



The Falkland Society - meeting postponed

We regret that our next meeting, scheduled for Wednesday 11 March, to feature Marietta Crichton Stuart, has had to be cancelled because of the coronavirus. We very much hope to reschedule this meeting for later in the year. Our Chair, Peter Burman, explains below the reasons for this decision, which was not taken lightly.

Dear Member, Dear Friend,

After much consultation and reflection, I have decided, with the Committee's support, to postpone Marietta Crichton Stuart's lecture in the Chapel Royal on Wednesday 11 March for reasons directly relating to the Coronavirus epidemic.

Over the weekend, I participated in an email debate with other Community Councillors and a clear consensus emerged that we would do best to obey the Precautionary Principle and not have our usual monthly meeting on Tuesday evening. Many of the same arguments apply to the Falkland Society lecture on Wednesday evening, but I confess that the following paragraph from a keen member of the Falkland Society has weighed heavily with me:

'Community transmission is now likely, if not already happening, and this appears to be being acknowledged by the Government which means the numbers will most likely significantly increase over the next few weeks, so all of us older people need to be very careful. Open meetings where the demographic is an older population need to be avoided – not least because this is the most vulnerable group and anyone with a compromised immunity system is especially at risk.'

We have an exceptionally rich programme of lectures but I know that we have all been looking forward with particular excitement and interest to Marietta's lecture on the 3rd Marquess of Bute, the fruits of many years of research and pondering of her great-grandfather's remarkable legacy in Fife. I will be asking her if she would be

kind enough to agree to an alternative date in the early autumn. We will give maximum publicity to that lecture when the time comes.

Meanwhile it is too early to know what we should best do about our next lecture meetings going forwards. My same correspondent as quoted above ends a message with the wise words: 'let's be careful with and for each other.' Another member has written saying, with characteristic ironic humour, 'If the virus turns out to be a bit of a damp squib we can all laugh at ourselves and say how silly we were; but if turns out to be a roaring lion and devours all in its path we do not want to be the one that left the cage door open.'

Meanwhile discussions and consultations are proceeding about the suggestion that the Falkland Society, as a registered charity, should take over responsibility for the ownership and management of our iconic drinking fountain, designed by Alexander Roos. This would obviate water rates and also increase the Society's profile as a determined stakeholder on behalf of Falkland's cultural heritage. If you have thoughts about the matter then do please write to me at: peterburman@btinternet.com.

I send warmest greetings to all members and friends of the Society and thank you for all your support.

Peter Burman, Chair, The Falkland Society

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