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Greetings from beautiful springtime Falkland!

Falkland Society Newsletter, May 2020

Dear member/Dear supporter,

We were very encouraged by the response to our first Newsletter, with new people signing up to receive our mailings and several existing members writing to say how much they had enjoyed the first issue. Now we are already at the second!

We very much welcome contributions from members and friends of the Falkland Society. This month we welcome a contribution touching on the hugely important late 19th century restoration of Falkland Palace. It is by Jake Bonnett, who is currently studying History at Fife College and has been a Volunteer Guide at Falkland Palace for the last two years.

Ross Burgess (editor)

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Falkland Palace Restoration Programme

The Palace Restoration programme has been of such importance for Falkland. John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, third Marquess of Bute, was a master of the arts with a passion to restore magnificent buildings such as Falkland Palace, owning a combined total of 117,000 acres of land throughout the country. When he bought the Keepership of the Palace and the surrounding lands in 1887 for the sum of £192,000 from the Tyndall Bruces, he saw a Palace in need of vital repair caused by years of neglect. He immediately began to hire the best architects around such as John Kinross to supervise repairs at the Palace. The third Marquess also even hired his favourite window designer Horatio Walter Lonsdale who carried out the restoration on the Palace's stained-glass windows.

The third Marquess was so involved with the restoration that he used red sandstone, which costs a huge sum of money, to mark what was old and new, new being above the sandstone line and old being below the sandstone line.

The restoration of Falkland Palace started in 1887 and the last written document was in 1895. From the restoration was brought a Royal Palace which had been so badly in need of a restoration to what we see today, a masterpiece of engineering. During the restoration the workers were frightened to touch the roof as they thought it would collapse onto the inner roof: this just goes to show the extent to what the Marquess and workers would go to in order to give the Palace a new lease of life. During the restoration Bute's architect was seen regularly around the Palace inspecting the work to make sure it was to a good standard. The cost of the restoration is not known but it was well above £8,000 by the late 1890s: a huge sum of money. The Marquess got so involved that he began digging trenches to see if he could discover the old castle. His excavation maps were huge, and were very detailed on what was found near the North Range, one discovery being the Great Hall that adjoined the East Range (now gone).

The next part of the restoration was the rebuilding of the floors and the inner ceilings; the inner ceilings we see today were finished in 1895. All the ceilings were hand painted in Major Michael's study and the Keeper's Bedroom. However, from the restoration came a magnificent building, full of wonderful history, and the home to the Keeper.

Jake Bonnett



An article from the *Dundee Courier*, 1 August 1931, unearthed by Marietta Crichton Stuart.

THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

ALL ROADS STOP AT FALKLAND

Secret of Townspeople's Good Manners

By a Special Correspondent.

The Edge of the World is in the Kingdom of Fife. To be exact it is at Falkland, and Falklanders themselves are the first to admit it. It is the place to which many roads lead, but all of them connect and end there.

So I was told yesterday by a resident as we chatted close to the towering semi-ruins of Falkland Palace. "I hae always looked upon it as the edge the world," he said, with a humorous twinkle in his eye.

"If you go through the toon and alang the road you come to the gates o' the estate; you can gang nae faurer. If ye tak' the road up by the Lomond Hill you can gang only for a certain length and then stop, for you've come to the end o' things, as it were.

"A' roads seem to stop here. It's the edge o' the world." He smiled musingly, and then told me something extraordinary about Fife's smallest royal burgh.

A score or of years ago the sun was never seen in Falkland in the dead of winter. Other places might see a flaming red ball through the frosty air, but to people in Falkland in mid-winter the sun simply did not exist. There was light certainly, but that was all.

Barrier to Sun's Rays.

The towering Lomond Hill, crowned with forest, formed such an effective barrier to the sun's rays, that during the winter solstice the place was almost in perpetual twilight.

Then the lumbermen came, and in sweeping the hill almost bare of woods they let the sunlight into Falkland.

"That may seem queer but it's true." said the townsman. Even now that the wood's been removed we can still see only the tip o' the sun ower the hill aboot

Christmas time."

Forgetting his remark about Falkland being the edge of the world, I sauntered through the town along past the old mill dam (they call it the King's Mill—it was built several hundred years ago) and on to what I took to be the highway. About a quarter of a mile along the road I found my passage barred by a gate.

"The end of the world right enough," I said to myself with a laugh and turned back. I had scarce gone a hundred yards when I was hailed by a workman in overalls.

"They a' Stop Here."

"Can I be of any assistance to you; sir?" he asked. He must have been sixty years of age. "Yes," I said, "are there no roads leading out of the town in this direction?" He laughed. "Roads!" he said. "Man, they a' stop at Falkland." I thanked him and turned back towards the town.

I was pondering at a corner which way I should take when I heard the selfsame query:—"Can I be of any assistance to you, sir?"

This was interesting. I had never encountered the same attention in any town, I thought, I turned to see a white-haired old lady evidently just returning from a local store.

"Yes," I said again. "Can you tell why it is that Falkland's inhabitants are so extraordinarily polite?" She seemed a trifle nonplussed at the question, but she was an intelligent woman, so I got the secret.

Falkland's good manners are an inheritance from the days of the Jameses. James V and James VI, Charles II, and Mary Queen of Scots resided in Falkland Palace at various times.

Acquired Polish.

Falkland was the seat of a great civil court in the 18th century, with a consequent influx of well educated men and women.

This had its effect on the natives, who handed down their acquired polish to posterity. This was the story I got from the old lady.

And in the palace itself I saw Queen Mary's signature upon the wall. I was shown the room where James V died with the exclamation, "It has come wi' a lass and it'll gang wi' a lass." I saw the dungeon in which James the First's brother, Robert, the Duke of Rothesay, was starved to death.

"The maist historic place in Fife," said the keeper of the Stag Inn enthusiastically, and proceeded to reel off a list of Falkland's great men. "Sir Richard Cameron, wha started the Cameron Highlanders, was born up the street. Lord Deas was born along there at the post office—him o' the Court o' Session, ye ken."

"Cromwell's Troopers".

And in the inn also I picked up another link with the past. Twice every evening, at eight o'clock and ten, the town bell is sounded, and has been since Cromwell's troopers were in the town. It is the old curfew, which has rung through the centuries.

The shadows were lengthening and the old fashioned cobbled square with its quaint fountain showed not a patch of light as I left the town, the most peaceful I had ever been in.

At the junction of the roads on the outskirts of the town I paused, and a young man started up from the grass almost at my feet with the query—"Can I assist you in any way, sir?"

What could I do? I ignored the signpost and asked him the quickest way to Kirkcaldy.

News from your Chairman



The Trenches

I had thought of calling this short piece *A View from the Trenches* - meaning that puzzling feature of great archaeological and historical interest on the Falkland Estate. We often walk past it when taking our daily walk through the Estate. My first image shows the Trenches vibrant with the yellow gorse which is so strong a feature of the landscape at this moment in the year.

Another fascinating feature of the Estate is what I have been light-heartedly calling the 'Stone Age Bus Stop', which forms the subject of my second image. It is presumably of prime interest as a geological feature and it has just occurred to me to ask a geologist friend about it by sending him the same image. However, it may well be of archaeological and historical interest as well, as the stone bench appears to have been fashioned by the hand of man.

