

The John Meade Falkner Society

Founded 8th May 1999



Newsletter No. 56

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2018 SUBSCRIPTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

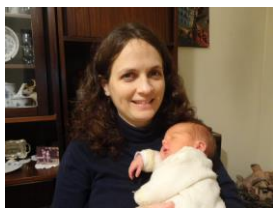
The years come around, don't they? January is Subscription time, so PLEASE send your subs (**ONLY** if you are sent a Reminder Form), either cheque or cash or PayPal, to me as soon as possible. A New Year's Resolution is to have done this by the end of this month! A reminder that it is still **only £10**.

NEW MEMBER

Robert Worley, who lives in Horsham, West Sussex joined us in December. He wrote: *I first came across Moonfleet at the age of 11 in 1945 when I became a pupil at Alleyn's School, Dulwich - and it made an indelible impression upon me. I had no idea that there was a J.M. Falkner Society and I would very much like to become a member, if that is possible. We extend to him a very warm welcome.*

We also send our best wishes to **Richard Davenport-Hines**, who has not had a good second half of 2017. We hope 2018 sees him fully restored to good health.

I was invited in November to the posthumous publication of '*Verses, Versions & Diversions*' – a book of poems by **Nicholas Aldridge**, one of our earliest members, who passed away some years ago. It was to be held at Summer Fields School, Oxford, where Nick used to teach. He visited JMF's nephew Tom Falkner and wrote up that and his subsequent trip to Fleet and its little church. Some of you will remember him coming to our Burford meeting in 2003. Alas, I was unable to get to the launch, but it brought back memories of a fine gentleman.



More positive news from our Argentinian member **Giselle**, who some of you will have met at past Society meetings. She and her husband now have a baby boy, Joaquin, born on

28th July. Giselle emails me with the splendid news: "...thank God everything went very well. Now he weighs about 5,500 kg and he is growing little by little. As you can imagine we are all very happy with the new member of the family!! Here is a photo of Joaquín only some days old. I also received the Journal, which was great to read!! The weekend meeting looked really interesting, I do hope to attend one sometime in the future." Congratulations!

THE SOCIETY'S NEW WEBSITE

For a long time, I have been wanting to upgrade the Society's Website. I have been most grateful to **Malcolm Talbot** who kindly set up the one which has

served us so well. However, advances in website design have enabled me to persuade my son **Stuart**, who works 'with computers', to take over its running. He has been liaising with me for some months on the project and it went online just before Christmas.

The new website 'address' is exactly the same: www.johnmeadefalknersociety.co.uk

- The **Home** page introduces viewers with a series of photographs of Society events. It also has a link to the purchase of the *Collected Poems* of JMF. You will see that the price is £10.00 (previously £15.00), + £2.00 p & p.
- The next heading is **The Society**. This is subdivided into *Newsletters*, *Journals*, *Meetings* and *Membership*. As before, you can read all the *Newsletters*, from 1999 up until the present. Whereas before the *Journals* were simply listed with the titles of the articles, now many of them are highlighted in blue. These can be 'hit' and the complete article read. Eventually, most of the articles will be available to savour. Each Society Meeting has photographs and a short resumé. *Membership* is simply a downloadable Application Form.
- The heading **Meade Falkner** includes the *Life*, *Obituaries* and a *Gazetteer*. The *Life* has an illustrated account of the main events of JMF's early days and later career. The *Obituaries* are just that – the main newspaper and journal accounts of his death. The *Gazetteer*, using either a map or a list, directs you to places in England related to JMF – e.g. Marlborough, Durham, Fleet.
- The **Bibliography** deals with JMF's *Fiction*, *Non-Fiction* and books/articles *About* him. Each of his works has contemporary and later reviews, as well as illustrations.
- Finally, the **Links** page contains (at present) the ability to move to the websites of the *Alliance of Literary Societies*; the *John Buchan Society*; the *Betjeman Society*; the *Hardy Society*; the *Dorothy L. Sayers Society*; and *The Robert Louis Stevenson Club*. More links will be added in the future.

We are looking at whether we can add a '**Members Page**', where members can send in photographs or short pieces (which are not for the Newsletter).

Much hard work has gone in to constructing the Website and I hope it meets with your approval. If any of you notice any errors (deliberate or otherwise!), please let me know. I am most grateful to Stuart for all his skills and industry – I haven't yet persuaded him to join the Society though!

"MOONFLEET" – R.P. BONSER'S VISIT

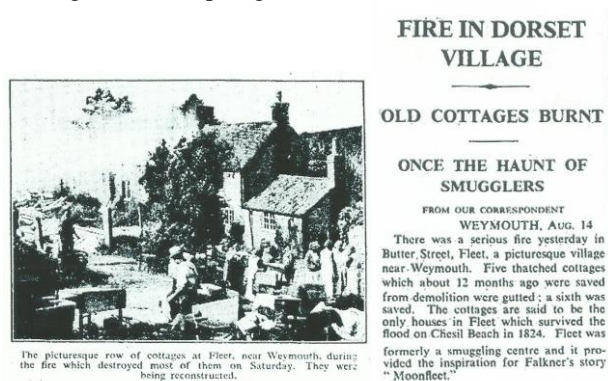
I recently purchased on EBay two pages from a (not known) magazine. The article's sub title is *R.P. Bonser visits the little church around which J. Meade Falkner set his famous novel*. Bonser included a sketch he had done of the church as well as a brief account of JMF's life. He then turned to the works:

His best works, though, were his novels. Of the three published, "Moonfleet" was his most outstanding. This novel deserved to stand amongst the great – such as "Treasure Island", "Lorna Doone" and "Westward Ho!" and yet it seems to have been pushed into the background, until recent years, when a film was based roughly on the book and a television serial were filmed on location in this area. Both film and television "revived" the story and several paper-backed editions of the book were published.

Bonser relates the stories of the Mohunes and the 1824 massive tidal wave and finishes on quite a poetic note: *One thing you must do before you leave. Approach the neat little churchyard at dusk and savour the atmosphere of the exciting days when smuggling was rife and men fought for their lives over a cask of wine, spirit or other contraband. Pause a while, as I did, and give a little thought for the men who go down to the sea in ships – some of whom lie buried beneath the hummocks and crumbling gravestones of this little churchyard by the waters of the Fleet.*

FIRE AT FLEET IN 1938

Ray Ion has long been invaluable to the Society for researching relevant JMF material in old newspapers and journals. Here is a story from a newspaper of Monday, 15 August 1938. Apologies for the poor quality.



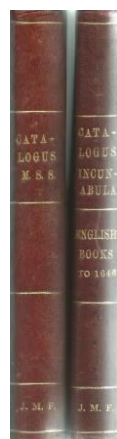
BURFORD

Issue 25 of *The Friends of Burford Church Newsletter* arrived in the Autumn of 2017. It is packed with information about what a vibrant group of supporters can achieve. One small piece on William Cass, vicar of Burford from 1871 to 1906, caught my eye. JMF had several dealings with him and would probably approved of Cass being a *High Church man* [who] *used to walk around his parish sporting a biretta*.

I am already looking forward to our meeting in Burford in **July 2019**. It will be twenty years since the Foundation of the Society, so we must make the visit a special one.

JOHN MEADE FALKNER'S LIBRARY

In the early 1990s, when I was in contact with the late **John Noble**, he mentioned that he had found at his home in Ardkinglas two hand-written volumes cataloguing the most important works in JMF's Library. After John's untimely death in 2002, they appeared to be lost. However, thanks to the good offices of **Sir Timothy Noble**, one of our members, and the searching capabilities of **David Sumsion**, who now lives at Ardkinglas, the volumes reappeared. We have purchased them for the Society.



One volume details Falkner's amazing collection of *Manuscripts* in 92 pages. It is dated 1925-6 E.V.S. The other volume consists of Falkner's *Incunabula and English Books to 1640*, and is dated 1922-7, with the same E.V.S. initials. These belonged to **Edward Stocks**, the Durham University Librarian and close friend of JMF. Meade Falkner wrote in a later letter: "[Stocks] is a decent fellow, from Wadham, and has just finished a two-volume hand-list of my books, which has taken him 4 or 5 years to compile. It is a relief to me to think that it is done, and is the only real pièce justificative for the insurance people."

It will be fascinating to compare the entries with the 1932 three-day Sale Catalogue held at Sotheby's in December 1932. I have already been in email contact with **John Coulter**, who contributed an excellent article on *John Meade Falkner as a Book Collector* to the July 2004 (Number 5) Society Journal. I am hoping that John (with his friend **Godfrey Smith**, who also contributed to that Journal article) might be able to gather together some thoughts on the two volumes for a future Journal.

THE 2018 JOURNAL

I already have two articles – by **Michael Daniell** on JMF's links with Oxford; and **George Robson** on Craggside, that amazing Northumberland home built by Lord Armstrong – but would like at least two more. I am looking at a possible one on the **medals** given to Falkner in appreciation of his work by Japan, Turkey and the Pope. A kind friend has already translated for me the Japanese citation linked to one of the medals.

AND FINALLY...

I find myself correcting more 'typos' as I get older. Here's JMF writing one January in the early 1920s: *"Forgive this machine-made letter. Neuritis has made the pen impossible for me for nearly three years past and so I have managed to get an old-fashioned and out-worn type-writer on which I am practising now. It is a harder art to acquire than I thought and is a grand test for temper."* Hear, hear!

Best Wishes and a Happy New Year,

Kenneth Hillier

nebuly@hotmail.co.uk

Greenmantle, Main Street, Kings Newton, Melbourne,
Derbyshire DE73 8BX