MARGARET M FORD: AUTHOR

Margaret M Ford was born 3rd April 1948 and is an English novelist.

Until 2010 she lived in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England with her family.

Upon their retirement, she and her husband Moved permanently to Australia, and in 2014 they became citizens.

INDEX

Links
www.fordmainwaring.co.uk
www.holdfastradiatorvalves.co.uk
LRS UK : Long Range Systems UK
Australia's Leading Web Hosting Service Company

Home Page..... 1

Biography..... 2-6
Early Life
Personal Life
Working Life
Later Life

Writing Career.....7-13
Struggles To Achieve Publication
Novels and Publications

MARGARET M FORD

2018

Born:
3rd April 1948
Staffordshire, England

Occupations:
Sales Assistant for *BHS*
Laboratory Assistant for *Johnson & Matthey*
Freehand Painter for *Middleport Pottery*
Professional Singer
Director & Company Secretary for *Ford & Mainwaring Ltd*
Managing Director for *Hold-Fast Radiator Valves Ltd*

Biography

Early Life

Margaret M Ford, née Williams, was born at Princes Square, Longport, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, the second child of Leslie Stanway-Williams and Eunice Mary Williams (née Roberts) with almost eight-years between herself and brother, Leslie Williams. Her paternal grandparents were Ruth Williams (née Stanway) and William Thomas Williams.

By all accounts, she was a difficult child. She was walking by the age of nine-months but was a late speaker. She followed her brother everywhere, and quickly learned how to climb trees, play cricket and football, and fight with the best of them, a genuine *tomboy* for many years and always in trouble. Her saving grace was that she loved reading. As a result, when she started infant school she could already read. But the only two subjects she gave her full attention to throughout her education was English and History. She began her writing career in the 1980s.

Margaret attended Moorland Secondary Girls School in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent. In her final year she was fortunate to enter the *Commercial Class.* She left at the age of fifteen qualifying as a shorthand/touch typist.

Aged 3 with Mum

aged 5

Aged 10

Aged 15

Aged 17

Aged 18

Personal Life

Parents: Leslie Stanway-Williams and Eunice Mary Williams.

On the 25th March 1967 Margaret Mary Williams, aged 18, married John Ford, aged 26, at Longport Methodist Church.

In May 1968 Margaret gave birth to her first daughter, Dulcie Jane, and in November 1973 her second daughter, Heidi Marie.

Margaret and John have two grandsons, Reece John and Connor David

Pictured here with her closest friend of fifty-seven years, Pauline Mary Morrell, whom Margaret lost in July 2022

Working Life

Margaret has had a variety of occupations. Her first job as a shorthand typist she found totally boring and lasted only three weeks. But this training would greatly benefit her in later life. Also, later in life, feeling she had wasted her education, she attended college and attained qualifications in English and French. In the main, she worked at British Home Stores UK for two years, followed by one year at Johnson and Matthey in the pre-production office/laboratory. Feeling like a change, she then worked a short spell in a carpet shop but left when she became pregnant. When her first child was just five months old, her aunt looked after her baby while Margaret took up the job of a freehand painter at Middleport Pottery, which lasted just six months. She then became a stay-at-home mum for the next seventeen years.

With friends from Johnson and Matthey

SEN-e01-S5 [SF] *The Way We Were* THE SEN

Author's search for sheilas

MADAM, - I'm in the photograph of Johnson Matthey staff at the Vine pub in Newcastle in The mid-1960s (*The Way We Were*, January 17). I'm fourth up on the right from the bottom of the picture.

I enjoyed working for Johnson Matthey, in Burslem, and remember every face in that Photograph.

Two of the girls, Pauline Morrall and Sylvia Wood, are still my best friends in the UK.

We are in touch constantly.

I think we've known each other longer than our respective husbands.

And I favoured the Crystal dance hall in Newcastle. I have two daughters and two grandsons. I was managing director of Hold-Fast Radiator Valves Ltd until my retirement in 2008.

I was also director and company secretary for Ford-Mainwaring Ltd.

Approaching retirement, my husband and I sold both companies, which are still going strong, and in 2009 we emigrated to Australia, where we are enjoying a happy retirement.

I have been writing for almost 27 years, but it wasn't until I came to Australia that I found success as an author.

All of my novels are on Amazon/Kindle and eBook stores worldwide, and two of them will be published in paperback this very month by Sid Harta Publishers here in Australia. I hope you get more replies, as I'd love to know what happened to the rest of the girls in the picture.

I'll look out for any follow-up articles or comments on the original.

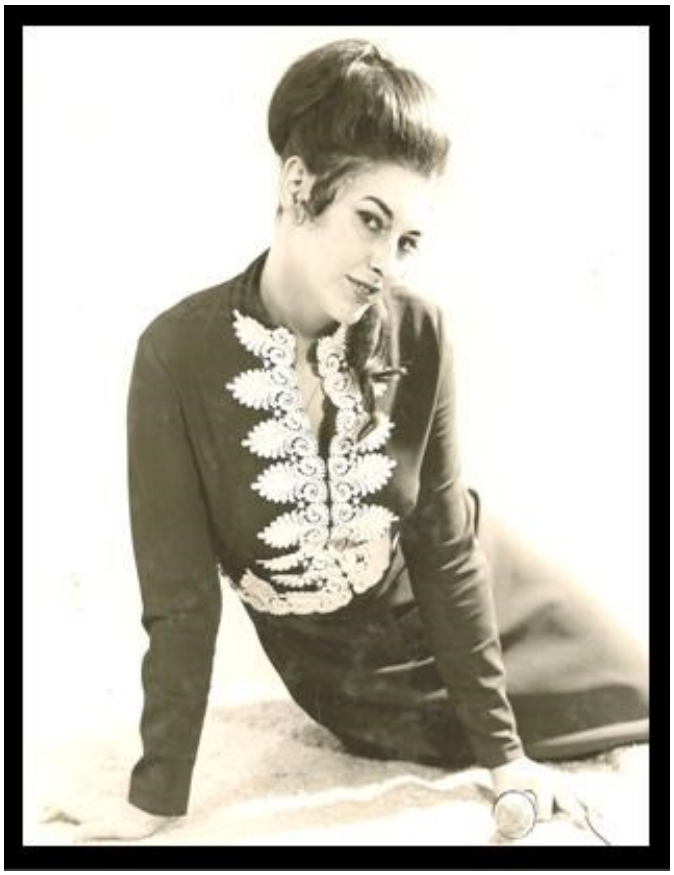
MARGARET FORD (née Williams)
Victoria, Australia.

Does this photograph rekindle memories for you? Write to Colette Warbrook, including your full name, address and telephone number, at Features Desk, Sentinel House, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3GN or email waywewere@thesentinel.co.uk

For ten years, 1964-1974, Margaret performed as a professional singer, travelling all around the country, always accompanied by her husband. Unless the booking was local like Trentham Gardens, where she performed on three occasions, she would consider only one-night stands because she needed to be at home during the day for her daughter. She never accepted Christmas bookings.

She never sought fame and, under constant pressure from agents to take on weekly bookings, three-month cruises and more, she retired from the profession in favour of her family, shortly following the birth of her second daughter.

First gig was a charity event for the blind. She was so affected by the gratitude of the audience that she never turned down similar requests.



One of her last performances was at The Regent Theatre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent in Pantomime. She was able to accept this term booking, as it was local. “Liked the tiara but hated the silly wig!”

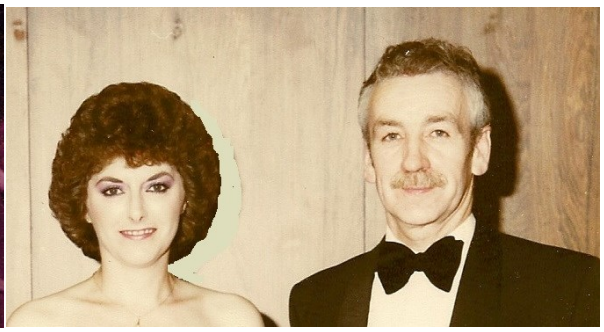
Later Life

In 1971 Margaret's husband started a heating and plumbing company: Ford-Mainwaring Ltd.

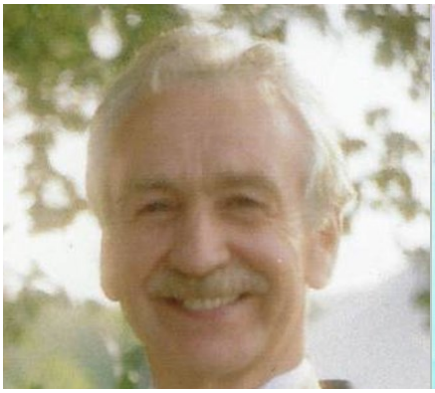
The Annual London Dinner/Dance for Heating Ventilating Contractors Association (HVCA)

1970s

1980s



At work 1990s



In 1985 John invented a commercial replacement top for radiator valves, followed by a universal domestic replacement top which proved to be very lucrative: Hold-Fast Radiator Valves Ltd. and Margaret ran this company. Due to a severe recession beginning circa 1987 the partnership of Ford-Mainwaring Ltd. was dissolved and Margaret became Director and Company Secretary for this company too, handling the accounts, PAYE and personnel while she continued to operate full control of Hold-Fast Radiator Valves Ltd. as Managing Director for twenty-four years. (During this time, she wrote numerous technical articles that were published in Heating & Plumbing magazines.) Despite the financial global crisis in 2008, both companies were sold as going concerns for fair prices, and are still thriving. The sale of both companies plus their house allowed them to retire to Australia.

Writing Career

Struggles To Achieve Publication

Margaret began writing in the 1970s. She was reading a novel and, after only three chapters, she discarded it, wondering how it could have been accepted for publication as it was so badly written. Believing that she could do better she sat down at her typewriter and sketched out a story line. It didn't take her long to complete her first novel, but then had no idea how to get it published.
Searching the shelves of her local book store she came across the annual publication of *'The Writers and Artists Yearbook.'* It listed all publishers and literary agents.

She spent years trying to achieve publication, refusing to follow other authors who would send out about ten copies of their MS at a time. She would choose one publisher only. The problem was that the replies often took 3-4 months. Even so, the problem was getting past the *Gatekeeper*. Publishers' rejection letters began to pile up, mostly informing her that they they only accepted submissions from literary agents, but some were helpful and included advice on how to get one. She spent just as many years attempting to obtain the services of a literary agent, only to receive the same rejection letters informing her that their client list was full. It soon became apparent that agents were not interested in you if you had not already been published; thereby creating a vicious circle.

Realising that the quickest way to achieve publication was by writing short stories, she checked out all the magazines. Disappointed to find that she would need to choose a genre she didn't much care for, she nevertheless quickly wrote two stories and submitted them. To her amazement, they were accepted immediately and she went on to have several more published, the first being *'MIZZ in August 1975.'*

Armed now with proof of publication, she once more began to go through the list of literary agents, but was furious to find that nothing had changed. At this point she gave up trying to obtain the services of one, and still to date does not use one. During all this time, she continued to write and by this time had now completed four full-length novels.

In 2009 'Lament for the Dead' was accepted for paperback publication by '*Libros International Publishing Company' (who don't appear to be operating any longer).* In anticipation of success at last, her first website was published in the UK by *'Long Range Systems UK Ltd'* This company has continued to host her UK Website. She waited almost two-years for publication. When, without warning, she received an e-mail advising her that the closure of many book shops in favour of online internet e-Books had persuaded them that they should be publishing only e-Books in future. They apologised for the cancellation of her contract and offered her a new one for an e-Book. She not very politely declined their offer.

She subsequently sent all her novels to N*orman L Price of Manuscript Appraisals UK* for an impartial assessment of them, all of which resulted in excellent reports. Consequently, he became her editor. By this time she had moved to Australia and was enjoying retirement when Mr Price contacted her to persuade her to allow him to convert her novels into e-Books and publish them; first on Amazon and then on all other e-Book stores worldwide. *'Lament for the Dead'* became her best selling e-Book. Mr Price is now retired. Her Australian website was designed by Jo Dunstan, also now retired, and is serviced by *Hosting Bay*.

Then in 2013 she signed a contract with *Sid Harta* in Australia to simultaneously publish in paperback *'Lament for the Dead'* and her new novel *'Beneath the Stone'.* Hoping for success, now all she had to do was hope they sold well. She had attended only the first two book-signings of a planned tour when she suffered a devastating accident, which left her with a permanent back injury. After informing the publishers that she would be unable to complete the book-signing tour, they were understanding and told her there would need to be a bigger a media campaign.

(By sheer force of will, she went from a wheelchair to a walking frame then a wheelie-walker and finally a walking stick, which she still uses today.)

Collins Bookstore Bairnsdale 2014

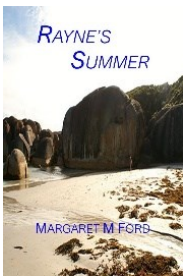
She is a member of PROBUS Mitchell River Club, and accepted the post of publicist for three-years, producing a monthly Newsletter for its members and other PROBUS clubs.

In 2021 and 2022 new editions of all her full-length novels were published in paperback by FMW Publications. Her e-Books were also updated.

She is currently writing a new novel, but due to her disability it is "Slow-going."

Novels and Publications

Rayne's Summer 1950s Period Mystery ISBN: 0-6451636-0-5



They all went off to active service together: Vinney and his closest friends Pete and Alfie, but only Alfie came back in one piece. Rayne's eldest brother was killed and Pete is locked up in Peddleton Mental Hospital. What is it that binds his silence and imposes an apparently self-deceptive paralysis?

For a nine-year old boy growing up in a remote seaside town in a close-knit community and within a loving family should be easy. But two children are missing, and an unexplained death is written off as accidental. What is Alfie Borne, a Korean War veteran, doing in an old unused warehouse, and why is he threatening Rayne? And there's something wrong with Raynes's favourite aunt. No one will adequately explain her behaviour to him. What are they hiding from him?

As family secrets are laid bare and events in the small community spiral out of control, Rayne is forced to take on extra years and evaluate his priorities. Consequently, he is destined never to forget the summer of 1956.

Reviews:

Rayne's Summer is a tale of a nine-year-old lad growing up in a small town on the English coast. Set in the 1950s with a backstory of the Korean War. Young Rayne is thrust into a whirlwind of events with meanings beyond his years.

Margaret M. Ford spins a web of vastly different conditions of Vinnie's two mates who returned after service, to the murders of two youngsters. She throws character after character at us that quickly form a picture of the evolving tale. They are beautifully described people who morph into classic Sherlock Holmes cast members before our eager eyes.

What appears to be a loving family becomes a tale of secrets that we follow through the eyes of the boy. Rayne, as the layers are peeled back one by one. Margaret has created a masterful story of loving relationships and edge of your seat dangers and threats that will keep you involved from beginning to the end.

In Rayne's Summer, she has condensed a classic mystery into a single summer, masterfully blending aberrant behaviour with quixotic searches for answers. It is hard at times to see Rayne as a nine-year-old, but Margaret Keeps bringing us back to his innocence amid his fetchingly precocious probes into the adult behaviours.

Ford is able to Keep a long list of identifiable characters in perfect focus for us as she introduces them and blends them into the tale. This is a brilliantly crafted book that will draw you in early and keep the pages turning. I highly recommend Margaret M. Ford's Rayne's Summer. A deliciously brilliant work!

— Tom Gauthier Readers' Favorite awarded 5-Stars

I don't usually read period novels, but I enjoyed Margaret M Ford's crime novel Lament for The Dead so much that I bought Rayne's Summer as soon as it was published on Amazon, and I'm glad I did. I thoroughly enjoyed it. It's a crime mystery set in the 1950s. The characters seem so real and the dialogue true to life. She writes in a style that is sometimes quirky and refreshingly different. I can't wait to read her next novel.

— Terry Holden on Open Book Review.

Shades of Darkness: A Mystery Period Novel set in the 1950s ISBN:0-6451636-1-2

For the wealthy resident of Westcliffe, the 1930s depression is just a blip on their cosy horizon. For those unaffected and uncaring, life is nothing but a continuous round of pleasure. The most dominant families are the Westerners and the Mayfields. And some members of the Mayfield line are more than happy to benefit from those suffering the effects of the slump.

But one young member of the Mayfield clan, Ben Appleton, is more discerning when considering the plight of the underprivileged. Often reviled and neglected in a house devoid of human warmth, Ben yearns for the love of a normal family. For a while his only friend is Tommy Woo, a Chinaman running a curio shop and laundry. By chance, one day, he comes under the tutelage of librarian Miss Eleanor Whitaker, an elderly spinster, and develops an independent and caring view of the world as a result, despite the evil in his midst.

When he learns that several member of his family are estranged and discovers that his grandfather was murdered, he sets out to catch up on his family's history. Then, after an eventful eight years and while nations prepare for war, Ben remembers the unsolved mysteries of his early days. He has never forgotten his childhood aim: to unmask the killer of George Mayfield and see him punished. But there are those who would murder him to keep their secrets.

Reviews:

This is an excellent murder mystery, revolving around an unusual and unhappy family during a period of great turbulence. Ben Appleton is an engaging and three-dimensional character whose journey from neglected youth to an independent young man to amateur detective is seamlessly told by Margaret M Ford, whose mastery of prose writing makes the story a delight to read. Eschewing many convenient conventions of the mystery genre by having the complex relationship between detective, victim, and suspects be both unique and already established. *Shades of Darkness is a very refreshing read for fans of the genre. A creative twist on the genre with a highly authentic depiction of the Great Depression and a diverse cast of deeply flawed family members, this book is an absolute must-read.*

K.C. Finn for Readers' Favorite awarded 5-Stars

Margaret M Ford's latest Book, Shades of Darkness, is one of those charming, heart-warming stories that gives a poignant insight into a dysfunctional family which is wealthy rather than poor, for once. It's a mystery set in the 1930s depression, a turbulent period which she manages to portray with great expertise from both sides of the track, and revolves around a young boy growing up in a very strange household. I found it a little over-sentimental at times but not at all predictable and a very satisfying read.

Erica Morley Open Book Review

I have enjoyed all of Margaret M Ford's books to date and Shades of Darkness is no exception. The quality of her writing in this novel is second to none. This story is exceptional and set apart from her others in that I wouldn't hesitate to let my twelve-year-old son read it. It's not your usual run-of-the-mill sort of mystery. The author manages to transport you to the period of the 1930s with scholarly ease. Her attention to even the tiniest detail is to be commended. I look forward to reading her next novel with eager anticipation.

Bob Bailey Open Book Review

Suranne’s List: a Political Thriller (Local Government) set in the 1980s ISBN: 0-6451636-2-9

When her aunt, a retired civil servant, dies Sue inherits far more than her estate, she inherits *Suranne’s List*. Little realising what she’s getting into, she sets out on a quest to learn what it means and what her aunt was involved in. The mystery of it is quickly solved, but as she works her way through the pseudonymous characters on *Suranne’s List*, it very soon becomes clear that someone will stop at nothing to prevent her reaching the end of it. And when she’s down to the last three names she realises that one of them is prepared to kill her by any means necessary in order to avoid identification and exposure.

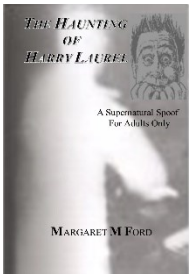
Reviews:

Suranne's List: Political Thriller Set in 1980s is indeed a murder mystery that will keep you guessing. I really enjoyed Suranne's List. It has all of the elements a murder mystery needs to make it a great book. The plot was fast-moving, the characters were well developed, and the outcome was awesome. The twists and turns had me changing my mind often as to which one was the murderer and which ones were the bad guys, believing none of them to be innocent. It is hard not to give away any of the plot while trying to describe how good this story is. Margaret M Ford has written a winner and I urge you to read it. You will find yourself rooting for Sue and not liking too many of the other major and minor players. Suranne's List will keep you on the edge of your seat from the first to the last page.
Trudi LoPreto for Readers' Favorite awarded 5-Stars

Suranne's List is the fourth novel I’ve read by Margaret M Ford and you never know quite what to expect. Guaranteed in all her stories are great characters and frequent episodes of humour, which always motivates me to look out for her next title. In this one, she has carefully crafted a fictional story around a set of fraudulent schemes run by local government employees that I suspect may not be all that fictional. I recommend it to anyone interested in finding out what some of our civil servants may be up to.
Bob Bailey for Open Book Review

I was prompted to buy an e-book called Suranne's List when one reviewer on Amazon said the tax office should use it ‘as their bible’. The author claims the story is entirely fictional, and it probably is, in which case Margaret Ford must have an incredible imagination – or she has been given access to a ‘Deep Throat’ in local government. I highly recommend it for a great and unusual read.
Erica Morley for Open Book Review

The Haunting of Harry Laurel: a Supernatural Spoof for Adults Only ISBN: 0-6451636-3-6



The haunting starts with the innocuous smell of perfume and ends with Harry Laurel fighting for his life. Charged with the murder of Anne Bowden and her daughter Jenny, Harry is forced to fight a war on two fronts. Despite overwhelming evidence, his denial of all charges is strenuous and consistent. But everyone knows he’s a habitual liar. Only his loyal wife believes in his innocence.
As Harry prepares for his trial, the haunting becomes more intense, and the outrageous acts perpetrated on him grow progressively nasty until he’s forced to confide in someone. His efforts to garner help in dispatching the ghost are constantly frustrated since everyone believes he’s attempting to cop a plea for insanity. But he knows that to confess the

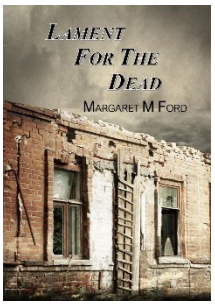
identity of the ghost would only confirm his guilt. And Harry's misery is multiplied ten-fold by the reactive hilarity he causes to those who would otherwise have very little to smile about.

Reviews:

Having read Margaret Ford's other novels, I found this one a bit of a shock, despite the warning at the start of it. It's unlike any ghost story I've ever read before. It is very funny but I still can't make my mind up if it's a wicked good read or should be banned.
Terry Holden Open Book Review

The Haunting of Harry Laurel is a very dark comedy indeed, though comedic it certainly is. I laughed a great deal reading it. This novel is an excellent fusion of horror and comedy, and will delight any fans of those genres with its mix of ironic wit and morbid belly laughs.
K. C. Finn for Readers' Favorite awarded 5-stars

Lament for the Dead Contemporary Thriller ISBN: 0-6451636-4-3



In Drayford Village, serious crimes are unheard of. Then the abductions begin. There is no rational connections between the victims that make any sense. And even when the bodies are discovered, the horrifying tableau only provides more questions than answers. But the Abductor is still holding all the cards. And he has another hand to play in a twisted plan for revenge a hundred years in the making.

Reviews:

Author Margaret M Ford develops her story effectively through the genuine dialogues and muted but vivid descriptions that should not fail to catch her readers' interest. Her treatment of shifts in the plot is nothing short of brilliant. As a result, Lament for the Dead flows in such a way that reading the book becomes highly enjoyable and interesting. This is a thriller that will meet any discriminating reader's expectations.
Maria Beltran for Readers Favorite awarded 5-Stars

This novel completely sucked me in during the prologue. Thoughtfully written and well-crafted, this novel is reminiscent of Agatha Christie's style. Margaret M Ford shows great talent and keeps her words flowing seamlessly throughout the pages.
John Morrow's Pick of the Week

A most engaging and mystifying story, weaving many different characters in the hunt for a ruthless serial killer, hiding in plain sight. The killer abducts his victims – seemingly unconnected, beloved members of a small English village – from under the noses of a growing army of determined detectives. The local librarian discovers vital clues that redirect a particularly resourceful and unconventional detective into the clutches of the waiting killer. The constant twists and turns of this complex plot make for a real page-turner. Another great read from Margaret M. Ford.
Dr Martin Cole Author

Beneath the Stone Contemporary WW11 Thriller ISBN: 0-6451636-5-0

Southern Italy, 1943: The German army is quickly losing ground to the Allied assault and retreating towards Rome. The quiet town of Vietri sul Mare has been spared from the ravages of war – until the arrival of an SS Officer amidst the confusion of retreat, and armed with a deadly purpose.

Aylesbury, 1956: David Montefort, a twelve-year-old boy uprooted from his old life, arrives at the lavish Ambrose House. He begins to learn the history of his enigmatic family, and the complicated link it has to the day Vietri sul Mare lost its innocence.

But Vietri is only the beginning, and the SS Officer evading punishment for his war crimes, still has an unfinished agenda that involves the Montefort family,

This thrilling mystery from Margaret M Ford spans three countries and two decades in the race to unravel the mysteries which began in 1943. The truth will turn David's idle curiosity about his own root into the unveiling of a shocking series of crimes – resulting in his own fight for survival.

Reviews:

Readers of Beneath the Stone will find a story they do not want to put down. The family dynamics are believable and the idiosyncrasies of its individual members are well drawn and realistic. Readers will turn the pages more quickly, finding a growing desire to learn the fate of David's grandfather and perhaps, in due course, to find justice served to a former Nazi.

Patricia Reding for Readers Favorite awarder 5-Stars

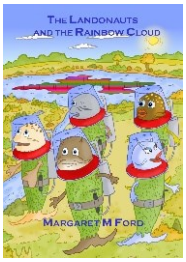
I have already had the pleasure of reading Ford's 'Lament for the Dead' and enjoyed it immensely. Now she has cemented my admiration of her work with this novel. Her writing skills once again immerse you easily and quickly into her story and her characters' strengths and flaws make for a fine reading.

John Morrow's Pick of the Week

The vengeful actions of a Waffen SS Officer during the battle for Italy in 1943 are not forgotten and result in a lifelong quest for truth and retribution. A riveting good read.

Norman L Price Manuscript Appraisals UK

OTHER BOOKS

Ten Minutes to Spare
A diverse collection of short stories

The Landonauts and the Rainbow Cloud
Illustrated children's book.
Illustrations by Simon Goodway