



**Wishing all our members and supporters a very
Happy Easter!**

Falkland Society Newsletter, April 2021

Dear member/Dear friend,

Our speaker for April is **Karen Dundas of Scottish Wall Paintings Conservators** - see below.

There's a change in our programme for May: we had hoped that Fiona Wemyss would be welcoming us to the Wemyss School of Needlework - for Covid reasons this is having to be postponed until the later in the year. We'll be getting back to you about a replacement speaker for May.

And don't forget if you missed any of our previous Zoom lectures you can view the recordings at falklandsociety.org.uk/recordings.shtml.

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

Peter Burman (Chair)

April Meeting

Your invitation to the Falkland Society meeting for April 2021

Karen Dundas, Scottish Wall Paintings Conservators

Karen leads this team of outstanding conservators who have worked on some of the most important schemes of painted decoration and mural paintings in Scotland, including Falkland Palace.

She lives in Dunfermline, Fife, and has lately become involved with the painted decoration which is one of the special features of the House of Falkland.



18:45 for 19:00, Wednesday 14 April
Meeting ID: 836 6641 2324

To join the Zoom meeting, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83666412324>

From 18:45 on the 14th.

If you can't join from your computer, you can dial in by phone on

0131 460 1196 or **0203 481 5237** or **0203 901 7895**,

and then quote the meeting ID **836 6641 2324**

Membership

You don't need to be a member of the Society to come to our meetings - all are welcome. But we hope that many of you will consider joining the Society to boost our income. When we were meeting in person we used to take a retiring collection every month, but we can't do that over Zoom.

So if you feel able, may we ask you to print and complete the membership form at falklandsociety.org.uk/flyers/membershipform.pdf and send it in with your cheque. We should be able to claim Gift Aid on your subscriptions, and we hope to have a facility for online payments, once the current problems with the bank have been sorted out.

Peter Burman

Historic Falkland

Some recent additions to the Historic Falkland website – historicfalkland.scot:

- a poem by George White
- the document in archaic legal language by which the National Trust for Scotland was appointed Deputy Keeper of Falkland Palace - most of it is a single 1200-word sentence!
- an extract, covering Falkland, from the 1903 Royal National Directory of Scotland
- an article by Marietta about the Polish Airborne Forces in Falkland

We always welcome more contributions.

Meanwhile we may have a new volunteer editor for [Falkland Historic Buildings](#), our Wikipedia-style encyclopaedia of Falkland and its buildings; as always, if you have any information or photographs to improve the site, we'd be most grateful.

The Society has joined the Scottish Local History Forum – [slhf.org](#) – and we are now listed on their directory of organisations. This should potentially be a way of increasing awareness of Falkland and the Society, and possibly even another way of selling our books.

Finally some of you may have noticed that the "links" page on the Falkland Society website – [falklandsociety.org.uk/links.shtml](#) – now has a link to the new website that Ross has created for Falkland Gardening Group: [falklandgardeninggroup.co.uk](#).

A Falkland Museum?

The National Trust for Scotland hope to be re-opening Falkland Palace to the public towards the end of April - very good news for Falkland and our visitors!

But it poses a problem for our Society: the NTS are holding a number of artefacts, some of them quite large (weaving equipment etc.), which were housed at the Town Hall and possibly belong to the Falkland Society, and they need us to remove them before re-opening. Ideally the objects would form the core of a Falkland Museum, if only we could find a suitable location for it; but that's a much longer-term project – meanwhile we need somewhere safe (and not damp) to store them until a permanent solution could be found. Any offers or suggestions?

John Colum Crichton-Stuart, 7th Marquess of Bute

The Falkland Society wishes to express its sadness at the death of the 7th Marquess of Bute, Ninian Stuart's cousin, on 22 March, aged only 62, after a short illness.

The obituaries in the national newspapers have tended to focus on his earlier career as a racing driver up to 1991 when he held the courtesy title from his father of Earl of Dumfries. Consequently, at that time (and subsequently) he was frequently referred to as 'Johnny Dumfries', although from 1993 when his father died he was Marquess of Bute.



But there was much more to him than a racing driver. First of all, there was his awesome genealogy as a descendant of King Robert II, of George III's Prime Minister the 3rd Earl of Bute who played a large part in the establishment of Kew Gardens, and of the previous Marquesses who all played their part in the cultural and economic history of Scotland and Wales. The 3rd Marquess is particularly important in Falkland's history because of his purchase of the Falkland Estate in 1887, his brilliant commissioning of architects and craftspeople to embellish both the Palace and the House of Falkland, and his exceptional contribution to the nation's cultural heritage through rescuing buildings at risk and through commissioning a new main seat for the family, Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute, to replace the house that was largely destroyed in a catastrophic fire.

Lord Bute's father had been successively Chairman and President of the National Trust for Scotland; his grandfather, the 5th Marquess, had given St Kilda archipelago and three houses designed by Robert Adam on the north side of Charlotte Square to the National Trust for Scotland. Lord Bute focused his energies and the patrimony of his family on the Isle of Bute and disposed of his other great house, Dumfries House in East Ayrshire, and its estate to The Great Steward of Scotland's Trust (that is to say to HRH The Duke of Rothesay and Prince of Wales). Thanks to this imaginative solution Dumfries House, with its walled garden and wider estate, has become a model for outstanding conservation and for reinventing the 'idea' of the traditional estate in a way that contributes to the aspirations of our age, focusing on sustainability, on traditional craftsmanship and on good design.

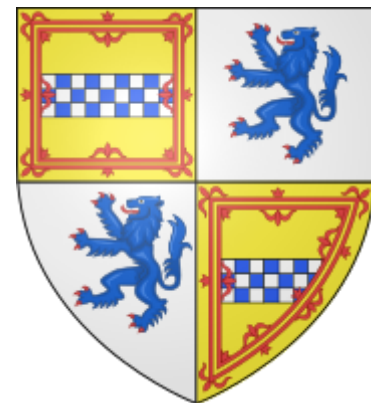
Lord Bute chaired the Board of Mount Stuart Trust from its active inauguration in 2005 when Mount Stuart and its gardens were opened to the public and its rural estate was vested in the charitable trust.



Mount Stuart (photo by Peter Burman)

I have been to Mount Stuart on three occasions, on two of them to spend time in the superbly well organised Archives, and I was bowled over by the high standards with which everything was managed, including an elegant modern Visitor Centre. The house is, as the 3rd Marquess wished it to be, 'a splendid palace', and the interiors are embellished by the work of architect Robert Weir Schultz and designer Horatio Walter Lonsdale, just as at Falkland. The house itself was designed by Robert Rowand Anderson who also left his mark on Fife, for example the Session House at Markinch and the Episcopalian Church in Cupar. It is one of the architecturally most stunning country houses in Scotland and appallingly ignorant of the *Guardian* to refer to it disparagingly as 'a Victorian gothic pile'.

Both Mount Stuart and its estate bear all the marks of a strong vision plus the knowledge and energy to take decisions which are both creative and good from a conservation perspective. For example, a current project is the Kerrylamont Centre, the former Home Farm of the estate. Under Lord Bute's personal guidance, and in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and Argyll & Bute Council, the extensive group of former farm buildings is being transformed. All the buildings will gradually be put into good repair and repurposed as flexible working spaces providing opportunities for small and medium-sized workshops, studios, a stone-masonry yard (as at Culzean Castle Estate), an open plan media studio and communal and event spaces. The first building to be restored is a new Creamery for The Isle of Bute Cheese Company. The Byre, the Mill and the Bull Pens will follow. A later phase will tackle the Category A-listed original Creamery.



***Arms of the Marquesses of Bute:
Chequered band for Stuart, lion for
Crichton***

In Rothesay the Bute Yard has been developed in partnership between the Mount Stuart Trust and The Isle of Bute Gin Company. According to the website Bute Yard will become 'a hub for a mixture of uses ... farmers' markets and community celebrations, the space will also support and complement significant long-standing events such as the Bute Highland Games, the Agricultural Show and the Bute Fest'.

The *Guardian* obituary on 27 March reported that Lord Bute had retired from the racing circuit in 1991 'leaving behind the memory of a likeable, unpretentious man'.

A statement from his family sums up his character and his vision very succinctly: 'He was a moderniser and an inspirational thinker, transitioning a family home to a progressive, working visitor facility and estate.'

Peter Burman

Future meetings

- 14 April: Karen Dundas, Scottish Wall Paintings Conservators
- 12 May: Speaker to be announced
- 9 June: David F. Wilson, public artist

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

And if you missed any of the previous lectures in this series there's information about them at falklandsociety.org.uk/2020-21programme.shtml with links to download the recordings.

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