

The Journals and Diaries of E M Forster

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The Pickering Masters

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Edward Morgan Forster (1879–1970) is best known for his beautifully-structured novels. He is recognized as one of the giants of twentieth-century literature.

This fascinating collection of diaries, travel journals and itineraries brings together all previously unpublished material Forster wrote which can be classed as ‘memoir’.

Covering the period 1895–1967, the diaries and journals presented in these volumes allow new insight into Forster’s early life and his career as a writer. They will be of immense value to scholars researching this key figure of English literature. They will also be a useful resource to those interested in travel during the first half of the twentieth century, as well as the wider literary and social history of the period.

A frank and lively diarist, Forster was not a dogged one, and his entries over the years are irregular and eclectic. Despite this, the archival material (held at King’s College, Cambridge), here newly transcribed, is substantial. Friendships with T E Lawrence, Benjamin Britten, Lytton Strachey, Dora Carrington, John Maynard Keynes and Leonard and Virginia Woolf are all attested to. Meetings with other writers of the period including A E Housman and Henry James are also documented. Details on Forster’s sexuality, though often veiled, are nonetheless in evidence, particularly with regard to his long relationship with Bob Buckingham.



E M Forster

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- All diaries and journals are previously unpublished
- Newly transcribed and not available in any other format
- Covers a period of over seventy years
- Illuminates the life of a key figure of English twentieth-century literature
- Full scholarly apparatus
- Index in final volume

**The Pickering
Masters**

Sample page

Aug. 6 Certainly blinder than the overleaf entry, but this may be due to the ointment which dear Narliker¹ squirts twice a day into my eyes. – Rested most of the day, as yesterday I was stumbly and couldn't give <an> order clearly in the kitchens. Where else could I grow old amid such kindness and competence? "Everyone likes me" which in literature, particularly in the drama, presages <catast> disaster. Complacency must be punished". But life does not always follow literature, and ghouls nosing in my remains may be disappointed. – That I shall be soon swept away and forgotten is another matter and doesn't count.

Aug. 18 I should like to record – and why not here – that during nearly 70 years I have been interested in lustful thoughts, writing, and sometimes actions, and do not believe that they have done me or anyone else any harm,

Nov. 19^a and probably soon for me \death comes/, for the symptoms to day are tiresome,^b and I can write only a little legibly, am an not yet in bed at soon may be put there as I stumble so. I want^c to record that so far I feel no fears, pain, or remorse, only annoyance.

Faith² should come to morow, Bob,³ May,⁴ sheraraile,^d Cotler,^e to morrow. Ben⁵ next week. The plan is to stay for the festival.⁶ – A Passage is being televised.⁷ – Every body have been very kind, including the nurses at Addenbrookes,⁸ and I don't like <people> leaving the err^f

Now to bed – can hardly leave, a nuisance.

1 Jayant Vishnu Narlikar, born in India in 1938; astronomer. After gaining his BSc. from Benares in 1957, he entered Fitzwilliam College (then Fitzwilliam Hall), Cambridge (BA, 1960), and was Berry Ramsay fellow at King's from 1963, then senior research fellow (1969–72), also lecturer in the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy. In 1972 he became professor of theoretical astrophysics (and in 1983 senior professor and head) at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in India.

2 Lady Faith Culme-Seymour (1911–83), daughter of George Montagu, ninth Earl of Sandwich.

3 Bob (Robert Joseph) Buckingham (1904–75), policeman and later probation officer, whom Forster met in London in 1930 and in whose (and his wife May's) house in Coventry he died in 1970.

4 May Buckingham, née Hockey, a hospital nurse in London whom Bob had met in 1931. They married on 31 August 1932 in a registry office, with Forster as one of the witnesses.

5 The composer Benjamin Britten (1913–76), whom Forster had first encountered in February 1937. Forster collaborated on the libretto for *Billy Budd*.

6 I find no record of a music 'festival' at this point; but the Cambridge University Musical Society performed Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* on 25 November 1965; perhaps Britten intended to go to this.

7 *A Passage to India* was televised by the BBC as part of their 'Play of the Month' series. It was broadcast on 16 November 1965, starring Sybil Thorndike, Virginia McKenna and Saeed Jaffrey. Zia Mohyeddin reprised his role of Aziz, having previously played the character in both the original London theatre production and on Broadway.

8 Addenbrooke's Hospital was founded in 1766 on Trumpington Street, Cambridge, with money bequeathed by Dr John Addenbrooke, a fellow of St Catharine's College. Forster spent time in Addenbrooke's in 1960 and again in 1967 after he had a stroke in his sitting room at King's.

a Nov. 19] *this entry is an example of the difficulty Forster was having with his writing at this time: the holograph is flagging, there are many errors, some corrected and some not, and a few things remain very unclear (annotated below)*

b tiresome,] *this may be 'tire ones' or 'tired ones'*

c want] *Forster seems to have written 'woant'*

d sheraraile,] *this may be 'sberarade' or even 'Sherwood' (unidentified)*

e Cotler,] *this may be 'Cutler' (unidentified)*

f leaving the err] *Forster seems to have broken off at the end of the line, but he may have written 'leaving them'*

Aug 6 Certainly blinder than the overleaf entry, but this may be due to the ointment which dear Narkler squirts twice a day into my eyes. - Rested most of the day, as yesterday I was stably and couldn't give order clear in the kitchen. Where else could I grow old amid such kindness and competence? "Every one likes me" which in literature, particularly in the drama, presages ~~at least~~ disaster. Complacency must be punished" But life does not always follow literature, and growth rising in my remains may be disappointed. - That I shall be soon swept away and forgotten is another matter and doesn't count.

Sample of E M Forster's handwriting from the 'Locked Diary', August 1965
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Contents

Volume 1

- General Introduction
- Normandy Journal (1895)
- Journal (1898)
- Journal (1899)
- Journal (1900)
- Trip to Switzerland and Italy (1901)
- Journal (1901)
- Mediterranean Journal (1903)
- Notebook Journal (1903-9)

Volume 2

- The 'Locked Diary' (1909-67)

Volume 3

- Stisted (1910)
- Belfast Journal (1912)
- 'Incidents of War' Memoir, Alexandria (1915-17)
- Journal (1925)
- Africa Journal (1929)
- French Itinerary (1931)
- America Journal (1947 and 1949)
- Journal (1950)
- Journal (1952)
- Travel Journal, France (1953)
- Travel Journal, Portugal (1953)
- Loose Diary Pages (1954 and 1955)
- Trip to France (1955)
- Hellenic Cruise (1956)
- Trip to Austria (1957)
- Journal (1958)
- 'Trip to Italy' Diary (possibly 1962)
- Journal (1964)
- 'West Hackhurst: A Surrey Ramble'
- Index

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