



The Falkland Society

Scottish Registered Charity SC017201

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October – "Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness"

Falkland Society Newsletter, October 2021

Dear <<First Name>>,

Our new season got off to a good start with our AGM on 15 September, followed by a very insightful talk by Kirsty Archer-Thompson, Curator of Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford House in the Borders, and we had a successful showing for the Society at the Cupar Societies Fair.

In October we look forward to hearing Fiona Fisher, Built Heritage Officer with Fife Council, who will give us two short talks (see below) at our monthly meeting on the 15th.

Another event we are looking forward to is the Falkland Book Festival, which is in part a celebration of our current local literary connections, and will also raise funds for the preservation of the Community Hall and Library.

Peter Burman (Chair)

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AGM Report

Our Annual General Meeting went ahead as planned on the 15th of September, via Zoom.

Our Chair, Peter Burman, gave his report on the year, our Treasurer, Dionatas Vargas, reported on our financial situation, and I reviewed our publishing and web activities.

Two actions were agreed, to review our constitution, and to register for Gift Aid.

The existing Office-Bearers and Committee were re-elected, with two changes: Fiona Lawrenson stepped down as Secretary but remains on the Committee, and I was elected Secretary in her place. We also welcomed Kieran Allan as a new Committee member. The full line-up is thus as follows:

- Chair: Dr Peter Burman
- Depute Chair: John Smith
- Secretary: Ross Burgess
- Treasurer: Dionatas Vargas
- Committee members:
 - Kieran Allan
 - Jake Bonnett
 - Fiona Lawrenson
 - Betty Gilchrist
 - Thomas Playfair
 - Marietta Crichton Stuart

Following the formal business, we heard a talk by Kirsty Archer-Thompson, Curator and Collections and Interpretation Manager for the Abbotsford Trust.

You can read [the full Minutes of the meeting](#) on our website.

Ross Burgess (Secretary)

October Meeting

Our speaker for October is Fiona Fisher, Built Heritage Officer with Fife Council.

Please join us (via Zoom as usual) at 19:00 on Wednesday 13 October. To join the meeting please go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83666412324> any time from 18:45 on the 13th.

You can also join by phone on **0203 481 5240**, **0131 460 1196**, **0208 080 6591** or **0330 088 5830**, quoting the meeting ID: **836 6641 2324**.

At Fife Council since 2014, Fiona provides specialist support for urban regeneration projects and built heritage advice (through the planning process) on alterations to assets in Fife and leads the streetscape project in the five-year Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration project (2019-2024). She has been the project co-ordinator for the Erasmusplus Traditional Building Skills project (August 2018 – September 2021). She co-founded the Fife and Tayside Traditional Buildings Forum and established the Fife Heritage Blog.

While at Perth & Kinross Trust she was project officer for their Historic Graveyards project. Historic graveyards and landscapes have been a continuing focus in subsequent work including

the Clyde and Avon Valley project with Susan Buckham. After joining Fife Council she continued that interest in the Kirkton Old Church project. Vernacular architecture is another special interest – the beauty of the everyday – and she has a keen interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Fiona has previously worked as a landscape architect. She has designed many school wildlife gardens, including the Sauchie Nursery School Sensory Garden project which won a Scottish Urban Regeneration Award in 1997. Her other landscape projects include the design and refurbishment of historic gardens and the settings of listed buildings, including landscape and public art for Dollar Academy, as well as industrial heritage landscapes including the Bo'ness Memorial to Mining and the award-winning Mill of Haldane Green Corridor project.



Her talk will fall into two parts:

- **"Traditional Building Skills In Europe"** (about the recent Erasmusplus project sharing experience in passing on traditional building skills to young people; please see Peter Burman's [report on a conference about this](#))
- **"Green Traditional Buildings"** (how Traditional Buildings and Skills are part of the COVID Green Recovery and reaching Net Zero Carbon).

New Leaflets



We've had some tri-fold leaflets printed, giving the full Falkland Society programme for the current season. We'll be distributing them round the village, and if you've paid up as a member for the current season, you should receive your own personal copy,.

And if you're not a paid-up member, why not join? We've revamped the [online membership form](#) and it now includes the option to pay by bank transfer as an alternative to cash or cheque.

Chronicle of 1927

Jack Burgess (no relation) is working his way through the 20th century, a year at a time, compiling a chronicle from local newspapers.

He's just reached 1927, a pretty quiet year in Falkland: the Parish Church and the Free Church continued their parallel existences (they would be united two years later), electric light was

installed in the Kirk, the production of linoleum and floorcloth continued "at full blast", Captain and Mrs Maule Ramsay were living at the House of Falkland, and the B.O.A.F.G. (readers of *Falkland and its People 1901–1913* will know what that stood for) announced that fines for non-attendance at their AGM would be strictly enforced. There was much sorrow at the untimely death in November of Mrs Mary Brown of Dundrennan, Horsemarket, who had been the first lady member of Falkland Burgh Council.

You can read the full story of 1927 (and 1900 to 1926) on our *Historic Falkland* website – go to historicfalkland.scot and click "Chronicle".

We're always interested in receiving snippets of local history for *Historic Falkland* – send them to me at ross@foxeearth.net.

Ross Burgess

Falkland Literature and Lyrics Festival

The Falkland Community Development Trust is organising a festival of literature and music from the 15th to the 22nd of October at the Library and the Community Hall.

Our Society is taking an active part in the festival: we're having a stall at the Interest Groups Fair on the 15th, and Ross Burgess, our Secretary, will be giving a talk on the 20th and leading walks on the 19th and 21st.

For full details of the week's events, see <http://falklandcommunitylibrary.org/literature-lyrics-festival-2021/>.

Cupar Societies Fair

On Sunday 26 September we had a Falkland Society stall at the Societies Fair, organised by the Cupar Community Council and the Rotary Club of Cupar, in Cupar's Haugh Park.

Your Chair and Secretary manned the stall, with Kenny Lumsden, and your Treasurer and his partner helped us to clear up at the end. We were very lucky with the weather (the winds of two days before would have blown everything away).

We gave out lots of the new tri-fold leaflets, we signed up ten new people for our mailing list, and we sold seven copies of *Falkland and its People 1901–1913*. Thanks to John, our Depute Chair, for providing the gazebo and to Bill Pagan for inviting us to attend. Bill is Chair of the Cupar Development Trust and has taken a lead in organising both Cupar's Celebration Weekend 2021 (see next article) and the Societies Fair.

In the Haugh Park the stalls were organised into two 'streets' on the grass. One or more of us would stay at the Falkland Society stall while the other would go round chatting to people at the other stalls, learning much about what the other organisations were doing, and meeting some delightful, warm and welcoming people.



Your Treasurer, Chair and Secretary (Dionatas, Peter and Ross) in front of the stall

Apart from ourselves I counted the following organisations on a quick run-round:

- Cupar Scouts
- Animal Rescue
- Royal Burgh of Cupar Community Council
- Cupar Amateur Musical Society
- Tree Planting in Cupar
- Cupar U3A
- The Rotary Club of Cupar
- Cupar Arts
- Cupar Development Trust
- Cupar in Bloom
- The Adamson Hospital League of Friends
- Cupar Camera Club
- Cupar Art Club
- Cupar Model Rail
- Cupar Old Church
- Cupar Baptist Church
- Fife Folk Museum, Ceres
- Cupar Men's Shed.

We can parallel a number of these organisations in Falkland but, of course, Cupar being our former county town and with a larger population, there is an even wider spread of organisations than we have here.

We also chatted to a representative of Cupar & Howe of Fife Twinning Association which reminded us how very valuable it is to have warm relationships with comparable villages and

towns in other countries. Falkland has such a twinning with a village in France and it would be pleasant to revive the relationship more actively and perhaps to initiate others. When I lived in York I twice participated in our twinning with the city of Münster in North Rhine-Westphalia. Like York, Münster has a very wonderful medieval cathedral. Like York also, it has many traditional shops and other businesses, and a rich literary and musical life, which in turn attracts gifted people both to visit and to live there. The relationship is a very successful one

I was delighted to be greeted in the Haugh Park by a Cupar resident who told me how very appreciative he had been of the Falkland Society talk in the Chapel Royal by our friend Professor Axel Klausmeier on his work as Director of the Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation.

Peter Burman

Great Goings on in Cupar and District

In the January issue of our newsletter, I wrote about ambitious plans for celebrating the literary and musical history and traditions of Cupar and its neighbourhood. Sir David Lindsay of The Mount (that same mount on which stands the 1826 Hopetoun Column visible for many miles around) was a 16th century laird who wrote the first play written in Scotland, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estatis*, a new edition of which is being prepared. The weekend was judged by its organisers as "a resounding success" - see the CuparNow blog, "[Cupar's Celebration ... what a Weekend!](#)" Among those taking part was Dr Joseph Morrow, successor to Sir David Lindsay as Lord Lyon King of Arms, who came to speak to our society in April 2019.

Ross and I attended one of the weekend's events: a concert on Saturday 18 September in the upper hall of the early 1860s Corn Exchange given by The Meadows Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Peter Evans. The first half consisted of a spirited performance of Franz Schubert's *Symphony No 5 in B flat major*. The second half consisted of a performance of Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, narrated in Broad Scots by John Bett, an award-winning actor, writer and director. He spoke very movingly about his upbringing in Cupar. Having learnt Russian as a pupil at Bell Baxter School, he was able to translate the text of *Peter and the Wolf* himself, directly into Broad Scots. His presence and his very deft narration was a reminder that past and present literature has many dimensions, local, national and international, all three important. It is also why, in devising our annual programme of lectures, the Falkland Society pays attention not only to matters of Falkland significance but also to our neighbourhood context as one of the many villages in the Bell Baxter catchment area, as a village and surrounding landscape in Fife, in Scotland – and in Europe.



Peter and the Wolf in the Corn Exchange

What makes a vibrant village, town or city? It is self-evidently the people who live there, and their commitment to a "sense of place" and to continuity of involvement. It is wonderful to be welcoming to visitors but not to be completely over-run by them. At the moment I am organising a sequence of activities relating to the city of Venice which is plagued by a number of challenges: over-exploitation of property by mega-rich incomers (who often use their Venetian apartment as little as one week a year, apparently); this impacts on the people who genuinely live in Venice who cannot afford the rocketing price of space for their workshops and studios; traditional shops and other local business have been driven out by businesses catering solely to the needs of tourists; a daily incursion of thousands of visitors who come for the inside of the day to "do" Venice and then retreat like the tide leaving behind their litter, having contributed very little to the economy of Venice; the impact of the *Grandi Navi*, the huge cruise ships, profitably marketed with the lure of a cruise through the Guidecca Canal while their passengers enjoy the comforts of their luxurious ship; the ships bring pollution and, worse still, damage the delicate eco-system of the lagoon in ways which threaten the very survival of the city. Amazingly, there are even politicians and architects who advocate that Venice should be given a shot in the arm of a dose of 'modernity', including tower blocks for offices and flats! This in turn reminds us of the true purpose of conservation which is never to "preserve the past in aspic" but to enable our existing buildings, equipped with the best of modern services, to be in good repair so that they can serve the future as well as they have served the past and present.

If such issues interest or concern you, then I confidently predict that we shall all enjoy and profit from our talk this month by Fiona Fisher, Heritage Buildings Officer of Fife Council. Through her, and with the backing of other senior officers, Fife Council has taken a remarkable initiative towards introducing young people at school to the learning of craft skills so that they may have the possibility of deeply satisfying careers working on historic buildings.

The Hopetoun Column

I cannot resist adding one more local topic. Everyone who walks on the Falkland Estate will have noticed how the Hopetoun Column on The Mount (home of Sir David Lindsay of The Mount in the sixteenth century) dominates the entire landscape of the Eden Valley. Ian and Evelyn Crombie, owners of the Over Rankeilour Estate, generously invited the Hopetoun Archives Team to visit the Column on 17 September.

Lieutenant-General Sir John Hope, who became the fourth Earl of Hopetoun after the death of his half-brother, lived on the estate and ensured that it had a beautiful house, stables, steading (now the Scottish Deer Centre) and walled garden. He was much loved, and there is a fine portrait of him in the County Buildings in Cupar. Following his death in 1823, the tenants of the estate and other well-wishers commissioned the column to commemorate a great man who had been their neighbour and friend.

It was enormously enjoyable and full of interest to walk through the estate and climb the 100 steps to the top of the column.



Peter Burman



The Lomond Hills from the top of the column



Evelyn and Ian Crombie (on steps) with the Hopetoun archives team

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