

The John Meade Falkner Society

Founded 8th May 1999

Newsletter No. 51

8 May 2016



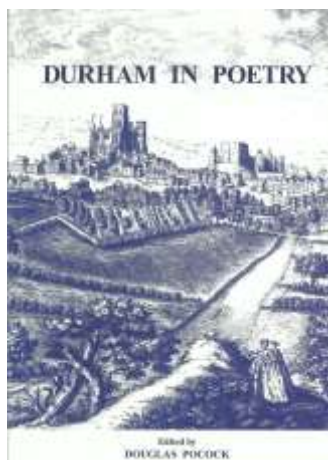
2016 SUBSCRIPTIONS OVERDUE

There are still twelve members who have not sent their subs for this year. Please send either a £10 note or a cheque (to '*The John Meade Falkner Society*') or use PayPal. If you have the dreaded Black Spot in your email, I am afraid you are one of the targeted ones!

THUS BAD BEGINS

I am delighted to say another of **Javier Mariás's** novels, *Thus Bad Begins*, is now on sale in its English translation. I have read the very positive review in The Guardian (26th February) which argues "this is familiar territory for Mariás, both in its forensic examination of the grey areas of personality morality and in the way personal stories reveal truths about the historical trauma buried beneath the surface of modern Spain". Mariás frequently takes his titles from Shakespeare – can you recognize this one? Javier has been a loyal member of our Society since March 2011.

DURHAM IN POETRY



The City of Durham Trust, founded in 1942, have continued their praiseworthy tradition of publishing books of local import with this collection of poetry, edited by Douglas Pocock. He had already written five previous works and this one is well worth purchasing. He includes extracts from two of Meade Falkner's verse – *Stir Up Sunday* and *Silvesterabend*. Pocock writes of JMF: "An author who loved Durham over the years... It was in many of the three dozen poems he wrote that his Christian faith and history loomed large."

THE FRIENDS OF BURFORD CHURCH NEWSLETTER Issue 23, October 2015, was received late last year. Our Society has a close connection with the Church, perhaps the one JMF most loved. We hope to be

revisiting it as a group in July 2019, but the Friends would be delighted if any of you popped in well before that.

MOONFLEET ANGLING

Trust **Ray Ion** to hunt this fishing tackle shop down! In fact, there are two – one in Gateshead and one in Newcastle. Ray was confronted by a fisherman, clad in a blue fleece bearing the words 'Moonfleet Angling', whilst out on a Sunday afternoon stroll along South Shields pier. The fisherman knew nothing of 'our' Moonfleet, so Ray (and I quote) "gave him the quickest of run-downs on Falkner and his book".



MEADE FALKNER FIRSTS ON THE INTERNET

Looking on the Internet for the top prices for his three novels, I found the following:

The Lost Stradivarius: First edition, first impression, first issue with the earliest catalogue. Presentation copy, inscribed by the author to the poet Henry Newbolt on the first blank, "Henry Newbolt, from the author. Jan 1896." A sophisticated supernatural tale, by the author who wrote the popular *Moonfleet*. With the inserted catalogue at the end dated 10/95. **£3,339**

Moonfleet: First edition. 8vo. 305pp. + 32pp ads. dated November 1898, inscribed on the flyleaf to Reginald J. Smith - editor of The Cornhill magazine and head of Smith Elder Publishing from 1894 onwards. **£9,750**

The Nebuly Coat: First edition. 8vo. 372pp. + 16pp ads. Publisher's oatmeal cloth titled and decorated in black and silver gilt to spine and front board. **£600**

So, if any of you have the odd **£13,689** available, I would contact the sellers quickly.

If you haven't, then a bargain can be had by purchasing *The Lost Stradivarius* and *A Midsummer's Night Marriage* and *Charalampia* (Tartarus Press) for a mere **£69** (a bonus is the *Introduction* by **Mark Valentine**, a Society member); OR *The Complete Novels of J Meade Falkner* (Leonaur 2013) at **£21**.

FINCHALE ABBEY

Finchale Abbey is a thirteenth century priory set beside the River Wear four miles from Durham City. It was a favourite haunt of JMF who often travelled from his home *The Divinity House* to enjoy the peaceful and quiet ambience of this secluded spot. Finchale was a Benedictine priory and is now looked after by English Heritage, being Grade 1 listed.

Prior to the founding of the priory St. Godric* for fifty years lived on the site as a hermit, sticking to an ascetic lifestyle. He lived and slept outside, rejecting expensive cloth and accepting all but basic food. He died on May 21st 1170 and was initially buried within Durham Cathedral, but later his body was transferred back to Finchale. During most of its history the priory served as a resting facility for the monks at Durham. Four Durham monks would travel to Finchale for a three week period of recuperation, joining the four permanently resident monks.

When visiting Finchale, JMF was occasionally accompanied by his friend and confidant Edward Vazeille Stocks who was the librarian at Durham Cathedral from 1901 until 1934. JMF regularly visited Stocks' home at Quarry Head on the outskirts of Durham City and the hospitality was reciprocated when Stocks visited *The Divinity House* to oversee the cataloguing and updating of JMF's ever-expanding library.



JMF and Stocks



The same spot today

Any Society member visiting the sights of Durham City would do well to travel out to Finchale as Kenneth Hiller and George Robson did together in 2011.

*St. Godric's life was recorded by a contemporary of his - a monk named Reginald of Durham. He recorded four songs of Godric's which are the oldest songs in England for which the original music settings survive. Reginald describes the circumstances in which Godric learnt the first song:

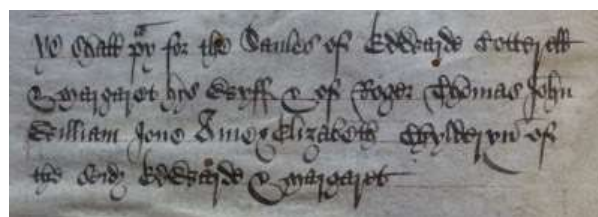
In a vision the Virgin Mary appeared to Godric with at her side two maidens of unsurpassable beauty clad in shining white raiments. They pledged to come to Godric's aid in time of need and the Virgin herself taught Godric the song of consolation to overcome grief or temptation.

Saint Mary, Virgin,
Mother of Jesus Christ the Nazarene
Receive, shield, help your Godric.
When received, bring him solemnly
With you into God's kingdom
(Translated from the Latin)

THE COTTERELL-THROCKMORTON HOURS

Further to the article in our **Journal No.16** of July 2015 on the leaf from a West Country Book of Hours c.1425, which the Society purchased from Scott Gwara, I later came across a blog entitled *Medieval Manuscripts Provenance: Weekly notes and observations*, posted by **Peter Kidd** on Tuesday, 16 June 2015. He reiterated the fact that the book was broken only very recently: "it was still intact when sold at Christie's two years ago (12 June 2013, lot 23). [He] was able to photograph the manuscript before the Christie's auction in 2013", and reproduced on his website some images of the book before it was dismembered. He continued, "A large number of leaves are currently available from Philip J. Pirages, and a few from King Alfred's Notebook [Scott Gwara]; one is owned by the University of South Carolina, MS 138". Two days later, Kidd added "Micah Park kindly informs me that nine leaves, containing the Psalter of St Jerome, are now at Emory University, Pitts Theological Library, MS 370."

I reproduce a detail of the inscription, on a smaller leaf at the front of the book, requesting prayers for Edward Cotterell, Margaret his wife, and their children.



JOURNAL 17 - July 2016

This year's **Journal** is ready for printing and I am very pleased to say that it easily lives up to its predecessors. Articles include: *John Meade Falkner: Novelist and Antiquary* by **Peter Davidson**; *100 Years Ago (2)* by **Ray Ion**; *The Northumberland recreations of the masters of Elswick* by **Kenneth Warren**; *Wanderings around Naples Part 1 – Piedigrotta or The Game is Afoot* by **Philip Weller**; and *John Meade Falkner and Oxford* by **Richard Davenport Hines**.

I know it is over a year ahead, but I am already thinking about the **2017 Journal**. I would be delighted to receive contributions, either from members or from other writers who are interested in Meade Falkner's life and works. If any of you read articles in other societies' magazines which have links with Falkner (we have reprinted in the past articles from the Thomas Hardy and Dorothy L. Sayers societies), then let me know and I will 'pursue' the author!

Similarly, I am always grateful for shorter pieces to go into the **Newsletters**. After 17 years, I am finding it harder to get material which will be of interest to you all.

Best Wishes,
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