



# the National Trust for Scotland

## NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Forging ahead at Falkland Palace**

The National Trust for Scotland's Falkland Palace in Fife is marking 2017's opening with a weekend of blacksmithing demos.

On 4 and 5 March, the team will be encouraging members of the public to try their hand at blacksmithing in celebration of their new Orchard Gate.

The gate, made by local artist blacksmith Jim Shears, celebrates the history of the royal hunt as well as depicting some aspects of the palace's fern garden and the insects and wildlife that are often found in the orchard. It was designed by Head Gardener, Susan Thores and partly paid for by fundraising effort from the palace garden volunteers.

Jim, who is based in Auchtermuchty and has been a blacksmith for 15 years, will be at the palace on the opening weekend with a portable forge demonstrating some of the techniques he used in making the gate and encouraging the public to try their hand at forging.

Head Gardener Susan Thores said: "We are delighted with the new addition to our garden. Jim is using this traditional craft to create something which is functional and in-keeping with historical aspects of the grounds as well as decorative and adding interest to the garden for our visitors."

Jim's work is in evidence in and around the village of Falkland as he created many of the planters that are used by Falkland in Bloom. Jim also created the main gate to the orchard which was installed last year and will also be on view to visitors.

Falkland Palace was a favourite place of Mary, Queen of Scots, as the Renaissance design reminded her of the chateaux she lived in as a child. The original and reconstructed rooms are packed with 17th-century Flemish tapestries, elaborate painted ceilings and antique furnishings.

The beautiful, tranquil grounds include the UK's first tennis court, pretty Percy Cane gardens, an ancient orchard and wild flower meadow.

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**Editor's Notes:**

**Images: Jim at work:** <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/A023qH>  
**Falkland Palace:** <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/2320s1>

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