

Orts: The George MacDonald Society Newsletter

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The George MacDonald Society

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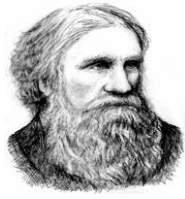


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Orts

The George MacDonald Society Newsletter No. 22, May 1991

1. **The Library.** The George MacDonald Library at King's College has moved. It is still housed with the Charles Williams collection in the Head Librarian's office, but that has moved and is now the last room (overlooking the river) on the first floor on the left side of the main courtyard. Of MacDonald's works we lack Poems (1857), The Portent, Rampolli, The Gifts of the Christ Child and Other Tales, A Cabinet of Gems, Heather and Snow, the annotated Hamlet and A Threefold Cord. Unfortunately most of these were restricted to one edition and so are quite rare. Of the major works of biography and criticism we have so far no copies of Colin Manlove's Modern Fantasy and The Impulse of Fantasy Literature. Stephen Prickett's Romanticism and Religion and Victorian Fantasy, Humphrey Carpenter's Secret Gardens, Greville MacDonald's Reminiscences of a Specialist and Michael Phillips' George MacDonald.

2. Robert Cecil, whose article, "A Tale of Two Families", appeared in North Wind no 7, informs us that the MacDonald letters and other material in his possession have now been deposited in the King's College Archives (not in the MacDonald Society's own collection). They are as follows:

A. Poems in MS: "My Room"

three Christmas poems (1876 – 8)

one Christmas poem (1887 – printed sheet)

one poem in letter of 1890 – see below

B. Letters to H. Cecil from various addresses: 1876, 1878 (two), 1879.

C. Letters to H. Cecil from Bordighera: 1883, 1888, 1889, 1890 (last contains short poem on death of H.C.'s son).

D. Two letters from Louisa MacDonald to H.C. (undated – probably 1876).

E. Letter from George MacDonald (father) to H.C., dated Huntly 1858, about John MacDonald's death.

F. Contemporary review (unsigned, undated) of GMD's dramatic poem, "Within and Without".

G. Two photos, one showing George MacDonald; the other a group showing his eldest son Greville, H.C., and Edward Hughes, fiance of Mary MacDonald. Probable date 1875-6, when the MacDonald family was in Bournemouth, where the photo was taken.

3. John Docherty urgently wishes to borrow a first edition of Adela Cathcart for a couple of

months or so, for research purposes. Can anybody help?

4. We mentioned in ORTS 20 that J.J. Flynn has republished *Far Above Rubies*, MacDonald's very last story. To date he has had no orders from the UK, so we repeat the offer: a facsimile of the New York ed. of 1899, hardbound in ¼ cloth and marble paper, at \$39.95 + \$1.50 postage or £25 + £1.50 postage. Obtainable from Mr. Flynn at PO Box 3855, South Pasadena, CA 91031, USA.

5. Kathy Trigg's brief biography, George MacDonald: the Seeking Heart is now out of print. Unlike its companion, Charles Spurgeon, it was never released in the United States, and she would be glad to hear from any potential publisher. She holds rights in the typography as well as the text. Contact her at the address below.

6. **Secondary Worlds.** Under this title, Bill Raeper has reviewed Raphael Shaberman's *Bibliographical Study of George MacDonald*. He commends the author's diligence and thoroughness, fulfilling the long-felt need for a bibliography where GMD's works in their various editions are listed in full. The work is well-produced, of high quality, and with a number of interesting illustrations. Raeper regrets, however, that the bibliography does not cover the period after 1974, thus failing to include a large amount of recent material on GMD. Critical interest began to increase only after 1975. On the whole, however, Raeper commends the bibliography as a valuable aid to MacDonald studies. Those wishing to read the full review will find it in the Times Educational Supplement for 15th February.

7. **Subscriptions.** Rachel Johnson would like to remind members to send their 1991 subscriptions to her at 97 Hykeham Rd, Lincoln, LN6 8AD, UK. If there is a red spot in the margin at this point, it means your subscription is overdue (however, if you are a US member, and have sent your subs. to Emily & Randall Tobias, please just ignore the red spot. We are having temporary communication difficulties).

8. **An Opinion on Registered Charity Status.** A recent Committee meeting discussed the possibility of seeking for the Society the status of a Registered Charity under English law. This status involves initial and continuing conformity – supervised by the Charity Commissioners of England and Wales – to a body of legal judgements and precedents. To qualify for Registered Charity status a body's property has to be held in England and Wales, the majority of its trustees and/or committee members have to live there, and it has to pursue "The relief of poverty, the advancement of education, the advancement of religion" or "other purposes beneficial to the community", while avoiding political, pressure group or campaigning activities. The George MacDonald Society might be able to fulfill these criteria. However, The Charity Commissioners' rather unclear booklet Starting a Charity also implies that Registered Charities must benefit the public, or sections of it, rather than simply their membership. This might preclude the George MacDonald Society, or might make a change in its character a precondition of Registration. In addition, the Society might find itself under continuing pressure or restraint in how it ran its affairs. In any case, as an international Society with strong American and Scottish links, we should think twice before becoming deeply rooted in England and Wales, or needlessly bound by local laws. There is potentially one big advantage in becoming a Registered Charity: this is because there

are tax exemptions for Registered Charities whose considerable funds or endowments would otherwise attract tax liability in England or Wales. However, this would be of no immediate benefit to the relatively impecunious George MacDonald Society. If we acquired substantial real estate in England or Wales we could, perhaps, reconsider the matter.

Tony D Triggs

Other opinions on this issue would be extremely welcome.

9. Two of our members will be involved in a forthcoming meeting of the Lewis Carroll Society: Professor Morton Cohen will deliver the second Roger Lancelyn Green Memorial Lecture, to be introduced by Richard Lancelyn Green. The meeting is on Fri. June 21 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room C, Birkbeck College, London WC1.

10. The William Morris Society is looking for volunteers to help spring-clean Kelmscott House. As we have a strong connection with the house (formerly The Retreat) some of our members might like to contribute time and energy, as well as taking the opportunity to see the inside of the house. Please contact Dorothy Coles at Kelmscott House, 26 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London W6 9TA, Or phone 181.741.3735.

11. We have an update on the G.K. Chesterton Study Centre, established at the home of Aidan Mackey. Aidan reports: "... many books which had belonged to GKC and his wife, Frances, were sold by the Estate, and I was able to purchase these. It seemed unavoidable that these would have to be sold to help repay the bank debt I incurred to buy them and to do work in the Centre. However, a scheme has been launched by which supporters may buy one of the books and donate it to the archives here . . . Over some forty years I have been building my own collection and archives, so that the house now holds a great richness of material, which will continue to grow. The Centre will not, however, be merely a museum, but an active centre propagating his work and thought, particularly among young people, and we will maintain links with students of other Christian writers, such as C S Lewis, Charles Williams, Dorothy L Sayers, and the Victorian George MacDonald, who was a major influence upon both GKC and C S Lewis."

12. G Knight is running an "Inklings weekend" in Bath on 15th-16th June. Anyone interested, contact John Docherty, 9 Medway Drive, Forest Row, East Sussex, RH18 SNU.

13. The International Biographical Centre is asking for information on those wishing to be included in the forthcoming seventh edition of their Who's Who in Poetry (1992). We do not wish to send a list of our members, but if any would like to be included, would they write to The Research Secretary, International Who's Who in Poetry, International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, CB2 3QP, UK, and apply for their very full questionnaire.

14. As of this issue, Tony Triggs ceases to be co-editor of ORTS: Kathy will carry the can alone! A big "thank you" to him for all his help and support.



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