

1 December 1997

**Honorary Members:** Bernard Bergonzi, Janice Biala, Malcolm Bradbury, AS Byatt, Samuel Hynes, Alan Judd, Sir Frank Kermode, Ruth Rendell, Michael Schmidt, The Hon. Oliver Soskice, John Sutherland, Tony Tanner.

**Executive Committee:** *Chair:* Max Saunders *Treasurer:* Sara Haslam *Secretary:* Jenny Plastow

**W**elcome! Announcing the foundation of the Ford Madox Ford Society, we are pleased to present this first edition of the newsletter. The Society emerged from the first British Ford Madox Ford conference - details given overleaf - and is designed to cater for the enthusiast, the reader, the connoisseur and the student of all things Fordian. If you admire Ford, then this Society wants to hear from you. Read on to discover how, why and where.

Future issues will include:

- NEWS OF SOCIETY EVENTS
- ARTICLES ON FORD AND HIS MILIEU
- PUBLICATION INFORMATION
- ANECDOTES AND ARCANA
- DEVELOPMENTS IN FORD SCHOLARSHIP
- FORD ONLINE

**THE FIRST SOCIETY EVENT,  
FORD MADOX FORD:**

**PAINTING AND WRITING, A DAY OF CELEBRATION,** will take place on

10th January 1998 at the Centre for English Studies, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1 at 10 am. As Ford Madox Brown's grandson, and through relationships with both Stella Bowen and Janice Biala, Ford had a lifelong association with painting. This event is a celebration of that association. There will be a panel discussion on Ford and painting and lively informal presentations on several of the paintings which had a particular impact on Ford. The high point of the event, which we are very proud to



***Fragment of a transcript (Alan Judd and A.S. Byatt in conversation)...***

AB: [Ford] spans a greater time-span than other Modern writers, because he begins as a Pre-Raphaelite...and then he belongs with High Modernism, with T.S. Eliot and Pound...

AJ: As you say, he spans several literary generations and movements...

*...more overleaf*

present, will be Joseph Wiesenfarth's influential and fascinating illustrated introduction to the work of Stella Bowen. The day will include slides, and will encourage participation from the audience. To find out more, contact Max Saunders or Sara Haslam at the addresses overleaf.

*The conversation continues...*

...  
AB: [The Good Soldier is] one of the most chiselled and perfectly written books in English.

AJ: I often think of this book as being like a sphere, and you can neither add to it nor detract from it. It's perfect. You can't touch it...

AB: Can you perhaps describe [its] tone of voice?

AJ: Yes, it's difficult, but it's easier to illustrate than to describe. But it's a quiet tone of voice. Ford always used to say that he liked to aim at the tone of voice of two people having a quiet conversation by the fireside... This quiet tone of voice... conveys the complexities and the subtleties of what goes on in our lives.

...

[And, on the lighter side...]

AB: He wished to see himself as an archetypal English Gentleman, whereas in fact people seemed to see him as an elephant, a rhinoceros, a hippopotamus...

AJ: Yes, and I think whale as well. I mean various bits of the animal kingdom are brought in as comparisons with Ford.

*A.S. Byatt and Alan Judd in conversation, "Visiting Lives", Radio 3, 25<sup>th</sup> April 1992, produced by Ed Thomason*

## A REPORT OF THE FIRST BRITISH CONFERENCE ON FORD MADOX FORD.

This was held at the Centre for English Studies, University of London, on 15-16 November, 1996. It was a fully International event, attended by seventy-four people, from at least seven countries (Britain, USA, Italy, Australia, the Netherlands, Eire and Japan), and at least twenty-eight Universities and Colleges. There were twenty-six papers altogether: sessions were held on Ford's Techniques; on Modernity, Society and Values; on Ford's Literary Contexts; on Ford and Women; plus two sessions on The Good Soldier, and one on Parade's End.

There was a reception on the 15th November to open the University Library Exhibition covering Ford's life and works. The reception also included a recorded performance, presumably the world premiere, of two of Ford's youthful songs.

The standard of contributions was gratifyingly high, the range was impressive too. A volume of essays on the proceedings is planned. The conference demonstrated the vitality of Ford studies. At the same time Carcanet Press announced the launch of its 'Millenium Ford' project, aiming to bring back into print Ford's major fiction, poetry, autobiography and essays.

*Max Saunders, Robert Hampson  
Conference Organisers*

Carcanet have issued the following titles as part of this project: The English Novel, Parade's End, The Good Soldier, and Selected Poems of Ford Madox Ford. Further titles are planned over the next two years.

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

To join the Ford Madox Ford Society, please send a cheque to the Treasurer. Subscription rates for one year are as follows:

Individual membership	£12
Concessionary membership	£6
Member organisations	£25
USA (any category)	\$25

### CONTACT ADDRESSES

For more information, please contact either Max Saunders (Chair) or Sara Haslam (Treasurer)

<b>Sara Haslam</b> English Dept. University College Chester Cheyney Road Chester, CH1 4BJ	<b>Max Saunders</b> max.saunders@kcl.ac.uk
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*If you join now, membership for one year will commence on 10 January 1998. Membership guarantees entry to the first Society event, and receipt of Society news.*