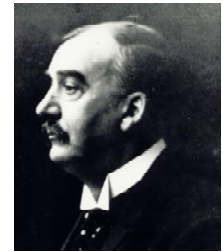


The John Meade Falkner Society

Founded 8th May 1999

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A FEW SUBSCRIPTIONS STILL DUE

A gentle reminder to the few who still have not paid their 2015-6 Sub (those with the **Black Spot**. Still only £10. I do look forward to hearing from you.

NEW MEMBERS

Jonathan Brough writes: I have been a primary school teacher for the past twenty-two years, the latter half of which have been spent as a Headteacher. I currently lead Hurlingham School in Putney, a non-selective co-educational institution for children between the ages of four and eleven. I retain a teaching role, and this year am delivering courses to the oldest pupils in the school in English, Latin and computer programming in Python. I first encountered J Meade Falkner's *Moonfleet* thanks to a recommendation from my local librarian when I was eleven. It has been one of my favourite works of fiction ever since and I was recently delighted to rediscover it as part of my (very very part-time) work towards as Master of Arts degree in Children's Literature at the University of Roehampton. Purely by chance (in the Strand BookStore in New York, one of my favourite places on the planet,) I found an advance review copy of Michael Williams's *Diamond Boy* and became fascinated by the similarities in plot and theme to *Moonfleet*, despite the twenty-first century writer setting his text on the Zimbabwe- South Africa border and never having encountered Falkner's novel. My interest led to some scholarly research, and I am pleased to be able to submit my findings, written up as *Prosper The Bonaventure... Storm Coming Now* as part of my work towards his degree. (Ed. - see the forthcoming July **Journal**).

Steve Allen writes: After a hiatus of thirty odd years I have very recently re-read *Moonfleet* (1st English edition) and am about to complete *The Lost Stradivarius* (1st American edition). *The Nebuly Coat* (1st English edition, 6th impression but bearing the inscription 'with the author's kind regard Ap 18.1904.') will follow! All this will indicate that I am a keen collector and would be delighted to hear of any interesting presentation or association copies.

Topographical setting also interests me and apropos TLS I've only just discovered that there is a Royston in Derbyshire. Was there a manor house? The 'harbour at Encombe' must be Chapman's Pool – a glorious spot.

Interestingly, I note that the JMF Society is now a member of The Alliance of Literary Societies, another member of which is the fledgling Robert Stephen Hawker Society that I helped launch.'

Steve has also purchased two booklets – *A Roman Villa: Chedworth* and *The Three Pories* – with a total of four JMF poems in them. Both were superbly produced by **Michael Daniell's Atlantis Press** in 1981 and 2009 respectively.

A very warm welcome to both of them.

SOCIETY WEEKEND IN THE NORTH EAST

Thanks to the sterling efforts of our members in the North East, the planned meeting in Newcastle/ Northumberland has been mapped out for us. Please let me know in good time whether you intend to come on the weekend. I will then send (in June) more details about where and when to meet up for each visit.

Our base (and where I am staying) will be the **Premier Inn** at the Newcastle Gosforth/Cramlington Moor Farm Roundabout, off Front Street (NE23 7QA)

Friday 17th July

A tour of **Jesmond Dene House** at 6.30pm. Scott Davidson, the General Manager, will show us around. The House, built in 1822, was bought by Sir Andrew Noble on the advice of near neighbour Sir William Armstrong, who developed the adjacent Jesmond Dene valley into a woodland park and garden which he presented to the people of Newcastle in 1883. Noble altered and extended the house in 1897. After his widow's death in 1929, the house was used for a variety of purposes, becoming an hotel in 2005 after extensive refurbishment. It is now a Grade II Listed Building.

Saturday 18th July:

A magical tour to view some of the great houses, leased as retreats for the **Noble** family and where JMF stayed – Cartington, Lorbottle Hall and Chillingham Castle. Plus a visit to Rothbury, where the churchyard has a private section for the **Adye** family, and Old Bewick Church. In the evening **Ken Warren** will give a talk on an aspect of JMF's life in the North-East. This will be held in a seminar room in the Beefeater Inn, which is next door to the Premier Inn

Sunday 19th July – morning.

Visit to **Crag-side**. The original house was completed for Sir William Armstrong in 1863, but was transformed by Richard Norman Shaw between 1869 and 1884. Acquired by the National Trust in 1977, the house was eventually opened to the public in 1979. The house is Grade I listed.

WORMWOODIANA

Very late in the day I came across a blog linked to the journal *Wormwood* (founded in 2003) – published by **Tartarus Press** and devoted to ‘literature of the fantastic, supernatural and decadent’. Dated Sunday, August 18, 2013 it gives a really positive plug for our July 2013 *Journal*. I am pretty sure we have to thank **Mark Valentine**, editor of that journal and member of our Society for the write-up. A very belated thanks!

MOONFLEET AND THE PSALMS

I first read *Moonfleet* in September 1966, at the age of 11, when I started attending Sir George Monoux Grammar School in Walthamstow. I was captivated by the story straight away and particularly impressed by the fact that Parson Glennie is portrayed as a genuine and faithful minister in the Church of England. Back in the 1960s (and even more so today) priests and vicars were often caricatured as being silly or given a dark and devious side.

So it was that, as I was singing in the church choir where we used the Book of Common Prayer, I would often leaf through my prayer book to find a capital ‘Y’ as mentioned in Parson Glennie’s sermon after the flood. Then, on one occasion much later when I had just reread *Moonfleet*, I looked up the Psalms quoted on the paper in Colonel John Mohune’s locket in my prayer book, and made a very interesting discovery.

The first quotation from Psalm 90 (correctly pointed out by Ratsey as verse 10) is indeed from Common Prayer, but all the others have slightly different wording from the Book of Common Prayer and yet they are not being quoted from the Authorized Version (King James Bible).

Perhaps I should explain that the version of the Psalms in the Book of Common Prayer were translated by Miles Coverdale and have been in the prayer book since 1662 (thus this would have been the version in 1757, when the novel is set, and the same version in 1898 when *Moonfleet* was published) whereas the Psalms in the Authorized Version were translated, in the main, by William Tyndale, and are somewhat different from the Psalms which were used for chanting in Common Prayer.

However, what fascinated me was that if John Trenchard had deciphered the code using his Aunt’s Common Prayer – he would have come up with a different message! For your interest, I shall print the verses in full from the Book of Common Prayer with the correct reference at the beginning and the verse numbers from the novel, as they appear in the book, at the end:

Psalm 90: 10 *The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years: yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.*

Psalm 90, 21

Psalm 73: 2 *Nevertheless, my feet were almost gone: my treadings had well-nigh slipt.*

Psalm 73, 6

Psalm 69: 16 *Let not the water-flood drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up: and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*

Psalm 69, 11

Psalm 84: 6 *Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well: and the pools are filled with water.*

Psalm 84, 14

Psalm 89: 13 *Thou hast made the north and the south: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy Name.*

Psalm 89, 6

So, if John Trenchard had used a Common Prayer to check the secret meaning, it would have been:

Fourscore – gone – swallow – the – and
rather than:

Fourscore – feet – deep – well – north

Consequently, some members of the Society may wish to do a bit of detective work to find out which translation of the Psalms Falkner used. It was definitely not the *Authorized Version*; the *Douay-Rheims Version* (Catholic Bible); or the *Geneva Bible* of 1599 – all of which would have been available to him at the time of writing.

What do I think? Well, it may well have been Meade Falkner’s own memory of the Psalms from reciting them or chanting them on a regular basis in Church with his father. Or it may be that there is a translation of the Psalms that I have not yet found!

Rev. Simon Law

Rector of Pitsea St. Gabriel with Nevendon St. Peter in Essex

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, BUCKLAND RIPERS

In early February, I received a letter from the Treasurer of this 13th century church, where JMF’s father, Thomas Alexander Falkner was curate-in-charge from 1880 to 1887. Those members who were at our weekend four years ago will remember paying the church a visit. The present congregation, and finances, have reduced to such an extent that without an influx of funds the church will close at the end of 2016. Their outgoings are c. £5,400 and income c. £1,900. Hence the letter. Unfortunately, this is happening around the country. I replied, expressing concern and asking them to keep in touch. We are due to return to Dorset in 2017.

THE JULY JOURNAL

Articles include: *Prosper the Bonaventure... Storm Coming Now* by Jonathan Brough; *100 Years Ago* by Ray Ion; *Pen Portraits* by Kenneth Hillier; *John Meade Falkner’s Book of Hours – an Illuminated Manuscript Sheet*; *A Sermon from the Dean of Windsor*.

I am always delighted to receive longer articles for the *Journal* and shorter pieces for the *Newsletter*.

Best Wishes,

Kenneth Hillier

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