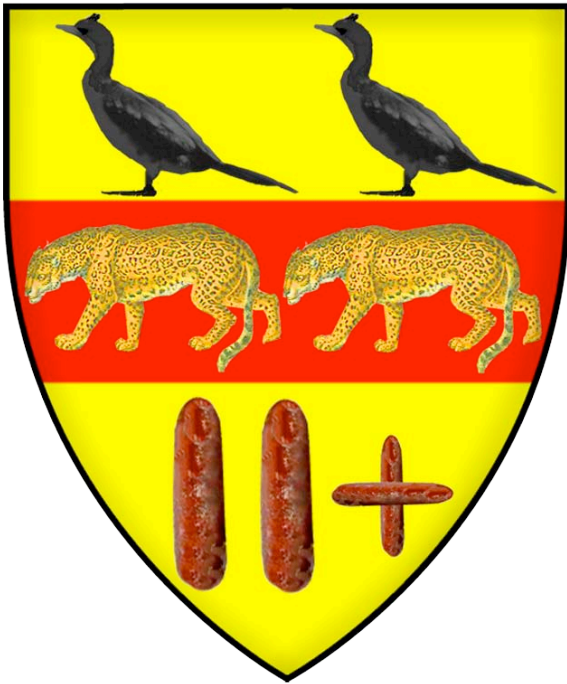


## John Prescott, Baron of Orkney



With astonishing speed the Prime Minister, still apparently Tony Blair, has moved to rid himself of his turbulent and embarrassing deputy by giving him a title. The first intention had been to promote him to the Upper House, but the united resistance of the peers there prevented that obvious and easy option. Charlie Falconer, the Lord Chancellor who in theory acts as the equivalent of the Speaker in the Lower House, proposed making him a peer specifically without a seat in the House, as was done in 1606 for Lord Hay, but the Barons objected on the grounds that he would still have the same title as they, even if they were not forced to look at him.

A Conservative peer, possibly Lord Heseltine, asked why officers of the armed services who had adulterous affairs with their subordinates faced a court martial and were dismissed the service, while the Deputy Prime Minister could do this with impunity. A crossbench peer observed that 150 years ago such an officer would be locked in his room with a bottle of whisky and a loaded revolver, a good idea whose time had come again. A Liberal peer asked why a policeman who pleased his girlfriend in his car should be dismissed from the force and sentenced to community service, while the Deputy Prime Minister could work his wicked will with his secretaries in government offices. A Labour peer asked why the police could prosecute a ten-year-old child for calling another “a Paki”, but refuse to investigate the bullying, harassing, groping Deputy Prime Minister.

With such united cross-party opposition the Prime Minister was advised to use the recent Scottish legislation to buy his deputy a feudal baron’s title, and thus now he is Baron of Orkney. His arms, rushed through by the Lord Lyon, are ***Or, on a fess Gules between in chief two shags Sable*** (common birds along the Orkney coast) ***and in base two cocktail sausages palewise*** (proposed by the editor of The Sun) ***and two miniature sausages crosswise, two jaguars all Proper***. The motto, which we assume refers to the arms, is “***Two Shags, Two Jags***”. Sun readers will doubtless explain to the less privileged the symbolism of the cocktail sausages which, we understand, are only two inches in length.

The Prime Minister thinks Mr Brown will sell Orkney back to the Norwegians.