I have postcards of the bandstand from the right time, but in Nigel Breadman’s office…

**John Ferguson (1871-1952)**

Chaplain of Eversley School, Sandgate 1915 – 1939.

‘I wandered out on the Leas, amid the gay butterflies listening to the military band, which that afternoon was playing on the glorious headland. In the midst of all that kaleidoscope of colour and buzz of talk I had a sense of being separate and aloof.’

\_Stealthy Terror\_ (1918)\_

Scottish by birth, novelist and dramatist John Ferguson became chaplain of Eversley girls’ school in Sandgate in 1915.[[1]](#footnote-1) The following year he wrote a paper for the Folkestone War Refugees Committee on the town’s contribution in helping [Belgian refugees](/20c/20c-belgian-refugees).[[2]](#footnote-2)

His spy novel \_Stealthy Terror\_ was published in 1918, but captures the mood of 1914, just before the outbreak of [WW1]( /20c/20c-folkestone-ww1). In a memorable scene in Folkestone, the narrator watches human ‘butterflies’ on the [Leas](https://www.visitfolkestoneandhythe.co.uk/media/1843/folkestone-historical-walks-promenading-on-the-leas.pdf), as they gather round a military band. The bandstand had been erected in 1893, when Folkestone ranked as one of the more fashionable [Victorian resorts](/19c/19c-folkestone). But as Ferguson’s readers would have been well aware, the Leas promenade gives on to what would later be designated The Road of Remembrance, along which thousands of soldiers had passed on their way to the trenches. Henry Williamson (best remembered as the author of \_Tarka the Otter\_), would call it ‘the English Via Dolorosa’ in his post-war novel \_The Dream of Fair Women\_ (1924).

The [library]( /19c/19c-folkestone-free-library) holds rare copies of several of Ferguson’s books: \_Campbell of Kilmhor\_ (1915), \_The King of Morven\_ (1922), \_The Secret Road\_ (1925), \_The Man in the Dark\_ (1928) and \_Murder on the Marsh\_ (1930).

Article by Carolyn Oulton

Bibliography

Bertie, David M. \_*Scottish Episcopal Clergy 1689-2000*\_. Edinburgh: T. and C. Clark, 2000.

Ferguson, John. *Stealthy Terror*. London: Penguin, 1954.

1. His address is given in local papes as 6 Devonshire Terrace. With thanks to Hilary Tolputt. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. With thanks to Hilary Tolputt. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)