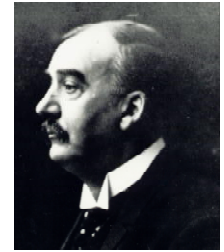


# The John Meade Falkner Society

Founded 8th May 1999



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## 2024 SUBSCRIPTIONS

A gentle reminder to those tardy members who have yet to send their annual Sub – there are still **three** of you ‘Black Spotters’. It is **£10** for UK members; **€15** for European members; and **USA\$15** for the rest of the world. You can pay by cash, securely wrapped; cheques (to “*The John Meade Falkner Society*”); BACS or PayPal. If either of the latter, I have provided the details in the accompanying email. PLEASE renew as soon as possible. I hope that you will all want to remain members of our select Society. I am always grateful and mindful of your continuing support.

## TWO NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to husband and wife, Ian and Indira Warwick, who live in the lovely Falknerian village of Fleet – which doubles our numbers who live there! Ian kindly sent me the following information:

*My wife has been a Science Teacher, Head of Department, Senior Leader and Headteacher in the State Sector for over 30 years and is now responsible for Inspection Standards at the Independent Schools Inspectorate. I have been an English, Politics and Psychology Teacher in the inner-city state sector and then set up London Gifted & Talented as part of the groundbreaking London Challenge, which reported directly to the Prime Minister’s Office, and transformed education for disadvantaged students across the capital city. LG&T has directly worked with well over 5,000 schools and 11,000 teachers internationally and more than 150,000 educators worldwide have used our award-winning high challenge materials. I have written six books on learning and contributed chapters to dozens more. I have worked directly with networks of schools and universities in many countries across Europe and Africa, the Middle and Far East, working with them to develop and embed tailored learning resources and professional development courses. I am Head of the Education Committee at the London Academy of Excellence and a founding member of the steering group to promote Innovation and Research in Learning at Eton College.*

## JESMOND DENE BANQUETING HALL



The BBC website drew attention at the end of May to the Victorian Society’s Top 10 at risk sites in 2024. The list, drawn up annually by the Victorian Society, are the ones the charity deems most in need of rescue. All are at least Grade II listed, signifying their historical or architectural importance. Their listed status means the structures are already subject to protection, but the society warned the regulations may not be enough without further action.

The Jesmond Dene Banqueting Hall in Newcastle, which originally featured a water-powered organ, was built for Lord William Armstrong by John Dobson in 1860. Lord Armstrong wanted a hall big enough to entertain his many guests, both VIPs from across the world and his own workers. It was subsequently expanded with a gatehouse, reception hall and display room by Norman Shaw in the following decade. The hall was last in use for events in the 1970s, and has been earmarked for restoration by the Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust at Eton College.

Members of our Society visited the atmospheric building in July 2015.

## THE WEBSITE, THE JOURNALS AND THE NEWSLETTERS

Last year’s updating of the Website meant that all the Journals, except from the last two years, are now available for perusal. The only contributions missing are JMF’s own poetry, which can be read if you purchase the Society’s own publication, *The Collected Poems*. The 2023 Journal will be available online once this year’s has been sent out to you.

We have now reached the twenty-fifth issue of the **Journal** and the seventy-sixth issue of the **Newsletter**. Little did I guess, back in 1999, that we should sustain the two publications for so long. As you can imagine, each year it gets slightly harder to find material, particularly longer articles for the Journal. I would greatly appreciate articles from members, whether they have already contributed or not. Every so often I am able to republish articles that were first seen in other journals – there are two this year – and I would also be grateful if any of you, having read Falkner related material somewhere else, could inform me about it. I could then contact the author or publisher with the hope of gaining their permission to republish their work.

I do have back copies of most of the Journals and you can purchase them for £2.00 each, plus the p & p. There are also still copies of *The Collected Poems* available

The cost is £10 + £3 p & p in the U.K. [overseas orders are £17 + p & p].

## A POT POURRI OF MUSINGS RELATING TO JMF'S *MOONFLEET*

### Archibald Campbell - Magistrate Thomas Maskew in *Moonfleet*?



This c.1847 painting by Theophile Hamel in the National Museum of Fine Arts, Quebec, shows Archibald Campbell of Quebec (1790-1862). Note the lawyer's quill and the background wreck, the *Aurungzebe*? He was for 50 years a King's

Notary. Born in Quebec, he was the father of Margery Noble and the father-in-law of Sir Andrew Noble, JMF's employer, who was also of Scotch descent born in Greenock. JMF described Elzevir Block as a 'grizzled giant'. He described Thomas Maskew as 'medium stature, a Scotchman and a lawyer with red, now grizzled (grey) hair, thin face and a sharp nose that looks as if it would peck you'.

That fits with Archibald's appearance in Hamel's later c.1852 online painting of him, held in the McCord Museum. A c.1860 photo by J.E. Livernois held in Quebec National Archives shows him with graying/grizzled hair. JMF would have been aware of Archibald Campbell and likely seen pictures of him at Jesmond Dene. In a similar way with his other characters, I believe he transposed Archibald's features onto his fictional villain Maskew. Why he chose Archibald for such inspiration who knows? However, Archibald's wife, Agnes George, was likely related to the Georges at Fleet House, who JMF knew from childhood, and the Scottish Ardkinglas Noble/Campbell connection may also have led to his metamorphosis. Maskew in *Moonfleet* was the opposite in character of Archibald Campbell, the latter being a philanthropist and lover of the arts, known for his kindness and generosity as opposed to the miserly, despised Maskew. Archibald Campbell Seigneur/Lord of Bic or Le Bic died at his Quebec home aged 72 on July 16, 1862.

The '*Moonfleet* on the Screen' article in Newsletter No.39 proposed suggestions for actors from the 1920's to play in a planned film production of *Moonfleet* c.1928, which film didn't eventually materialize. The suggestion of George Arliss (who played smuggler-in-chief Doctor Syn in the 1937 film) to play Ratsey prompted me to think that Arliss could actually make a pretty good Maskew, or perhaps Cedric Hardwick or Henry Daniell, who played Moriarty in the old Sherlock Holmes films, could fit that bill. Leslie (or Ronald) Howard could play Parson Glennie, but, struggling to think of someone to play burly, brooding Elzevir, I thought of American Lex Barker (Tarzan) in his final acting years, preferably using an English accent! Not, I admit, the perfect choice, but he did at least share his birthday (8<sup>th</sup> May 1919) with JMF.

### Rev. Henry Edward Maskew

was the younger brother of Rev. Thomas Ratsey Maskew. Though not a Scotchman, he served for 30 years as rector of St. James Church in Dollar, Clackmannanshire but it is unlikely he was the model for his namesake villain.



### Chaldron (Chaldon Herring) Moonfleet: Ch.12...

"Thomas Maskew, a Justice of the Peace, was most inhumanely murdered at Hoar Head, a lone place in the Parish of Chaldron". The soldiers/posse in *Moonfleet* who shot and killed Thomas Maskew in 1758 were **Grenadiers of the 13<sup>th</sup> (Ch.9) Regt. of Foot 1<sup>st</sup> Somersetshire** distinguished, as JMF said, by their tall Mitre caps with the embroidered blue Royal Cypher of George II, pictured here in 1751 with an example of their weapon used, a 1750's



**Flintlock Musket** with 13 RT stamped on its barrel.

Though remote, JMF was probably familiar with Chaldon Herring and the **Mohun Monuments** in the Church Tower including the one to Sarah Mohun widow of John Gould of Upwey, daughter of Gilbert Maximillian Mohun of Fleet. She died in 1774. In Ch.11... 'Elzevir walked nearly as far as Chaldron to pluck sorrel to make a mash for John's leg wound'. In reality, such a walk would have entailed at least a ten mile round trip, which at least proved his kind nature. Perhaps, it was these regular nightly outings and feats of endurance whilst holed up in the Sea Cave which encouraged John to the equally strenuous one of walking to Moonfleet and back, all in a day. These slightly far-fetched nocturnal adventures added however to the story's excitement and suspense.

**The Journal of the House of Lords**, V.11 of 14 June 1660 stated 'The Lord Mohun protested, upon his Honour', & quot; he never took the Oath of Abjuration against His Majesty". This expostulation came from Warwick 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Mohun (1620-1665) who lived in time of King Charles 1<sup>st</sup>. He was answering charges of treachery, having initially fought for the Royalists; but before the end of the Civil War deserted the King and in 1656 pledged his allegiance to Oliver Cromwell. In 1653 he was arrested for his involvement in a duel. The document contains minutes of the plot to kill the King during Charles's imprisonment at Carisbrooke Castle, apropos *Moonfleet* which primarily incriminated Major Rolfe, whose name along with Osborn his accuser appears alongside Mohun's. Warwick Mohun was JMF's '17<sup>th</sup> Century' Blackbeard and was the King's turncoat traitor in Chapter12. Although cleared by the Lords, having convinced them of his unwavering loyalty to the Stuarts and to the King, in an allusion to the novel his reputation was forever after tarnished. His grandson the serial duellist **Charles 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Mohun** (c.1675-1725) personified Col. John Mohune's dissolute, spendthrift ways and was in





effect JMF's '18<sup>th</sup> Century' Blackbeard. The character was based on a hotchpotch of Warwick Mohun, Charles Mohun and Charles's son Col. John Mohun (c.1690-1731) of Soho/Fulham, all from the main family line of at Boconnoc in Cornwall, as opposed paradoxically to any particular Mohun at Fleet.

**The Mandrive** - JMF's childhood holidays to Swanage probably instigated his interest in Purbeck and Durlston with its hummocky swards, underground stone quarries, caves and tunnels. The sprawling, still existing Mandrive was the object of his Sea Cave access shaft or as he called it Joseph's Pit, near Anvil Point. Whether it was always known as the Mandrive from earliest times or as JMF stated, that was originally the name of the pagan God/Demon who watched over the marble and gave its name to the cave complex is impossible to know but online photos of it match his book description so closely as to leave no doubt to its identity. Its precise history and age are unclear but an old map labelled in Latin and headed the Mandrive Complex suggests an ancient, possibly Roman origin. JMF may have known of it as a boy and even explored it or learned about it subsequently.

Fortunately, he bought it to life in his fiction. His friend Christopher Wordsworth was rector of Marlborough in 1900 but also of the Purbeck villages of East Holme and Tyneham the so-called lost village since being requisitioned by the Army in WW2 and the approximate location of Purbeck Gates in Moonfleet. He married the daughter of the vicar of Kimmeridge and they lived at Tyneham Rectory with their nine children. Their shared knowledge of the area may well have contributed to JMF's first two novels. Christopher's son John Wordsworth, Bishop of Salisbury gave permission in 1887 for the owner of Holworth House at Ringstead near White Nothe and Burning Cliff where Maskew met his maker, to hold Holy Communion in the house's private chapel. This knowledge may have influenced JMF's choice of location for that drama which focused equally on John's tormented mind and his soul-searching. Due to burgeoning congregations and a lack of space in the house,

in 1906 a small wooden church was built nearby and dedicated to St Catherine-by-the-Sea. It has a vague resemblance to the wooden beach shack featured at the end of MGM's *Moonfleet* film starring Jon Whiteley and the then mortally wounded Stewart Granger. Nearby Gallows Hill dates back to medieval times when the Moignes (alias?) Mohuns owned all in this area and inflicted harsh justice over the locals for breaching their laws. Like Old Daggars Gate Road which zigzags beside the church, this spot was very likely selected by JMF for good reason. Equally apt are the two old obelisk shaped navigation beacons standing close-by.



An early taste for the Arms industry and for Latin and Roman history may have been engendered in JMF by the Dorset Militia who had since 1873 carried out their annual training in Roman Dorchester...“to all Mohunes...in Agro Dorcestrensi”. In 1879 whilst on leave from University JMF would have seen the construction in

town of the Dorsetshire Regiment's new Keep, Barracks and Armoury, now the Military Museum. An obelisk erected in the Borough Gardens in 1900 commemorates the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's losses on the Indian NW Frontier Tirah campaign of 1897-1898, this conflict taking place at the same time JMF wrote *Moonfleet*. Their regimental badge depicts Gibraltar Castle and not as might be thought, the Keep. The Borough Gardens were designed by Sir Harry Veitch cf. Old Mother Veitch in *Moonfleet* ch.12. The 7<sup>th</sup> and last HMS Weymouth Ship was laid down at Armstrong Whitworth's Elswick Yard in 1910. As their then Company Secretary, I wonder if JMF had any influence in its naming.

### Manningford Bruce and Saint Peter

JMF seemed to have a particular fondness for Saint Peter. In *Moonfleet* he named Ratsey's rowing boat The Petrel, a diminutive of Peter. This may have been partly inspired by St. Peter's



Church in Manningford Bruce, his birthplace. The village was originally named Manningford Petri it is argued by some, after Saint Peter. JMF was no doubt also aware of the fact that the Fitz-Peter family owned the village in Norman times before selling it to the de Breuse family hence its change of name. I wonder if it ever crossed his mind the similarity between the names Bohun (from Manningford Bohune) and Mohun(e).

### Moonfleet and some Oxfordshire Associations



Puritan Coloniser, Pilgrim Father and founder of Dorchester in Massachusetts **Rev. John White (1575-1648)** known as The Patriarch of Dorchester has a strong connection with Dorchester, Dorset's County town as opposed to the village in Oxfordshire. He was rector of Holy Trinity Church from 1606 to 1648 where JMF's father later

became Curate and is buried in the porch of St Peter's church. There is a Memorial Plaque to him on the wall of his old house in Colliton Street. One of the ships in his 1630 fleet which included the Mayflower was named apropos *Moonfleet* 'The George Bonaventure' after the then Lord of the Admiralty George Villiers. White was born at Stanton St. John in Oxfordshire where his father James held a lease from New College Oxford. JMF made no reference to them in his *History of Oxfordshire* but he did devote significant time to Dorchester the village.

The Oxfordshire village of Churchill shared its name with Anne Churchill wife of Maximillian Mohun of Fleet as well as with JMF's childhood neighbours. **Rev. W.R.H. Churchill (1774-1847)** bought the Manor of Buckland Ripers



in 1825 which was retained by his descendants until 2006. Their Manor House still beside the church with its crest above the front door although the family sold the

house in the late 1800's. These were all relations of John Churchill 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Marlborough who JMF covers in his Oxford travel guide. With time on his hands and access to the old village records JMF's father Thomas Alexander Falkner (curate from 1880 to 1887) and a keen historian may well have discussed Fleet and the Mohuns with his Churchillian neighbours. JMF was then an undergraduate. The Falkner family's cook in Weymouth before they moved to Buckland Rippers was also named Harriet Churchill but her connection if any is unknown. A famous character born in the village of Churchill was Warren Hastings, who became an important figure in the East India Company. He arrived in Calcutta in 1750 when still in his teens and later became Governor of Bengal. Duel Avenue in Calcutta was named after his 1780 duel with his nemesis Sir Philip Francis. At the same period JMF's Uncle William Parsons of Injaram, Andhra Pradesh was working as a merchant and writer for the EIC and was known as the Nabob. This region of India was where many of the world's most famous diamonds were found including the Regent or *Moonfleet* Diamond. In ch.2, John Trenchard recalls the wreck of the East Indiaman Darius which came ashore on *Moonfleet* beach. The only Darius wreck listed was off Mauritius in 1829, so JMF possibly chose this name of a famous Persian King (521-486 BC) on a whim.

**John Milton Snr**, father of the famous Poet pictured, and one of twelve poets whom JMF dedicated his chapters in *Moonfleet*, had a strong family tie to Stanton St. John as it was where he lived, worshipped and his ancestors were buried.

The banker **Thomas Baring (1831-1891)**, son of Charles Baring Bishop of Durham, whose family is connected to the Noble and Gould families, and thus by association with *Moonfleet*, (N.B. last year's Journal) gave in 1874 £30,000 by way of an act of parliament towards recreating Magdalen Hall as Hertford College where JMF became a student in the 1880's.



**Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890)** the famous African explorer and translator of the Arabian Nights first published in England in 1886 which had so enthralled young John Trenchard in *Moonfleet* (published just twelve years later in 1898) matriculated at Trinity College Oxford in 1840. His ability to speak



Roman-Latin and Romaic Greek annoyed the Trinity dons but it would have appealed to JMF. Always in trouble - and having challenged another student to a duel following an insult about his moustache Burton was permanently expelled from Trinity, enlisting in the army of the East India Company. Like John Trenchard in *Moonfleet*, when he was disguised as a carter, Burton famously used walnut juice to pass for an Arab in order to visit Mecca. His wife, Isabel Arundell, a writer and adventurer in her own right was descended from the Wardour Castle Arundells (with their links to Dorset

contraband, N/L.73) and her mother Elizabeth Gerard was related to Charlotte Gerard the mother-in-law of 'riotous' (ch.14) wastrel Charles Mohun, above.

**A.G. Gaydon**

## A LETTER FROM JMF TO JOHN NOBLE

Durham

November 14<sup>th</sup>. 1924

My dear John,

*If you are not already engaged, do let us dine together at the Athenaeum on Wednesday November 19<sup>th</sup>. I am going down to Oxford on Thursday afternoon Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>. I cannot remember whether I showed you a curious boxwood mace, or wand, with many silver fittings, which I purchased at a sale in College here. The silver is stamped on ½ dozen places T.P. in a kidney-shaped shield, but has no essay or date mark. It is of course of no intrinsic value, but is singular enough to be interesting. I dare say that I showed it to you, but, I am bringing it up with me next week. I cannot identify the stamp, but think that the date may be about 1750.*

*I am off now because a distinguished party are coming to us today. Miss Noble, Lady George Campbell, Miss Powell Jones, and my God-child.*

*I resume this in the evening, after they have come, and are gone. It has been a very pleasant day for me at least. The weather has kept fine, with an overcast, but not too sinister sky. Durham has a wonderful charm, when the banks are green in bright sunshine: yet, I am not sure that the sunlessness of shortening days, when the leaves are off the trees, does not reflect the real genius of the place more accurately. We saw the familiar 'sights', had lunch, made a joint call on the Dean, came back to the sung service at 4, afterwards had tea, and sped our guests at 5.30. Yes, for me it was a pleasant day, and Miss Noble and I reminded each other that it was near 42 years ago that we first heard the service here together. Of all those that were attached to the cathedral then, not one remains, except old Hutton.*

*I was very pleased to see Rosemary again. Of course I liked her looks, I liked her dress, which I was careful to note, though as a rule I take little stock of womens' dress, and particularly liked her manners. Her manners were charming, and generally recalled those days when young women were more distinct, as well as more distinguished, than they are now. For the most part, they seem to me all as like as shelled peas, it was a pleasant relief to find Rosemary not like all the rest. There is something outstanding about her, which was most attractive. Is she had been my daughter, I think that it would give me pleasure to hear someone of judgement say these things about her; and that is why I venture to say them to you.*

*Goodnight, and do try to dine on Thursday.*

*Affectionately yours JMF*

I hope you all enjoy this year's **Journal**, and that you will think of contributing to next year's.

Have a relaxing Summer.

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