



The Falkland Society

Scottish Registered Charity SC017201

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Falkland Society Newsletter, April 2022

Dear <<First Name>>,

First of all sincere apologies for the disruption that afflicted Ben Tindall's talk at our March meeting. It seems that the problem arose because the event had been posted on Facebook and was picked up from there by troublemakers. We will be better prepared in future, and Ben hopes to give his talk again on another occasion, but please may I ask everyone not to post future Falkland Society events on social media.

We have what promises to be a very interesting meeting this month, with Ninian Stuart and Joe Fitzpatrick talking about **[the Falkland Estate and its unfolding future](#)**.

The other main event this month is the online conference, **[Voices from Venice](#)**, that Peter is organising for the Guild of St George. Peter has been tireless in engaging a wide variety of speakers with different backgrounds and viewpoints which should add enormously to our understanding of the problems of Venice which are also the problems of all places (Falkland too, on a vastly smaller scale) that are over-dependent on tourism. The conference is this Saturday, 2 April, so please book your free tickets as soon as possible (see below for details).

Ross Burgess (Secretary)

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April Meeting

Our Falkland Society meeting on 13 April will feature **Ninian Stuart** and **Joe Fitzpatrick**, on 'The Unfolding Future of the Falkland Estate'

As usual, the meeting will be held by Zoom, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday 13 April. You're invited to join us from 6:45 onwards at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85002181532> ready for a prompt start at 7. There's no charge. Please note the meeting will be recorded.

You can also join by phone on **0203 481 5240**, **0131 460 1196**, **0208 080 6591** or **0330 088 5830**, quoting the meeting ID: **850 0218 1532**.

Please DO NOT copy these details to Facebook or other social media.



Ninian Stuart



Joe FitzPatrick

Members and friends of the Falkland Society have a wonderful opportunity on Wednesday 13 April to hear a presentation by Ninian Stuart, the current owner of the Falkland Estate, and Joe Fitzpatrick, Chair of the Falkland Stewardship Trust. Both are friends and colleagues of mine and so I have a fair idea of the sort of presentation they will make: they are likely to regard it as an opportunity to present and test ideas about the kind of thinking that can be going on and which, in the not too-distant future, will lead to some kind of conclusion.

The Falkland Estate is by no means the only private Estate in Scotland which is thinking hard about its future. Important debates are going on about the use and stewardship of the land of Scotland, debates which touch upon other far-reaching debates such as what we can do locally in the face of our global climate crisis, what we can do to grow food and produce energy, what we can do to provide opportunities and facilities for local communities and for our visitors to enjoy the countryside and the benefits it brings us in terms of healthy lifestyles and well-being.

Ninian's family has held the Estate since the third Marquess of Bute purchased it in 1887. The Estate has supported the family, but the family has also invested massively in the Estate over the past century and a quarter. There is also a further dimension going back into local history, with the Estate being built up in the 1820s by Professor John Bruce and then a period of

consolidation and enhancement and much local generosity (e.g. the parish kirk, the drinking fountain) under the ownership of his niece and her husband, Margaret and Onesiphorous Tyndall Bruce.

Imaginative solutions have been found for the principal cultural assets of the Estate. Ninian's father, Michael Crichton-Stuart, had the vision to make the National Trust for Scotland the Deputy Hereditary Keeper of the Palace, and it is now one of the Trust's most popular properties. The House of Falkland is part of a long-term lease embracing the House, the Stables, Home Park and East Lodge which are held for preservation and appropriate uses by the Falkland Stewardship Trust, which has now existed for 28 years. The House of Falkland is a major mid-nineteenth-century country house with spectacular Arts & Crafts interiors of the 1890s, thanks to the third Marquess of Bute, and is sub-let to an admirable school for boys with special needs, famous in its own way for the sensitivity and professionalism with which it carries out its work.



The House of Falkland School

It is difficult to imagine local life now without the Stables as they have become, the natural start or finishing point for enjoyable walks across the Estate, with a café, shop and gallery all of which have adapted astonishingly well to the COVID health crisis. I will never forget the way in which the Estate – freely open to all – became a place of safety, refuge and refreshment during the times of lockdown. Suitably distanced, many local people and some from further afield took daily or frequent walks on the Estate, and there was a notable friendliness between all of us who did so. Meanwhile, funds have been successfully brought together to mend the suffering landscape of the Maspie Den, whose narrow paths have been repaired with great skill, other structures (such as bridges and walls) repaired, and before long will be open again. The latest challenge is the condition of the Duck Pond, just inside the main gates of the Estate, which became seriously silted up during the great floods which affected the locality in 2020. My belief is that many local people and our visitors would be willing to support the restoration of the Duck Pond by contributing money and helping to raise funds for its repair and ongoing management. It is one of the truly delightful corners of the Estate, deservedly popular with visitors.



The Stables

The situation of an Estate is very different from how it was a century ago. Consequently, new ways have to be found to manage and pay for the very aspects which most attract visitors. A great achievement has been the design and execution of a substantial new car park at the Pillars of Hercules junction. I often notice, driving past in mid-morning, that virtually every parking place is already taken. Wonderful walks in several directions can begin and end here, so it is no wonder that the car park has been an instant success. It is also an example of good strategic thinking as it reduces traffic coming through the village where the narrowness of our picturesque historic streets means that the less motor traffic we have the better. As I do the washing-up in our kitchen facing the delightful Brunton Green I often notice family groups (or individuals) who have clearly got the message and who have parked in the main village car park off the High Street and Back Wynd, and for whom our house is on the obvious walking route from car park to the Estate.

Ninian says he would like to reflect, with us, on his own tenure of the estate since his father died when he was 25 years old – as well as sharing the evolving strategy to sustain and regenerate Falkland Estate for future generations. He's touched on some of these ideas in a recent interview on BBC Out of Doors - and is one of a growing number of landowners in the UK exploring ways of engaging communities more closely in governance. He will also share about some current initiatives and the intentions behind them.

Following a distinguished career in education, Joe Fitzpatrick became a trustee of the Falkland Stewardship Trust in 2012. That was during the seven-year period when I was myself Chair of the Trust, and I felt very happy for him to succeed me when the time came for me to demit office. Ninian, Joe, John Smith and I are the four local trustees and we meet regularly together to consider the relationship between the Estate and the local community – John and I are both Community Councillors – and to try to ensure that there is good communication about what the Estate is doing, and what it needs to be doing, in order to be viable into the future.

So we may anticipate that Ninian will have something to say about the future long-term ownership and management of the Estate, and of how this might gradually – but beginning fairly soon – be brought into effect. Collaboration and partnership are vital tools for survival of the Estate into the future.



A previous Falkland Estate – the East Lomond Hill fort

Joe will surely tell us something about his own background, and what he brings to the exacting role of Chair of the Falkland Stewardship Trust. He will clarify, no doubt, what the Trust is and what it does: and what it might do in the future. He is currently in negotiation with the University of Aberdeen's Department of Archaeology about a partnership relating to further exploration of the rich archaeology of the Estate. This is a good example of the kind of collaboration which in our current society brings great opportunities – for university students and their teachers through opportunities for archaeological exploration on the ground, and for research; for the local community which has shown tremendous enthusiasm for becoming involved in practical archaeology during the past decade; for local schools; and as representing a resource for the Estate which is not simply about income streams but is about the 'knowledge economy' which is such a precious element in our lives in society today. You will notice that the local community is identified as a 'key partner' in all that the Trust seeks to do as one of the three current manifestations of the Estate.

Since we, the members and friends of the Falkland Society, are part of that local community I know that views, ideas and suggestions made after the presentations will be listened to with great interest and respect. So please make a point of being present, if you can, for this particular occasion. We will be part of a rich and ongoing process of consultation with an early opportunity to contribute ideas and to comment on proposals.

Peter Burman

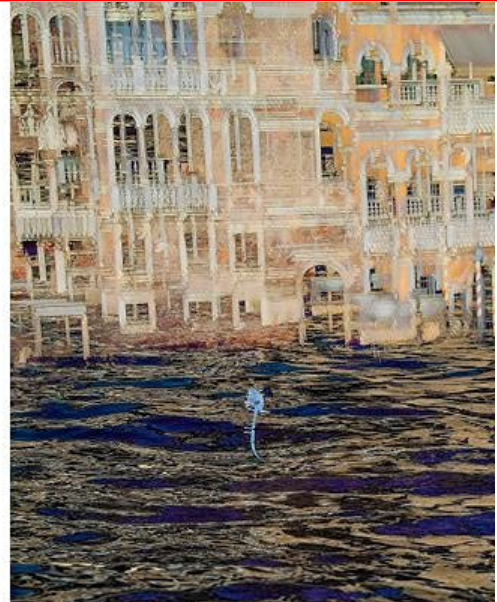
Voices from Venice

VOICES FROM VENICE

VOCI DA VENEZIA

An online
conference

2 April 2022, 9am–6pm
(UK time)



We're glad that several Falkland Society members and friends have been able to attend the series of readings from John Ruskin in December to March. The series reaches its climax this Saturday (**2 April**) with an all-day conference, organised and chaired by our own Chair, Peter Burman. The Conference will run from **9 a.m.** to **6 p.m.**, but please feel free to drop in and out during the day. You can download the full programme for the day from [the Guild of St George website](https://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/voices-from-venice).

All are welcome to attend this event, but you will need to book in advance via Eventbrite (no charge). For more information, and how to book, go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/voices-from-venice-conference-tickets-263429493707>

The Lomond

So good to see the former Lomond Tavern, in Horsemarket, spruced up and operating again, after what seemed like years of dereliction. It's now a tea room and chocolate shop, and Ross and I had very agreeable pieces of cake and hot chocolate on its first day of opening. Long may it prosper.

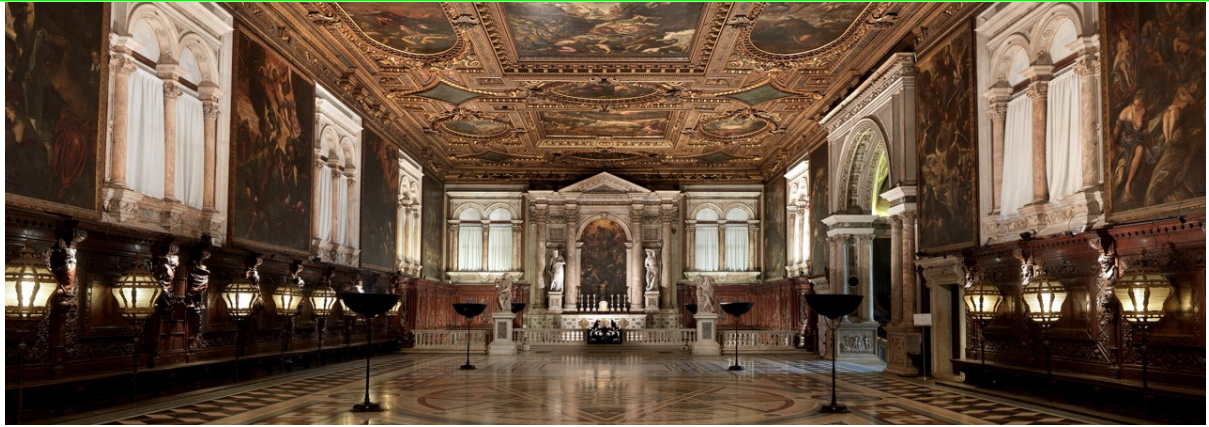
See the updated entry with new photograph on the Falkland Historic Buildings wiki:

https://historicfalkland.scot/wiki/index.php?title=Lomond_Tearoom.

Peter Burman

Venice in March

Peter and I were lucky enough to be able to spend two weeks in Venice during March. Partly a holiday (of course!) but also a working holiday: we had meetings with most of the people who will be speaking in the **Voices from Venice** Conference, plus others who had helped us in various ways or taken part in the Ruskin readings leading up to the conference.



The Scuola Grande di San Rocco

We found that Italy is taking Covid-19 precautions much more seriously than even Scotland: masks are obligatory in enclosed public spaces - and not just any old masks - they have to conform with a European standard. It's impossible to go into churches, museums, theatres, etc., without having your 'Green Pass' scanned to confirm your vaccination status. Most people had the Green Pass (odd that they use the English phrase) as an app on their mobile phone, but we managed with printouts from NHS Scotland (getting a bit dog-eared by the end of the fortnight) showing our latest two jabs.

Venice was of course as beautiful as ever, although surprisingly no warmer than Scotland. We visited again some of the sights we'd seen on previous occasions, such as the magnificent Scuola Grande di San Rocco, with its unforgettable series of paintings by Tintoretto and the amazing wood carvings, one of them depicting Tintoretto himself; but we also managed some new visits, including a couple of museums and at last St Mark's Basilica, which even Peter had never properly visited before.



Mass in San Rocco, Ukrainian bishop presiding

We attended a Ukrainian Catholic mass (in Italian, with tuneful singing in Ukrainian) in the church

of San Rocco, a concert in the former church of San Vidal, and a chamber performance (in English) of Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas*.

Our apartment for the week was small but adequate, located very centrally, off a quiet courtyard in easy reach (if you could remember your way amidst the maze of little streets and alleyways) from some major sights such as the great Frari church and the Rialto Bridge. Our windows overlooked a small canal with gondolas and other traffic passing by.

Ross Burgess

Treasurer needed

Many thanks to Dionatas for taking over as Treasurer of the Falkland Society, and for sorting out online access to our bank account, with John's help. Unfortunately Dionatas now finds that the pressure of work means that he won't be able to continue as Treasurer. If you would like to help the Society, and feel able to undertake the role of being Treasurer, please let me know.

Peter Burman

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