

Statue will honour Scot who left his imprint on crime detection

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DR HENRY Faulds lost his claim to fame because he was too trusting.

The Ayrshire man who discovered that fingerprints were unique asked the influential Charles Darwin to help expand his research. The author of *The Origin of Species* took the data and gave it to his nephew, a scientist, who took the glory for changing the history of crime detection.

Dr Faulds was forgotten in Scotland, but he remains revered in Japan for his work as a medical missionary in Tsukiji, where a statue in his honour stands outside the hospital he founded.

Until now, it has been the only memorial to Dr Faulds. But on 12 November, fingerprint experts from around the world will gather in the Ayrshire village of Beith, where Dr Faulds was born in 1843, to unveil a second tribute.

Donald Reid, of the Henry Faulds Society, who helped organise the memorial at Beith Cross, said: "It's ironic that it has taken a century to erect the second monument.

"As a former senior police officer, I know the value of his work and how he literally made his mark. Hopefully, more people will now realise it."

The ceremony, which will take place at 1pm in Main Street, will be conducted by Drew Duncan, provost of North Ayrshire Council, Brian Wilson, the MP for Cunninghame North and the Rev Fiona Calvin Ross, president of the Henry Faulds Society. Alan McRoberts and Dr Ed German, two of the world's leading fingerprint experts from the United States, will attend.

Shirley McKie, the former police officer whose life was turned upside down when she was falsely accused of leaving her fingerprint at the scene of a 1997 murder, will also be there, as will her father, Ian McKie. Ms McKie was cleared of a charge of perjury and leading fingerprint experts have declared that the contentious print did not belong to her.

Mr McKie said yesterday: "We want to celebrate a forgotten Scot who should be honoured. We have nothing against the honest fingerprint experts of the world."

Dr Faulds was in Japan when he recognised the unique nature of fingerprints and measured the odds of two people having the same prints at 64 billion to one.

He had studied medicine at Anderson College, later part of Glasgow University, and in 1874 he became the United Free Presbyterian Church's first medical missionary to Japan.

Dr Faulds became curious when he was studying ancient pottery and found a fingerprint. He removed his own prints from his fingers using chemicals, and discovered they grew back in the same pattern.

The breakthrough came when Tokyo police arrested a man for burglary. Dr Faulds proved his innocence and when a second suspect was arrested, he established his guilt.

For a long time, history attributed Dr Faulds's discovery to Sir Francis Galton and a colleague, William Henry. Dr Faulds died in 1930 but a recent book by a New York author, Colin Beavan, has done much to set the record straight.

The memorial was paid for by donations from all over the world.

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