William Martindale (1840-1902) and Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939)

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This paper brings together two men who each became famous as writers in their very different spheres. The background to the family business of the famous English pharmacist William Martindale and his book *The Extra Pharmacopoeia*, used by pharmacists throughout the world, is presented in more detail in two posters (*Martindale: The men behind the book* and *Martindale: A story of success*). As a result of their contact Martindale appears in various guises in the fiction of Ford Madox Ford.

**William Martindale**

William Martindale lived almost exactly in Victorian times, but his name lives on in the book he started with co-author Dr William Wynn Westcott in 1883 – *The Extra Pharmacopoeia*, now in its 37th edition. He married Mariah Hannah Harrison, a farmer’s daughter, in 1872. In 1873 he was able to buy the pharmacy of Hopkins and Williams at 10 New Cavendish Street in the fashionable West End of London.

They had four children: Mary (1873); William Harrison (known as Harri) (1874); Elizabeth (known as Elsie) (1877); and Leonard (1884).
Mary, Elsie and Leonard were sent away to the Praetorius House School at Folkestone, while William Harrison (Harri) went to University College School and Leonard later to Uppingham School. The girls had a European education and lessons were taught in German and French on alternate days. Mary and Elsie met Ford Hermann Hueffer at the Praetorius school and both were charmed by him.
Ford Madox Hueffer

Ford Hermann was the son of Franz Hueffer and Catherine Brown. His father was a German music critic from Muenster who pioneered Wagner in Britain, and his mother was the second daughter of Ford Madox Brown, the famous Pre-Raphaelite painter. (2,3)

Born Ford Hermann Hueffer 1873

Baptised Catholic as Joseph Leopold Ford Hermann Madox Hueffer in 1892 and at Registry marriage 1894

Changed to Ford Madox Hueffer in 1915

Changed to Ford Madox Ford from 1919

Ford left school and wrote poetry, fairy tales and composed piano music while seeking work. His artist grandfather said he must be an ‘artist’ and not work in ‘trade’. (3) But he courted Elsie Martindale with the disapproval of both Ford Madox Brown and William Martindale, who had rows with his headstrong daughter.

After one row with her father – he typically told his teenage daughter “you can’t go out dressed like that” when she dressed as a fashionable aesthete – he kept her in her room and told Ford to send any communications via the pharmacy.

William Martindale’s family home at 18 Devonshire Street, London W1.
In 1892, Ford published *The Feather*, a fairytale, in which a headstrong princess’s courtship is opposed by a stern father figure. In *The Queen who Flew* (1894) a young queen escapes from a black-bearded suitor and runs off with a ploughman to the country where they live happily ever after.

This was a preview of real events as in March 1892 Martindale ordered Mary to take Elsie away from London to their farm in Winchelsea, Sussex to put her out of reach of Ford. But on the way there Elsie gave her sister Mary the slip when changing trains at Ashford and returned to London. She then eloped with Ford to Edward Garnett’s relative in Bristol. From there they moved to Gloucester and were married by the Registrar. They gave false ages (they were actually 20 and 17½). Ford used his full baptised catholic name - Joseph Leopold Ford Hermann Madox Hueffer. Meanwhile William Martindale searched for them, then had Elsie made a Ward of Court (ie protected) and he sent private detectives to find them.

On their return Ford was in deep trouble and Martindale tried to have Ford and various tabloid newspaper journalists committed for contempt of court, but ended up paying all the legal costs. The episode had cost Martindale nearly £50,000 at today’s values as shown in his private ledger. (4)
William Martindale’s Private Ledger, showing payments to newspapers and magazines. (4)

By Christmas Martindale became reconciled to the marriage, which produced two daughters, Christina in 1897 and Katherine in 1900. In 1901 he moved the family from their damp country cottage (Stocks Hill, Aldington, Kent) to ‘The Bungalow’ in Winchelsea.

“The Wedding Ring, Elsie Madox Hueffer”
Pastel and pencil by her mother-in-law
Catherine Madox Brown 1895 (5)
In 1898 Ford Hueffer was introduced to the Polish author Joseph Conrad and they collaborated on three novels: *The Inheritors* (1901), *Romance* (1903), and *The Nature of a Crime* (1909).

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**Death of William Martindale**

William Martindale was a Mayor of Winchelsea and thereby a Warden of the Cinque Ports. While President of the Pharmaceutical Society, he became ill again and his son Dr Harri started running the business. Martindale committed suicide with cyanide in February 1902.

Obituaries and tributes in the pharmaceutical press (6) said he was tired and overworked by helping a government enquiry into poisons legislation. He complained of ‘brain fag’ in his suicide note, but there was no mention in pharmaceutical sources of what the literary biographies and criticism of Ford such as Goldring (2), Moser, (7) and Saunders (3) have reported, but unfortunately without verifiable evidence. They claim that Ford had an affair with his sister-in-law Mary Martindale at Winchelsea early in the new century.(8) The date this started is not definitely known. Did Martindale suspect or find out?

The last words of Martindale’s suicide note are strangely ambiguous: ‘Thank Ford’. In English this can have a double meaning.(9)

By 1908, Ford was trying to divorce Elsie and marry his secretary Violet Hunt, but Elsie tenaciously pursued him through his many other affairs and called herself Mrs Elsie Hueffer to the end. She published good translations from De Maupassant and a novel, *Margaret Hever* (1909).(10)

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**Ford’s fiction**

Ford seems to have carried guilt into his works and there are references to a Martindale-like figure in his novels, which are now being republished by Carcanet. Ford was editor of *The English Review*, an iconic journal, from 1908 to 1909 where he published Ezra Pound, HG Wells, Thomas Hardy, John Galsworthy, Henry James, and DH Lawrence.

Ford Madox Ford’s later novels achieved great popularity and *The Good Soldier* (1915) established itself as ‘a masterpiece of literary modernism alongside *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*’. (11) Martindale’s memory lives on in the drug reference books of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, who have his bust on display.(12)
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References and Endnotes

9. Reference 3, Saunders: 145-146. See also reference 7, Moser: 30, 52.