

Falkland 1900-2000

Year 1915

(As researched by Jack Burgess)

16th October 2015

Article from *The Fife News*: ***Requiem Mass for the Late Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart, M.P.***

“Following the death on the field of battle of Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart, M.P., Colonel of the 6th Welsh Regiment, a solemn requiem mass was celebrated on Friday in the Chapel Royal of the ancient Palace of Falkland, of which his Lordship was Hereditary Custodian. A mounted guard of honour, numbering 100 men and horses from the Ayrshire Yeomanry, was drawn up in the Palace Court, under the command of Colonel Campbell, and inside the Chapel, a few steps from the altar, stood a catafalque covered with the Union Jack, with an officer’s sword and cap resting upon it. Lighted candles were in place on the altar and beside the catafalque. Although no public announcement was made of the intended celebration, the Chapel was crowded by sympathisers, representative of all ranks and drawn from a wide area. Amongst those present were: -

Lady Ninian Crichton-Stuart and her little daughter, Miss Ismay; the Dowager-Marchioness of Bute (Lord Ninian’s mother); the Marquess and Marchioness of Bute, Lord Colum Crichton-Stuart, and the Hon. Mrs Richard Preston, London (Lord Ninian’s sister-in-law); Lady Gormanston, London (Lady Ninian’s mother); and the Earl and Countess of Rothes, Leslie House.

Others present were: -

Mrs Moncrieffe Skene, Pitlour; Madame Grane; Miss Fairlie, Myres Castle; Sir William Coates Cross, Bart., Lieutenant-Colonel Queen’s Own Glasgow Yeomanry; Major J.L. Lumsden, of the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry; Mr Archd. Pitman, W.S., of Messrs J. & F. Anderson, Edinburgh; Rev. J.K. Russell, The Manse, Falkland; Rev. J.M. Morrison, U.F. Manse, Falkland; Rev. H. Macdonald, Episcopal Church,

Auchtermuchty; Dr and Mrs Jack, Falkland; Mr Gavin, factor, Falkland Palace; the Falkland estate tenantry; Provost Jackson, Falkland, wearing his chain of office (the gift of the late Marquess of Bute, Lord Ninian's father); and the Bailies, members, and officials of Falkland Town Council; Provost Stark, Cupar; Bailies R. Dott Thomson and A.C. MacBean, Cupar; Hon. Sheriff Thomson, Cupar; Mr Grosset, solicitor, Cupar; Mr J. Tennant Gordon, Chief Constable of the County; Dr G. Pratt Yule, Medical Officer of the County; Mr and Mrs Archibald Walker, Auchtermuchty; Mr F.W. Christie, Secretary of the Fife Agricultural Society; Mr, Mrs and Miss Dun, Woodmill; Mr, Mrs and Miss Macdonald, Perth; Provost Ferlie, Auchtermuchty; Provost Sime, Ladybank; etc.

Father Bullen, Rector of St Mary's Monastery, Kinnoul, Perth, celebrated the Mass, and was assisted by Father Bradley as Deacon, Father Howard as sub-Deacon, and the choir of the Perth Monastery. Father Joyce (Lord Ninian's private chaplain) acted as Master of Ceremonies. The whole ritual was gone through, and the fine singing of the choir added much impressiveness. The absolutions having been given, Father Joyce entered the pulpit, and, after reading the prayer that their departed brother might not be delivered into the hands of his enemies, but conveyed to paradise, and reading appropriate lessons from Corinthians and the Gospel of St John, said: -

"It is all over now. We have discharged our last sad duty to Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart, and, through the kindness of Father Bullen, Rector of St Mary's Monastery, we have been able to go the full solemn ceremonial of the Church. The death of Lord Ninian came as a shock and a terrible blow to Falkland and the surrounding district. In fact, I may say that since Tuesday, Falkland has not been the same. None of us have been the same. We cannot think and we cannot speak of anything else. Lord Ninian was a fine type of a man, and it is certainly very sad to think that he has been cut down in the very flower of his youth with such a bright and promising future before him. It is very sad, but we bow to God's holy will and we accept the burden, heavy and unbearable though it seems. In our grief we have one consolation: we know that Lord Ninian died in a just and noble cause. He gave his life on the battlefield for his King and for his country. He has made the great sacrifice – "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." That is what Lord Ninian has done. When he was leaving England about a year ago with his regiment, he wrote to a friend in these terms, "I may lose my life, but my honour never." His life is gone, but his honour remains unsullied. Another source of consolation is this. We know that Lord Ninian was well prepared for death. I will tell you of a most touching incident that happened a day or two before he was killed:

There happened to be a village church near by where he was stationed. The sight of the church brought his thoughts to God, and he inquired if there would be a Mass in the morning, and if so, at what hour. He was told there would be Mass at half-past six, and there, in that dismantled little church, Lord Ninian was found engaged in

prayer in the morning. A French officer approached and asked Lord Ninian if he would serve the Mass. Lord Ninian willingly agreed. The French officer happened to be a priest, and Lord Ninian made his confession, served the Mass and received Holy Communion.

There is something more than appears on the surface in that incident. How befitting it is that Almighty God should reward him with the consolations of the sacraments at the end of his life! How befitting that one who out of his generosity had placed these same consolations within the reach of so many others should be so rewarded! Certainly the ways of God are wonderful. Our thoughts also turn to those whom Lord Ninian has left behind. He leaves a young wife and a young family – a young wife and a young family who loved him well and to whom he was fondly attached. His mother, his brothers and other relatives are here to-day to mourn his loss. Their grief must be intense, and our deepest sympathy goes out to them. We will pray Almighty God to comfort them in their sorrow, and give them courage and strength to bear it. May He give eternal rest to the soul of Lord Ninian, and comfort those mourners who are left behind.”

The ceremonial was terminated by the sounding of “The Last Post” by buglers stationed in the Tribune and the playing of the Dead March in “Saul” by the organist. The whole service was most impressive, and was marked by great dignity and reverence.

Church Tributes:

At the close of his sermon in the U.F. Church, Falkland, on Sunday, the Rev. J.H. Morrison made the following reference to the late Lord Ninian: -

“It is fitting that some reference should be made to-day to the death in battle of Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart, who occupied so prominent a place in our community. He has fallen with many another hero, fighting gloriously for his country and for the cause of humanity. Very swiftly the chapters of his life have passed, vivid with joys and sorrows. To some of us it seems but yesterday since he came of age, and, with the frank charm of opening manhood, made his first public appearance among his friends and tenantry. There followed in quick succession the welcome home of his bride, the rejoicing over the birth of his son and heir, his labours and victories in the field of politics, the tragic loss of his little son, whom we laid to rest amid the soft stillness of the falling snow. Then came the stern call of country, and more recently, in the darkness of the wartime, a new-born joy in his home. And now the end. No one could look back on all this, as we do to-day, without emotion. “We spend our years as a tale that is told.” Lord Ninian was a man of sterling character, ardent in temperament, pleasing and affable in manner. He had “a brow for every good cause”, as Thomas Boston expresses it. He spent himself freely, at times too freely, for the public good. His health might well have excused a less arduous life, had not

his high spirit urged him on. And that same high spirit forbade him to be a laggard in the hour of his country's need. Now it has been granted him to make the supreme sacrifice. Such a death is the crown of life, an inspiration and a trumpet call to the youth of our nation. We in this house, as fellow mortals and as fellow Christians, unite in sympathy with those who most deeply mourn his loss, and we pray that they may be sustained by all gracious memories, comforted by Christian hopes, and enfolded in the infinite tenderness of the love of God."

In Falkland Parish Church, the Rev. J.K. Russell also made suitable references to the deceased.