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# OUR FAMOUS EDWARDIANS

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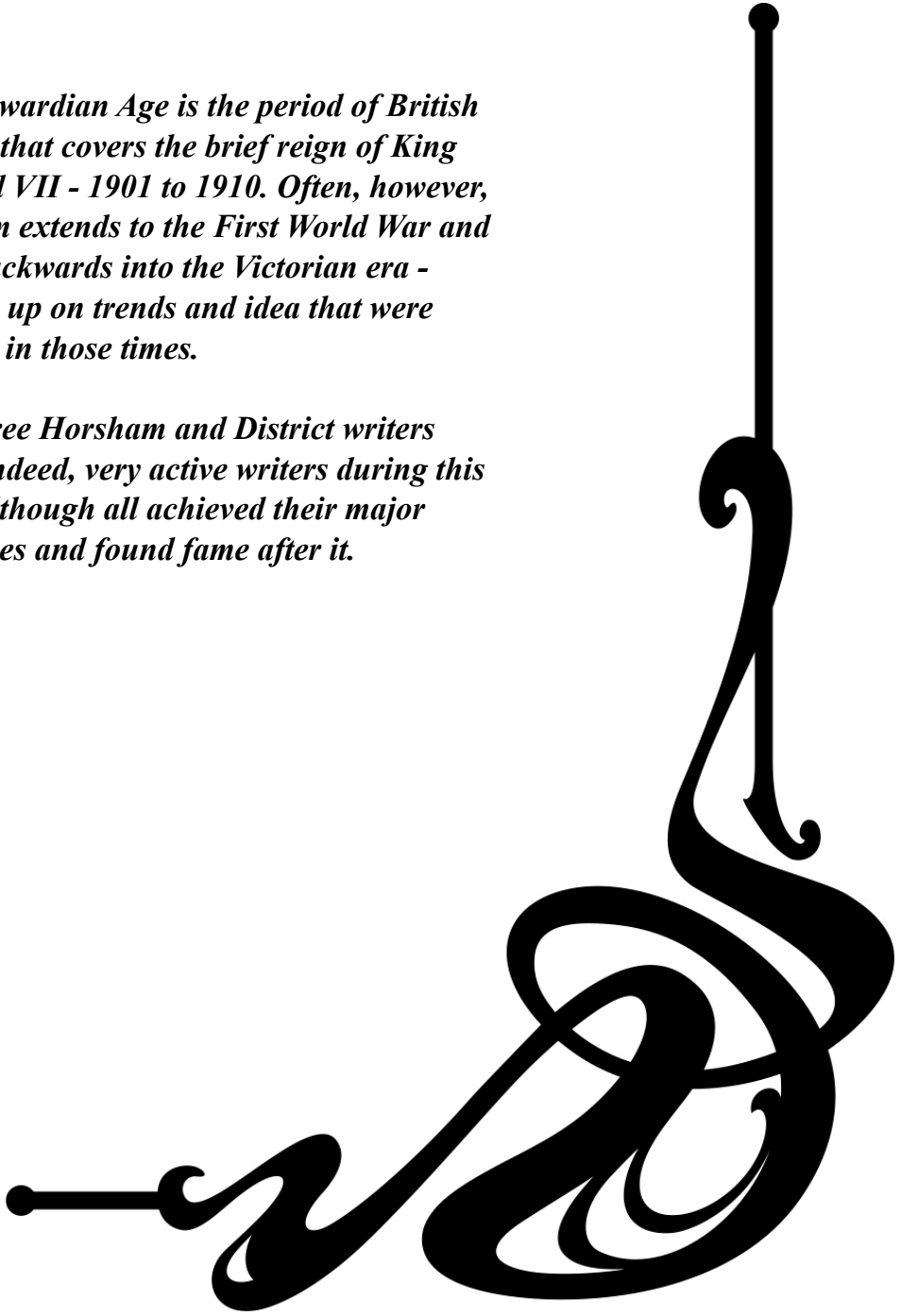


One of a monthly series of booklets  
from Horsham Writers Circle  
presenting some of Horsham and  
District's most famous literary figures.



*The Edwardian Age is the period of British history that covers the brief reign of King Edward VII - 1901 to 1910. Often, however, the term extends to the First World War and even backwards into the Victorian era - picking up on trends and ideas that were around in those times.*

*Our three Horsham and District writers were, indeed, very active writers during this time, although all achieved their major successes and found fame after it.*



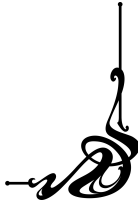


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## Ernest William Hornung

1866-1921



**Horsham and District Connection** – in 1919 Hornung and his wife, Constance, moved to Midway Cottage in Partridge Green to be near to his brother Pitt and his family who lived in West Grinstead.

Hornung was born on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1866 in Marton, Middlesbrough, the eighth child of his Hungarian father, John Peter (formerly Johan Petrus) Hornung, and his wife, Harriet Armstrong.

John Hornung had moved to England in the mid 1840s and became successful and wealthy through his trade in coal, iron and timber.



Ernest William Hornung was called Willie by his family and was a slight little child who suffered from asthma and was short-sighted. He loved cricket but, perhaps due to his ill health, he did not

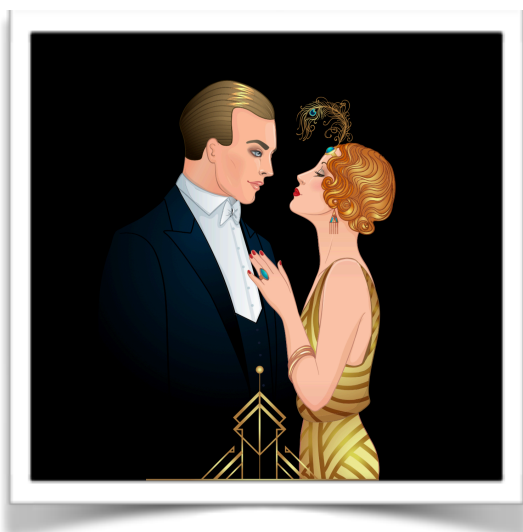


excel in the sport, unlike his famous protagonist Raffles through whom he would one day be able to live out any childhood fantasies of being a cricket ace.

Willie was sent to Uppingham School but had to leave in 1883 also due to ill health. He travelled to New South Wales in Australia to recuperate. Whilst in Australia he worked as a tutor and also on sheep farms.

Willie had hoped to become a poet, but the death of his father, by then penniless, in 1886, put paid to this. Undeterred, once back home he became a professional writer and used his experiences in Australia to this purpose. He wrote articles and short stories which he submitted to magazines and his first novel, set in Australia, “A Bride from the Bush” was published in 1890. He proceeded to write and publish a further seven novels set in Australia and two collections of short stories. His novels were a success and displayed the characteristic qualities of his future works, namely skilful and well-honed plot lines backed up with excellent description.

Hornung later went to live in West London where he came to know many other authors and artists. On 27<sup>th</sup> September 1893 he married Constance Doyle, sister of Arthur Conan Doyle who became godfather to their only child, Oscar.



Hornung started to write his A.J. Raffles stories in the late 1890s. Like Hornung, Raffles was an ex public schoolboy. He was also a renowned cricket ace and a jolly good chap to boot. However, by night Raffles and his sidekick and former fag, Bunny Manders, were notorious jewel thieves - a profession which enabled Raffles to live at the Albany and indulge in a gentleman's lifestyle. The stories of Raffles' exploits of daring-do are told by Bunny, who portrays him as a fearless, charming and resourceful hero.

The first Raffles tales were published under the title of “The Amateur Cracksman” in 1899. Although the reader is encouraged to admire the gung-ho exploits of Raffles, who by day is admired for his prowess as a fearless cricket ace and an equally fearless and ingenious jewellery thief by night, our heroes do get their comeuppance. At the end of these stories we are led to believe that Raffles has gone to a watery grave and Bunny has been arrested and is facing a custodial sentence.

Fortunately, our heroes bounce back in “The Black Mask” published in 1901. In this publication Raffles uses his powers of disguise for the most part and only surfaces as himself occasionally, a practice used by another famous character of the era, namely Hornung's illustrious brother-in-law's creation, Sherlock Holmes. Once again Raffles pays the price for his ill-gotten gains by losing his life whilst fighting for the British in the South African War.



The Raffles stories were so successful that Hornung wrote a third series of tales entitled “A Thief in the Night”, published in 1905. Rather than miraculously resurrecting a dead hero, Hornung cleverly recounted prior escapades. By this time Hornung had written and published a total of twenty-six Raffles short stories. In 1906 the first two series were amalgamated into the single volume entitled “The Amateur Cracksman.” Hornung’s books were a resounding success and opened up a thrilling world to his readership. This success led to his stories being transformed into stage plays and films. However, as already stated, there were similarities between Hornung’s protagonists and those of his illustrious brother-in-law.



Nothing published by Hornung after his Raffles stories proved to be as well received.

In 1909 another Raffles story “Mr Justice Raffles” was published but dissatisfied lovers of the earlier tales.

Tragedy struck the Hornung family in July 1915 when their beloved son Oscar was killed in action in the First World War. Hornung wrote his son’s biography for the eyes of family and friends only and undertook voluntary war work. He travelled to the Western Front and wrote a poem entitled “Wooden Crosses” about a military cemetery which was later published in the Times and afterwards in its own right.

Here are some lines from Hornung’s poem **Wooden Crosses** :

A thrush sings in an oak-tree, and from the old square tower  
A chime as sweet and mellow salutes the idle hour;  
Stone crosses take no notice - but the little wooden ones  
Are thrilling every minute to the music of the guns!

Upstanding at attention they face the cannonade,  
In apple-pie alinement like Guardsmen on parade:  
But Tombstones are Civilians who loll or sprawl or sway  
At every crazy angle and stage of slow decay.

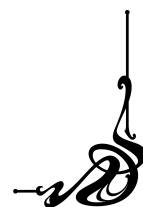
Hornung even worked in a front line canteen in Arras and set up a lending library for the troops.

After the War in 1919, Hornung and his wife moved to Midway Cottage in Partridge Green. He went on to publish some of his poetry and commenced work on a new novel.

Hornung died on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1921 in the south of France having succumbed to pneumonia after catching a chill.



## **Ford Madox Ford (formerly Ford Hermann Hueffer) 1873-1939**



**Horsham and District Connection** – In 1919 Ford Madox Ford went to live in a cottage, in Hurston, near Pulborough, called Red Ford Cottage, and later moved to a larger cottage in the area.

Ford was a very interesting and successful writer who explored ‘impressionist’ writing and championed early ‘modernist’ literature. He not only admired fellow writers, but supported and encouraged new and upcoming talent and was beloved and respected by not only them, but fellow critics.

Ford was born in 1873 to artistic parents. His father, Francis Hueffer, was a musicologist and author; and his mother, Catherine, a painter, was the daughter of the painter Madox Brown who was associated with the Pre-Raphaelites. His great-grandfather, Franz Hueffer, came to England from Germany in 1869 and became a music critic for the Times.

On the death of their father in 1889, Ford and his younger brother Oliver went to live with their artist grandfather in London and were so fond of him that they were both to incorporate ‘Madox’ into their own names.

They were the nephews of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti and through their revolutionary minded cousins they met with Russian émigrés. They also mixed in artistic circles which included the illustrious Carlyle, Holmen Hunt and Ruskin.

With such influences in his early life, it is not surprising that Ford became such a great writer and critic.

In 1890 Ford met an author who would influence him profoundly, Joseph Conrad, with whom he wrote a romantic novel - about pirates. Unfortunately, "Romance", published in 1903, did not receive much acclaim.

In 1901, Ford and his wife Elsie, who he had married in 1894, despite her father's misgivings, moved to live in Winchelsea. Whilst they were there Ford became friends with other authors who lived in the vicinity such as the Americans Stephen Crane and Henry James as well as the renowned H.G.Wells. He also met someone upon whom he would base a lot of his fictional characters, a mathematician called Arthur Marwood.

The disappointment of "Romance" and a strained marriage led to a nervous breakdown and Ford sought a nerve cure in a German resort close to relatives. After his sojourn in Germany he returned to England and spent more of his time in London. This experience provided Ford with background information he used in his excellent and hugely successful novel "The Good Soldier" published in 1915.

Prior to the publication of "The Good Soldier" Ford published several other books:

1905 – "The Soul of London" the first volume of a trilogy

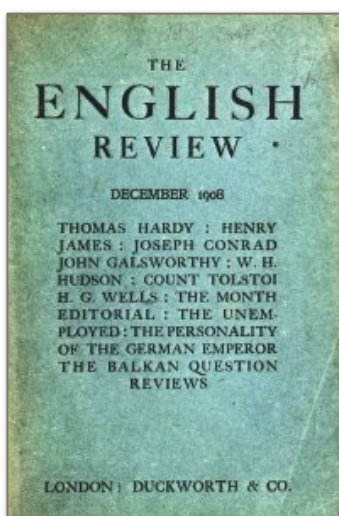
1907 – "England and the English" two volumes which completed the trilogy.

Over the same period he produced another trilogy, a historical romance about Katherine Howard:

1906 – "The Fifth Queen"

1907 – "The Privy Seal"

1908 – "The Fifth Queen Crowned"



Whilst living in London Ford started up and edited 'The English Review'. Ford claimed that he started the magazine '... in a rage that there was no place in England to print a poem by Thomas Hardy.' The magazine remained in print until 1937. It was a hugely influential publication which publishing more traditional writers such as Henry James and Hardy as well as the likes of Arnold Bennett, Joseph Conrad and H.G. Wells.

Ford is also famous for having 'discovered' Ezra Pound, D.H. Lawrence and Wyndham Lewis. In fact Ezra Pound became a friend for life and is said to have thought Ford was the best critic in the country.

Ford was not only a novelist and critic, he also wrote poetry, for example: "The Mind of the Race" and "The Wild Asses of the Devils".



Ford's private life was not without excitement, but not necessarily welcome sort. He left his wife for the novelist Isobel Violet Hunt, but did not manage to obtain a divorce from his wife Elsie, who later won a libel case against his lover after she had been referred to in the press as Mrs Ford Madox Hueffer. In spite of his personal problems and the ensuing scandal Ford wrote the memorable "Good Soldier" (1915) a remarkable and complex novel in which he made excellent use of the unreliable narrator.

In 1915 Ford joined the Welch regiment and in July 1916 was sent to the Somme. Two weeks later he was involved in the bloody Battle of the Somme and was concussed by shelling. Like so many others he was sent back to the Front later when he was thought to be fit enough and was gassed and succumbed to pneumonia. Ford used his war time experiences when writing the four novels which make up "Parade's End" published between 1924 and 1928 and is thought by some to be among the best literary fiction written about this period.

After the war Ford convalesced in the South of France before returning to the UK where he met and fell in love with the Australian painter Esther (Stella) Bowen with who he would remain until 1928. Ford was demobilised in 1919 and they moved to Red Ford Cottage. Whilst in Hurston Ford tried his hand at farming, but was not very good at it and his farm was not a success. However the move to Sussex did rejuvenate Ford and it was at this time that he changed his name by deed pole to Ford Madox Ford. Unfortunately the Sussex weather did not delight him, particularly its winters and prompted him to write his poem:

"Mister Bosphorous and The Muses", in which he expressed his yearning for warmer climes.

He then moved to Cap Ferat and started to write "Parade's End" which has been described as one of the major works of European Modernism. This Modernist movement featured in all of the arts – architecture, music, art as well as literature – and was a conscious rejection of traditional approaches. In literature it shows in a focus on such things as the psychology of characters, realism, multiple points-of-view etc. as well as some experimentation in style, such as the use of stream-of-consciousness. The novel follows the dramatic changes of the recent times: the dissatisfaction felt by the people after the war and the country's efforts to rebuild.

In 1923 Ford and Stella moved to Paris and with assistance from his friend, Ezra Pound, Ford started up the "Transatlantic Review" taking on Ernest Hemmingway as a sub-editor. In this review Ford published the works of James Joyce, Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemmingway. Ford also found the time to have an affair with another writer he discovered, Jean Rhys.

In 1924 on the death of Joseph Conrad, Ford wrote: "Joseph Conrad: a Personal Remembrance", a touching book and a worthy tribute to a fellow writer.

An open-minded, understanding intellectual who was loved and respected by this fellow writers and critics, Ford befriended a number of up and coming writers: Douglas Goldring, William

Carlos Williams, Allen Tate, Caroline Gordon, Robert Lowell, John Crowe Ransom and most famous of them all, Graham Greene.

The success of “Parade’s End” led to lecture tours in the U.S. in the late 1920s.

By 1930 Ford was back in Paris where he met the woman he would spend the rest of his life with, the American painter Janice Biala. They spent their time together between New York, Paris and Provence.

In the 1930s Ford produced more novels and autobiographical works.

1931 – “Return to Yesterday” a fictionalised account of his world before the war.

1933 - “The Rash Act” in which he explored his fascination with concept of the double.

1934 – “It was the Nightingale” based upon his life in Sussex and France after the War.

1935 – “Provence” this was a change in direction and is best described as a charming travelogue which shows his deep passion for this region.

1937 – “Great Trade Route” in which he gives his view on how civilisation has evolved.

The last book of Ford’s to be published was “The March of Literature” in 1938.

In all, Ford wrote eighty books and is the most influential of our Edwardian writers.

He died on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1939 in Deauville France, not long before the beginning of the Second World War.

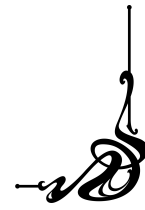




# Cyril Herman McNeile

(1888-1937)

(also wrote under the pseudonym of Sapper)



McNeille was most famous for his Bulldog Drummond books.

## **The Horsham and District Connection:**

McNeile spent his later years at his home, King's and Princes' Farm, West Chiltington, Near Pulborough, where he died on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1937.

He was born in Bodmin, Cornwall, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1888. His father, later to become the governor of the Royal Naval Prison in

Lewes, was Captain Malcolm McNeile RN, and his mother, Christiana Mary Sloggett. McNeile attended Cheltenham College and afterwards the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich.

He went on to join the Royal Engineers in 1907 and served in the First World War as a Captain, winning the Military Cross.

Under the pseudonym of Sapper (the nickname of the Royal Engineers) McNeile published several popular books during the War, which include:

1915 – 'The Lieutenant and Others'

1915 – 'Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R.E.'

1916 – 'Men Women and Guns'

1917 – 'No Man's Land'

In 1919 McNeile left the army by which time he had reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Later on in 1919 he published 'Bulldog Drummond'. McNeile was to write seven thrilling adventures about this demobilised officer who found life in civvy street boring. In fact, Hugh 'Bulldog' Drummond was so very bored that he offered his services to potential employers in the newspaper describing himself as 'Demobilised officer, finding peace incredibly tedious, would welcome diversion. Legitimate if possible; but crime, if of a comparatively humorous description, no objection. Excitement essential. Would be prepared to consider permanent job if



suitably impressed by applicant for his services.’ (extract from the very first ‘Bulldog Drummond’ story.) The attitudes of the characters would not fit well with today’s values and were very much of their time and to do them justice, it is perhaps wise to remember this when reading them. Drummond and his gang of followers display a hearty arrogance. The baddies such as his arch-villain Carl Persen and Irma, his lover, are portrayed as evil foreigners and other characters are described with vocabulary which we would regard as racist today.



Bulldog Drummond’s adventures were set in London’s clubland and were very popular in their day. In 1921-22 Wyndam’s Theatre put on a stage version of ‘Bulldog Drummond’ which starred Sir Gerald Du Maurier. The same play enjoyed equal success in New York.

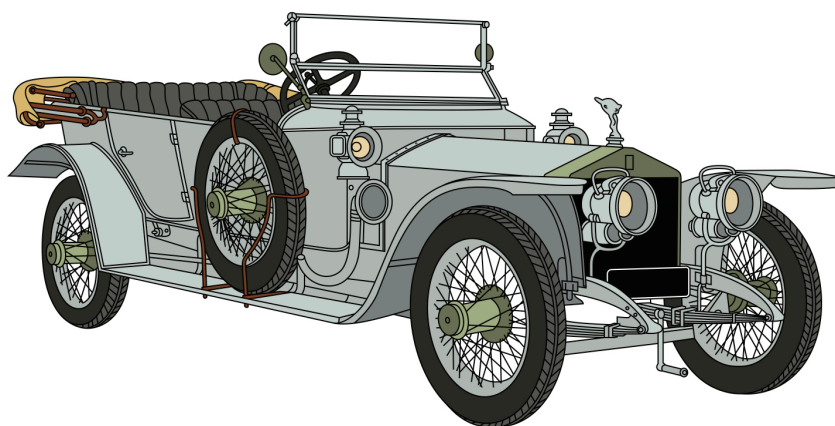
Many Bulldog Drummond films were made, the first of which in 1922. The lead was played by several famous actors such as: Jack Buchanan, Ralph Richardson, John Howard and Ronald Colman.

Ian Fleming recognised the influence of McNeile on his own writing thirty years later when he acknowledged that his own creation, James Bond, was a fifty-fifty mixture of Sapper and Mickey Spillane - with Sapper representing the upper half. Like Drummond, Bond is incredibly patriotic, is not political and is intellectually unpretentious. He is also ruthless when undertaking his assignments - another similarity they share.

McNeile did not only write about Bulldog Drummond, but his other books were all thrillers some depicting the adventures of the character Ronald Standish, a private detective and in 1932 ‘Jim Maitland’.

Just as Bulldog Drummond needed to find excitement after his military service, perhaps McNeile sought this too and found it through his protagonists who were adventurous and plucky ex public school heroes who knew what it was like to be bullied having suffered in their schooldays.

On 14<sup>th</sup> August 1937 McNeile died at his home, King’s and Princes’ Farm, West Chilton.



Source: Oxford National Dictionary of Biography



**PART OF OUR CONTRIBUTION TO ...**

**HORSHAM DISTRICT**  
**YEAR OF**  
**CULTURE**  
**2019**