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The Falkland Society

Scottish Registered Charity SC017201

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Committee for 2024–2025: **Peter Burman** (Chair), **John Smith** (Depute Chair), **Ross Burgess** (Secretary), **Robeena Dhar** (Treasurer), **Alan Graham** (Archivist), **Marietta Crichton Stuart**, **Robin Bell**, **John Fletcher**.

Falkland Society Newsletter, March 2025

Dear <<First Name>>,

Thanks to Alan Graham for organising a most enjoyable trip to the Cambo Gardens in snowdrop time. Cambo and its buildings are the subject of this month's talk by Robin Evetts, which will be followed by our AGM, a time to ask questions about the running of the Society, and elect the Committee for the coming year.

And thanks to all of you who've paid your membership subscriptions for 2025 – if you're one of those who have not yet paid, may we encourage you to download a membership form: as [a Word file you can edit](#), or as [a PDF file you can print out](#) and return it to us with your subscription?

Peter Burman (Chair)

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March Meeting

Our next monthly meeting will be at 7 p.m. on **Wednesday 12 March**, when Robin Evetts will be talking about **Continuing development at the Cambo Estate**. This will be a hybrid meeting: online via Zoom, or in person at the Stables, Falkland Estate, and will be followed by our **AGM**.

Please join us from 6:45 p.m. onwards on the 12th, at
The Stables, Falkland Estate, KY15 7AF,
or by Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81302705013>
or one tap on your mobile:
[+442034815240](tel:+442034815240), [81302705013#](tel:+442034815240)

You can also join by phone on **0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196**,
or **0208 080 6591**, quoting the meeting ID: **813 0270 5013**



Robin Evetts is a long-standing member of the Falkland Society, and was a highly informative guide for our visit to the Cambo stables on 22 February (described in the following article). He is a former Senior Inspector, Historic Scotland, and Trustee of the Cambo Heritage Trust.

Robin's principal role at Historic Scotland involved dealing with listed building consent casework: working closely with applicants, architects and planning authorities, and advising on applications, Local Plans, Conservation Area designations, and all manner of questions relating to the historic environment. He advised on grant applications, on listing

proposals and on policy issues. He also represented HS on various bodies such as the Fife Environment Trust, and the now defunct Church of Scotland Committee on Artistic Matters. At various times he was the HS Inspector in North and South Lanarkshire, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, and latterly Fife, but also had line management responsibilities for other council areas.

Robin's talk is entitled "Continuing development at the Cambo Estate" and will cover the rehabilitation and re-purposing of the Georgian Stables, and future projects including the dovecote, and bridges over the Cambo Burn.



The dovecote and one of the bridges

Robin's talk will be followed by the Falkland Society's **Annual General Meeting**, which will include reports on the past year's activities, discussion of future plans, and the election or re-election of office bearers. Please come, if you can, and give us your support. It will be a hybrid meeting, so can also be attended, like the talk, by Zoom.

Our visit to the Cambo Estate



The well-known 'Snowdrop Hanging', this year used as a background in the shop

The small but eager group who visited the Cambo estate on Saturday 22 February enjoyed a richly rewarding experience. For one thing we met two outstanding personalities who are crucial figures in the unfolding story of the Cambo Heritage Trust: the first was the youthful figure of head gardener, Callum Halstead, and the second was loyal Falkland Society member, Robin Evetts, both of whom shared their knowledge and their enthusiasm unstintingly. Robin is exceptionally well placed to be a bridge between Cambo and the Falkland Society as he is a trustee of the Cambo Heritage Trust and has guided the well-informed and sensitive project to repair and re-animate the stables. Fundraising is now in progress for further stages of work, e.g. providing access to the large space on the first floor of the main mid-18th century range, and repairing the final one of the cast-iron bridges of c.1800–1820 which are remarkable in being a set of six.

The visit was well timed between the superb talk given to us in March last year by Lady Catherine Erskine, who had drawn upon the estate's rich archive of information and images to give us an enthralling account of the evolution of the gardens from the mid-18th century to the present day, and the talk which Robin Evetts will be giving us on 12 March, by focussing on the built structures and especially the historic walled garden and stables.

If you consult [the website](#) of the Cambo Heritage Trust you will see that 'The charity promotes horticulture, heritage and the arts at Cambo Estate (which lies between St Andrews and Crail, an admired and well-visited corner of Fife). The gardens, open to the public, include a walled garden, stables and various other historic structures. Various events, activities and volunteering opportunities are available'.

We were fortunate to visit during the annual Snowdrop Festival which many of us look forward to from year to year. The 'buzz' was unmistakable. We arrived between 10.0 and 10.30 and already the place was teeming with visitors. I was glad to be able to secure a Mocha coffee and an utterly delicious slice of lemon and elderflower cake!



*Head gardener, Callum Halstead, giving us his introductory talk,
with Brenda Graham listening intently*

Callum explained that snowdrops belong to a large family of plants called *Amaryllaceae* (daffodils belong to the same family). The Latin name for the genus is *Galanthus*, comprising a number of species (*G. nivalis* being the most common) and innumerable varieties, often named after a particular horticulturalist who first bred them or a place where the variety first appeared. At Cambo, for the Snowdrop Festival, the clumps are identified by clearly-written signage.



Two of the varieties we were shown: *Galanthus* 'Sibbertoft Manor' and *G.* 'South Hayes' with much bolder markings: Both names are those of the gardens and/or houses where they were first bred

Callum is clearly one of those deeply knowledgeable experts and he plainly loved sharing his interest and enthusiasm with us. We learned that the snowdrop is not native to the British Isles, which was something of a surprise given that wherever we look in Britain we are inclined to suppose that it is the classic harbinger of Spring (which it is) and must therefore be a native plant (which it isn't). It can be harmful to humans and pets if eaten, which is also not well-known. I was struck by the graceful shapes of the stalks and by the tiny crinoline-like dense clusters within the 'nodding' flowers of some of the varieties. I can easily imagine becoming hooked on the identification and enjoyment of different varieties. It is striking how many houses and gardens now offer the 'snowdrop experience' but Cambo was one of the very first and it is still one of the very best!



Robin Evetts explaining how the hay fodder for the horses came down in chutes from the store above: unusually, three of these chutes survive

The over-riding principle of the stable restoration was to retain every scrap of old work. I have been an enthusiast for 'horse-related heritage' for many years – it has been one of my topics for research as an architectural historian – and the adaptation of the stables at Cambo is the best such conversion that I have seen. It keeps the magic of the original stables to an exceptional degree. You will see everywhere in the stables that original joinery has not been replaced: it has been *repaired*.



Cambo: the Stables courtyard

The photograph above shows a classic dilemma, often encountered in Scotland, which may be expressed as 'to harl or not to harl', the harling needing to be carried out with a lime-based mix. In the middle of this image you can see, high up in what originally read as a pavilion, a small area of original lime-based harl. The small yard at the north end of the stables has been re-harled but for reasons of cost it was otherwise omitted from the original project. It could still, one day, be done: and, meanwhile, nothing is lost. But it is worthwhile being aware that the original 'finish' was not bare stonework. In the 19th century however, harled buildings frequently had the harling removed. I live in such a building. It was meant well but bare stone was a fashion, whereas harling protects the stonework and gives it a longer life.



A bridge in the Cambo walled garden in a ruined state - see previous article for an idea of what it will look like when restored

The picture above shows one of the six – six! – pretty cast-iron bridges which are part of the enrichment of the walled garden carried out for the 9th Earl of Kellie round about 1800 or a little later. Most of these bridges, incredibly early in date for such items in Scotland (or Britain), have been repaired: but this one is a future project, for which funding is being sought. Its delicate beauty, with just a hint about it of late 18th century ‘Gothick’ style, cries out for tender loving care. We can be sure that, with the sensitivity and awareness of Robin Evetts and his fellow trustees, that this is exactly what it will receive when the funding is in place.

Don’t miss Robin’s talk on Wednesday 12 March at 7.00 p.m., and then the AGM, at – of course – our own stables on the Falkland Estate, also successfully re-purposed.

New uses for churches: St Mark, North Audley Street

This short piece about St Mark, North Audley Street, Mayfair, south of Oxford Street, London. is intended to be the first of a series – here is an invitation to participate. If anyone who receives this newsletter would like to submit some photographs and a short text about the re-use of a former church which has intrigued or pleased you we shall be glad to publish the same.



The former church in 2025 – the lift makes the galleries accessible and available for use

Many years ago, I wrote a report on this church when it was proposed for closure. At the time I was working for the Church of England's Council for the Care of Churches. Most of our work consisted of advising and giving grants and other encouragement to churches that were very much in use. There are still 16,000 Church of England churches in use, of which around 12,000 are listed buildings, many of them Grade I. However, we also had a statutory duty to consider and report on churches being proposed for closure, and prepared a detailed report on the 'architectural, archaeological, historic and artistic aspects' of the building, also placing it within its design and pastoral context. This church was a very large one, situated in a small area of London where there are other famous, historic and still active churches of several denominations including: St George's, Hanover Square; the Grosvenor Chapel; the Jesuit church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street; The King's Weigh House Chapel (The Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Family in Exile); and, a little further away, The Methodist Church in Hinde Street, close to Manchester Square.

St Mark's, North Audley Street (or 'St Mark's, Mayfair') was first built in 1824–8 by the architect J. P. Gandy Deering. It was the only church he got to design. The interior had a 'makeover' of astonishing richness in 1878–80, designed by the then fashionable architect Sir Arthur Blomfield, who designed many churches, especially in London. In the 1890s much further work was the responsibility of J. F. Bentley, the architect of Westminster Cathedral, one of the most talented architects working with churches in the late 19th century. Money was plentiful and the church attracted a large and fashionable congregation. It is surrounded by residential and commercial property belonging to the Grosvenor Estate, the patrimony of the Dukes of Westminster, then and now.

The church was closed in 1974, found a use by another Christian denomination, closed again and eventually was bought, appropriately enough, by the Grosvenor Estate, who have established it as 'Mercato Mayfair', a 'picture-perfect community market housed within a de-consecrated church'. The official description reads as follows: 'Mercato Mayfair is a sustainable community market and a cultural hub in the regenerated St Mark's Church on North Audley Street. The food hall is full of small artisans selling a wide range of accessible food and drink,

alongside a buzzy schedule of events and activities. In Mercato Mayfair you can also find three levels of food and drinks stalls, a microbrewery, a wine bar and shop, a garden store and a roof terrace.'



St Mark's as Mercato Mayfair – the altar and original 1870s decoration, including the splendid 'Transfiguration' mosaic

In short it has become, on its own terms, a vibrant contributor to the cultural and commercial animation and success of that part of Mayfair. Being a listed building it has retained almost all of its historic and artistic furnishings – including altar, pulpit, memorials and stained glass – intact.

Peter Burman

Study Day in Edinburgh

At least five Falkland Society members were among the capacity audience on Saturday 1 March for the Study Day organised by Peter on the architecture and art at St James Church, Goldenacre, a "Treasure House of the Scottish Arts & Crafts movement". The event featured presentations by seven experts in different fields, plus contributions by Peter as Chair, Jane the Rector, and Susanah the Churchwarden. The event was also marked by the launch of a new guidebook to the church, with text by myself and photography by Paul Turner, who contributed the images for last year's Celebratory Guide to Falkland Parish Church. Both books are now available, £5 each - contact me for more details.

Ross Burgess

ST JAMES, GOLDENACRE



A TREASURE HOUSE OF THE SCOTTISH ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

Text by Ross Burgess
Photography by Paul Turner

The Rector and Vestry of St James, Goldenacre

Falkland Church a Celebratory History



The Falkland Society

Previous Meetings and Recordings

You can now see and hear [the recording](https://falklandsociety.org.uk/previous.shtml) of last month's meeting when Ross spoke about "Faith and Fashion" - tracking the changes in our churches over the centuries". And all our recordings, together with links to previous Newsletters, can now be accessed via our Previous Events page at <https://falklandsociety.org.uk/previous.shtml>.

Future Events

Wed 12 March: Robin Evetts on *Cambo Estate – the rehabilitation and re-purposing of the Georgian Stables*, followed by the Society's AGM (hybrid meeting: by Zoom and in person; see main article above)

Wed 9 April Robin Bell: *'Pull out all the stops' – an illustration in music and story of the Falkland Church pipe organ* (in person, in Falkland Parish Church)

Wed 14 May: Peter Burman: *William Hole and Phoebe Anna Traquair*. Our Chair will be talking about these two artists of the Scottish Arts and Crafts period (hybrid meeting: by Zoom and in person).

(Dr Rory Lamb's talk has been postponed to a future occasion)

Wed 11 June: Falkland Society group visit to *Culross*, to celebrate its stewardship by the National Trust for Scotland

July and August: Summer Break

September onwards: ***Our programme of talks continues***. Possible subjects under discussion include:

- ***the National Trust for Scotland***
- ***Universal Basic Income*** – <https://www.basicincome.scot/>
- ***Campaign for Borders Rail*** – <https://campaignforbordersrail.org/>
- ***SAVE Britain's Heritage*** – <https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/>
- ***Dr Judith Roebuck, Sanctuary Development Officer, Church of Scotland***

Look out for more details of all these events in our future Newsletters.

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