

The John Meade Falkner Society

Founded 8th May 1999



Newsletter No. 58

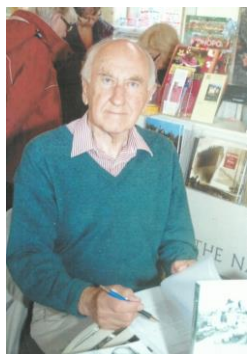
22 July 2018

2018 SUBSCRIPTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

I am pleased to report that everyone still in contact have paid their 2018 Sub, with several kindly giving an extra donation. However, in the last couple of years we have 'lost' several members, three to resignations and three having passed away. We have had just one member join this year. I do hope you all extol the virtues of JMF and the Society whenever you can. At the very least, please suggest to friends and acquaintances a look at our excellent website.

KEN WARREN

Ken was one of the first to join the Society – on 11th June 1999 (*I should be delighted to be involved as a member.*) – and had been a very loyal and vital contributor until his recent death.



Ken wrote a biography of JMF – *John Meade Falkner 1858-1932: A Paradoxical Life* (1995). His real interest was in Elswick and the North-East and the great men who ran the huge armaments complex on the Tyne. Further books were written on *Armstrong: The Life and Mind of an Armaments Maker* (2010) and *The Builders of Elswick –*

partners, managers & working men – 1847-1927 (2013). However, he was indispensable to the Society, allowing his 1989 Durham Cathedral Lecture – *John Meade Falkner: A perspective on a small cathedral city* – to be reprinted as an article in our Journal No 4. He wrote four more articles for our Journals: on JMF's cycling holidays in Berkshire, The Divinity House, puzzles in JMF's life, and the recreations of Elswick's leaders. He also gave talks at our Durham, Newcastle and Burford weekends.

Ken will be much missed by us all. He was always immensely helpful to me personally and became a good friend to several of us. Our sincere condolences go out to Jean and the family. His **Memorial Service** will be held at Ledbury Methodist Church on 7th September at 11.15 for 11.30, with refreshments held at *The Feathers*, Ledbury after the service.

JOHN COCHRANE

John joined the Society on 18th June 2001. He was the son of Wilfred Cochrane (1881-1955) and Yseult Noble (1901-1991). Wilfred had been Sir Andrew Noble's private secretary and then Secretary to Armstrong-Whitworth. John took a keen interest in all our Society events and joined us for a day on one of the Dorchester weekends. He also kindly sent me one or two original mementoes linked to JMF. John lived to

the ripe old age of 95 and we send our sincere condolences to Elizabeth and the family.

SNIPPETS

- “After he had written his 3 novels he wrote a fourth, but unhappily at Newcastle station he handed a small case which contained it to a porter who put it down for a moment & it was pinched...He was 6ft. 4 in height & a good cricketer & racquets player – was at Marlboro' like some of my other best friends...I used to go on archaeological bicycle rides with him & we went together in a horse drawn vehicle – he named the animal the White Horse of the Apocalypse...” (letter from 'Skipper' Lynam to John Betjeman – dated 6th April 1937).
- The fourth novel, 'lost' on Newcastle Station was to be dedicated to Rosemary Noble, JMF's godchild (letter from Sir Andrew Noble – her brother – dated 13th August 1977).
- “A farmer's wife used to cycle round Wiltshire churches with Falkner and loved him dearly. She knew him when she was a little girl, living where he was born at Manningford Bruce...JMF seems to have been a real emanation, a kind of mushroom from a chancel floor.” (letter from Geoffrey Grigson to John Betjeman – dated 1946).

MOONFLEET THE MUSICAL

Thanks to the good offices of **George Robson**, the Society now has a copy of the libretto (by Gareth Machin) for the Musical performed at the Salisbury Playhouse mentioned in our last Newsletter. The public relations officer, Lucy, not only sent the script but a few photographs of the actors.

The one strange difference to the book is that Elzevir Block has become Isabelle – not a cross-dresser, but a real woman! What Meade Falkner himself would have made of this probably doesn't bear thinking about!



Ryan Heenan as Trenchard

JOURNAL NO. 20 – JULY 2019

I am already looking for four or five articles for next year's **Journal**. It will be our twentieth, so it would be excellent if it could be a bumper one.

MOONFLEET AND THE HELLFIRE CLUB

In his companion sheet to the Puffin edition of *Moonfleet*, George H. Atkins states few writers like Meade Falkner had the skill to be realistic in blending fact with fiction. One example from *The Lost Stradivarius* does beg pause for thought, however. In the novel we read of Adrian Temple: *He also became acquainted with Francis Dashwood, the notorious Lord Despencer, and many a winter's night saw him riding through the misty Thames meadows to the door of the sham Franciscan Abbey. In his diaries were more notices than one of the 'Franciscans' and the nameless orgies at Medmenham.*



However, the first meeting of Dashwood's Brotherhood was held on Walpurgis Night (30th April) 1752, at West Wycombe House. The second meeting later in the year was at Medmenham, as were those subsequent. Temple preferred Italy in his later years apart from *a few days in Oxford* prior to his last diary entry of mid-December 1752. Death soon following his return to Naples, it is difficult to see how he could have involved himself with the Brotherhood *on many a winter's night*. Moreover, Dashwood did not have the title of Lord Despencer bestowed on him until many years after Temple's death. Further, the *Franciscan Abbey* was in fact a Cistercian Abbey and the 12 inner members were referred to as *Apostles* and the other members as *Monks of Medmenham*, not *Franciscans*. Does it spoil enjoyment of the book? Of course not.

George Robson

MOONFLEET: FULLY BOOKED?

Through its Newsletters, the Society has occasionally noted instances of *Moonfleet* being part of a business name or title – what about the tourist trade?



**Worth
Matravers
Dorset**

Set in an enviable position, with lovely sea and rural views, this much-loved family home is located on a no-through lane leading to a path to the sea.



**Charmouth,
Dorset**

This delightful, detached cottage is situated in a private close in the centre of the coastal village of Charmouth. Less than a ten-minute level walk from the famous fossil beach...it has a terrace showcasing the spectacular views down the valley to the sea beyond.

**Freshwater
Bay, Isle of
Wight**



This charming cottage is beautifully situated on the cliff top in 'An area of outstanding beauty'. Visitors can walk down for a swim, in Freshwater Bay, in less than 5 mins.



**St. Mawes,
Cornwall**

Moonfleet is a beautifully renovated modern luxury property with lovely views over the Percuil River and surrounding National Trust countryside.



**Skinningrove,
North Yorkshire**

Moonfleet Guest House is a Grade II listed former manor house, situated 300 yards from the sea, in a traditional fishing village. There's lots of history: from Saxon treasure to smuggling, fishing and iron ore mining.

There are many more *Moonfleet* holiday homes waiting for you – so get on the Internet!

Ray Ion

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