

The John Meade Falkner Society

Founded 8th May 1999



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8 May 2019

2019 SUBSCRIPTIONS

There are still some Subs outstanding. It remains at **£10 (\$15 overseas)**. **Please** renew – by cash, cheque or PayPal as soon as possible. Again, many thanks to those of you who gave ‘extra’ with your Subs. It is so helpful with the costs of producing the **Journal** and the ever-increasing postal charges.

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome

Julia Foster, who writes: *“I am currently a full-time primary school teacher in a city-centre school in Nottingham. I came across JMF quite by chance at my local library about 6 months ago. I was struggling to find a book that looked remotely interesting, when my eyes alighted on the novel ‘Moonfleet’. I vaguely remembered hearing the title before and when I first looked at the author’s name, I mistakenly thought it was by William Faulkner. It was only at a second glance that I noticed the name John Meade. As nothing else took my fancy, I brought it home and started to read it. I was hooked immediately. I loved it! Everything about it, from the story to the prose I found enchanting and refreshing. After completing the novel, I then looked for other books that he had written. I have since read both ‘The Lost Stradivarius’ and ‘The Nebuly Coat’. Both of which I have enjoyed immensely. Both ‘Moonfleet’ and ‘The Nebuly Coat’ remain firmly in my favourite top ten books. I extol the virtues of all his books to anyone who will listen to me and have even bought the books as presents to friends, hoping to convert them too.*

I have never joined any literary society before, but my love of JMF books led me to peruse the internet to see if there was anyone else ‘out there’ who enjoyed the books as much as I did. I was so delighted to find that your society was up and running.”

Godfrey Smith MBE who writes: *“I recently became involved with the Society through my interest in liturgical books in which John Meade Falkner also shared. I am a retired Civil Servant and have many interests, including local history.”*

Christopher H. Freeble, who is a professional writer and a collector of rare supernatural literature from the 19th and 20th centuries. He served as a professor of English at Carnegie Mellon University and is now a rare book dealer specializing in modern first editions. Recently, he assisted in the research of a new book analysing the works of T.S. Eliot titled *“The Poems of T. S. Eliot: Volume 1: Collected and Uncollected Poems,”* edited by Christopher Ricks and Jim McIlure, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, December 4, 2018.) I am delighted to welcome Christopher back, as he was a member many years ago!

Robert Knott has also returned to the Society. He first joined in May 2015. He discovered *Moonfleet* by accident when a search for *Treasure Island*-like stories led him to the writer Iain Lawrence, who referenced *Moonfleet* in interviews. He quickly became interested in the man behind the book.

OTHER MEMBERS’ NEWS

Sadly, **George Ramsden**, who had been a member since May 2001, died on Sunday April 7th at his home in Yorkshire. His funeral was held at All Saints’ Church, Settrington on Thursday May 2nd. After Eton, Magdalene College, Cambridge and the Inner Temple, he started working for Heywood Hill in October 1977. In 1981 he opened a bookshop called Stone Trough Books (*My family had a brewery called Stone Trough in Halifax. It’s an extremely dull name, but I thought I could rise above it.*) The *Daily Telegraph* obituary recalled that Ramsden once described bookselling as, for him, a long procrastination. He was much better at accumulating stock than persuading customers to buy, an aspect of the trade for which he felt he had no aptitude at all, lacking the gift of small talk as much as salesmanship: *“Things tend to go better if I walk away from the customer.”* I popped into his shop in York on several occasions and chatted to him about JMF and other authors. He expressed an interest in publishing the former’s letters; alas, it was not to be.

Philip Weller and **George Robson** have both endured bouts of ill-health recently, and the Society wishes them a steady recovery.

COLLECTED POEMS

Since November 2018, I have sold 12 copies of our *Complete Poems*. These sales are all grist for the Society’s income mill. We have now sold 231 of the 300 copies printed back in 2005.

MOONFLEET DVDS

Just to let you know I have arranged for ten more copies of the BBC version to be transferred to DVD to be done for me. There has been quite a lot of requests that have reduced my stock to one single copy!

Bear in mind that I have these on offer at £8 - £3 for production costs and £5 for Society funds. Might be worth including this again in the next Newsletter?

George Robson

(Ed. Please contact George through [my](#) email)

SMUGGLING

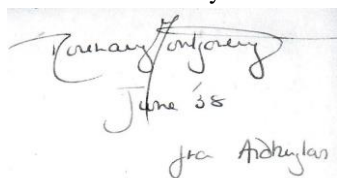
Have you read **John Masefield’s** *Jim Davis* (Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd., 1911)? I bought it in January this year, stimulated by the fact it is another book on smuggling, with a young hero (the book’s title) who gets caught up when ‘the gentlemen went by’. I will discuss it in the July Newsletter, as well as other fiction/non-fiction books about this subject.

ROSEMARY NOBLE AND MOONFLEET

In the Society Journal for July 2017, I printed letters from JMF to "Three Little Maids", one of whom was his god-daughter, Rosemary Elizabeth Noble, the daughter of John Noble. The fourth novel, 'lost' on Newcastle Station, was to be dedicated to Rosemary (letter from Sir Andrew Noble – her brother – dated 13th August 1977).

George Robson finds an interesting link:

In 2010, a box of old books was discovered in the attics of the Noble family's seat of Ardkinglas on the banks of Loch Fyne. They were given away to support charity. Some weeks later, one of the books, having mysteriously been transported to Australia, was put up for sale by Dacobra Books for AUS \$1000 (£575) and bought by one of our Society members. This was a first edition



(1898) of JMF's *Moonfleet*, inscribed on the flyleaf by Rosemary Montgomery (née Noble) and dated 1938. Dacobra had advertised the book as:

Falkner, J. Meade. MOONFLEET, Arnold 1898, first edition. Covers slightly rubbed, spine a little faded, inner hinges cracked, binding a bit shaken, ink name and date on front endpaper, minor foxing, text block toned with a couple of light finger marks, a G-VG copy.

Rosemary was the daughter of John Noble, who had been tutored as a boy by JMF at Jesmond Dene House on the outskirts of Newcastle. By the time of her birth, JMF had become an intimate family friend of the Noble family and was employed as Sir Andrew Noble's personal secretary. So, it was fitting that JMF was chosen to be Rosemary's godfather at her christening, which was held at St George's Church, Jesmond.

Coming from an affluent family in the Edwardian era, she gained all those accomplishments which were expected of women in those days. She played the piano, she embroidered, she danced beautifully, and she cooked well - especially bread. However, she was no lightweight intellectually and it was only on topics she regarded as masculine, such as money and sports, that she would profess ignorance.

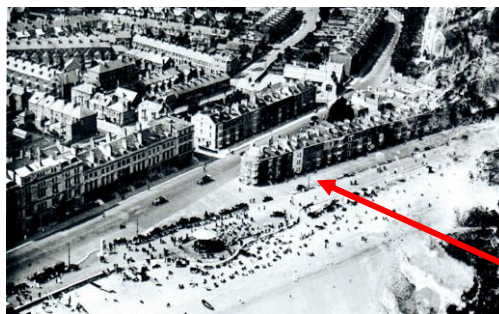
In 1931, Rosemary married Brigadier Ernest John Montgomery and was an army wife from her marriage, until Ernest retired in 1954 – after distinguished service in India, Singapore and at the Normandy landings in 1944, where he commanded a sub-area.

Right through her life Rosemary was remarkably fit. She climbed Beinn Bhuidhe on her 70th birthday in 1973, keeping to a good pace, and she performed somersaults on her lawn when in her mid-80s. Following Ernest's retirement, the Montgomeries moved to live at Kinlochruel in Argyll. Amongst many other interests and responsibilities, Rosemary and her husband created a wonderful highland garden – the highlight of which was a rock garden with many species of heather cultivated and sold. These included a spectacular double white which they called *Kinlochruel*.

Some years after Ernest's death in 1970, Rosemary moved to a former manse in Lochgilphead from where, two years before her own death in 1988, she moved to an old folks' home in the Borders, in order to have help at hand.

George Robson

BRUNSWICK TERRACE



Ray Ion kindly sent me this aerial photograph of Brunswick Terrace, taken in 1925. Three of JMF's aunts, Ellen, Lucy and Charlotte, lived there in the latter half of the 19thc. (see **Journal** Number 16, July 2015), when they were known as 'Brunswick Buildings'. Then, as JMF himself recounts, 'The houses were the nearest to the sea...[and] ambitious land-ladies changed the title into Brunswick Terrace and the old Georgian dignity took wings and flew away.'

BURFORD JULY 2019

Our biennial weekend takes place in the lovely Oxfordshire town of Burford between Friday afternoon/evening 12th and mid-Sunday 14th July. **The Friends of Burford Church** held their committee meeting on 5th February and discussed the visit of our Society to Burford Church in July. They will be happy to organise a tour with a talk about the history of the church on the Saturday 13th July. It will start with the tour at 5pm which could last about three quarters of an hour. This would be followed by a short talk (about 15 - 20 mins) on the JMF Society. This could be followed by a "questions and answer" time if appropriate. I am plotting a route for Saturday morning and early afternoon, which will take in several places (churches, houses, Roman villa) mentioned by JMF in his *Handbook for Oxfordshire*. Shall we meet at *The Bull at Burford* from 4.00 p.m. onwards on the Friday (whether you are staying there or not)? I would be grateful if you could let me know if you intend to come for the (whole or part of) the weekend.

Coming by car? - note JMF's **1888 Poem** to L.H.G.N.

The white coach-road across the down
Between its ivied walls,
The valley where the windows frown
In Lovel's ruined halls;
The signpost, and the way that falls
To Burford lying low:
A charm they have that never palls
Where Windrush waters flow.

JOURNAL 20

I now have three completed articles and one due any moment. A reminder to all the rest of you who kindly promised an article – please let me have them by the end of May at the very latest.

Best Wishes

Kenneth Hillier

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