

The John Meade Falkner Society

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2019 SUBSCRIPTIONS

There are still **eight** Subs outstanding. It remains at **£10 (\$15 overseas)**. **Please** renew – by cash, cheque or PayPal as soon as possible. Again, many thanks to those of you who gave ‘extra’ with your Subs. It is so helpful with the costs of producing the **Journal** and the ever-increasing postal charges.

NEW MEMBER

We warmly welcome **John Gretton**, who is retired from his various working roles in teaching, bookselling and as a County Councillor. He first read *Moonfleet* aged ten (the best age) and still enjoys the explanation given for the brandy barrels banging together when the church vault flooded. He has no favourite among the novels and luckily has the Oxford World’s Classics double volume of the other two books.

He is also interested in Falkner’s topographical works as the co-author and publisher of the “Bibliography of Murray’s Handbooks for Travellers” (1993). This is not a sales pitch as it is long out of print!

His ambition, as a moderately experienced bibliographer, would be to write, or co-author, a full descriptive Bibliography of J.M.F.’s writings with details of the make-up, binding, publishing history etc., etc., of each book. This would greatly expand Graham Pollard’s ‘Uncollected Authors’ article in *The Book Collector* some years ago.

BURFORD 12-14 JULY 2019

Society members had a fulfilling weekend based at the lovely Cotswold town again. Friday evening saw us gathering at *The Bull* and, on Saturday, we enjoyed a fascinating tour: first to the nearby village of **Taynton**, where we viewed the 14th/15th/19th century church, which Falkner described as “good”.



We also had a brief stroll round the village itself, where there are several fine 17th century houses.

Then, it was on to **Chedworth Roman Villa**, set in superb countryside at the end of a small valley. There were quite a few visitors, but this did not detract from

our enjoyment of the buildings, which reflected the wealth and taste of their owner.



We drove on to **Fairford Church**, to marvel at the set of twenty-eight medieval stained-glass windows displaying biblical scenes and figures. The “**Great West window**”, depicting the Last Judgement and related scenes, was outstanding.

Our final stop was at **Kelmscott**, to go round the Elizabethan Manor House, made famous by the occupancy of **William and Jane Morris** (with Dante Gabriel Rossetti as a visitor). A Grade 1 building, it was easy to understand how Morris drew inspiration from “its organic relationship with its setting”.



We returned to Burford for a warm and wonderful reception from the **Friends of Burford Church**. After



being shown round the church by Stephen Price, (Verger), we had refreshments, both before and after a talk on JMF and his links with, and love of, the town and the church. All of JMF’s works in 1st edition were on display, with original photographs of his family. A cheque was given to the Friends from our Society and we also hoped that Evelyn Falkner’s gravestone could be restored to its original condition.

An excellent weekend, topped off by the Sunday visit to Minster Lovell church and manor house.

THE 'WON' STRADIVARIUS

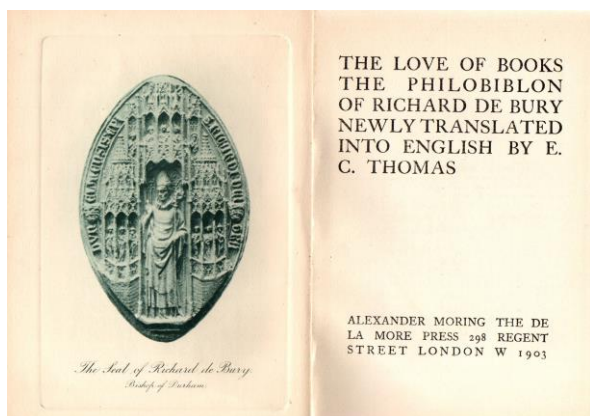


Stradivarius faced ten rivals in the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot, when he successfully became the first horse since Yeats to win consecutive renewals of Thursday's highlight. Bjorn Nielsen's five-year-old was partnered by Frankie Dettori as usual. Frankie Dettori guided Stradivarius to a second successive Gold Cup victory at Royal Ascot as the in-form jockey won the first four races on Ladies' Day.

The John Gosden-trained evens favourite pulled clear to see off runner-up **Dee Ex Bee** with **Master Of Reality** in third. It was a seventh Gold Cup triumph for Dettori, who was labelled a 'superstar' after his double success on Wednesday. "What an amazing horse he is. He is a horse for the big occasion and I love him dearly," said the Italian. "I am only nervous because the people care so much about this horse. It's a wonderful story. Every time he runs he delivers."

Stradivarius is now on a seven-race winning streak, with his last defeat coming on Champions Day in 2017.

PHILOBIBLION



Since reading George Woodman's article on Richard de Bury's *Philobiblion*, I have acquired a delightful little copy of the treatise, published in the King's Classics series, whose General Editor was Israel Gollancz. This edition dates to 1903 – I wonder if JMF purchased a copy? In de Bury's first Chapter, 'That the Treasure of Wisdom is chiefly contained in Books', he states: "*In books I find the dead as if they were alive; in books I foresee things to come; in books warlike affairs are set forth; from books come forth the laws of peace...all the glory of the world would be buried in oblivion, unless*

God had provided mortals with the remedy of books." Later, in his Chapter 'Of the Advantages of the Love of Books', he opines: "*Books delight us, when prosperity smiles upon us; they comfort us inseparably when stormy fortune frowns on us. They lend validity to human compacts, and no serious judgements are propounded without their help. Arts and sciences, all the advantages of which no mind can enumerate, consist in books.*"

I find myself absolutely concurring with his stricture: "*And in the first place as to the opening and closing of books, let there be due moderation, that they be not unclasped in precipitate haste, nor when we have finished our inspection be put away without being duly closed. For it behoves us to guard a book much more carefully than a boot.*" "Amen", say I, presently unshod.

N.B. One of my heroes, **William Ewart Gladstone**, had this to say: "*Books are a delightful Society. If you go into a room filled with books, even without taking them down from their shelves, they seem to speak to you, to welcome you.*"

I have another card on my bookshelves, this time from the Library of the Monastery of San Pedro, Barcelona. It is a curse directed at book thieves:

"For him that stealeth, or borroweth and returneth not, this book from its owner, let it change into a serpent in his hand and rend him. Let him be struck with palsy, and all his members blasted. Let him languish in pain crying aloud for mercy, and let there be no surcease to his agony till he sing in dissolution. Let bookworms gnaw his entrails and when at last he goeth to his final punishment, let the flames of Hell consume him for ever." So, be warned.

DORSET SMUGGLERS' PUBS



A kind member of the **John Buchan Society** sent me photos of Moonfleet Manor from Terry Townsend's book. It also gives information about Butter Street and Fleet Old Church. It concludes with the poem at the start of *Moonfleet*: "*Says the Cap'n to the Crew...*"

Good publicity?

PLACE NAMES: THE LOBSTER IN MOONFLEET

I have had an interesting email relating to **Worth Matravers**, which I append below.

Chapter 8. The Landing

"...we will have no more of innkeeping," he said; 'I have been sick and tired of it this many a day, and care not

*now to see men abuse good liquor and addle their silly pates to fill my purse. And I have something, boy, put snug away in Dorchester town that will give us bread to eat and beer to drink, even if the throws run still deuce-ace. But we must seek a roof to shelter us when the Why Not? is shut, and 'tis best we leave this Moonfleet of ours for a season, till Maskew finds a rope's end long enough to hang himself withal. So, when our work is done tomorrow night, we will walk out along the cliff to Worth, and take a look at a cottage there that Damen spoke about, with a walled orchard at the back, and fuchsia hedge in front—'tis near the **Lobster Inn**, and has a fine prospect of the sea; and if we live there, we will leave the vault alone awhile and use this Pyegrove's Hole for storehouse, till the watch is relaxed.'*

As discussed, I thought it would be good to know whether Meade Falkner used the name of the cottage in the village for the name of the Pub above in Worth Maltravers where they could live after they left Moonfleet village.



I tried ringing the *Square and Compass* but sadly with little luck. I thought the owners may have knowledge whether the *Lobster* in *Moonfleet* was known to have been based on their pub, or whether this was an unknown quantity. Perhaps there were other pubs in Worth circa 1895 and one had the name *Lobster*. On their website there was no indication that the *Square and Compass* was ever called the *Lobster*. But, as mentioned, there exists adjacent to the church a Lobster cottage today which, although modern, (the Victoria County History said it was a 17th Century construction), so my guess would be that JMF used that cottage for the fictional name for his *Lobster* but meant its location to be where the current Pub stands (both because he says it has a fine view of the sea, which from memory it does, and also that the 'Square' according to their website has a known history of smuggling and a garden wall). I am a bit doubtful that today's Lobster cottage itself commands as good a 'view of the sea' – but it may. Incidentally, I notice there is today a Lobster Cottage on Brewers Quay in Weymouth, however I am doubtful that one was JMF's namesake in his book.

<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101305045-lobster-cottage-worth-maltravers>

I also wondered about the origin of his above mentioned *Pyegroves Hole*. I searched online but could find nothing local to Dorset with the name and so concluded on that

point that JMF probably 'took' that name from the area of Bracknell in Berkshire – *Pyegrove's Chase*, which county he clearly knew as he wrote in the Murray's Handbook book about it - or maybe the place in Glossop. It would be interesting to get your group's thoughts.

The lady who lives in *Lobster Cottage*, Worth didn't know of any connection to her cottage and the *Moonfleet* novel or to the *Square and Compass*. The cottage is listed. She said in 1898 her cottage was called *Lobster Pot Cottage* or something similar. She also mentioned the name Squib/Squibb. The Mohuns of Fleet had a marriage into the Squibb family - perhaps a coincidence, as Squibb was evidently certainly a local name in Worth. She said that she knew it had definitely always been named 'Lobster', since its original building in the 1600-1700's.

THE ATHENAEUM 1898 REVIEW

Our latest member, John Gretton, kindly sent me a print-out of this review of *Moonfleet*.

'Moonfleet' and 'The Lost Stradivarius' are by the same author, but do not resemble one another. In 'Moonfleet' the days of smugglers and preventative men are once more used for purposes of romance. The result is a story by no means bad of its kind. It has interest both in the way of incident and character. There is, of course, one of the caves without which the contrabandist story would be incomplete. It is not exactly replete with every modern convenience, but is a convenient hiding-place for the men of Moonfleet, "runners" of kegs and casks of good liquor. It is deep and secret, full of "hollow soundings" and mysterious wails, and serves the youthful hero John and his good friend Elzevir to great purpose. So does the vault belonging to the old Mohun family, where some alarming adventures occur, notably the wresting of a diamond from a long-deceased member of the family. All this, and more besides, should endear the book to right-thinking or unthinking specimens of boyhood, if any such exist in these days of degenerate children.

SMUGGLING

I am leaving (due to a lack of space) my promised discussion of John Masfield's *Jim Davis* etc. to a later Newsletter.

JOURNAL 20

Thank you to all the six contributors to this July's **Journal**. I am immensely grateful to all of those who, since July 2000, have kept the literary flame burning. Of course, I am hopeful of contributions for **Journal 21** – do contact me with suggestions or, even better, articles. I would like all contributions in **Times New Roman 10 font**, with any illustrations sent separately (but indicating where they are to be placed in the text).

Best Wishes
Kenneth Hillier

nebuly@hotmail.co.uk

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