

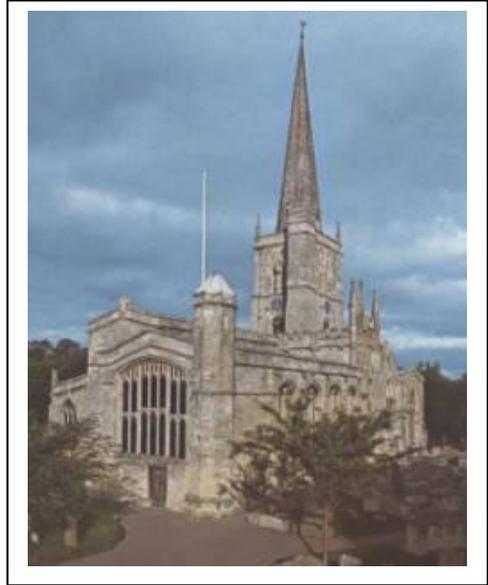
Burford Oxfordshire

John Meade Falkner first came to Burford from Oxford about 1879 and he returned to a town he became increasingly devoted to, time and time again. *“To me, Burford is, I suppose, a sort of fetish. Certainly, the church is more to me than a survival of youthful enthusiasm. It is a vigent pleasure.”*

St. John the Baptist Church

In 1888 he visited with members of the Noble family and in connection with the visit he wrote two poems, the first of which begins

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.



He strongly recommended the town to the public through his *Handbook for Travellers to Oxfordshire* [1894] He maintained it possessed “a High Street scarcely inferior in picturesqueness to any in the country”. Falkner became a life-long friend of one of the Vicars – Rev. Cass, who died in 1906.

Falkner was extremely generous in his donations to the Church: in the early 1890s two fine 17th century Italian altar frontals were given; in 1901 he and John Noble paid for the placing of the figures of Mary and the Angel Gabriel in niches by the High Altar; he commemorated the deaths of his sister Grace and younger brother William with a fine stained-glass window at the western end of the nave. William was buried in a wool-bale tomb in the churchyard. In 1910 and 1911 he and Noble provided for the complete restoration and furnishing of the Lady Chapel, including altar, reredos and stone screen.



Meade Falkner’s last resting place



His wife, Evelyn’s stone nearby

During the 1920s Falkner would continue to bring gifts from his travels. On his death, in July 1932, not only did he leave money for two stained-glass windows near to the altar in the Lady Chapel, but his own ashes were buried next to his brother’s, under the wool-bale tomb. His wife, Evelyn, was also buried there seven and a half years later.