

Falkland 1900-2000

Year 1928

(As researched by Jack Burgess)

6th October 1928

Article in *The Fife News*: *Hill Indicator Unveiled on East Lomond*



The above photograph shows a group round the indicator after the unveiling ceremony.

Among those in the picture are:- Miss Mary Lumsden, who unveiled the indicator;

Rev. W.G. Mitchell, Freuchie; Mr A. Grieve, Freuchie; Major G.J. Lumsden of Tarvit;

Mrs Lindsay, Bathgate; Dr Fred Walker, St Andrews; Mrs Richardson, Balgavies, Forfar;

Miss Lumsden, Eden Valley House, Freuchie.

Unique Ceremony on Mountain Top

“A hill indicator which will prove of immense value to visitors to the top of the East Lomond, Falkland, gifted to the community by the Misses Lumsden, Eden Valley House, Freuchie, was unveiled on Saturday afternoon in presence of an assembly which was of surprising dimensions considering the difficulty of reaching the site, and that a half gale of wind was blowing. The fact that a considerable part of the ascent can be accomplished by motor car no doubt helped to swell the company, but many scaled the more difficult route up from Falkland.

The gathering was the more unique in that it represented all classes and all ages. There were children of tender years, and there were others far beyond the allotted span; there were men and women, boys and girls – and there were innumerable dogs! It was a striking testimonial to their hardihood that in the company were Mrs Richardson, Balgavies, Forfar, aunt of the Misses Lumsden, who is 83 years of age, and Mr R. Nelson, Freuchie, who is 81 years old. Both these people were fleet on their feet, and far from being distressed by the ascent.

It was only on Saturday morning not long prior to the inaugural ceremony, that the indicator was completed and finally set. It consists of a solid column of granite on a concrete base, and inset on the top is a bronze plate extensively and exceedingly well marked, indicating direction, distance to, and height of, the most important points in view, from the Moorfoots and Lammer Muirs to the Cairngorms.

The weather was none too promising when the hour of the ceremony approached, but, fortunately, what looked like being a heavy shower did not develop, but the high wind made conditions somewhat uncomfortable. It was also cold, and coats and rainproofs which had been cast off during the ascent, proved hardly sufficient to keep a normal temperature.

Those Present

Among those present were:

Major G.J. Lumsden of Tarvit, Cupar; Miss Lumsden, Miss Mary Lumsden, and Mr Jack Lindsay, Eden Valley House, Freuchie; Mrs Richardson, Balgavies, Forfar; Miss Lumsden, Mrs Le Fanu, and Mrs Scott Davidson, Tarvit; Dr C.E. Douglas, St Andrews, and Dr Dorothy Douglas; Mr and Mrs David Bonthron, Newton of

Falkland; Mr John Mathieson, F.R.S.E., F.R.S.G.S., Edinburgh,, the cartographer; Rev. J.K. Russell and Mrs Russell, Falkland; Rev. J.P. Batchelor and Miss Batchelor, Falkland; Rev. W.G. Mitchell, Freuchie; Mrs Black and Misses Black, Chapel; Provost Hopkins, Mrs Hopkins, Mr Alex. Hopkins, and Miss Hopkins, Falkland; Mr and Mrs Nisbet, Schoolhouse, Falkland; Misses Martin and Forsyth, teachers, Falkland; Mr and Mrs T. Drysdale, Falkland; Mrs Drysdale and Messrs Drysdale, Falkland; Miss Henderson, Falkland; Mrs Robert Millar, Falkland; Mr and Mrs Hardie, Falkland; Mr and Mrs Cochrane, Miss Cochrane, and Mr M. Cochrane, Freuchie; Mr David Reid, Freuchie; Messrs Nelson, Freuchie; Mrs Aitken and Miss Aitken, Freuchie; Mr and Mrs T. Williamson, Falkland; Scoutmaster David Duncan and his Freuchie Scouts; Mrs Lindsay and Miss Lindsay, Bathgate; Mr Miller Morrison, Newmills, Perth; Mr and Mrs G. Tullis, Arnot Tower; Mrs Mathieson, Edinburgh; Dr Alexander, Dr and Mrs Walker, St Andrews; Mr Reid, Alburne Knowe, Markinch; Bailie Robertson, Mr A. Grieve, Mr Alex. Dryburgh, Falkland Estate Overseer; Mr Baxter, chemist, Falkland; Mr Venters, Assistant Scoutmaster Ross, Mr Wm. Reid, Keswick (a native of Falkland); Mr and Mrs Dykes, Westfield, Falkland; Mrs and Miss Fraser, Nochnary; Misses Lawson, Falkland.

Importance of the Hill

Major Lumsden, who presided, intimated apologies from the Hon. Mrs Maule Ramsay, Falkland House; Miss Balfour, Balbirnie; Mr J. Clarke, Aberdeen; Dr Russell, Rothes; and others. They had hoped, he said, to have had the Hon. Mrs Maule Ramsay as representing the Falkland estate, but she had been detained elsewhere. Miss Balfour, in a letter, expressed her appreciation of the erection of the indicator, and stated that it would now end many arguments one had to submit to on the summit before. It was a unique occasion in the annals of the district, a unique event so far as he was aware in the history of the county. He did not propose to say very much about indicators. An indicator in the hands of a proper person could afford fruitful matter for many sermons. These sort of discourses, however, were not so popular as they used to be, and he did not want to see his audience disappear before the unveiling ceremony. (Laughter). He thought he would have them all with him when he said the indicator certainly was a valuable adjunct even to such an important hill as the East Lomond. It was important historically, and also geologically. He was not to say anything about the geological aspect, because he understood there were several expert geologists there that afternoon, and they might trip him up. (Laughter). But from a historical point of view, the East Lomond went very far back. It was a beacon hill. Professor Watson, in his talk on place names gave the derivation of Lomond as 'llumon', a lum, a chimney, a beacon, and the East Lomond was, therefore, in common with the West Lomond, a 'llumon', which was used in the old days as a beacon hill. One of their local newspapers very neatly put it that once the indicator was established upon it, it would again be a beacon hill. A great part of Scottish history had been enacted where the hill might be said to have looked upon the fair women of the Court, while frowning down on the foibles of the

Kings. The great value of the East Lomond to the present generation was to the health-seeker and to the pleasure-seeker. The easy ascent and the beautiful air gave health, and when they once got up there had been the pleasure of the magnificent view. Cecil Rhodes had had the temerity to say that the view from Matoppos was the view of the world. He, Major Lumsden, as a true Fifer, thought when he said that, Rhodes had not been up the East Lomond, (Laughter) and possibly if he had, that 'obiter dictum' might have been considerably modified. (Laughter and applause). He then called upon Miss Mary Lumsden to unveil the indicator.

Hint to Educationists

In doing so, Miss Lumsden said that so many people when they heard an indicator was to be erected on the East Lomond asked what an indicator was. She, therefore, proposed to say a little about it. Scotland had been in the forefront of sport, and during the last 50 years another sport has arisen, that of mountaineering. Mountaineering developed a sense of fair-play, a sense of nerve and faith, not the faith that removed mountains, but the faith that enabled them to reach the summits. That indicator translated that faith into knowledge; but not only did it let them know what lay at their feet, it told them of the distant peaks, and made them long to see what lay beyond them. Her sister and she hoped that all visitors to the hill would derive great pleasure and interest from the indicator. She also hoped the schoolmasters of Falkland, Freuchie, Markinch, and Leslie, backed up by an enlightened Educational Authority, such as they had in Fife, would some clear day tell their pupils to put their books away, and take them up the East Lomond. On their way up they would hear the 'waup' cry and learn all about the flowers growing on the route. When they reached the top, they would learn about the hills in the neighbourhood, get their geography lesson from the indicator, and go back and instil new life into the dry bones of school text books. The Local Authority had been asked to share the guardianship of the indicator, and she hoped they would be willing to accept.

Souvenir Hunters

Mr David Bonthron, Newton of Falkland, chairman of Cupar District Committee, in proposing a vote of thanks said that was rather a lofty place on which to make a speech. Besides, it was no part of his bargain when he took on the duties of County Councillor to address a meeting of his constituents on the top of the East Lomond, and if it was to be repeated, he might have to re-consider his position. (Laughter). They had to thank the Misses Lumsden for their improvement, which would be of great value to the good folks of the district, and to visitors to the top of the hill. It would be a great attraction to the latter. He could not attempt to tell his hearers about the indicator, for he was more familiar with those to be seen at the roadsides.

The County Council had been mentioned as the possible custodian of the new indicator, and he had discussed the matter with officials, only to find that, while they could deal with ancient buildings and war memorials, they could not exactly call that erection an ancient building. They might depend upon it that whatever he could do would be done. Some authority would have to control it, because they knew that they had people coming from all parts of the country, and from beyond the seas, and some of these far-away ones delighted in taking home souvenirs, so that they might possibly find the indicator transported to some front garden in a far distant land. (Laughter). He would also arrange for the erection of a notice at the foot of the Purin Den, showing the road up the hill. The indicator would be a lasting memorial of the kindly actions of the Misses Lumsden. They gave them such things in such a quiet way that nobody quite realised the good they did. That new expression of their goodwill deserved hearty appreciation, and he called on his hearers to give the donors three ringing cheers, a request which was heartily responded to.

Provost Hopkins, Falkland, said it was his privilege to ask them to accord the proprietors of Falkland estate their hearty thanks for the gift of land on which the indicator stood. He need not tell them how, when the Falkland people were approached for such an object, they were willing to oblige. He did not think there was a more estimable privilege than that of coming out on such a hill to breath God's fresh air, and to see the wonderful country they called their own. He had travelled in various countries abroad, and he had never seen a finer country. He had also to ask a vote of thanks for Scoutmaster Duncan and his willing helpers for their assistance, and also the tradesmen who had taken part in the erection. (Applause).

A Friend for Keeps

Major Lumsden then called upon Mr John Mathieson, the cartographer, to tell them something about the indicator. He said he would like to express special thanks to Mr Mathieson, who undertook the delicate task of the cartography, the layout, the plotting of the plate. He was responsible for the facts, the figures, and the fancies of the indicator, the names, the distances, the heights, the directions, and the pictures. They thanked him for the good work which he had completed, for the care and thoroughness which he had brought to bear upon the accomplishment of his task. He personally owed Mr Mathieson a debt of gratitude for the most fascinating hour or two spent with him there on the mountain top, whilst he was filling in details of his sketch. After a certain age, which he had already passed, one was supposed to be unable to make new friends. He trusted, however, he had made one for keeps in Mr Mathieson. (Applause). He would like to read an extract from a letter he had received from Mr J. Clarke, Aberdeen, who wrote:

'The indicator will be an historical landmark, and an unfailing source of interest to old and young alike in the Kingdom. Having been so closely associated with Mr Mathieson in this and similar projects, I should also have liked to see the culmination of his efforts. His services to Scottish geography, including topography, have been

quite invaluable, and quite unique. The Lomond indicator is the last link in a chain that now extends from the Cheviots to the Moray Firth, by way of the Eildons, Arthur's Seat, the East Lomond, Lochnagar, and Ben Macdhui. Its immediate service in presenting a permanent map and plan of the central area between the Forth and Tay is thus enlarged and extended to a national scale'. (Applause).

Cartographer's Explanation

Mr Mathieson said it had been a very great pleasure to make that indicator. Instead of wasting their time by mere words, he might tell them what use the indicator could be put to. In the first place, they had on the outside an inch of space upon which the whole outline of the sky-line was indicated as far as it could be done on an engraving of that kind. The important mountain, West Lomond, stood out well with the name on it. They would see the Moorfoots, and the Lammer Muirs, while the Grampians were indicated from their beginning to their end. The cardinal points north, south, east and west were indicated, and that gave them their bearings. A direction line was given for every important point, and every important hill, and on the direction line, they would find the name of the hill and its height, and in a little circle they would find the distance to the place. For instance, they would see of the Hopetoun Monument a little picture on the outer rim, the distance 8 ½ miles, and the height 730 feet. It was not an easy matter sometimes to get these heights on the ordnance sheets – they were not all given but he had been able to supply as many as they would like. Some indicators that were put up had just a few lines showing the important places and nothing more. That one was much more elaborate, and the Kingdom of Fife was shown clearly on a large scale. They would find the whole outline of the Kingdom of Fife and of Kinross, and estuaries of the Tay and Forth were shown as far as the plate would permit. People who went up there for geographical purposes would find a great deal of interest in the indicator. It would show very clearly what the country was like and how it lay. To those who came up for pleasure, it would be an immense advantage. When they looked on the mountains in the districts, they would be wondering, as they had been doing hitherto, what the hills were, and now they would be able to know. He was very pleased indeed to have had a share in assisting to put that indicator into order. (Applause).

At the close of the ceremony the company made a closer inspection of the new erection before wending their way in little groups down the sunny slopes of the hill.

Special praise has been meted out to the Freuchie Boy Scouts, who under their popular Scoutmaster, undertook the work of hauling to the summit the three huge granite blocks of which the indicator column is composed. It was no easy task, but the Scouts stuck to their work with determination and successfully accomplished a real good deed.

The local work of erection was satisfactorily undertaken by Mr Martin Smart, Freuchie."

CEREMONY ON FIFE HILL



Miss Mary Lumsden, of Eden Valley House, Freuchie, at the ceremony of the unveiling of the indicator on the top of East Lomond Hill. Miss Lumsden and her sister are joint donors of the indicator.

ON SUMMIT OF EAST LOMOND HILL



Members of the 15th Fife Troop of Boy Scouts at the ceremony on the top of East Lomond Hill on Saturday, when an indicator was unveiled.