



The Falkland Society

Scottish Registered Charity SC017201

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Falkland Society Newsletter, April 2024

Dear <<First Name>>,

We had a good turnout, both online and in The Stables, for our March meeting. Catherine Erskine's talk about Cambo was much appreciated (and you can see the recording [here](#)). After a short break we held our Annual General Meeting (see [the Minutes](#)). All our current Office Bearers and Committee were re-elected for a year, **but** some of us intend to stand down at the March 2025 AGM. So we need volunteers **now** to join the Committee, help run the society, and to be ready to take over some of our roles in twelve months time.

Ross Burgess (Secretary)

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April Meeting

Our next monthly meeting will again be a hybrid event, held at the Stables on the Falkland Estate, and also online by Zoom, at 7 p.m. on **Wednesday 10 April**. We will be having a talk by **Craig Thomas** on ***The Dukes of Buccleuch and their estates***.

Please join us from 6:45 p.m. onwards on the 10th, at **The Stables, Falkland Estate, KY15 7AF** (what3words: [///dressings.destroyer.football](https://dressings.destroyer.football)) – or online by Zoom at:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87228799902>

You can also join by phone on **0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196**, or **0208 080 6591** quoting the meeting ID: **872 2879 9902**

Craig Thomas – from John Lewis to Dalkeith Palace and more



Craig on a flawless summer's day in a garden near Hexham, Northumberland: he has been studying under the AHRC Northern Bridge funded Collaborative Doctoral Award at Newcastle University

Our lecturer in April is a colleague and friend through our shared membership of the Scottish Association of Country House Archivists (SACHA) of which I have been Chair since its inception a decade ago. He told us that he left school at fifteen and for seven years worked for John Lewis in Edinburgh where his enthusiasm and abilities led him to being offered management training. But all the time, in a way that would have been approved of by John Ruskin, he had a deep love of beauty – beauty in buildings, in gardens old and new, landscapes, works of art, authentic historic archives – and an understanding of the role that an appreciation of beauty can have in our lives.

Craig has had a great zest for education – again, very Ruskinian – and we catch him on the very point of handing in his doctoral thesis, likely to be of outstanding interest to anyone interested in the great estates of Scotland. Its title is *Peer Power: the Fifth Duke of Buccleuch – land, industry and paternalism c. 1820–c.1884*. For his doctoral study he has

had unrivalled access to the Archives of the ducal family; he had already completed his MA (Hons) in History and Politics in 2018 and an MLitt in History in 2019 at the University of Dundee.

Having grown up in the vicinity of the Duke of Buccleuch's Dalkeith Estate, Craig felt a personal connection to his doctoral project, shining a light on how the Scottish Buccleuch estates evolved over the 19th century.



Dalkeith Palace

Dalkeith Palace, seven miles from the heart of Edinburgh, was commissioned in the late 17th century by Anna, 1st Duchess of Buccleuch, designed by James Smith, the leading Scottish architect of that time (Newhailes, NTS, is another important house designed by him) and completed in 1711. King George IV stayed there for his state visit to Scotland in 1822.

During the course of his PhD, Craig has become a committee member of SACHA and a Learning Advisor to the *Historic Houses* organisation, with a passion for widening access to properties and estates that hold such wonderful collections and opportunities. His job title since the beginning of the year is Assistant Archivist at Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust.

The gist of his thesis and his talk to the Falkland Society can be summarised as follows:

Like many nineteenth century landed magnates, the Dukedom of Buccleuch and Queensberry had hundreds of tenants across several estates. This allows us to ask the question:

How far and in what ways did the family operate under a paternalistic ethos and what did this mean practically?

His talk will examine the paternalistic activities of the 5th Duke of Buccleuch (1806–1884) drawing on several examples of paternalistic behaviour, and what this meant for the

image and reputation for the Dukedom of Buccleuch and Queensberry at a time when many of their contemporaries were beginning to see a decline in their fortunes and ultimately failing, financially, politically and culturally.

If all this knowledge and scholarship suggests someone who is purely academic in his make-up, I can assure members of the Falkland Society that he is the greatest possible fun to be with yet makes every aspect of his subject matter enjoyable and fascinating. He is exploring the possibility of welcoming us to Dalkeith Palace on a summer's day later in the year and if you would be interested in coming I can guarantee that it will be a memorable day. Once details are known, we shall make special mailing to all those who receive our Newsletter. It is likely, however, that we shall need to make the bookings conditional on your becoming a fully paid-up member of the Society!



Drumlanrig Castle

Drumlanrig Castle, the seat of the Queensberry Dukedom, is set in a rolling landscape in Dumfriesshire and dates from the late 17th century. The magnificent rooms include a remarkably complete State Apartment – which the grandest houses commonly had in case the King or Queen wished to visit. The outstanding collection of paintings includes *Old Woman Reading* by Rembrandt. The house feels warm and comfortable, a true family home in spite of its grandeur. There is a very fine and intact Victorian garden. The archive is very spectacular and has been brilliantly rehoused very recently. We had a most enjoyable lecture on the Archive, and on the stories arising from its vast quantities of plans and other documents, from Professor David Munro of Kinross, Plans Archivist, in January this year.



Boughton House

Boughton House is near Kettering, in Northamptonshire, so easy of access to and from London. Most of what can be seen at Boughton today is of the late 17th century, designed and constructed for Ralph, 1st Duke of Montagu, who had previously served as English Ambassador to France. French influence can be seen in its design, reminiscent of the great French palaces of that time such as Versailles. The 2nd Duke of Montagu became known as 'John the Planter' because his passion was the designed landscape surrounding the house. He added avenues of elm trees, sculptural earth forms, and many water features. The house contains some of the best-preserved and grandest state rooms in Britain. There are paintings by Gainsborough, Van Dyck, El Greco, John Wootton and many others. The designed landscape is still one of the great joys of the estate and the present generation has added a Sensory Garden and a Rose Garden and cherished the ancient Lily Pond.



Bowhill House

Bowhill House is situated in majestic Border landscape close to Selkirk. In 1322 King Robert the Bruce gave the estate to the Scott clan, the ancestors of today's Duke of Buccleuch. The present house dates mainly from 1812 and was greatly expanded during the 19th century by such architects as William Atkinson, William Burn (who designed the House of Falkland) and David Bryce (who designed Falkland parish church). Sir Walter Scott, a kinsman and frequent visitor, admired the house so much that he christened it 'Sweet Bowhill' in his famous poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The house served as a military hospital during the first World War and was occupied by the Army during the second World War, so its restoration was a heroic undertaking. The house has superb art treasures – my favourite is the collection of sixteenth-century portrait miniatures, which are also most effectively displayed. There is a theatre and a restaurant and it is a wonderful place to visit.

Such estates as these have shown remarkable resilience, and the owners, especially the best of them, have become enlightened curators of the nation's heritage. Such an owner is Duke Richard, Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.

PETER BURMAN

The Treasures of Falkland

An Act of Parliament in 1973 swept away the whole historic system of Scottish local government, including the Royal Burgh of Falkland, created in 1458, in the reign of King James II of Scotland. Despite covering only the small historic core of the village – for instance Balmbrae remained outwith the Burgh, in the much larger "Landward" part of the Parish of Falkland – the Royal Burgh had its own Town Council, with a Provost, Bailies, and Councillors, and ran many aspects of the town's affairs.



The Provost's Chain, with the Arms of Falkland

With the abolition of the Royal Burgh, its property passed to Fife Council, but listed separately as "Common Good" items. These now include:

- the Town Hall Clock (the Town Hall itself having passed to the National Trust for Scotland and then sold been off
- the Provost's chain of office, presented to the town by the Third Marquess of Bute, and currently kept in the OnFife Collections Centre at Bankhead, Glenrothes
- some other items of "Falkland regalia" in a display cabinet in Falkland Library, including framed photographs and standard weights and measures.

In the Falkland Society we have no such treasures as these, but we do have:

- an archive of photographs, maps, documents, and copies of Society publications, currently stored in the Library
- a collection of artefacts, mainly concerned with the weaving and linoleum industries, currently stored in the Parish Church.

Plans are being developed for a "Falkland Archive day" in the summer, when some of Falkland's historic treasures could be shown off to townspeople and visitors.

Future events

Our events for May and June can be found on the ["Events" page](#) of our newly-redesigned website (extract below): note that the June event will be much later in the month than usual. As

usual we'll be having a break for July and August.

8 May 2024

**Frank Glynn, writer
and musician, *George
Thomson's Fiddle***

Hailing from Aberdour, Frank Glynn is a writer and musician. He started playing the violin at the age of 8, has played in orchestras since he was 11, and as an adult, playing both violin and viola as a soloist and in various ensembles, from classical to ceilidh via folk and Americana. With the duo Holm, he has recorded two CDs.

He will be talking about, and demonstrating, the violin once owned by George Thomson, music publisher and friend of Robert Burns, and possibly played by Burns himself.



26 June 2024

Philip Thomas, *A Small Phoenix Rising*



Philip and his husband have rescued and conserved Knedlington Old Hall (1649-1660), returning

its integrity, adding contemporary beauty, creating a suitable setting and adding layers of new significance for our own day.

We've got some ideas for the programme from September onwards, but there's a limit to what we can do with our small Committee. We urgently need new Committee members, to help with planning future events and then with running them. If you would like to help, have a little time to spare, and essential computer skills, please get in touch at secretary@falklandsociety.org.uk.

Ross Burgess (Secretary)

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