



The Falkland Society

Scottish Registered Charity SC017201

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Secretary: **Ross Burgess** (until 31 August), **Darryl du Plooy** (from 1 September).

Treasurer: **Robeena Dhar**

Committee members: **Marietta Crichton Stuart**, **Robin Bell**, **John Fletcher**.

Publications Sub-Committee:

Alan Graham, **Marietta Crichton Stuart**, **Ross Burgess**, **Elizabeth Jackson**.

Falkland Society Newsletter, September 2026

This Newsletter marks a turning point in several ways: we're celebrating 50 years since the founding of our Society; we're launching our new guide to the village of Falkland, and this is the last Newsletter that Ross Burgess and I will be producing, as we hand over to Alan Graham and Darryl du Plooy.

Peter Burman

In this issue:

- [Celebrating 50 years!](#)
- [Our new publication](#)
- [September meeting; Joe Fitzpatrick](#)
- [A visit to Rossie Farm](#)
- [Organ music at St Stephen's](#)
- [Ann Scott RIP](#)
- [Future Programme: a Summary](#)

Celebrating 50 Years!

A reminder: on **Saturday 29 August** we will be welcoming members, friends, and anyone interested in Falkland and its history to a special event in Falkland Church, to celebrate our Society's 50th anniversary:

10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday 29 August 2026

Falkland Parish Church, KY15 7BU

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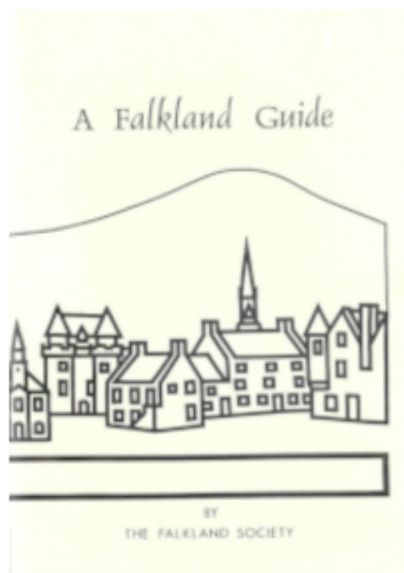
All welcome, no charge, donations very welcome.

- Informal talks about the church
- Background organ music by Robin Bell
- Tea, coffee and cakes
- Information about the Society and its activities
- Exhibition of historic items from our archives
- Sale of Falkland Society literature
- Launch of our latest publication: *Falkland: A Guide to the Historic Buildings*

Our new publication

We first published [A Falkland Guide](#) in 1988. It was reprinted, with minor corrections, in 1989, 1991, 1994, 1998 and 2010. We're now very proud to announce the publication of a new edition, entitled [Falkland: A Guide to the Historic Buildings](#), in full colour and expanded to 40 pages, with a striking new design by Elizabeth Jackson and rewritten text by Ross Burgess. Thanks to Alan Graham, Marietta Crichton Stuart and Peter Burman for helpful comments and corrections. As before, the centre-spread is a map of the village, but the number of highlighted buildings has been nearly doubled, from 24 to 47, and there's a new section of 'Further Afield' Attractions. [More about this on our website](#).

We hope to have copies for sale at the celebration event on 29 August, and you can order copies now for £5 (plus post and packing: free for Falkland addresses, £2 for the rest of the UK). Please [download our order form](#) and return it to us with your payment.



Front covers, 1988 and 2026

The following comments on the new edition are by Tom Addyman, Scotland's leading buildings archaeologist, who lives in Strathmiglo.

This new edition of The Falkland Society's Falkland guidebook is most welcome.

It is not simply a revision but a completely fresh evocation of the extraordinary wealth of special and listed buildings within Falkland and on the surrounding Falkland Estate. Engagingly informative, highly accessible and beautifully illustrated, it is bound to increase local pride and visitor interest not only in the burgh's individual buildings but in the quality of its historic environment more generally.

Falkland is fortunate in the long protection of its underlying ancient structure of medieval streets and burgage plots, their relationship to the great Renaissance royal palace at their midst, and to the beautiful countryside that still marches with the historic periphery of much of the settlement – its fields, estate parkland and the lower slopes of Falkland Hill, still mostly free of modern encroachment.

This guide wonderfully illustrates the distinctive texture and materials of the place, with its cobbled streets, stone and whitewashed buildings, with their slated (occasionally thatched) roofs; it emphasises that Falkland's historic environment is a precious resource and one that is easily spoiled by inappropriate intervention. It requires careful management, constant maintenance and vigilance if it and the buildings within it are to survive. It is heartening therefore to see the recent revival of interest in appropriate traditional construction practices such as the reinstatement of historic lime-based wall finishes including whitewash, Scots harl and mortar pointing. Building owners in Falkland deserve praise and support for the investment they make.

The ongoing success of Falkland's community is intimately tied to the protection of its special environment. In this, Falkland faces challenges, particularly the scourge of over-tourism. The importance of an intelligent visitor policy embracing all the stakeholders, which include the NTS and the Falkland Estate as well as the individual

owners of properties and businesses, could not be more relevant today.

The understanding of this historic place is a fundamental step towards developing a deeper sensitivity to its qualities, its fabric and its underlying structure. This guide is an important contribution towards this, and one learns by it that Falkland is a rich, complex and diverse settlement that has evolved over centuries, but also that it is a much-beloved living place that is home to a strong and vibrant community with a clear sense of its own identity.

This guide is an outstanding demonstration of the value that local civic organisations such as the Falkland Society can bring towards deepening knowledge of local heritage, in lifting our eyes to wider horizons through the contributions of their excellent speakers, and in building upon earlier achievements such as the significant historical work, *Falkland and its People, 1901–1913*, published in 2018.

Tom Addyman

September Meeting: Joe Fitzpatrick

Another reminder: our next meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday 9 September, when Joe Fitzpatrick will talk about recent archaeological discoveries on the East Lomond Hill.

This will be a hybrid meeting: online via Zoom, and in person at Falkland Parish Church.

Please join us from 6:45 p.m. onwards on the 9th, at
The Craig Room, Falkland Parish Church, KY15 7BU

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All welcome, no charge, donations very welcome.

Or you can join us online by Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83071855510>

You can also join by phone on **0203 481 5237, or 0131 460 1196**,
quoting the meeting ID: **830 7185 5510**

Joe Fitzpatrick FSA Scot is Chair of the Falkland Stewardship Trust which has responsibility for significant parts of the Falkland Estate. He also leads the archaeological work on the Estate, which concentrates on the East Lomond Hill, with its important prehistoric, Iron Age and Pictish connexions. Since 2022, the annual excavations on the hill have been conducted jointly by the Trust and Aberdeen University. Joe's talk will highlight some of the major finds from the 2026 dig.

A visit to Rossie Farm

A warm invitation from James and Jeanette Storrar to visit their farm, Rossie Farm, on Saturday 26 September arriving from 1:30 p.m. so that we can all be parked up and ready to start a walk through the farm at 2 p.m.



James will be giving his lecture entitled ***History all around: a square mile of Fife*** at our meeting on Wednesday 11 November. He is the tenth generation of his family to farm in the neighbourhood. But we will all get so much more out of the lecture if we can take the opportunity to 'walk over the ground' beforehand. This will be a rare treat for those of us who love our local landscapes and appreciate the contribution that the farming community makes to our local culture and prosperity.

Coming from a farming background myself, in deeply rural Warwickshire, I rejoice that the Falkland Society has several farming members all keenly interested in our local culture and history. My father expressed his relationship with his local community by being a 'feoffee' or trustee of a historic local charity. He achieved his ambition to have a pedigree herd of Red Poll cattle: noble animals they were. The Birmingham to Stratford-on-Avon Canal bisected our land: as small children my sister and I were strictly forbidden, for our own safety, to venture anywhere near the canal bank, but later we had the great joy of seeing the canal restored and becoming a great attraction for visitors and locals alike. We thought about this recently when Ross and I went on a wonderful evening cruise and picnic with other members of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland on the Union Canal.

It is a wonderful thing to be able to vary our normal routine of speakers giving lectures by taking part in semi-social events which enable us to chat to one another and to enjoy being together. We will have had two farm visits this year, offered by members, the first by John and Nichola Fletcher and now the second by James and Jeanette Storrar.

If you plan to come on 26 September, please email Darryl at darrylgduplooy@gmail.com; he will let James and Jeanette know how many are coming. Tea is promised! If you

forget to let us know you will still be welcome, but it would be good if we could let our kind hosts know roughly how many of us there will be. Let's hope for a beautiful autumn day, with the harvest safely gathered in!



James and Jeanette have sent the following instructions on how to reach Rossie Farm, within which is Wester Rossie, where in 2014–15 they have built an outstandingly fine new farmhouse:

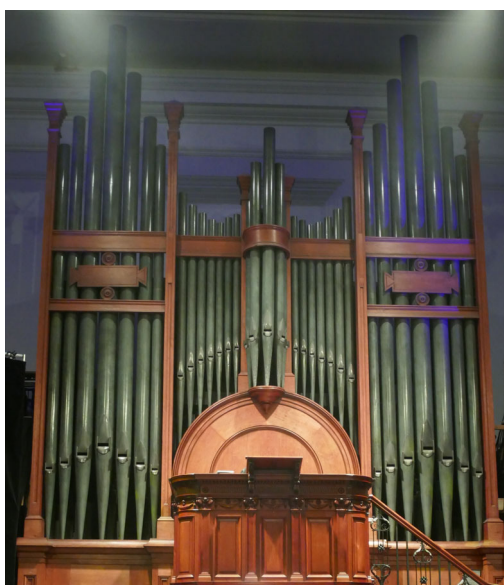
Directions:

From Auchtermuchty take the A91 westwards towards Cupar. After about a mile you will see three large white houses on the left; turn into their lane; after about 400 yards you will find yourself turning left into the farmyard of Rossie Farm.

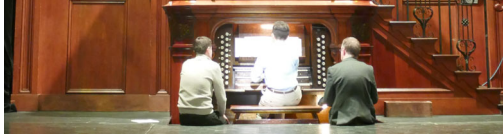
Peter Burman

Organ music at St Stephen's

The mighty "Father Willis" organ in St Stephen's, Stockbridge, speaks again!



At St Stephen's Theatre, Stockbridge, Edinburgh, a concert on Saturday 20 June was organised by the brilliant "Sowne of Organe" team: Chris Bragg, Andrew Forbes, Matthew Hynes and Steven McIntyre. Additional support to the team was given by the youthful Eilidh Harris, a first-year undergraduate student at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, and by Dr Damin Spritzer, Associate Professor of Organ at the University of Oklahoma, who not only opened the concert with the *Pétite Rapsodie Improvisée* of Charles Tournemire (as reconstructed by Maurice Duruflé)



but spoke powerfully on ‘advocating for our shared heritage’ of musically and technically outstanding organs.

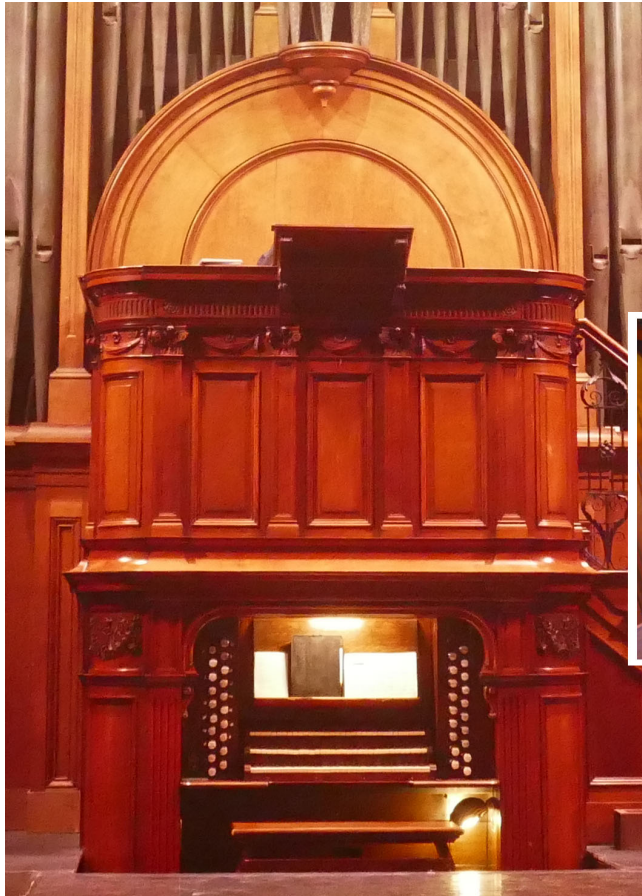
Driving into Edinburgh from the Forth Bridge you catch a glimpse of the noblest of Edinburgh’s post-medieval steeples, the tower sailing across the sublime panorama of the New Town. The former church of St Stephen, Stockbridge, by one of Scotland’s finest neo-classical architects, William Henry Playfair, was constructed 1827–28 at the then spectacular cost of £18,975. It is described in the Buildings of Scotland *Edinburgh* volume as being ‘a design of vast scale, Baroque power and Grecian severity’.

For many years the organ has remained mostly unseen and unheard, so the large audience on an auspiciously beautiful summer’s day was all agog to see and hear one of the outstanding masterpieces of 1880 by “Father” Willis. In 1956 it was dismantled and re-erected by the original builder’s grandson when the vast space of the church was divided into two levels. With every justification the organ has been listed as Grade I by the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS).



The concert was also an opportunity to see inside the former church. I had been there once before, to a Burn’s Night Supper in the lower basement, but it had been difficult to see much of the main space as it was largely in darkness. The scale of the building is daunting, as evidenced by the height of the superb double-doors which lead into the staircases swooping up and down.

Photographs of the interior when it was all intact show very few furnishings of any note, with one exception which is happily still there: the organ console is encased by a monumental “double-decker” construction, its upper part designed to be the pulpit. It is a superb piece of ecclesiastical furniture and deserves to be cherished. The illustration below shows the pulpit/console, with a detail of the carving.



We first glimpsed the organ in swirling artificial mist, and throughout the concert we were treated to an astonishing play of coloured lights which, though apparently unexpected by the team, added to the drama and visual richness of the occasion.

The format was the performance of pieces which showed off the organ's paces and the astonishing range of colour available on the organ alternating with short but excellent talks. We had an explanation of the origin and purpose of "Sowne of Organe" from Andrew Forbes; Chris Bragg on the originality of "Father" Henry Willis and his organs; Stephen McIntyre on the history of the organ in front of us in St Stephen's; and Chris Bragg on the topic which had brought us all together: "Scotland's historic organ crisis and how you can help". The closing piece was Andrew Forbes's thrilling rendition of the *Allegro Maestoso* from Elgar's Organ Sonata in G major, Op.28.

We should pay tribute to the present owner of the building, Peter Schaufuss, who is supportive of the aims of "Sowne of Organe", and who kindly waived the hire fees for the venue which normally run at £1,500 per day. The organisers paid tribute to the support they had also received from David Nicholson, Manager of St Stephen's Theatre as it is now called. "Sowne of Organe" also needed to cover the costs of removing the serge drapes and staging that normally conceal the organ, along with a tuning and repair visit from pipe organ specialist Paul Miller.

It crossed my mind often during the concert that we are collectively very far from having a solution for the future of this outstanding instrument. It seemed very hefted to its building in terms of sound – Henry Willis knew what he was doing – so a solution in which the organ could remain in the place for which it was designed and voiced would

be the ideal.

The Edinburgh Society of Organists was delighted to support this hugely important project with a donation of £1,000 and to be recognised as a partner in the enterprise. There is a strong case for all the organ-oriented organisations in Scotland and the United Kingdom to work together on the identification and listing of significant organs and on the vigilance which is needed if we are to save organs of note from unnecessary destruction. Meanwhile it is a pleasure to record what a successful occasion we all enjoyed. We must build on that success, in a spirit of collaborative partnership, and in that partnership the Edinburgh Society of Organists clearly has a vital part to play.

Peter Burman

Ann Scott RIP

We very much regret to announce the death, aged 93, of Ross's cousin Ann Scott, of Clearwater, Florida, who was probably the farthest-flung subscriber to these Newsletters, and whom many Falkland residents will have met in June 2019 when she came to Falkland to be one of the witnesses at Ross and Peter's wedding.



*June 2019, the Memorial Chapel, Falkland:
Marietta, Peter, Ross and Ann*

Falkland Society Future Programme: a Summary

Wed 9 September: Joe Fitzpatrick – *Recent archaeological finds in Falkland*

Sat 26 September (1:30 for 2 p.m.): **visit** to *Rossie Farm, Auchtermuchty*.

Wed 14 October: Speaker and subject to be announced.

Wed 11 November: James Storrar of Rossie - *History all around: a square mile of Fife*

*Look out for more details of all these events on our website
and in our future Newsletters.*

[Back to top.](#)

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