

# The John Meade Falkner Society

Founded 8th May 1999



## Newsletter No. 53

3 January 2017

### 2017 SUBSCRIPTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions are now due for this year – still only £10 for U.K. and European members and USA\$15 for North and South America. I held the sub at £5 for the first eleven years, and it was raised in January 2012 to its present amount. Unlike the rail fares in the UK, I am keeping it the same again five years on. One day, I suppose, the sub will have to be raised, as postage charges (not to mention my ink cartridges and the printing of the Journal professionally) continue to mount; but, not for the foreseeable future.

I am afraid five members have still not paid their 2016 subs, and I have no way of knowing whether they wished to resign or something worse has happened. Please, could everyone pay this year's sub - either a cheque to "The John Meade Falkner Society" or to my account on Paypal as soon as possible (and thank you to the five members who have already done so). To the five in arrears, please let me know if there is a problem – as I say every year, I really do not want to lose anyone!

For the last few years our membership total has never fallen below fifty and never reached sixty! 2015 was a good year, when we welcomed five new members; 2016, on the other hand, only saw one new member. Please spread the word about the Society – the interest in JMF is out there, as I have sold four copies of the *Collected Poems* in the last six months.

### DORSET WEEKEND: 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> JULY

Our biennial weekend will be held in Dorset, based in Dorchester and at the same hotel as in 2011 – the **Best Western Wessex Royale** in High West Street. It is an ideal H.Q. for visits to the county town itself, Fleet, Weymouth and Portland etc. As before, please make your own arrangements for accommodation, although we will meet up initially at the Wessex Royale on early Friday evening.

The timetable is still in the planning stage, **but** **Melanie Davy** has kindly offered to host pre-dinner drinks on the Saturday at her home at 8 West Walks. Moreover, she has written, "*If it is a nice day, then we can also go in the garden.*" Those who came on the 2011 weekend will remember viewing JMF's family home from the public thoroughfare – now we can legally cross the threshold!

I would welcome other ideas for places to visit, although we will certainly be returning to Fleet Old Church and, probably, viewing Weymouth buildings linked to JMF.

### JESMOND, NEWCASTLE

Our last Society weekend, in the North East, included walking along the atmospheric Jesmond Dene valley. **George Robson**, one of the three members who organized the trip, reports on his recent findings:

*"I went to the Jesmond Banqueting Hall yesterday and found nothing has happened as yet with the restoration. Also found the stable block of Deep Dene House has been totally destroyed by vandals' fire. But main part still there although deteriorating fast."*

One of the photographs he took, of the latter building, is reproduced below. All very sad.



### TWO NEWSLETTERS

**The Association of Oxford University Pensioners' Newsletter** Issue 53, published last Autumn, included a piece by **Jon Whiteley** on "A Childhood in Films". He reminisced about the making of *Moonfleet* with Fritz Lang - "*on set, he could be appalling but off set we got on extremely well.*" I didn't know that the film was a huge critical success in France, appealing "*to the cinéastes of the Nouvelle Vague.*" A highlight of our last weekend in Oxfordshire, was the meeting with Jon Whiteley for lunch at the East Gate Hotel.

(Thank you, **Edward Wilson**, for the above information)

**The Friends of Burford Church Newsletter** Issue 24 was published last October. They celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their foundation in July 1946. A short piece by **Peter Harris** mentioned that **Raymond Moody** would be giving a talk at the AGM on JMF. Ray contributed to our very first *Journal* in July 2000. It is pleasing to read that the Warwick Hall project took a massive step forward, with the builders handing it back to the Church .

## “ATMOSPHERIC PHOTOGRAPHS”

The following three photographs (annotated on the back) were found by **George Robson** in an old copy of *Moonfleet*. It is hoped they will whet the appetite of those coming to Dorchester in July.



*The Manor House now Moonfleet Hotel – restored 1896.*



*Summer house in the grounds where Grace & John met*



*Moonfleet Church taken from the Fleet*



*+ Butter Street, which some of you will have seen before*

## FALKNER AND BURFORD

I was re-reading Mary Sturge Gretton's *Burford Past and Present* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1945), and thought Society members might like to see what she added to her original work:

*...to some of us, through the 1900's in Burford, such imagining has been made easier by our witnessing the romance of John Meade Falkner's devotion to our Church...in bringing up to the present my memories and in a Chapter that includes the date of Meade Falkner's burying beneath Burford Church Tower – rather more than allusion is necessary. On the July 1932 night through which, at his desire, his body was laid beneath the place of the pre-Reformation Rood screen the candle flames and the scarlet geraniums that encircled the coffin were no whit more vivid than his presence remained – even so much of his spiritual presence as had been evident to us here...as Chairman of Armstrong-Whitworth, on evening after evening of summer and winter he came to stand at the door of Burford Vicarage carrying an ecclesiastical treasure which he, in his unceasing travel, had redeemed from ignorant use or misuse in some unfrequented corner of Europe. Yet these things had never been unfairly obtained; because though astute chairman of a vast enterprise, Meade Falkner was an incorruptible Christian – writer of The Nebuly Coat....in a day when individuality and the independently characterful are all too rare, picture that pair within the Vicarage hallway – the six foot just-arrived tendering his bulky package, and the shorter figure receiving it – should be perpetuated, not only in their appearance but also in their intercourse. For, invariably as the donor insisted that there must be no publicity respecting his gifts, so invariably did the receiver – though his eyes were alight at rarity of the objets – emphasise the risk they must necessarily undergo; because, over and above his artist appreciation his pastorate must prevail. And never so long as he remained in Burford should its church suffer a locked door or a sacristan's patrol.*

*Among those romantically arriving parcels have come to us our Spanish Processional Cross, splendid Altar frontals, Italian, Spanish, French – loveliest and most delicate the festival cloth for the Lady Chapel altar – silver Crucifix and Candlesticks furnishing that altar; and the jewelled Cross that glows through the dimness of St. Thomas's. The Whall window and the resurrection – no less – of the Lady Chapel by Meade Falkner and his friend have been told of in Chapter IX. The two luminous stained glass windows of Falkner's in that Lady Chapel ...are last tracks of feet that surely show 'beautiful on the mountains', even on the present 'mountain growths of sorrow'.*

## 2017 JOURNAL

I still only have two definite articles for this July's **Journal**, with the possibility of a third. There are usually three or four, so I would welcome contributions from others. I would like material by the end of May, please.

Best Wishes,  
**Kenneth Hillier**

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