



The season extended!

Falkland Society Newsletter, July 2020

Dear member/Dear supporter,

Welcome to our third monthly newsletter. In spite of the coronavirus lockdown, out of which we are moving very gently and advisedly in Scotland, there is a great deal happening which is of interest to us as members of the Falkland Society. You'll see below that we've extended our season of lectures into July, and are also planning some events in August. So I thought I would use this opportunity to say something of future plans taking us up to the end of 2020.

My June online lecture on *Padua – paradigm of good conservation* produced valuable feedback from some of the 20 or so members or friends who participated. Normally we would expect to have at least 40 (and once 77!) at our monthly lecture evenings but 20 was not bad for our first attempt at using modern technology. I must confess I am finding it (as a completely 'non-techy' person) highly enjoyable and nothing like as difficult as I had imagined. I have in reserve a lecture on Venice, and the current threats to the beauty and integrity of that incomparable city, and I will be very pleased to give it at some point before the end of this year. Meanwhile, I am absolutely thrilled that Marietta Crichton Stuart will be giving an online lecture this month: 7 p.m. on Wednesday 15 July (details below)..

During August we have a month off from lectures, and in our August Newsletter we hope to confirm the lecture programme up to the end of the year, starting with our AGM (to be confirmed) in September. At the moment it seems prudent to assume that our meetings will be online at least until the end of the year – and maybe we should consider having at least some meetings online thereafter, especially in the winter months when getting to evening events in the Chapel Royal can be difficult for some.

Enormous progress is being made with the Falkland Society's next publication: a book about Falkland 1901–1913. It will be based on extensive research by Tom Playfair in archives and local newspapers, and Ross Burgess has added a whole apparatus to enhance our understanding and our enjoyment of what will be a substantial book. I often see Tom and Ross, suitably distanced, sitting on a bench on Brunton Green or in our garden in deep consultation with one another!



Tom and Ross on Brunton Green

The circulation list for this Newsletter increases month by month, but we're very keen to expand it further. If you have friends or relatives who you think might be interested in what we are doing in respect of the historic environment of the parish of Falkland, please do urge them to go to our website and register. It takes but a moment! Ideally we'd also like to convert readers to paid-up members, but this can wait until our face-to-face meetings get going again.

From the editorial desk and our respective studies Ross and I send members and friends best wishes for the next three months, which are expected to be critical from a public health point of view.

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

Peter Burman (Chair)

July meeting

We don't usually have a meeting in July, but this is an exceptional year, so **Marietta Crichton Stuart**, who was to have been our speaker in March, will now be talking to us online on Wednesday 15 July.

Formerly on the production staff of *The Guardian*, Marietta has devoted her energies since retirement to her work as Archivist to the family and Estate papers and as a historian. She chairs the Friends Group of Kennington Park, London. She is a trustee of the Falkland Stewardship Trust and has an unparalleled knowledge of the House of Falkland, Falkland Palace and the nineteenth and twentieth century histories of her family.

Her talk is entitled **House and Garden - the story of Falkland Palace and garden and its people, 1800-1952**.

Marietta's talk traces the story of the Palace, its gardens and its occupants over a 150 year period.

By 1800 the Palace was largely roofless and in ruins, with the local minister living in pokey rooms in the south range. The building and royal tennis court were used as a stone quarry and the grounds were a wilderness. During the next 150 years the Palace saw an initial programme of consolidation, followed by the Marquess of Bute's major restoration of the 1890s and, after the Second World War, what Marietta's father Michael, the then Keeper, termed 'a revival'.

The grounds saw similar changes and were transformed when Marietta's parents commissioned a new garden fit for a Palace from the landscape designer Percy Cane.

As for the occupants, for almost a century the Palace was home to the Estate factors, but from 1947 Michael and Barbara Crichton Stuart began the work to make it 'domestically convenient and comfortable'. Realising that the task of preserving such a building was beyond the means of an individual, in 1952 the National Trust for Scotland were appointed the Deputy Keepers; one of their duties was to keep the Palace 'wind and watertight'.

Throughout these 150 years the Palace and the historic village of Falkland have acted as a magnet to tourists; 2020 will be the first year since 1947 that there have been no visitors going round the Palace.

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. Please email Ross if you would like a little reassurance about getting on to an event presented through Zoom.

Peter Burman

Marietta's talk in March – postponed because of coronavirus – was to have been about the third Marquess of Bute, that remarkable polymath who has left such a powerful imprint on Falkland and St Andrews. She has the talk ready and prepared for us, and still intends to deliver it, but she would prefer to do so face-to-face with her audience, which almost certainly mean next year.

Meeting Invitation

Ross Burgess is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

**The Falkland Society: Marietta Crichton Stuart on Falkland Palace,
its gardens and its people**

7 p.m., Wednesday 15 July 2020

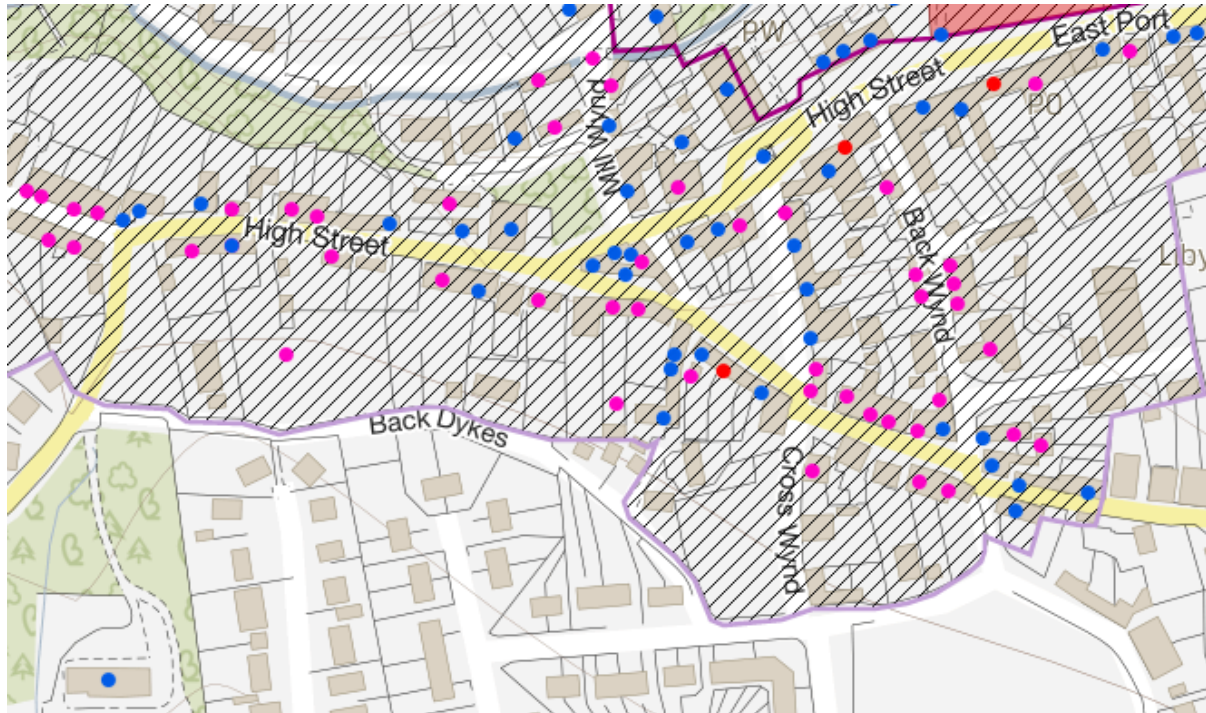
You can join the Zoom Meeting from 6:55 p.m. at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83321520228>.

Meeting ID: 833 2152 0228

(If you haven't got Internet access you can join the meeting by phone: dial 0203 481 5237 or 0203 481 5240, and when prompted give the Meeting ID: 833 2152 0228)

The Falkland Historic Buildings Project

Falkland has a remarkable number of listed buildings. The map below, from the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) web portal, shows just a part of the village centre, with the listed buildings marked (Category A red spots, B blue spots, C pink spots; the shading indicates the conservation area).



But information about our listed buildings can be hard to come by. The listings for Falkland were done as far back as 1971, and give very little detail (other communities, whose listing came later, are generally very much better documented). Some of the entries are not helpful in identifying the property, with descriptions such as 'House (Empty, Formerly Mrs Jean Clark), Back Wynd' rather than an address. But they can all be identified, with some effort, using the latitude and longitude on the Wikipedia article, or the National Grid references on the HES web pages.

Wikipedia has an article entitled 'List of listed buildings in Falkland, Fife', with about 150 entries. It covers the whole of the old Parish of Falkland, and therefore includes some entries for Freuchie, Newton of Falkland, etc. but not surprisingly most of them are of buildings or structures in the historic Royal Burgh. The article has a space for a picture for each building, but so far very few of them have images - see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_listed_buildings_in_Falkland,_Fife

So we're planning a project to collect images and information about all the historic buildings and structures in Falkland, including:

1. The correct current street address for each building.
2. A photographic record of our listed buildings. You will be invited to join us on Wednesday 19 August (World Photography Day) to photograph whatever is visible from the street; there will be modest prizes for the three best photographs.
3. In addition to the street façade it would be very helpful if owners would photograph any features of interest and send them to us. The range of possibilities is enormous but might include outbuildings which are or were stables or outside privies (very rare but they do survive here and there) or interesting internal features such as old staircases, bread ovens, cast-iron kitchen ranges – anything that might be of interest. Outside features could include windows and doorcases, and the marriage stones with initials and dates which are very common in Falkland.
4. We would also welcome information from residents as to who lived in their house over the ages, and any interesting facts, or the features that make their houses special. Of course the privacy of current residents will be observed.

All photographs of sufficient quality and/or interest will be entered into the Society's photographic archive, and also to Wikimedia Commons which would make them free to use on Wikipedia or elsewhere. They would be identified as coming from the Falkland Society, and we would also credit the photographers (unless they wished to be anonymous).

In the longer term we hope to use the information as the basis for a book or an exhibition or both.

Ross Burgess

Craft Symposium V

For the past four years I have organized the Falkland Craft Symposium, for two or three days in mid-August. The symposia have been managed by the Falkland Stewardship Trust (responsible for the House of Falkland, Stables and designed landscape) in partnership activities with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). The aim has been to bring together craftspeople, conservators and historians in a programme rooted in the historic environment of Falkland, both the village (including Falkland Palace) and the Estate.



The image above shows one of the practical activities that have been a feature of the Craft Symposia, the repair using stonemasonry skills and lime-based mortar (definitely not Portland cement which is highly damaging to traditional stone or brick structures!) of the beautiful curved stone wall just before the East Lodge at the entrance to the Estate. The craftspeople in this case were mostly William Morris Craft Fellows of SPAB and others with the appropriate traditional skills. The location meant that passers-by could stop and enjoy what was going on, and ask questions.

I often quote a remark of John Ruskin in *The Eagle's Nest*: 'Cherish, above all things, local associations and traditional skill.' This is precisely what we are trying to do through setting a good example in our Craft Symposia.

We were not intending to have an event this year but the SPAB Scotland Committee urged us that it would be a pity to let the momentum drop when so many of us are becoming skilled at using applications such as Zoom. So now we have set up a four-day event, afternoons only from 14.00 to 15.30, on 18–21 August. The first session will be on sustainability, chaired and introduced by me, with Ninian Stuart as the first speaker. He will consider sustainability from the angle of *landscape management*, balancing the production of food against the heritage value of our Falkland landscape and the pressures of visitors who come in increasing numbers drawn by what Ruskin identified as 'the beautiful, the peaceful and the fruitful'.

The second speaker will be SPAB's Director, Matthew Slocombe. Matthew has been with SPAB for a quarter of a century, and his is one of the most powerful voices in the UK heritage world. He will be speaking from the aspect of *historic buildings*, complementary to landscape, and with a strong commitment to finding ways for heritage to contribute to the sustainability of the earth's resources.

Peter Burman

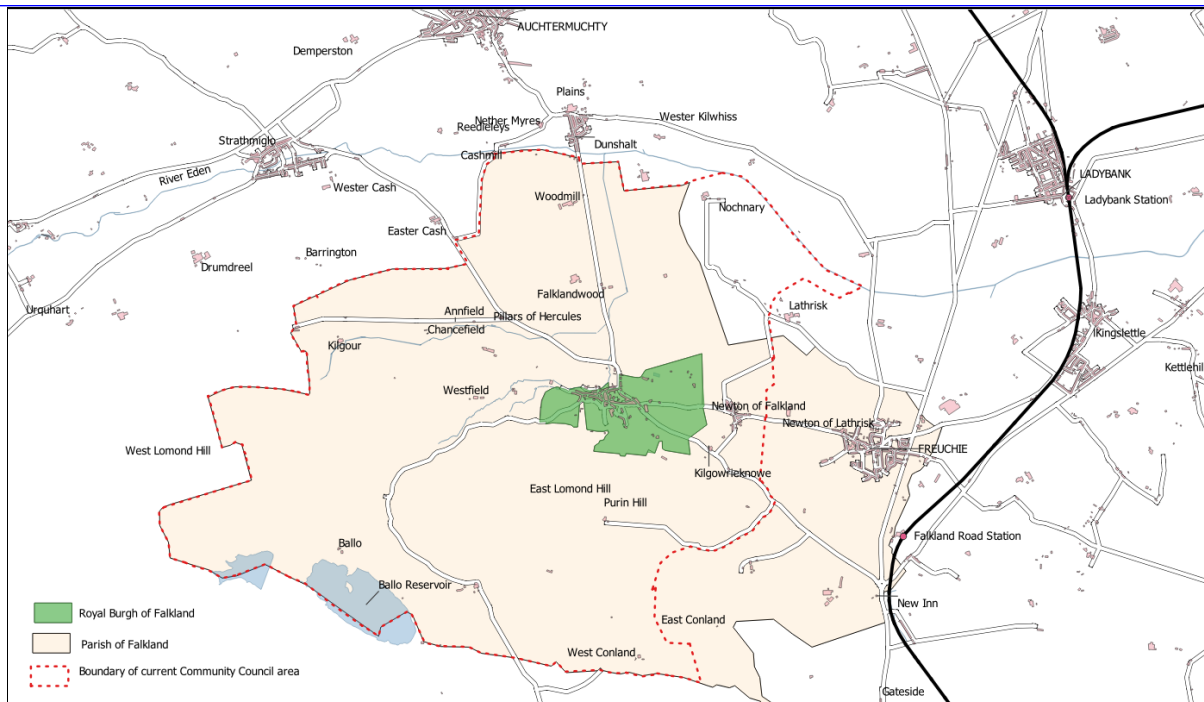
Information requested - Blind John Hay

Marietta tells us that in 1946, 'Blind John Hay' is recorded as working on the paths at the House of Falkland, but we don't know any more about him. Any information would be much appreciated.

The new book

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.

To put places in context, some maps seemed a good idea, so I've been teaching myself to use geographic information software, using data old and new from the Ordnance Survey. It's really come across to me that there was more than one 'Falkland' in the Edwardian era: for instance the Parish, covering quite a large area, and the Royal Burgh, covering just the historic core of the village (or town as it was always called in those days). The Royal Burgh didn't include the Palace or the House of Falkland, or even Balmblae, and by 1916 it also seems to have excluded Millfield House, which had been included in 1895. A map like the one below will probably appear (in black and white, but bigger) somewhere in the book.



The other 'Falkland' of course, is the Estate, which was much more extensive than it is today (I haven't yet been able to track down a map of it) and varied in size as properties were bought or sold off.

We're starting to think of ways to fund and publicise the book. One option might be to ask Falkland Society members and supporters to sponsor it - in return for sponsorship you'd get a mention in the book and a free copy. Peter and I sponsored a book like this last year. But there's a lot to be thought about. We certainly intend to have a launch event for publication day, depending as ever on whether large gatherings will be possible by then. But your comments and suggestions on this important venture will be very welcome.

Ross Burgess

Tree of the Month

Monkey Puzzle (Chilean Pine)

Botanical name ***Araucaria araucana***

Belonging to the ancient family ***Araucariaceae***.

A few years ago I bought a clutch of booklets on trees, published by the Sage Press based in Rye, Sussex; one of them, dated 2001, is on the Monkey Puzzle tree. The author, Mrs Bobby Meyer, had consulted many correspondents about their Monkey Puzzle trees by conducting a nationwide survey and the book is dedicated to 'all the enthusiastic Puzzlers' who contributed their own experiences. Elsewhere she says that people tend to have very strong feelings about Monkey Puzzle trees, either loving them very much or disliking them very much.



Fig. 1 Childhood home of the author with a Monkey Puzzle tree

I am a Puzzler, in the first category, and Fig. 1, which shows my childhood farmhouse in Warwickshire, explains why. The photograph was taken by me with my first-ever camera, a Box Brownie, in 1953, the year of the Coronation. It shows a formal, but Picturesque, 19th century wing festooned with climbing pear trees and roses. Behind were (and still are) two older wings, one 16th century and the other 17th century, with extensive outbuildings beyond. On the front lawn is a solitary Monkey Puzzle tree which I loved with a passion. In fact there had been two such trees symmetrically placed: it was a day of great sadness when the left-hand one, considered unsafe, was felled. Away to the right of the photograph was a tall and splendid Giant Sequoia tree. All three were part of an extensive garden lay-out of the 1840s, which has given me a lifelong love and interest in garden history as well as trees.

One of our favourite walks on the ever-welcoming Falkland Estate entails walking up to the Memorial Chapel; then through the park, keeping close to the field boundary on the left; through a 19th century kissing gate; then on the left is a most beautiful bridge of about 1850 by the architect and garden designer Alexander Roos (who also designed the drinking fountain in Falkland Village). We take the first turning to the right, walking downhill, and soon see the magnificent Monkey Puzzle tree shown in Fig. 2. The House of Falkland was completed in 1843, so this, too, is part of an 1840s layout which embraced a formal garden with fountains close to the house and then wooded policies around the Maspie Den.



Fig. 2 The noble Monkey Puzzle tree in the woodland on the far side of the Maspie Burn from Falkland



Fig. 3 The very distinctive trunk



Fig. 4 A young Monkey Puzzle tree in the village of Falkland

The native habitat of the Monkey Puzzle is now only three main areas in Chile and in a small part of Argentina. Uncontrolled logging, violent storms, volcanic eruptions and fires have all taken their toll. The Araucana region of Chile is still home to small groups of native Mapuche Indians: the Monkey Puzzle is their sacred tree. A Scotsman called Archibald Menzies was ship's doctor and plant collector/botanist on a major round-the-world voyage in the *Discovery* led by Captain Vancouver. Detailed logs, letters and diaries written by Menzies survive. It seems that he gave Monkey Puzzle seeds to Sir Joseph Banks at Kew Botanic Gardens sometime towards the end of the 18th century. Five 'Menzies' trees were planted and the last survived until 1892. This seems rather surprising as the trees commonly last much longer.

The Falkland specimen shows the tendency of Monkey Puzzle trees to shed their lower branches as they grow older. This gives us the opportunity to admire the trunk and perhaps, trees being immensely tactile as well as (in this case) sacred, to run our fingers as well as our eyes gently over the surface. The bark, as you can see in Fig. 3, is wrinkled rather like an elephant's foot: a timeless surface of prominent ridges running round the trunk at intervals, and very distinctive scars where branches have been lost.

For us visiting this tree is like visiting a very dear elderly friend. The tree welcomes us, the ground immediately around it feels like sacred ground, and we come away feeling cheered and refreshed.

Fig. 4 shows a young specimen in the front garden of a house in East Loan in Falkland village. I must say I am tempted to plant one too! A somewhat older but still quite young tree can be seen just south-west of the New Inn Roundabout on the way to Glenrothes, a most beautiful specimen. Further afield (and not forgetting the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, like Kew one of the world's great botanic gardens) I have seen the two avenues of Monkey Puzzles planted in the 1850s at Castle Kennedy near Stranraer, where you can buy seedlings in the Estate Shop, and much, much further afield the Monkey Puzzle avenue at Bicton, a country house in Devon, planted in 1843.

Please let us know of Monkey Puzzle trees known to you and how you feel about them.

Peter Burman

Did you know?

The cobbled part of Falkland's High Street was covered with tarmacadam in the summer of 1956. The County's Road Surveyor was asked that the Falkland Cross by the fountain remained marked out with cobbles: this was the site where the Town Crier stood to make his announcements.

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