

**Ford Madox Ford and America**  
**An International Conference**  
**Organised by the Ford Madox Ford Society**

**New York, CUNY, 23-25 September 2010**

**Call for Papers**

America was a major preoccupation of Ford's. His family contacts and childhood reading ensured that from an early age America figured in the world of his imagination. His admiration for the work of his friends Henry James and Stephen Crane meant that he was for many decades involved closely with American writers and American literature. He also knew many more of the best American writers of three times and places: figures such as Ezra Pound and H.D. in England before the First World War; Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, Katherine Anne Porter, William Carlos Williams, and many others in post-war Paris; Allen Tate and Caroline Gordon, Robert Lowell, Theodore Dreiser, and Charles Olson in the USA in the 1930s. From the late 1920s he lived frequently in New York, and travelled over much of the country, accompanied in the 30s by his American partner Janice Biala. A late, but significant, development in Ford's career was his lecturing at Olivet College in Michigan from 1937.

He wrote prolifically about America and Americans, especially after his first visit to the USA in 1906. The narrator of his best-known novel, *The Good Soldier*, and his wife, are Americans living in Europe. But many of his other fictions are centrally concerned with America and American life:

*An English Girl* (UK [only], 1907)  
*The 'Half-Moon'* (UK and US, 1909)  
*When the Wicked Man* (US 1931, UK 1932)  
*The Rash Act* (US and UK, 1933)  
*Henry for Hugh* (US [only], 1934)  
*Vive Le Roy* (US 1936, UK 1937)

Also many of his books of criticism and reminiscence concern American literature and culture; especially:

*Henry James* (UK 1914, US 1915)  
*Thus to Revisit* (UK and US [?], 1921)  
*New York is Not America* (UK and US, 1927)  
*New York Essays* (US [only], 1927)  
*The English Novel* (US 1929, UK 1930)  
*Return to Yesterday* (UK 1931, US 1932)  
*It Was the Nightingale* (US 1933, UK 1934)  
*Great Trade Route* (US and UK, 1937)  
*Portraits from Life* (US 1937; UK 1938 as *Mightier Than the Sword*)  
*The March of Literature* (US 1938, UK 1939)

Papers would be especially welcome on any of the texts listed here (some of which have had little work done on them).

As an influential literary editor, Ford conceived his role as bringing European and American literature into contact; something he also attempted in his regular reviewing of American novels. From his launching of the *transatlantic review* in 1924, and through the 1920s as he spent more of his time in New York and became more popular in the States, Ford not only came to think of American literature as the most dynamic of its time, but also began increasingly to address his work to American readers. There are major collections of his papers at Cornell, Princeton and Yale university libraries.

Some of the best recent work on this increasingly highly regarded author has focused on his relations to Modernism or to the idea of Englishness. This conference aims to explore his complex and evolving relation to America as a way of broadening, and deepening, our critical picture of Ford and of his cultural relations. The Ford Society is committed to an outward-looking programme of events, exploring Ford's involvement with a variety of other writers, artists, milieux and cultural forms. Given the kind of writer Ford was, we think it particularly important not to conceive the Society as a cult of the individual. We welcome work (from graduate students as well as established scholars) on the literary and cultural movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and comparative work on Ford and other figures.

Proposals of around 300 words should be sent **by 1 April 2010** to Sara Haslam – [s.j.haslam@open.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.haslam@open.ac.uk) – and Seamus O'Malley: [seamus\\_omalley@hotmail.com](mailto:seamus_omalley@hotmail.com)