



Recording Falkland's history

Falkland Society Newsletter, December 2020

Dear member/Dear supporter,

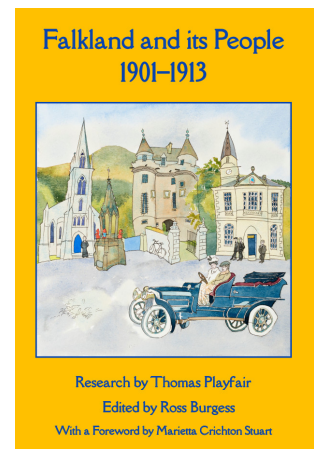
Our new book, ***Falkland and its People 1901–1913***, is with the printers, who tell us the copies have been printed and are now ready to be bound. As soon as we receive them we'll start sending them out to our sponsors and to those who have pre-ordered. To make sure of receiving your own copy, please download the order form from www.falklandsociety.org.uk/flyers/OrderForm.pdf and send it in with your cheque for £20 per copy.

We've been making good progress with our [online encyclopedia](#) of "Falkland Historic Buildings", but there's much more still waiting to be done. Find out below how you can help fill in the gaps.

This month we have the fourth in our new season of **online lectures**, with a talk by our chair, Peter Burman, about Venice, the beauty of its buildings, and the threats that it faces (19:00 on Wednesday 9 December, by Zoom as usual; join from 18:45 onwards). More about this, too, 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)

Falkland Historic Buildings – the survey and the wiki

With the book sent off to the printers I've had a chance to catch up with our other major local project, the [Listed Buildings Survey](#). The results of the survey now form the nucleus of our new online database, or "[wiki](#)", at historicfalkland.scot/wiki. Our wiki works very much like Wikipedia, and uses the same software, but it's totally devoted to Falkland and its historic buildings.

Back in August many of you submitted forms about the history of your own houses as part of our Listed Buildings Survey, and may be wondering what has happened to the information you submitted. If you took part then you should now see an entry for your house on the wiki. Go to the wiki, type your house name into the "Search Falkland Historic Buildings" box at top right, and click the magnifying glass symbol. In most cases there will also be a photo of the house, submitted by you or someone else. So please check it out, and let us know if you have further information or maybe a better photo, or an additional photo showing the building as it used to be.

If you haven't yet sent in a form, it's not too late - you can still download the form at www.falklandsociety.org.uk/flyers/ListedBuildings.pdf; we will be very grateful for any more information about your home or other Falkland buildings. I'm continuing to add information to the wiki, ready for a formal launch at the Falkland Society meeting in January when I will be talking about some of the more interesting results, and the difficulties there have been in compiling the data.

If you'd like to help with the project of recording our historic buildings, by researching in the archives and the census records, by taking photographs, by lending us any photos you may have from earlier days, or even by helping to edit the wiki, do please get in touch with me at ross@foxeearth.net.

As well as the wiki, our new Internet space at historicfalkland.scot houses other sources for Falkland's history, currently including Jack Burgess's year-by-year chronicle of Falkland life, a timeline of local history, and an account of the early years of Falkland in Bloom by Bert Allan,

Ross Burgess

December Meeting

You are invited to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Falkland Society Meeting for December 2020:
Peter Burman on "Venice, Heart City"

18:45 for 19:00, Wednesday 9 December
Meeting ID: 851 1902 3958

To join the Zoom Meeting, click on <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85119023958>
from 18:45 onwards on the 9th.

If you can't join from your computer, you can dial in by phone on **0203 481 5237**
or **0203 901 7895**, and then quote the meeting ID: **851 1902 3958**

Peter Burman – "Venice, Heart City"

Peter has twice studied in Italy (in Florence and Rome) but only in recent years has he become an active and engaged visitor to Venice, about which he will speak. He will elucidate some of the challenges which threaten Venice while delighting us with expositions of the beauties of some of his favourite places including the *Accademia*, the *Scuola Grande di San Rocco* and certain special churches.

Future meetings

- 13 January 2021: Ross Burgess on Falkland's Historic Buildings
- 10 February: Marietta Crichton Stuart on Falkland and its People 1901-1913, some stories from the book
- 10 March: Tom Christian, Consultant Dendrologist
- 14 April: Karen Dundas, Scottish Wall Paintings Conservators
- 12 May: Fiona Wemyss of the the Wemyss School of Needlework
- 9 June: David F. Wilson, public artist

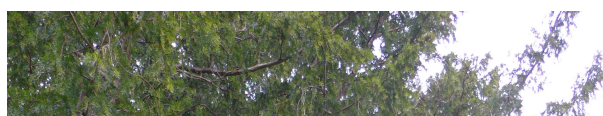
For more about these meetings, see <https://falklandsociety.org.uk/2020-21programme.shtml>

Tree of the month

Holly, *Ilex aquifolium*

The common European holly used in Christmas decorations and on Christmas cards the world over is *Ilex aquifolium*; in our gardens and hedgerows we often find hollies with 'variegated' leaves of yellow and green which are undeniably decorative and attractive.

Although the main purpose of this piece is to celebrate and provide some information about



the Ilex or Holly I want first to honour my intention of a few months ago by saying a little more about the Taxus or Yew, or rather one specific yew, the one in the churchyard at Fortingall, in Glen Lyon, Perthshire, which is variously dated as being between c.3,000 and c.5,000 years old which, if proved to be true, would make it one of the world's oldest living plants.

Our visit to Fortingall was completely unplanned. One day recently we spontaneously felt the need to get right away from our desks and achieve great gulps of fresh air. We set off meaning also to celebrate the National Trust for Scotland's innovative stewardship of one of our iconic landscapes by walking up Ben Lawers but in the end we were defeated by the failing light. I have often been to Fortingall – one weekend I camped in the valley with friends, which may surprise some of my other friends – but Ross had never been there and so when we saw a signpost saying 'Fortingall 3½ miles' while driving along the northern side of Loch Tay it was irresistible to go there. We parked by the churchyard wall and on entering it the first thing you see is the

'birdcage' former 18th century bellcote and the second thing is the yew, supported on a



Fortingall Churchyard, 18th century 'bird-cage' bell-cote from the previous church

name for his buildings in Scotland and London. Fortingall is a treasure trove of his work including the justly famous Z-plan Kirkton Cottage, 1889 (Figure 3), illustrated in every serious book which deals with the Arts & Crafts Movement in Scotland, two other cottages (Menzies and Craig) and the amazingly picturesque steading, Balnald, of 1886. Much, perhaps all, of this work was paid



Fortingall Churchyard, Ross Burgess with the celebrated Fortingall Yew

framework, situated in close proximity to the west end of the church. Gazing at it, and half-remembering the facts and legends that swirl around it (e.g. Pontius Pilate was born nearby in what would now be the 'parish'), is an awesome experience.

But the longer one spends in Fortingall the more remarkable it reveals itself to be. The church, for example, is an Arts & Crafts masterpiece of 1901-2 with windows of Art Nouveau character by the architects William Dunn (1859–1934) and Robert Watson (1865–1916). Robert Watson had been architectural assistant to James Majoribanks MacLaren (1853–1890) who sadly died far too young but even so deserves to be a household

for by the enlightened patronage of Sir Donald Currie, a shipping magnate, who had bought the Glen Lyon Estate in 1884 and immediately set about embellishing it. There is a parallel here with the artistic patronage of the third Marquess of Bute who bought the Falkland Estate in 1887 and immediately set about embellishing it.



Fortingall, Kirkton Cottage 1889

When we are allowed once again to have group outings as a Society then Fortingall would be a very appropriate place to go. There is even a small hotel, designed by William Dunn and Robert Watson, which could provide us with refreshment. At present both church and hotel are firmly closed in compliance with Covid-19 restrictions.

As we walked along the village street we came across a number of magnificent holly trees, one of which I illustrate.



A particularly fine holly in the village street at Fortingall

I have a special affection for holly because as a child I lived on a lane where a holly hedge had been planted for a considerable distance which included a sharp curve. At night or in winter the headlights of my mother's ancient Rover Sports Saloon would pick out the holly and we would know we were back home, about to sweep into the farmyard to an excitable chorus of welcoming dogs and hens.

First of all, a word about the name. "Ilex" in Latin originally meant the holm-oak or evergreen oak which, I must confess, is one of my favourite trees when I see it in a landscape or adorning a landscape through being part of a shelter-belt. The botanical name for the holm-oak is now *Quercus ilex*; and *Ilex* with a capital I is holly; specifically *Ilex aquifolium* is the holly with red berries we are all familiar with.

The word holly appears in a number of medieval English poems or carols: can any reader find it, similarly, in Scots literature of the late medieval or Renaissance period?

Is it a tree or a shrub? – a commonly-asked question. Ilex includes species of trees, shrubs and climbers, with evergreen or deciduous foliage and inconspicuous flowers. It is slow-growing, which suggests that the magnificent hollies at the northern entrance to Victoria Place and Castle Park and on the corner of Back Dykes Terrace, both in Falkland, have been there for some considerable time.



Victoria Place / Castle Park



Back Dykes Terrace

Characteristic of this species are the simple, alternate glossy leaves, frequently (but not always)