

# Orts: The George MacDonald Society Newsletter

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The George MacDonald Society

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## **The George MacDonald Society Newsletter No. 23, August 1991**

### **1. Calendar**

\* "George MacDonald and his Background": a talk by Bill Raeper at Huntly Hotel, The Square, Huntly, on Wed 28th August at 8.00pm. This meeting will be used for the formal announcement of the establishment of the MacDonald Essay prizes (see para. 5).

\* Members are cordially invited to the Children's Books History Society on Tuesday November 19th at 6.30pm, when Raphael Shaberman will talk on "George MacDonald: Compiling a Biography", with special reference to the children's books. Place: The Library Association, Ridgemount St, London (off Store St, Tottenham Court Rd, near Goodge St & Tottenham Court Rd Underground Stations (Northern & Central Lines)).

\*\* Our own AGM will take place on Friday November 22nd, at 7.00pm at 58a Westbourne Park Villas, London W2 SEB. Please notify Freda Levson in good time at this address if you intend to come. The meeting will begin with a short recital of poems given by our member the poet and critic John Heath-Stubbs.

2. Although the information arrived too late for advance notice in ORTS 22, we note with pleasure that the OXFORD 91 triennial convention of the C S Lewis Summer Institute had a GMD seminar on offer among its many attractions this July. Did any of our members attend? Can they give us a report?

3. There has recently been an increased interest in the arts in the Gordon District of Scotland (which includes Huntly), and the GMD Society has become affiliated to the Gordon Forum for the Arts, which keeps us informed of the many activities in the area. We recently received a brochure of the Aberdeen International Youth Festival, running from 6th to 17th August. The Odon Japanese Dancers were performing at Leith Hall, near Huntly, and the String Orchestra of the Reykjavik College of music, at Huntly's Gordon Schools.

4. As a first step towards the establishment of a permanent Heritage Centre in Huntly, the Huntly Heritage Project Group, with the assistance of the Gordon Forum for the Arts, is establishing an exhibition in the Brander Library, Huntly. This may be open in time for Bill's lecture on Aug 28th. Prominent among the exhibits will be some of the "Beulah" scenery for the Pilgrim's Progress, designed and executed by the MacDonald family when they acted together as a touring theatrical group. There will, of course, be a range of other MacDonald exhibits.

5. Stephen Hughes, the Manager of the Huntly Hotel in Huntly, has generously under-taken to sponsor two annual essay prizes to be offered to pupils at the Gordon Schools in Huntly – one for junior and one for senior pupils. Prizes of £25 each will be offered for essays on a subject connected with George MacDonald's life or novels, or inspired by his fantasies and fairy stories. These will be judged by Mrs. Morag Black and other members of the GMD Society. Mrs. Black

will also be teaching the children about GMD and introducing them to the fairy stories and Huntly novels.

The Gordon Schools do, however, have the problem of gathering together enough texts and biographies on GMD to make the project feasible (apparently the copies the school once had were so popular that they disintegrated many years ago!). The Society has supplied Gordon McPherson, the Deputy Rector, with lists of suppliers of available books in print, but Mr. McPherson wonders if Society members would be willing to lend copies to the Schools. The following books are needed: At the Back of the North Wind, The Princess and the Goblin, The Princess and Curdie, Alec Forbes, Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood, Robert Falconer, William Raeper's George MacDonald, and E. Sainsbury's Life of George MacDonald.

If you are willing to lend any of the above, write your name and address in the books and send them as soon as possible – for the essays will be set during the coming term – with a covering letter to Gordon McPherson, Deputy Rector, The Gordon Schools, Huntly, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4SE. Gifts of books would also, of course, be much appreciated.

Your help is much needed as we do want this project to work.

#### 6. **Book Section**

Kathy Triggs has the following for sale, all in satisfactory to good condition, post free in UK. See tailpiece for address.

Sir Gibbie with intro. by Greville MacDonald. Dent 1924. £10

The same, edited & with a sensitive foreword by Elizabeth Yates. The best choice for anyone wishing to avoid the Scottish dialect while remaining very close to MacDonald. Blackie 1967. £20

At the Back of the North Wind with 75 illustrations by Arthur Hughes. Blackie (?)1895. £39

Thomas Wingfold, Curate. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1906. £17

The Marguis of Lassie. Same publisher, 1909. £15.

Overseas orders in sterling, please, adding £2 per book towards postage & packing.

**Secondary Worlds revisited.** In ORTS 22 we summarised Bill Raeper's review of Raphael Shaberman's Bibliographical Study. Raphael would like to point out that his work does in fact cover the period after 1974: the section dealing with translations is up to date, and reveals clearly that the current world-wide interest in GMD began in the 1950s – in fact, only 2 of his books were translated (into French and German) during the whole of his lifetime. The most recent translation recorded by Raphael is for 1987. He learned, too late for inclusion, that the parable from "The Disciples at Sais" by Novalis will be published in Germany this autumn in the original German together with GMD's translation (out of print for almost a century) plus one of Raphael's illustrations.

7. In ORTS 21 we suggested that last summer's Huntly visit had made a profit of £93.01. This has turned out to be incorrect, with the trip making a loss of £51.99, the key factor being that the coach cost more than expected.

8. **CHANGE OF ADDRESS.** Rachel Johnson, our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, has moved to 61 Longdales Road, Lincoln, LN2 2JS. Her new telephone number is 0522 532967.

*Orts: 23 (1991)*

We wish her, Terry and Nathaniel every happiness in their new home.

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Masthead and tailpiece illustrations by Arthur Hughes