

The John Meade Falkner Society

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2017 SUBSCRIPTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions are now overdue for this year – still only £10 for U.K. and European members and USA\$15 for North and South America.

Thirteen members (a quarter of the membership and by far the highest ever, I'm afraid) have still not paid this year's subs, and I have no way of knowing whether they wish to resign or something worse has happened. Please, could everyone pay - either a cheque to "The John Meade Falkner Society" or to my account on Paypal as soon as possible. If there is a problem, please let me know – as I say every year, I really do not want to lose anyone!

DORSET WEEKEND: 7th – 9th JULY

A reminder that 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.

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!

This year, I think it would be interesting to spend a little time in Weymouth (say, for Saturday lunch?), before going on our usual pilgrimage to Fleet. There is no speaker for either evening, but I will be bringing material from our Archives for members to peruse. A suggestion for some of you travelling by car – I will be stopping off in Wiltshire, to look at the 19th century parts of Marlborough College, then moving on to Manningford Bruce, just south-west of Pewsey, where JMF was born.

FARINGDON ADVERTISER: 17th MAY 1902

Ray Ion has found another parochial newspaper piece - this time a sombre account of JMF's younger brother, William's, interment in Burford churchyard.

An interment of some pathetic interest took place on Thursday in last week in Burford Churchyard, not only on account of the high position of the deceased, but also because of the fact that this obscure Oxfordshire town was chosen as the place of burial, and that by the special desire of the lamented gentleman himself.

Mr. William Richardson Falkner held the post of secretary to Armstrong, Whitworth and Co., one of the mightiest companies in the world, and perhaps it was the fact that Burford afforded such a complete contrast to the busy scenes in which his life was ordinarily passed, that he chose from time to time to reside here in the periods of his vacations.



William Richardson Falkner in 1868, aged one (with Jane)

His distinguished brother (Mr. J. Meade Falkner), is well known as the author of the "History of Oxfordshire, and other scholarly works. He, too, has always shown an affectionate interest in Burford, and so it was that when the mournful cortege appeared in town from Shipton, whence it had come from Manchester, it was met by many full of sympathy for deceased's relatives, mourning for the loss of one who had been ill but a few days. The coffin was met at the Churchyard gates by the Revs. W.A. and G.H. Cass, and the service conducted by them was of a more than usually solemn character, whilst Mr. Glanville played the Dead March most impressively.

Inside the church the coffin was placed on brass pedestals between two large candelabra. Beautiful mementoes in the shape of morocco-bound copies of the burial service were distributed to many of those who had assembled. The place of interment was immediately opposite the beautiful window of the Leggare Chapel...



On the coffin was a nickel tablet with the words "Our dear brother", and underneath a Latin cross. Inspector Porter was present, but he had no difficulty in maintaining order amongst the large number of people who had assembled.

“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* (2nd 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 now have four articles for this July's **Journal**, and I am most grateful to Dennis Hamley, Robin Davies, Christopher Hawtree and Philip Weller for their quality contributions.

Best Wishes,
Kenneth Hillier

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