



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library



Speaks Volumes 23

The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of The Leeds Library

September 2020



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

From Your CEO

Dear Member

We hope you, your family and friends are in good health and have been able to make use of the Library and its services whether virtually throughout lockdown or from a visit to the Library over the last couple of months. It has been a period of time that has been extremely challenging and unlike any other in our 252-year history.

To help the Library adjust to the challenges that Covid-19 has brought, we have been actively seeking grant funding to enable the Library to function and continue its work effectively. Just prior to our reopening at the beginning of July, we received the good news that we had been awarded a Heritage Emergency Fund grant for £49,800 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



The aim of this funding is to help to protect heritage at this complicated time. The Library will be using part of its grant to repair the roof, work which had to be postponed during the lockdown period. The funding will also enable us to cover some of the costs incurred in reopening the Library, invest in a new CCTV system to improve the security of the Library when we are closed, undertake further book conservation and help us in developing our fundraising, marketing and income generating activity.

Alongside receiving grant support from the Government Job Retention Scheme (furloughing scheme), the Heritage Emergency Fund grant has helped the Library absorb, for now, some of the negative financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis. We are continuing to look at other areas for financial support over the coming months so that the Library can flourish and extend the work that we are able to undertake.

It has been really good to see Members returning to the Library since reopening and the relaxation of the lockdown regulations. The feedback from Members visiting the Library in recent weeks has been positive and we hope to see an increasing number of Members returning to the Library as we continue to extend our opening hours and services provided.

Cont/



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

From Your CEO, cont'd

In September we will be open for 6 hours a day from Monday to Saturday and will be looking at making newspapers and magazines available once again for browsing. We will also be aiming to have hot and cold refreshments available in Coffee Corner so that Members can make their own drinks and enjoy more time spent in the Library.

It is hoped that this process of steadily relaxing conditions within the Library will mean that before the end of the year, the Library, subject to any changes in government advice, will be close to being fully open in a way that respects social distancing requirements and Member expectations.

We look forward to seeing you soon. Please note that the Library's AGM is on Saturday 19th September at 2pm. See the following article for more information.

With best wishes,

Carl Hutton

Library Opening Hours

From Monday 7th September, the Library will be open:

Monday	10am to 4pm
Tuesday	10am to 4pm
Wednesday	10am to 4pm
Thursday	12pm to 6pm
Friday	10am to 4pm
Saturday	10am to 4pm
Sunday	Closed

We hope to extend these hours, Government restrictions permitting, again in October. Check the website or call us for more information nearer the time.





FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

From Your Editor

It's a great pleasure to bring you Speaks Volumes 23 from a reopened Leeds Library! Summer has just flown by and we now find ourselves heading for Autumn and longer evenings. What better thing to do then than to pop in and see us and stock up on your reading? If you are unable to visit us in person then we have lots of online resources for you to access in our eBooks Library, and PressReader trial service for newspapers and journals. The latter expires in October so make the most of it now. Details of how to access both of these and our postal loans service are included in this newsletter.

If you have visited the Library, you cannot fail to have seen our beautiful new window art by local artist [Jenny Tribillon](#). Her work is really stunning and she is much sought after. Our front cover shows the Library's main ground level window but it really doesn't do it justice. If you can come in soon to see it please do as it will be replaced with a new artwork for Autumn in the next few weeks.

Our Book Club and Reading Group continue to meet virtually and we hope our reviews tempt you to read some of our choices. Our monthly Lockdown Quiz nights are fiercely competitive and if you haven't joined us for one yet, it's time you gave it a go! The next one is on Wednesday 7th October at 8pm via Zoom. We've had a wonderful Summer of lunchtime poetry events in our regular Nowt But Verse series. Host and poet Hannah Stone has chatted with Becky Cherriman, Peter Spafford and Pamela Scobie to name but three. They are fascinating insights into each person's life, influences and writing. Hannah's next guest is Aziz Dixon at 1pm on Friday 25th September. Full details of all events can be found on our [website](#). Look out for more events coming soon.

My thanks to Lucy Evans for her book review of *The Author's Effects: On Writer's House Museums* by Nicola J Watson, and to Bob Duckett for his fascinating article, picking up on [Brian Cole's](#) in the last Speaks issue, about Cedric Chivers.

The next issue of Speaks Volumes will be published in November and I'd be delighted to receive your articles for inclusion by Monday 26th October by email at gellf@theleedslibrary.org.uk.

Best wishes

Fiona Gell, Marketing & Communications Officer





FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

Library News

Annual General Meeting

The Library's AGM will be held at **2.00pm on Saturday 19th September** in the New Room.

To ensure compliance with social distancing guidance we will only be able to accommodate 40 Members at the meeting. Those wishing to attend will need to register in advance and if more people want to attend than we can permit they will be selected on a first come first served basis. To register please either email wests@theleedslibrary.org.uk or telephone the Library on 0113 245 3071, giving your name, membership number and contact telephone number.

The AGM will be strictly a business meeting to consider and approve the Annual Report and Accounts, receive the results of the election of Trustees, and transact any other necessary business. There will be no refreshments and no speaker.

If you are unable to attend but have a question for the AGM please submit it in advance. We will ensure that questions are responded to at the meeting, and the report on the AGM in November's Speaks Volumes will include those responses.

You can also arrange a proxy vote so that you can vote on the matters to be considered at the meeting. Details of how to do this along with the AGM papers are being sent out by email and post for those Members who don't have an email address this weekend.





FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

A Fond Farewell to Nichola by Jane Riley

After more than 7 years, we said goodbye to Nichola Holmes (Library Assistant) who resigned at the beginning of April to be able to care for her elderly parents who lived in Norfolk.

Nichola left an impression on all who met her. She was a one-off. She never refused to do a job, no matter how dirty, or onerous, and she was popular with colleagues as she loved shelving which is the least favourite job here!

Aidan tells a very funny story which sums up Nichola perfectly. She offered to pick him up one Saturday to bring him into work. They were late and I was starting to imagine all sorts of things. Apparently, Nichola rang Aidan to ask where he was as she had been sat outside his house for 10 minutes. She was sat outside a house – just not his house! When they eventually met up, he climbed into the passenger seat only to almost end up sitting on a bowl of porridge she was eating on the way in. In her lap was her make-up and at every traffic light stop or hold-up, she applied more using the rear-view mirror to see what she was doing. She often appeared on a Saturday, with one eye “made up” and the other a work in progress!

She was known for her hoarding tendencies and her loft became infamous. If you wanted a pirate costume, a set of heated rollers, a grand piano or a grandfather clock, she would find it up there and bring it in on the bus for you.

A mother to two sons, she looked after us all and was one of the kindest people I have ever met. Eccentric yes, but she was our eccentric and the Library is a sadder and less colourful place without her. She will be sorely missed by us all.





FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

Services You Can Access From Home

eBooks Library

Our new eBooks library went live on Monday 21 April and many of you have already signed up and used it. Currently we have over 350 titles available (including some audiobooks) and we are adding more books all the time.

Most of our selections so far have been informed by your requests and reading habits, as well as some classics, but please let us have your suggestions and we will see what we can do. Recent popular reads have been *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* by Anne Tyler; *The Secret Commonwealth: the Book of Dust Series, Book 2* by Philip Pullman; *Travels with My Aunt* by Graham Greene; *The Mirror and the Light* by Hilary Mantel; *A Modern Cinderella: the Little Old Shoe and Other Stories* by Louisa May Alcott.



We have set a limit of 3 books per Member to ensure that as many of you as possible can borrow and we would ask that once you have read a book, you return it to the collection so that other Members can access it.

To access the eBooks library:

Download the Libby app which is the e-reader (unfortunately, you can't use Kindle): [google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.overdrive.mobile.android.libby&hl=en_GB](https://www.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.overdrive.mobile.android.libby&hl=en_GB)

To go straight to our online library click on this link: <https://theleedslibrary.overdrive.com/>

Or go through Libby <https://libbyapp.com/library/theleedslibrary> and follow the prompts to find **The Leeds Library**.

Cont/



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

eBooks Library, cont'd

Sign in using your email address (as your card number) and your 4-digit membership number as your PIN (*see below for more help on this), then browse the eBooks library collection and borrow a title.

N.B. If you have a couple or family membership and have only ever provided us with one email address and you want your own eBooks account, you will need to give us a second email address.

*If you can't remember your membership number, it may be on a sticky label on your door card. Let us know if you need to be reminded of the number or the email address we have for you. Membership numbers with less than 4 digits need to have a zero or zeros in front of them to make them up to 4 digits. For example: 12 needs to be 0012, 123 needs to be 0123 but 1234 is fine. If you have a couple or family membership, you need to include the letter in the membership number also. For example: 12A needs to change to 0012A and 123A needs to be 0123A.



We intend to continue with the eBooks library as a service to Members going forward. If you have any problems using it, please contact us and we'll do our best to help you.

Members' Forum

Join our online community Forum and stay in touch with each other and exchange news and ideas. We have dozens of threads created by staff and Members. Examples are current reading, book reviews, free resources to do from home, Library memories and our popular Word of the Day. We now have over 130 Members and we would love you to join us there too.

It takes just seconds to register here: <https://theleedslibrary.freeforums.net>



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

Postal Loans

The Postal Loans service allows you to have up to 10 items (books, DVDs, magazines, talking books) delivered to your door by the Royal Mail. There is a small charge to cover the costs of packaging and postage only.

These are the charges:

£3.00 for up to 3 items to be posted to you;

£6.00 for between 4 and 10 items to be posted to you.

This is how to request a postal loan:

1. Reserve items from our catalogue via the website in the usual way, ensuring you add a note specifying that your request is for a postal loan: <https://www.theleedslibrary.org.uk/search/>



Or

Email counter@theleedslibrary.org.uk with your list of requests.

Instructions on how to log on and make a request can be found on the [Search the catalogue](#) page on the website.

N.B. Some items may be on loan, reserved for another Member or offsite, but we will inform you if this is the case to allow you to select another item.

- 2. Once you have selected the items you would like, please make your payment by clicking on the red DONATE button at the top right hand corner of the website home page and using a bank or charge card, adding a note identifying your membership number and name.
- 3. Your parcel will be sent to you as soon as possible by 2nd class post.

Cont/



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

Postal Loans, cont'd

If it is safe for you to do so, you may return any loaned items to the Library. We have drop boxes in the foyer and we will quarantine your returns for 72 hours before either shelving or passing on to the next reservation.

Anyone can return loaned items on your behalf – they do not have to be a Member. Please let us know if you will have a problem returning items to us and we will arrange collection.

PressReader Trial Subscription

We are delighted to have been able to secure an initial 3-month period free access to [PressReader](#) for all Members which ends in October. This means that you will be able to view over 6,000 titles (newspapers and magazines) including the majority of UK newspapers free of charge. It is essential though that you follow these joining instructions as registration is strictly limited.

You will need to contact the counter for a special link to activate your access which will take you through to this page.

Please do not forward this link to anyone else. Register using your email address and password of your choice.



You will now be shown the second screen to complete.

Now download the PressReader App and login. This is a onetime process, so once you've logged in on the email link you do not have to do it again. Henceforward, you will access by your chosen username and password.



You should be able to sign in with 2 other devices as well. We hope you enjoy your free trial to this excellent service.



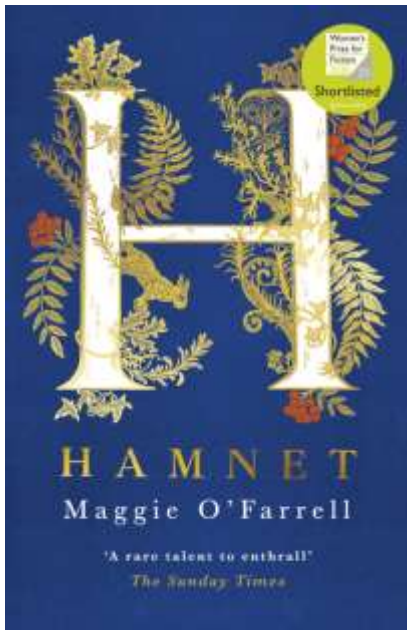


FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

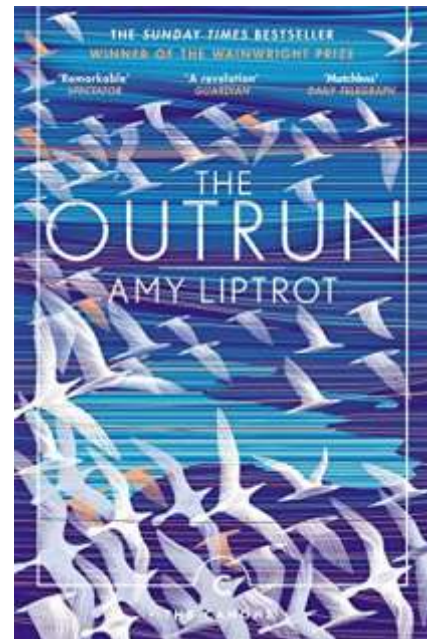
Zooming with the Leeds Library Book Club

Since the last edition of Speaks we've enjoyed three Book Club reads!



July was *Hamnet*. Maggie O'Farrell fan or not it would be difficult for a reader not to enjoy *Hamnet*. We gave it a resounding thumbs up and highly recommend it. Be warned though, it is an upsetting book in lots of ways, plague, death and grief are central and especially resonated with all of us in these Covid times. O'Farrell chooses Agnes/Anne as her main character, not William who is there throughout the story but never named. It is Agnes' story that is told and the story of their relationship mainly through her eyes, alongside the devastating grief on the loss of a child. For some of us this was a first time reading his author, others had read more of her work. Her style in *Hamnet* is very different to her other books but still retains the same beautiful writing.

August was *The Outrun* by Amy Liptrot, part memoir, travelogue and nature treatise. It is the story of the author's spiralling alcohol addiction and ultimately how she recovers. It ranges between Orkney, London, back to Orkney and some of the Orkney Islands. Whether you have ever visited there or not you will love the geographical descriptions and the nature writing. They will take you there in your imagination and then make you want to go there. Less so when she is describing her life in London, addiction and its consequences. You really feel the claustrophobia and her struggle and you don't want to be with her on that part of her journey.



Cont/

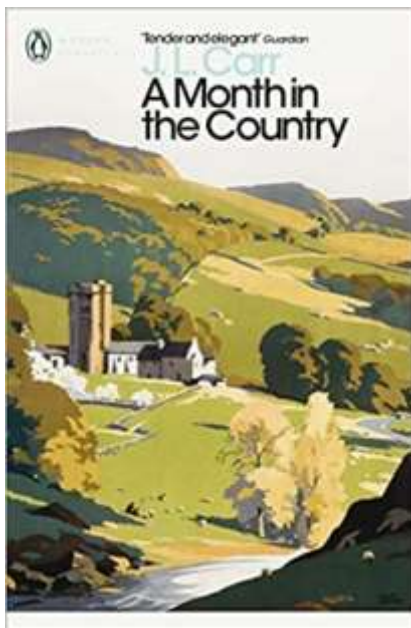


FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

Zooming with the Leeds Library Book Club, cont'd

There is a lot of repetition about her addiction and one reader found that really irritating. I think we agreed that it was more a memoir of process and not really her life story. We wanted to know more about her parents and how their stories contributed to her addiction but we only got unsatisfying glimpses. All that said, we would recommend it. She is a very gifted writer and a deserved award winner.



Finally for September, we have just read *A Month in the Country* by J.L. Carr. It's a very short read being not quite a novella but more than a short story and very easily read in one sitting. We were in unanimous agreement that we really loved it and would recommend it to anyone who hasn't read it yet but also to those who have for a re-read. It is part memoir, part lecture, part sermon. Set in the Summer of 1920, it is the story of Tom Birkin, a returning WW1 soldier who comes to the village of Oxgodby to uncover its church's medieval wall painting. The story has a deep sense of place and time with characters that are intensely human. It is very funny but also has great pathos. It is a book to experience.

For October (5th) we will be reading *Mr Loverman* (2016) by Bernadine Evaristo and in November (9th) it will be *Stoner* (1965) by John Williams.

You can find out more about what we thought about all the books we have read on the Members' Forum in the Book Club thread. Please feel free to post your own comments there too if you have read any of the books we have covered.

Multiple copies of most of our chosen titles are available to download for free from our [eBooks Library](#).

We Zoom our discussions and if you would like to join us then please email me and I'll send you a Zoom link nearer the time: gellf@theleedslibrary.org.uk.

All Library Members are welcome.

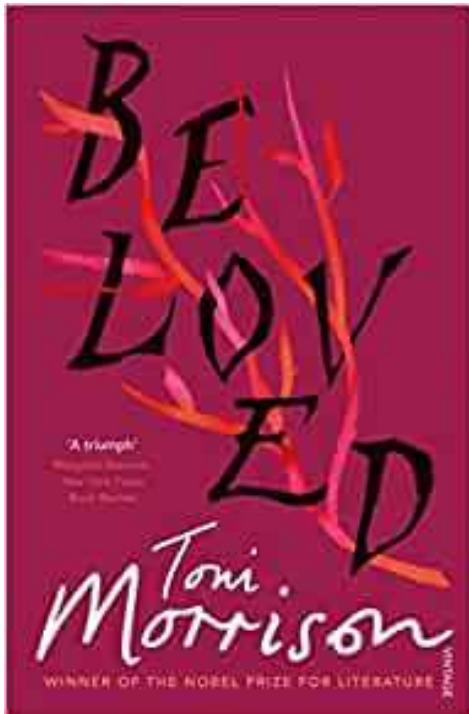


FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

The Leeds Library Reading Group - Still Active On Zoom! By Chris Stead

Our long-standing Leeds Library Reading Group, which meets every first Tuesday of the month, has found a way of continuing to operate in spite of the current restrictions, using Zoom. Numbers taking part were very much reduced, but on Tuesday 4th August sufficient of us met to have a very fruitful discussion about *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. We know that it isn't the same as meeting face-to-face, but we all enjoyed it nevertheless.



It was felt that this novel was as relevant and powerful in the era of Black Lives Matter as it had been when it was written in 1987.

Toni Morrison was inspired to write it by the true story of Margaret Garner, an African American whose story she came across in an 1856 newspaper article.

The novel tells the story of Sethe, an ex-slave, her daughter Denver, and other members of their extended family and fellow slaves, ranging back and forth from their days as slaves on the “Sweet Home” plantation up to 1873, the point at which the narrative begins.

Sethe and Denver now live at number 124 in Cincinnati, a house which is shunned by neighbours because it is haunted by an angry spirit who we learn is that of the baby daughter that Sethe killed rather than let her fall into the hands of slave-hunters – one of the most shocking and dramatic scenes in the novel, and its central driving event.

This spirit of “Beloved”, driven out by Sethe’s lover, comes back as a young woman who acts as a kind of succubus on the family, and whose craving for lost love and attention threatens to destroy it.

The power of this novel lies in the way it forces the reader to confront the evils of the slave system. Morrison does not flinch from describing the ways in which it plays out, from the acute physical suffering it inflicts on individuals to the ways in which it destroys any possibility of stable family life for slaves on plantations. Despite Emancipation, its victims are unable to escape their past and are traumatized and scarred both physically and mentally. **Cont/**



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

The Leeds Library Reading Group - Still Active On Zoom! By Chris Stead, cont'd

Nor do whites- “people with no skins”- escape the malign effects of the slave system. Their actions range from the vicious “scientific” savagery of the “Schoolteacher” to well-intentioned abolitionists and the poor white girl who saves Sethe’s life when she is on the run.

The novel ends on a note of possible redemption and hope for the future, though some in the group felt that this rather unconvincing. Nevertheless, the novel is an uncompromising assertion of our common humanity and the human spirit.

For September, the Reading Group discussed *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. Thank you to Ann Suter for setting these meetings up and keeping the Group reading together!

Diane Cook - Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize

In March, we were delighted to welcome US author Diane Cook to the Library who was the International Writer in Residence for Leeds Lit Fest, supported by a British Council grant. Diane (left) officially opened Leeds Lit Fest with an event where she spoke about her life and writing with Prof Susan Watkins from Leeds Beckett University. Her debut collection, *Man v Nature* (2015), was shortlisted for the Guardian First Book Award and the L.A. Times Book Prize and her novel, *The New Wilderness* (2020) has just been long-listed for the Man Booker Prize. Photo by Pete Cook.





FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

Book Reviews

The Author's Effects: On Writer's House Museums by Nicola J Watson, OUP, 2020, 352 pp. Reviewed by Lucy Evans.

I'm sure many Members enjoy exploring writer's house museums. I certainly do, including unofficial museums where I blagged my way in. (George Borrow's house in Norwich and the Misses Gaskell's holiday home The Sheiling in Silverdale – later home of the Keighley poet Gordon Bottomley.)

So, I was intrigued to read this book. *The Author's Effects* is not a glossy coffee table presentation but a stimulating challenge to rethink what is going on with the creation of such places and what relationship they bear to authors and their creative processes.

It is a rich study with intriguing layers of esoteric literary history. There is a long tradition of tourists from the fourteenth century onwards, eager to engage imaginatively with the ghosts, to grab souvenirs, to leave graffiti and now in the same spirit to share "I was there selfies". Nicola J Watson analyses the phenomenon from many different perspectives – the reader, the visitor, the curator, the exploiter, the artist - and the opponents. Her trawl encompasses a variety of countries. She combines formidable knowledge with sharp observation of the sites she investigated. However familiar you may be with an author, this will give you fresh angles and perspectives.

It is both an excellent academic study and a very entertaining, easy read. Structured as a virtual tour, the chapters guide the reader through remains, bodies, clothing, furniture, household effects, glass, outhouses, enchanted grounds and finally out through the gift shop. Each chapter focuses on particular objects, some rather bizarrely related. Cowper's hares, Poe's raven, Sterne's starling, Johnson's coffee-pot, Woolf's spectacles, Agatha Christie's toilet seat, Freud's mirror, the whole of Abbotsford are amongst them.



The shock of discovery starts with the frontispiece and dust jacket painting. And by the end you really understand why Shakespeare's New Place in Stratford-upon-Avon is an allegory through garden and installation, a rejection by the designer Tim O'Brien of the idea of a biographical house museum. It also helped me understand some of my past reactions to various objects – why, for example, the Jane Austen desk in the British Library, has little attraction for the dedicated pilgrim. And why on earth there is a stuffed hedgehog at 48 Doughty Street? Good question!



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

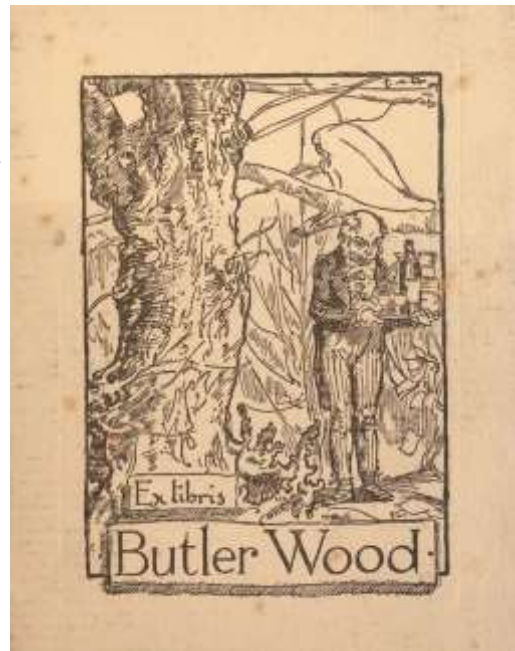
Members' Articles

Cedric Chivers - Far From The Madding Crowd by Bob Duckett

Mention of Brian Cole's new book on book-binder Cedric Chivers, *Aspire to be Beautiful*, in [Speaks Volumes 22](#), reminded me of a singular occurrence relating to the Chivers family which may interest Members.

In October 1925, on the occasion of the retirement of Bradford's long-serving Chief Librarian, Butler Wood (1854-1934), Wood reminisced that 'It was so long ago as 1874 when I first read one of Thomas Hardy's books. This was *Far From the Madding Crowd*, then running in serial form in the Cornhill Magazine, and I became so eager to follow the story that it was a positive pain to wait for the appearance of each monthly issue. When it was finished I cut out the sections from the magazine and had them bound together, and the volume is now one of my treasured possessions.'

In addition to being Borough Librarian, Wood was, among many other things, founder member of the Brontë Society and the first editor of the Society's Transactions; an early trustee of the Library Association; founder member of the Museums Association; the Yorkshire Dialect Society and the Bradford Historical and Antiquarian Society. I also belonged to many of these organisation, and so frequently did I find myself walking in Butler Wood's footsteps that I researched a monograph, wrote articles, and gave talks on him. In these activities I was supported by his daughter from a second marriage. Imagine my surprise, therefore, that on her death a few years ago she willed a smartly bound edition of *Far From the Madding Crowd* complete with Wood's humorous book-plate of a butler in a wood!



Inside the mint delux binding (sorry, Brian, I'm sure you have a better term for it!) duly lettered on the spine in gold with title and author and 'Cornhill Magazine 1874', was a signed letter from Cedric Chivers of October 1928:

Cont/



FOUNDED 1768

The Leeds Library

Cedric Chivers - Far From The Madding Crowd by Bob Duckett, cont'd



On Saturday last we returned the copy of Thomas Hardy's "Far from the Madding Crowd" belonging to your late chief, Mr. Butler Wood.

If it is permissible I should like to make him a present of the binding as a small reminder of many years' friendship with him in the library world.

Yours faithfully

Cedric Chivers

But there was a puzzle. Had not Wood said the parts had already been bound 54 years earlier? A re-bind perhaps? To add to the

confusion, there was a postcard tucked inside the book picturing 'A romantically placed second-hand bookshop just off the main road at Hitchin, Herts', on which was written: 'Bought *Far from the Madding Crowd* Aug. 1928'. It was definitely the Cornhill Magazine version, not a new edition. So here was a bibliographical puzzle. Oh yes! Wood was also a member of the Bibliographical Association and had written a paper on bibliophile Thomas Gent of York.

The puzzle took some solving. The sequence of events appears to have been thus: in his 1925 retirement speech referring to his 1874 purchase and binding the parts of Hardy's book printed in the Cornhill Magazine, Wood was referring to an earlier, unpublished paper of his. Now (1925), after 51 years, maybe he no longer had the book – it had disintegrated perhaps, or lost. An unbound replacement was purchased in 1928 from a bookshop in Hitchin which was then sent by Wood to Chivers to be bound. In recognition of their 'many years' friendship', Cedric Chivers had it royally bound and presented to the 74-year old retired chief librarian. Wood died in 1934 and the book passed to his daughter.

And now it has come to me. If not the original bound parts cut out from the 1874 magazine, then a worthy simulacrum. In any case, as a personal memento of my hero, Butler Wood. I treasure it, thanks to Cedric.

CHIVERS' BINDING LASTS LONGER THAN THE BOOK AND THE BOOK LASTS LONGER FOR THE BINDING. Slogan on letterhead.