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A busy summer

Falkland Society Newsletter, August 2020

Dear member/Dear supporter,

We've now concluded our 2019–20 season of lectures. Unusually, the season was extended until July, with Marietta's splendid talk about Falkland Palace and its gardens. Her lecture, delivered by Zoom, was recorded and is available to view, together with my June lecture on Padua, at www.falklandsociety.org.uk/recordings.shtml. There are no lectures (as usual) in August, but we start the new 2020–21 season on the 9th of September.

But things will still be happening in August. The annual Craft Symposium will be an online event this year, spread over four afternoons. And we are also launching our Falkland Listed Buildings Survey, with a questionnaire going out to everyone in the Conservation Area, and a special event for World Photography Day, 19 August.

Meanwhile work is continuing on the new book, *Falkland and its People 1901–1913*, and we are looking for members and friends to act as sponsors.

More details of all this below.

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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)

The Falkland Listed Buildings Survey

We've been making some progress towards the Falkland Listed Buildings Survey, which we announced last month. In fact we can already claim one minor achievement: a keen-eyed reader noticed that the map in last month's Newsletter didn't show his own house as a listed building. On further investigation we discovered that the spot was there but in the wrong place. We contacted Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and the map has now been corrected.

But the Survey gets going in earnest during August. We will be delivering a leaflet to every premises in the Conservation Area, asking residents what they know about their building, including changes to the house over the years, interesting facts from its history, and known previous ooccupiers (with a 50-year cut-off to ensure the privacy of current residents). This information will be put together with what we can glean from other sources to build up a more comprehensive picture of our historic buildings and their history.

The main output from the survey will be an online database, looking rather similar to Wikipedia (and using the same software).

You can access the database at www.falklandsociety.org.uk/buildings; apart from the home page (see image below) there's not much content yet, but we will be adding to it during the month and thereafter.



The project is being managed by our Chair, the architectural historian Peter Burman, with IT support from myself.

Ross Burgess

World Photography Day

Thanks to Marietta Crichton Stuart for letting us know that the 19th of August is World Photography Day. We are celebrating it this year with a photographic competition. You are invited to gather (suitably distanced) on Brunton Green at 10:00 a.m. for a briefing and will then be sent

off to photograph historic buildings all round our Conservation Area. Please, don't go onto private property, and all the pictures should be of buildings,or structures, with maybe a glimpse of the landscape - no people!

There will be small prizes for the three best photographs, but you will have to agree to the images being released under a Creative Commons licence, to make them free to use on Wikipedia or elsewhere. They will be identified as coming from the Falkland Society, and we would also like to credit the photographers (unless they wished to be anonymous). All photographs of sufficient quality and/or interest will be entered into the Society's photographic archive, and the Listed Buildings Survey database.

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

The Craft Symposium

A window into the world of craftsmanship, hosted by the Falkland Centre for Stewardship and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Previous Craft Symposia have included a mix of lectures and practical craft activities, covering different fields every year. This year's fifth Symposium will be held online via Zoom, including contributions from craftspeople working in various fields as well as conservation professionals and historians.

Each day's session will run from from 2 to 4 p.m. with two lectures and an opportunity for general discussion. Tickets are free but need to be booked; donations are encouraged.

Full details with links to each days's programme and how to book, at the Centre for Stewardship's website.

Peter Burman

Our new book

At last the end is in sight for our new book. making progress with the new book about Falkland in the Edwardian era.

Since the last newsletter we've finalised the title:

Falkland and its People 1901–1913

Research by Thomas Playfair

Edited by Ross Burgess

With a Foreword by Marietta Crichton Stuart

We've also fixed the number of pages: 560 (including 55 illustrations and 4 maps) and the price: £20 . The distinguished artist, art historian and designer Alan Powers, currently Master of the Art

Workers' Guild, will be designing the cover.

And we're now launching a sponsorship scheme. For a minimum donation of £50 you will have your name printed in the list of sponsors in the book (and of course you get a free copy). If you'd like to take part, just download the form, complete it and return it to us with your cheque by the end of August.

Ross Burgess

The next season

Our series of talks for 2020–2021 begins in September. The first four lectures of the new season will all be held online via Zoom, starting at 7 p.m., as follows:

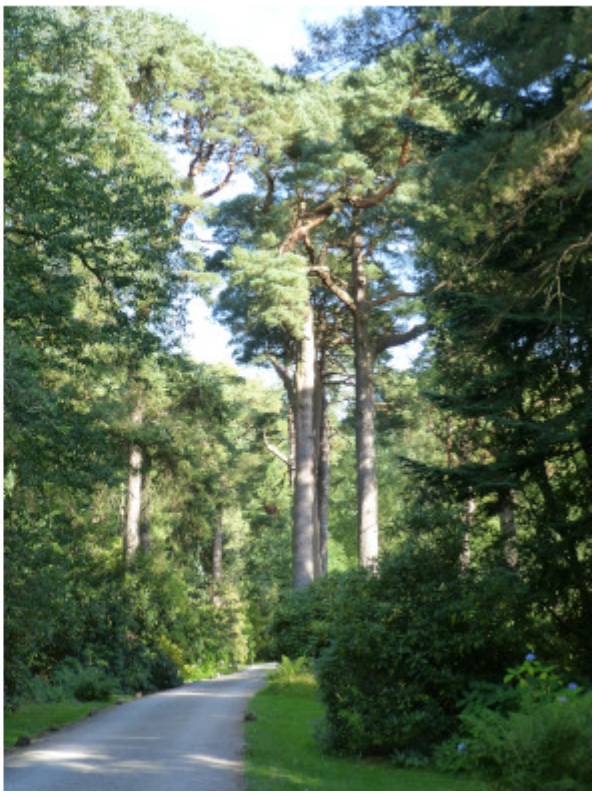
- Wednesday 9 September: Peter Jones, painter, preceded by the Society's AGM
- Wednesday 14 October: Vanessa Stephen, landscape architect
- Wednesday 11 November: Nic Boyes, consultant stone conservator
- Wednesday 9 December: Peter Burman, art and architectural historian

The programme of lectures for January 2021 onwards is still being worked on. Some of the speakers have been booked, others have been approached but have not yet been assigned a date. Part of the uncertainty relates to whether we will be able to meet in person: some subjects are suitable to a Zoom presentation, others perhaps less so. And in the winter months in particular people may prefer to attend in the comfort of their own homes rather than venturing out on a cold dark, evening. Whatever happens we will keep you informed through these Newsletters and of course via the 'coming events' page on the Society website: www.falklandsociety.org.uk/comingevents.shtml.

Tree of the Month

Scots pine
Pinus sylvestris
A species of pine which is widely considered to be the national tree of Scotland

My earliest memory of Scots pines is of often seeing them as a windbreak on the horizon in Norfolk, which is not surprising as they love sandy soils. Another happy memory is of seeing them in the English Lake District in a wood where they were combined with mountain ash trees, covered with their characteristic red berries. Another Lake District memory is of the Scots pine avenue leading up to the house – where Wordsworth, Coleridge and other Lakeland poets were guests – at Mirehouse, a country house which is not as well known as it deserves to be. The park is also notable for its sessile oaks.

Left: a memorable combination of Scots pine and mountain ash in the English Lake District; right: an avenue of Scots pines at Mirehouse in the English Lake District

But of course we can see them in Fife On the Falkland Estate there are breath-takingly beautiful stands of Scots pines in, for example, the Drumdreel Woods. Whenever we are feeling especially energetic we love to walk in that direction, and to find ourselves almost in Strathmiglo.



A stand of graceful Scots pine in Drumdreel Forest, towards Strathmiglo

Closer at hand is the group of Scots pine in the park or designed landscape which forms the setting for the House of Falkland, not far from the delightful wooden hut which is currently an

artist's studio.



A group of Scots pine in the designed landscape around the House of Falkland, forming a picturesque group on a knoll

Scots pine are among the most distinctive of trees: when mature they present a long, bare, straight trunk topped by a rounded or flat-topped mass of foliage. The bark is thick, scaly and a dark greyish-brown on the lower trunk whereas on the upper trunk it is thin, flaky and orange.

The populations of Scots pine in western-most Scotland are genetically distinct from those in the rest of Scotland and northern Europe, but not sufficiently to have been distinguished as a separate botanical variety.

Scots pine is the only pine native to northern Europe. In Britain it now occurs naturally only in Scotland, which is a good reason to consider it as our Scottish national tree. Historic and archaeological records make it clear that it also occurred in England and Wales until 300-400 years ago but was probably wiped out through over-exploitation and grazing. However, as the Lake District examples show, it has been reintroduced to England and Wales and also to Ireland, Denmark and the Netherlands.

It is a very useful tree, and hence the tendency in some countries to over-exploitation. The timber from it is called red deal or yellow deal and is useful in building construction and in furniture making. The wood is also used for pulp. Scots pine was used for making tar before the industrial revolution, especially in Scandinavia. It has also been used as a source of rosin and turpentine. Scots pine fibres are used to make the textile known as 'vegetable flannel', which has a hemp-like appearance, but with a tighter, softer texture. (I must say I have never seen this textile but if any member of the Falkland Society has seen it, I would be most interested to know).

Finally, we can celebrate Scots pine as forming much of the Caledonian Forest which once covered vast stretches of the Scottish Highlands. Over-cutting for its general usefulness, fire (an ever-present hazard for growing timber), overgrazing by sheep and deer, and deliberate clearance to deter wolves, were all historical reasons why little now remains of this once-heroic pine and birch forest. The main surviving remnants, well worth seeking out, are at Abernethy Forest (so convenient for Falkland), Glen Affric, Rothiemurchus and the Black Wood of Rannoch.

I turned to my treasured copy of Thomas Pakenham's *Meetings with Remarkable Trees*, given to me by the Head Gardeners of the National Trust for Scotland, and in a section entitled 'Return of

the Natives' I read: 'The largest remaining fragment [of the Caledonian Forest] is at Rothiemurchus … When these ancient pines were young, parts of the forest were as wild as the forests of central Europe. Travellers on the road to Inverness had to run the gauntlet of wolves as well as highwaymen … A century ago it was 'up horn, down corn'. Now it is 'up pine, down kine'. Best of all, the new forests include native trees as well as exotics, and not all the native trees are planted trees. Some landowners – including John Grant, the benevolent laird of Rothiemurchus – insist on allowing their pines to sow themselves.'

Peter Burman

Did you know?

In May 1920 the *Fife News* reported that a German field gun had been handed over to the town and placed in position at the East Loan.

May 1922 the *Fife News* reported that it was agreed to remove the captured German gun from the Loan to the front of the Palace.

In 1937 Falkland Town Council reported that the old German gun standing within the Palace grounds was sold to a Perth scrap metal merchant for £1.

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