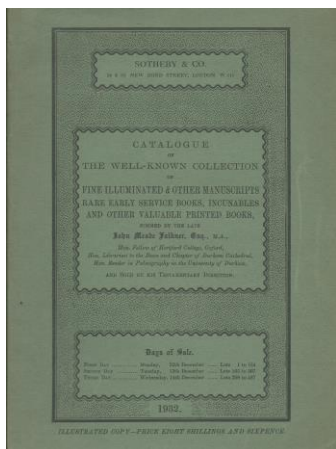


## A Leaf from a West Country Book of Hours c.1425

Between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> December 1932, *The Well-known Collection of Fine Illuminated & Other Manuscripts, Rare Early Service Books, Incunables and other valuable printed books formed by the late John Meade Falkner, Esq., M.A.* was offered for auction by Sotheby & Co. A contemporary account stated that the sale 'fetched in all a little over £8,000'. In *The John Meade Falkner Society Journal* number 5 (July 2004), John Coulter discussed JMF's book collection, also including a *Note* by Godfrey Smith on his Liturgical Books. Smith pointed out that Falkner 'had a passion for collecting religious books that were mainly liturgical. Of the 487 lots in his sale almost 45% fall into this category'. He collected both manuscript and printed versions, concentrating on English Catholic works of the pre-Reformation and Marian periods. More than a quarter of the English liturgical books, which included the primers and hours, which were for the laity rather than the clergy, were in manuscript form.



The 1932 Catalogue  
with description of  
Lot 211 below

211 HORAE. USE OF SARUM. MANUSCRIPT ON VELLUM, 78 ll. written in a pointed **gothic** hand, numerous initials in burnished gold on coloured backgrounds with marginal decoration, 18th Century calf, rebound, bookplate of Sir Robert Throckmorton (9 3/4 in. by 6 3/4 in.) ENGLISH, XV CENT.  
\*\* A large fragment of what must have been a fine MS. What remains is in good condition with wide margins.

There were 14 Books of Hours (lots 86, 204-215, 235). H.R. Creswick (1902-1988), Keeper of Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library in 1932 – and later Librarian of the Bodleian (1945-1947) and Cambridge University (1949-1967) – bought six manuscripts, including **Lot 211**. Although other Books of Hours raised large sums (Lot 205 - £44; Lot 207 - £36; Lot 208 - £150; Lot 210 -£46; Lot 212 - £75; Lot 214 - £60; Lot 214A - £110; and Lot 235 - £140), this Sarum Hours was purchased by Creswick for just £14.

Clearly, one reason was that it was 'a large fragment', missing all its miniatures. One wonders how many miniatures there were originally.

This Book of Hours was re-sold at Sotheby's on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1939 as Lot 44. It was bought by Edwards for £8. 10s. and in the following year it was acquired by Charles F. Cutts (1871-1949), co-founder of the Nevada Art Gallery from Dawson's of Los Angeles. The Gallery acquired Cutts' personal collection, as a foundation bequest, some time after his death. Some fifty years later, it sold the Book of Hours 'to benefit the collections' (the housing collapse was especially catastrophic in Nevada and may well have led to such deaccessioning); this time it was auctioned by Christie's on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2013. The auction house described it in some detail:

***Book of Hours, use of Sarum, in Latin, Illuminated Manuscript on Velum***  
250 x 170mm 78 + 2 leaves...with two-line initials in blue with red flourishing, recovered from a binding...other leaves also missing...

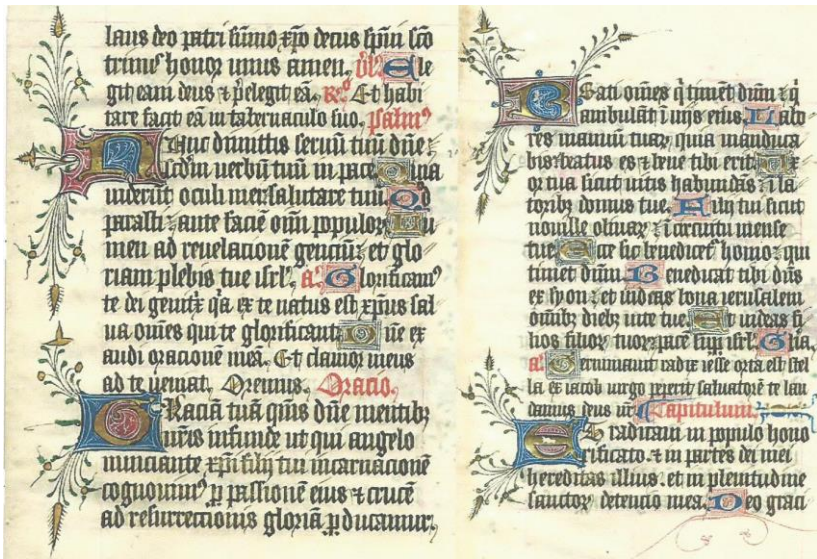
***Provenance:*** perhaps made for an English cathedral priory: the rubrics are unusually specific in some of their directions in mentioning the bishop, dean cantor, chancellor, and treasurer (ff.35v-36), priest (f.44), and ordinal (f.37); other directions indicate that short passages of text are to be said silently ('sine pronunciacione', ff.43, 53v; 'sub silencio', f.44v) suggesting that the book was to be read communally, not for private devotion. The church of Salisbury is also mentioned (f.55)

Although now lacking the opening leaf of every main text and, consequently, all its major illumination, this is an elegantly written and attractively decorated corpus of what was, until the Reformation, one of the most common types of medieval English book. **It has been owned by a series of discerning collectors.** Falkner would have concurred.

In the summer of 2014, Dr. Scott Gwara, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of South Carolina, produced Enchiridion 18: a catalogue of medieval manuscripts for university teaching & research. Among the 'Specimen Leaves & Fragments: Psalters & Prayer Books' were leaves from the Falkner Book of Hours. Wanting to preserve at least some leaves for American institutional libraries, Dr. Gwara had acquired eleven pages from a bookseller who had cut up Falkner's manuscript. Luckily, he was able to salvage all the consecutive pages of the Psalter of St. Jerome, which now resides in the Pitts Theology Library on

the campus of Emory University in Atlanta. Dr. Gwara donated one leaf from the Hours of the Virgin to his home institution, the University of South Carolina. He also stated that ‘this unusually large and important book of hours was doubtless commissioned for a chantry chapel in a major English church or cathedral’, citing the same points made in the previous Christie’s provenance details.

On the flyleaf of the book, there is a sixteenth century inscription (it may be earlier): ‘Ye shall pray for the soules of Edward Cotterell & Margaret hys wyff, & of Roger, Thomas, John, William, Jane, Amey, Elizabeth, chylderyn of the seid Edwarde & Margaret’.



English Book of Hours from a West Country Chantry Chapel

(From Enchiridion 18: Specimen Leaves & Fragments: Psalters and Prayer Books)  
King Alfred’s Note Book LLC (Kind permission of Dr. Scott Gwara)

It is idle to speculate on this Cotterell family as, so far, researches have drawn a blank. There is a village called Frampton Cotterell to the north-east of Bristol, where the present Frampton Court only dates from the 1600s, although it retains features from the medieval manor house. The

surname is a diminutive of 'Cotter', a technical term of status for a serf or bond tenant in the Feudal System. In the Domesday Book of 1086, the term 'coterellus' is used, the Old French being 'coterel', a diminutive of 'cotier', cottages. In the modern idiom the name is spelt Cotterell, Cotrell, Cotterill, Cottrill and Cotherill. The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of William Coterel, which was dated 1130.



The Book was at one time owned by Sir Robert Throckmorton (1702-1791), Bart., of Coughton Court, Warwickshire, and contained his armorial bookplate.

It is not yet known when John Meade Falkner bought the Book and from whom. One can only hope that he would be delighted that the Society which bears his name now possesses a fragment.

**Sir Robert Throckmorton  
by Nicolas de Largillière (1729)**

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*The contents of Books of Hours* were derived from the official service-books of the medieval Church, but they were commissioned and produced as the personal prayer books of the laity. They were therefore not subject to clerical control and could be decorated according to the position and wealth of the prospective owner. No two are alike and, combining sacred and secular elements in a manner not found in other types of illuminated manuscripts, have a particular significance in the history of religious sentiment and in the development of painting. The invention of printing increased rather than diminished the vogue for Books of Hours, and an enormous number were produced. The invention removed much of the previous drudgery and speeded up production. For another two or three centuries Books of Hours continued as accessories of fashionable piety, whilst becoming increasingly desirable for collectors with means – such as John Meade Falkner.