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Here comes Summer!

Falkland Society Newsletter, June 2020

Dear member/Dear supporter,

At last summer seems to be here. It's a good time to be in lovely Falkland with the countryside all around us for healthy walks or bike rides. And for those of us with gardens it's a simple pleasure but a real joy to take our meals outside as much as possible.

Having cancelled our planned meetings for the last three months, we're delighted to announce that this month's meeting is going ahead, on our usual day and at our usual time, but online via Zoom – so you'll be able to attend the meeting from your own PC, laptop, or mobile phone. Peter Burman, our Chair, will be talking about the astonishing wealth of history and culture to be found in the city of Padua, where he and I spent three days in February. More details below.

Meanwhile we're making progress with the new book about Falkland in the Edwardian era (1901–1913). Tom Playfair has compiled a fascinating collection of stories from archives and newspaper cuttings, I'm working on an introduction to set the scene plus notes on people and places, and the index is almost finished. But we're still short of illustrations - if you have access to photos or even drawings from Edwardian times we'd be delighted to hear from you, also from anyone with skills in creating cover designs.

In this issue:

- June meeting
- Meeting invitation
- What happened to our railings?
- Tree of the month
- Masks or no-masks
- Ruskin quote
- Oliver O'Grady

- Did you know?

A reminder that this Newsletter comes to you from The Falkland Society, Scottish Registered Charity SC017201, www.falklandsociety.org.uk.

Ross Burgess (editor)

June meeting

For our June meeting I'm giving an online lecture, or webinar, about the city of Padua where Ross and I spent three days in February on our way to spend a unique ten days in Venice – unique in the sense that Venice was coming to terms with gathering evidence of the rapid spread of Covid-19 (even the strange word for it was new to our eyes and ears at that time), churches and museums were closed, and yet – and yet – it felt such a privilege to be there, expressing solidarity with our Venetian friends, enjoying the peace and tranquillity of a city no longer 'drowning in tourism'.



The Loggia and Odeo Cornaro, Padua

I have a talk about Venice up my sleeve, but I have chosen to speak first about Padua because it is less well known and yet a very special place: it is a place of pilgrimage – which of us has not prayed to St Anthony of Padua on finding that we have mislaid our purse, our passport, our driving license or whatever? Padua is a city of deep culture from Roman times until the present day, with visible evidence of all periods in between; in the Scrovegni Chapel it has a complete cycle of mural paintings by *Giotto*, one of the greatest of all Italian painters, which escaped destruction by a whisker in the bombardment of 1944; it hosts one of the oldest universities in the world; and it has a botanic garden, belonging to the university, which is *the* earliest in the world. It is moreover a thriving modern city and the economic hub of the region of Italy called the *Veneto*.

I have already given a webinar for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (founded by William Morris in 1877) and on 4 June I will be giving one for the Art-Workers Guild (founded in 1884 by disciples of John Ruskin and William Morris). I was surprised how enjoyable it was and what a good response there was on both occasions.

The lecture will last for one hour. We will stay open for another half hour if there are questions or comments from those who have been following it online.

Peter Burman

Meeting Invitation

Ross Burgess is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: The Falkland Society: Dr Peter Burman on Padua
Time: Wednesday 10 Jun 2020, 7:00 p.m.

Click the following link from 6:30 onwards to join the meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81660541853?pwd=eDFkZzhjeFNqazRDTTIwczhGcitzZz09

Meeting ID: 816 6054 1853
Password: 414507

From the *Dundee Courier*, 30 October 1943, unearthed by Marietta Crichton Stuart.

PUBLIC NOTICES.

ROYAL BURGH OF FALKLAND.—EMERGENCY POWERS (DEFENCE) ACTS, 1939 and 1940.—REQUISITION OF UNNECESSARY RAILINGS.

Under the direction by Commissioners of Works all unnecessary iron and steel railings, posts, chains, bollards, gates, &c., in the BURGH OF FALKLAND will shortly be removed and collected for use in the national war effort in iron and steel works and foundries.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN. That on or after Nov. 15, 1943, the work of removal will commence with the railings in the following streets and places:—West Port, Mill Wynd, High Street, East Port, The Myre, Pleasance, Newton Road, Lomond Crescent, Old Manse, Kirkcaldy Road, South Street, Royal Terrace, Wellbrae. It is hoped that owners will be prepared to make a free gift of their railings, &c., to the nation, but property owners and others whose interests are affected by the removal and who desire to claim compensation may obtain the appropriate form from:—

THE TOWN CLERK. BANK BUILDINGS, FALKLAND.

Under the provisions of the Compensation (Defence) Act. 1939, no claim for compensation can ordinarily be entertained unless notice of claim has been given to the appropriate authority within a period of six months from the date of removal of the railings, &c.—**A. B. GALLOWAY, Town Clerk, Falkland, Oct. 28, 1943**

Tree of the Month No.1

This is not an original idea! I have enjoyed similar features in *The Guardian* and in *Country Life* over the years. But during this 'lockdown' Ross and I have continued to take enormously enjoyable walks in the landscape around Falkland, and on the Falkland Estate: we enjoy identifying trees and in recent weeks the thrill of seeing them come into leaf and then into flower. I thought we would share some of the pleasure with members of the Falkland Society and also invite your participation.

I know we have members and members' friends who are knowledgeable about trees and so we invite contributions for future issues of the Newsletter. Just choose a tree within a reasonable radius of Falkland, say five to ten miles, so that we might all go and see it if we want to, sooner or later. Give the common name and the botanical name; a brief description of what the tree is

like; what the timber is generally used for; what its medicinal use is or has been; any mythological significance or stories you have come across or read about; and two images, one of the tree itself and one of a detail: a leaf, a flower, or the pattern of the bark (the bark of different trees can be fascinating).

With that explanation, here is No.1:

Common name: horse chestnut.
Botanical name: *Aesculus hippocastanum.*
This particular example is in the park, between the Stables of the Falkland Estate and the House of Falkland. Go past the East Lodge and the Duck Pond; turn left over the bridge and follow the path up to the Memorial Chapel – where on 8 June we shall quietly celebrate our first wedding anniversary – and enter the parkland by the gate; follow the well-worn path in the general direction of the House of Falkland; and this tree – a characteristic 'park tree' because of its magnificent scale and shape, and its flawless placing in the designed landscape – will be found almost in the very centre of the parkland. Enjoy it!





There are two other magnificent horse chestnut trees on this walk, but the one illustrated is our absolute favourite because of its classic shape and magnificent size. Horse chestnuts can grow as tall as 128 feet. The flowers are usually white, as here, but we love also the red ones - there's one now in blossom just beside the chapel. In Yorkshire I used to live not far from a country estate which had an avenue of alternative red and white blossomed horse chestnut trees – a truly wonderful sight!
The detail image shows the distinctive shape and character of the flowers and leaves. The nut-like seeds are popularly known as 'conkers', a true delight! To this day, I can't resist picking up

really beautiful conkers in autumn and making a bowl-full to last until the next year. Their beautiful brown colour, their shininess, and the comfortable feel of them in our hand is a real pleasure.

The Wikipedia entry says that the popular name came about 'from the erroneous belief that the tree was a kind of chestnut (though in fact only distantly related), together with the alleged observation that the fruit or seeds could help panting or coughing horses.' The horse chestnut is a classic rural 'park tree' but also adapts well to urban parks and streets. A really fine specimen can absolutely transform an urban street into a beautiful place, especially at the time of the flowering and at the time of conkers. In both the first and second World Wars conkers were collected for the Government as a source of acetone. In Bavaria – that famously beer-loving country – horse chestnut trees were planted around cellars constructed in the grounds of inns so that their dense canopies would help to keep the beer in the cellars below cool. The roots of the trees are relatively shallow. These shady gardens evolved into the concept of 'beer garden'.

In medicine, horse chestnut seed extract has been found to support poor circulation of the blood, though such reviews as there are seem to be rather cautious. I think I shall take some advice on this question! Having been prescribed warfarin, I know I am on no account to take any preparation containing horse chestnut extract. However, there is nothing to stop me using *Badedas* as a shower gel. Traditionally, it has its basis in a preparation made from horse chestnut essence and Baden-Baden spa water. The smell is heavenly!

Masks or no-masks?

Returning to our current health crisis I want to share our experience on this question.

A friend in Prague sent us a short video about masks. For more than two months it was compulsory for everyone in the Czech Republic to wear masks outside their own apartments or houses. Masks had to be provided for 10.7 million citizens in three days, and were, because countless women and men turned to their sewing machines and produced them out of any suitable material that they had available or could find or scrounge.



The principle of the mask is that while it does not much protect the wearer from tiny infected

droplets of water it helps to protect everyone else. Ergo, if everyone wears a mask we would all be better protected.

We decided therefore that our household should wear masks when we go into any kind of shop or public place. But how to do it when we had no sewing machine or sewing skills? Immediately we thought of our friend Linda Pedder who runs *It's Sew Easy* in Cupar. She is a superb craftsperson and, working from home, she had already been making masks.

In case any member or friend of the Falkland Society would like to order some from her, Linda has authorised us to give her email address: linda_itssew_easy@yahoo.co.uk. You can also leave a message on her phone: 01 334 655854.

Ruskin Quote

Every day I am inspired by reading John Ruskin. One of my favourite quotations runs as follows:

Cherish, above all things, local associations and hereditary skill.

The expression 'local associations' sits well with a society such as the Falkland Society, dedicated to the history, archaeology, architectural and cultural heritage of a locality. The concept of 'skill' is also important whether applied to rural skills (the sight of a well-tilled field on one of our local farms is a real delight) or to the skills of maintaining, repairing and adapting traditional buildings or cultural heritage.

We can ponder also the difference between supplying 10.7 million masks by local effort with the strategy of sourcing specialist clothing or equipment from across the globe. Which is the more responsible from an environmental point of view? Which produces the better result?

Peter Burman

Oliver O'Grady



It is with the deepest regret that we have to advise members and friends of the sudden and unexpected death of our one our close colleagues and occasional presenter to the Society, Dr Oliver O'Grady.

Oliver was engaged by the Falkland Stewardship Trust to lead the archaeological excavations on East Lomond for the past few years – a task which he undertook with enthusiasm and a genuine warmth for the many local community volunteers who were trained and supported to become Archaeology Ambassadors and dig excavators.

His follow-up talks to the Society were always sell-out affairs with audience members standing at the back once all the seats were taken. He conveyed a tangible sense of excitement about the significance and importance of the discoveries on East Lomond – which in turn piqued the interest of some of our national institutions.

Oliver was an outstanding professional, combining a high level of technical expertise with a way of explaining and engaging the interest of everyone who had the pleasure of working with him. His is a sad loss to Falkland and to Scottish Archaeology. At an appropriate juncture in the future we will organise something to commemorate Oliver's outstanding contribution to our evolving understanding of what he termed 'this ancient seat of power'.

Oliver was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and a committee member of the Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee. He lived in Perthshire with his wife Lindsey and their two boys Sam and Finn.

Joe Fitzpatrick (Chair, Falkland Stewardship Trust)

Did you know?

In 1903 you couldn't get a drink in a pub on a Sunday. Under the Licensing (Scotland) Act of that year, pubs had were closed on Sundays. Hotels on the other hand were allowed to serve drink

to their residents, or to genuine travellers - but how far did you need to have come to be considered a 'traveller'? In December 1909 two chaps from Freuchie (Richard Hargreaves, a shoemaker, and James Miller, a tailor) had been for a Sunday walk around by Kinross and were thirsty on the way home. They went into the Bruce Hotel, Falkland, and bought beer and whisky, saying they were from Markinch. 'If we had said we had come from Freuchie the hotel-keeper would not have let us in.' They were fined £1 each.

Back to top.



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