

JOHN CRICHTON-STUART
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John Crichton-Stuart, 6th Marquess of Bute, died on 21 July 1993 at his family home, Mount Stuart, on the Isle of Bute, aged sixty years.

He was born on 27 February 1933, fifteen minutes before his twin brother David, as eldest son of the 5th Marquess of Bute and of Eileen, Marchioness of Bute, herself the younger daughter of the 8th Earl of Granard. He was educated at Ampleforth College, and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read history. From 1947 to 1956 he was styled Earl of Dumfries, and in 1956 succeeded his father as 6th Marquess of Bute. His full titles, with the dates of their creation, were: Lord Crichton (1488), Baronet (1627), Earl of Dumfries, Viscount of Air, Lord Crichton of Sanquhar and Cumnock (1633), Earl of Bute, Viscount Kingarth, Lord Mountstuart, Cumrae and Inchmarnock (1703), Baron Mountstuart of Wortley (1761), Baron Cardiff of Cardiff Castle (1776), Earl of Windsor and Viscount Mountjoy (1796). He was Hereditary Sheriff and Coroner of the County of Bute, Hereditary Keeper of Rothesay Castle, and patron of 9 livings, but being a Roman Catholic could not present. He was Lord-Lieutenant of Bute from 1967 to 1975, and of Argyll and Bute from 1990 until his death.

Even a partial list of his appointments indicates the extent of John Bute's public service. He was Convener of Buteshire County Council (1967-70), and member of the Countryside Commission for Scotland (1970-78), the Development Commission (1973-78), the Oil Development Council for Scotland (1973-78), the Council of the Royal Society of Arts (1990-92), and the Board of the British Council (1987-92). He was Chairman and then President of the Scottish Standing Committee for Voluntary International Aid (1964-68, 1968-75); and Chairman of the Scottish Committee of The National Fund for Research into Crippling Diseases from 1966 until his death. He also served as Chairman of the Museums Advisory Board (Scotland) from 1984 to 1985, when the structure of the National institutions was being re-organised, and as a Trustee of the National Galleries of Scotland (1980-87). He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1992, and was posthumously awarded the 1993 bicentenary medal of the Royal Society of Arts.

The wealth of the Butes derived largely from ownership of coal mines in South Wales. John Bute himself inherited not only estates in Wales, England and Scotland, including six castles, but one of the great collections of European paintings in which he took considerable interest. Works of art from private collections have always circulated throughout the world over a period of time, as various items are sold or otherwise disposed of. Bute approved of this historical fact, and was quite comfortable in selling occasional items from his own collection to meet running costs, or to re-invest in new acquisitions or patronage. In the 1980s the National Galleries of Scotland acquired from him the remarkable Saenredam painting of the interior of St Bavo's church, Haarlem, and the National Libraries of Scotland the fine book of miniatures known as the *Murthly Hours*. To offset death duties arising from his inheritance he had earlier conveyed the centre houses of the north side of Charlotte Square (Nos 5, 6, 7) to the National Trust for Scotland.

As owner of Bute Fabrics he successfully redirected the focus of the island's main employer towards designer fabrics and contemporary furniture. A similar family interest on the mainland is sadly less secure. The fourth Marquess had founded the Edinburgh Dovecot Tapestry Company in 1912, and John Bute tried valiantly to maintain the financial viability of the company by commissioning and promoting prestigious contemporary designers. In keeping with such concerns he was a strong supporter of the Royal Society of Arts and especially of its 'Art and Architecture' scheme which commissions new work for new buildings.

Bute's interest in architecture and preservation was hardly surprising. His great grandfather, the third Marquess, restored many famous buildings, including Falkland Palace; the fourth Marquess initiated lists of 'little houses' which formed the basis of the official lists under the Town and Country Planning Acts. John Bute himself always acknowledged the further inspiration, as an undergraduate, of Nikolaus Pevsner's Slade Lectures at Cambridge. For twenty five years, as Chairman, Vice-President and latterly as President, he guided and inspired the National Trust for Scotland, seeing its membership increase five-fold. His Chairmanship of the Historic Buildings Council of Scotland (1983-88), was equally successful, but his most recent success was as Chairman of the Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland from 1985 until his death. With quiet persistence he succeeded in persuading the Scottish Office, and the then Secretary of State, Malcolm Rifkind, to provide government funding for a new Museum of Scotland, to house the collections of the former Museum of Antiquities, and to bring together into coherent and mutually illuminating displays Scottish material from the Royal Museum of Scotland collections. After the largest international architectural competition in British history, the winning design by Benson + Forsyth was announced in 1991, and excavation on the foundations started in 1993. One of Bute's last public appearances was to thank the Secretary of State for Scotland, Ian Lang, for ceremonially cutting the first sod to inaugurate the building programme.

Although he was on all occasions unfailingly courteous, to many people John seemed to be shy and retiring. Such an image was misleading. In public life he was always a well-prepared and effective chairman of sometimes unruly committees, but he avoided publicity or grand gestures. For that reason future historians will find it hard to establish the full measure of his influence on public life, even in the domain of heritage and the arts. He refused to take part in the activities of the House of Lords on the grounds that 'the scene' was uncongenial, and was something to which he could not commit himself whole-heartedly. He knew a vast range of people, as testified by huge congregations at the four memorial services to him, but he needed some measure of protection. That he sought in close friends; but also in the renewing power of silence and solitude, enabling him to think, to prepare himself for the unremitting exercise of duty, to study the complexities of large scale issues, to savour and examine the detail of some finished workmanship or design. He would disappear by himself, on tours by Museum Trustees, to scrutinise an artefact or building work, or before making a public speech, which he always did with elegance and wit. Privacy became more precious to him as public duties mounted, and during the onset of cancer from which he died at such a relatively young age. Infectious enthusiasm, however, would always accompany the forced admission of plans for yet another exotic trip to rivers and forests in South America, India or Papua New Guinea; such travels fuelled not only his senses of colour and design, but also enriched his appreciation of the multi-cultural sources of contemporary arts and crafts.

Privately John Bute was an extremely gracious host, frequently exploding into infectious laughter or teasing repartee. He is survived by his second wife Jennifer, and three children by his first marriage. The heir is Johnny Dumfries, the noted racing driver.

PETER JONES