

# Orts: The George MacDonald Society Newsletter

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Volume 27

Article 1

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1992

## Orts 27, 1992

The George MacDonald Society

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# Orts

## The George MacDonald Society Newsletter No. 27, September 1992



### **MEMORIAL UNVEILING CEREMONY**

The memorial, in memory of George MacDonald and his wife, is to be unveiled in **Drumblade Churchyard on October 3rd**. The programme is as follows:

- 2.30pm at **Drumblade Church** (some 2 miles north of Huntly) Gathering in church with eulogy and songs by choir, followed by the unveiling and light refreshments.
- 7.30pm at **The Brander Library**, Huntly Town Square. Evening gathering with talk on MacDonald's letters. The MacDonald exhibition will also be open and there will be a bookstall.

All members are cordially invited to both events, For bed and breakfast following are suggested:

Mrs I Bell	0466 792798
Mrs A Bennie	0466 792475
E.E Manson	0466 792482
E.M Thompson	0466 792456

If any members travelling to the Drumblade ceremony in October can offer a share of transport or would like to take up such an offer will they please contact the secretary.



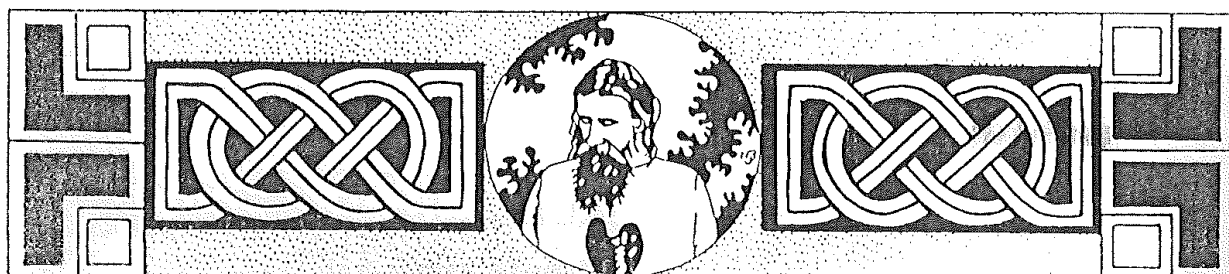


### 1992 AGM

This year's AGM will be held on **November 20th**. Please read the notice included with this issue for further details.

A summary of the last AGM minutes appeared in *ORTS* 25, but if members require it a full copy can be obtained from the secretary.

The social part of the evening this year will include readings by participants of favourite passages from MacDonald. Those who would like to contribute should contact the secretary, John Docherty, so he can coordinate the event.



## HUNTLY HERTIAGE

Huntly Hertitage has a varied selection of talks during the autumn, including the following, to which all are welcome.

Thursday 1st October *Slides of Old Huntly* a talk by Norman Connell.

Thursday 8th October *Bodies, Bawbees and Banknotes – Money in North East Scotland* a talk by Stewart Thain.

Both talks begin at 7.30pm in the Brander Library, Huntly Town Square.

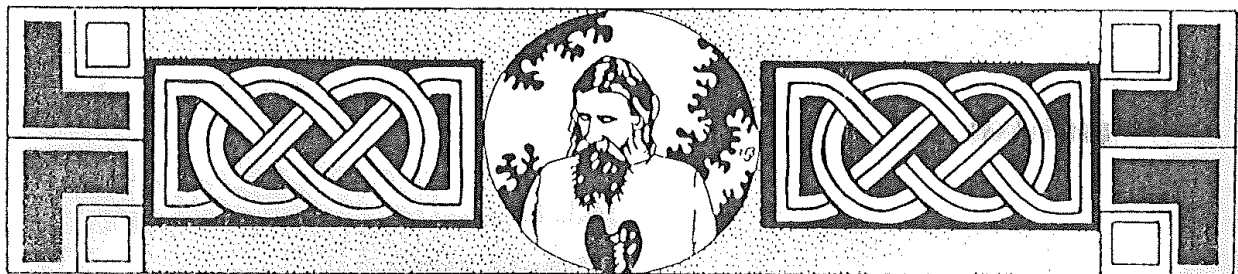
## BILL RAEPER – MEMORIAL SERVICE

Members may have heard of the tragic death of Bill Raeper in a plane crash in Nepal, on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bill was the former secretary of the society and editor of *North Wind*. His first published book was the definitive biography of *George MacDonald* published in 1987. Since then he had published a number of books and was particularly interested in the political geography of Nepal. He will be greatly missed. A full obituary will be published in *North Wind*.

The family memorial service will take place in Huntly on September 4th at Strathbogie Church. The memorial fund is called the Bill Raeper Memorial Fund. The Oxford memorial service is probably to be held on Saturday September 12th at St. Mathews Church, off Abingdon Road.

## THE BOOKISH MR DODGSON

Society member M.N.Cohen writes of the influence of F.D. Maunice and S.T. Colendge upon the faith of Lewis Carroll, in his article *The Bookish Mr Dodgson (Jaberwocky* The journal of the Lewis Carroll society. Vol.20 No.1 and 2.) These two men also played an important role in shaping the thought of George MacDonald. Cohen, in his article, notes that Carroll attended Maurice's Church on July 19th 1863 with his friend the MacDonalds and that after the service they all met with Maurice.



## *Ben has a way with words*



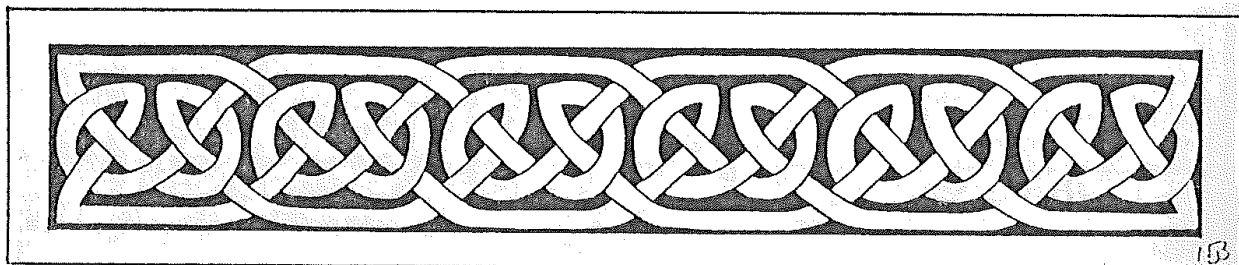
Mr Stephen Hughes, proprietor of the Huntly Hotel, presents Benedict Spracklen with a £25 voucher as the top prize in the George MacDonald Essay Competition which he sponsored.

Looking on are I-r school librarian, Christine McFarlane, Morag Black, representing the George MacDonald Society, and depute rector at the Gordon Schools, Gordon McPherson.

Mr Hughes decided to sponsor the competition to promote knowledge of the great writer among Huntly's young people following a visit to the town from members of the George MacDonald society.

### ESSAY COMPETITION

Due to the closure of the Huntly Hotel it has been agreed that the society will take over the Essay prize and extend the competition to include the Gordon district.





### **TOLKIEN CENTENARY**

On October 27th the Royal Mail will be launching their 1992 prestige stamp book and first day covers to commemorate the Tolkien Centenary 1892 – 1992.

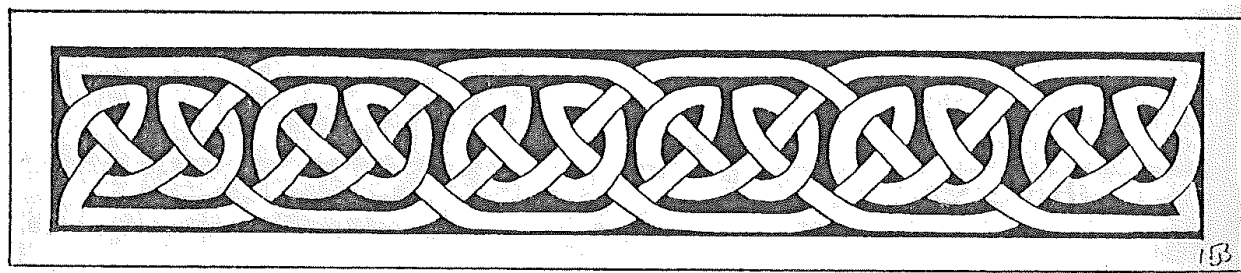
Also from August 18th – December 23rd an exhibition to commemorate the centenary of the birth of J.R.R. Tolkien (1892 – 1973) will be held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in the exhibition room, old library quadrangle. An illustrated catalogue and a poster will be available.

### **CALLIGRAPHY LETTER CARD**

The society is producing a letter card with a verse in fine calligraphy from one of MacDonald's poems on the front. The verse will be suitable for the card to double as a Christmas card, and it may ready just in time for Christmas this year. If so, details will be circulated with *North Wind*.

### **MAY LECTURE – KINGS COLLEGE, STRAND**

On May 17th Aidan Mackey gave an informative and interesting talk on *George MacDonald – His influence on G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis*. Refreshments and a bookstall were also provided. Unfortunately attendance was low despite adverstising. However, the wide distribution of posters is sure to have increased public awareness of the society.



## Christian Fantasy

*From 1200 to the Present*

by Colin Manlove

Macmillan £40 pp356

Karen Armstrong

THE SUNDAY TIMES  
2 AUGUST 1992

**I**t takes courage to entitle a study of the role of the imagination and the supernatural in such writers as Dante, Milton and Charles Williams *Christian Fantasy*. At a time when religious faith is becoming increasingly marginal, many of Colin Manlove's readers will as-

surely want us of the imagination. Manlove argues that the poem leads us through a hall of mirrors until the true shape of things becomes manifest and we finally see the frailty and transience of the fantasies of evil.

With the Renaissance, we have the first hint of the great divorce between heaven and earth. Where Dante's vision was something *given* (by Virgil or Beatrice), people felt that they were lords of their own imagination. This could be disastrous: Marlowe's Faustus is a Renaissance man lacking an imagination; he can envisage Hell only as a physical location, even though the devils try to teach him otherwise. His most powerful imaginative flights are not the result of aspiration but of desperation, as he struggles to ward off impending doom.

In the poetry of the metaphysicals, we sense the gap between imagina-

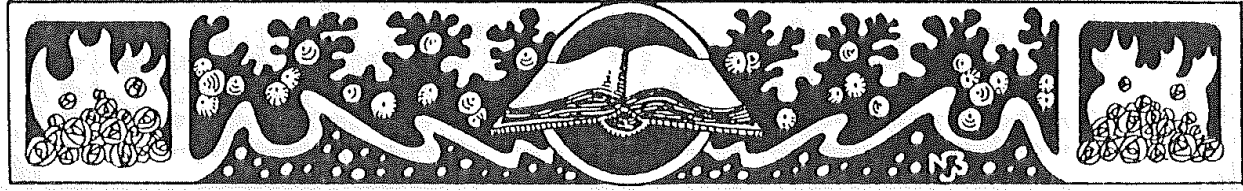
tion and devotion. At a time when theologians insisted that God was responsible for absolutely everything, Donne has the temerity to tell Him, in the sonnet *Batter my Heart, Three-Personed God*, that he is not doing enough. In urging the loving God to act violently, Donne dances delightedly on the brink of what is acceptable. The tension is still creative: the metaphysical conceit, yoking opposites together, is admirably suited to a faith which seeks a synthesis.

The later chapters of the book are less satisfactory since we are dealing with inferior and often eccentric authors. The great writers are no longer inspired by Christian themes, and Christian fantasy becomes the preserve of Charles Kingsley, George MacDonald and C S Lewis. Manlove draws our attention to the significance of this marginalisation. Christianity has been displaced and is no longer the central concern of intellectuals.

Lewis's fantasy takes us out of this world into outer space, to Heaven by bus or into the mythical past. Lewis had come to associate wonder with distance: God had become absent and the further away he was, the more real he seemed. After Lewis, Christian fantasy degenerates into wish-fulfilment. American writers, such as Richard Ford and Stephen Donaldson, Manlove concludes, "seem to like the idea of being Christian but they do not seem to know fully what it is like."

If God has indeed died in the West, his demise has coincided with the dearth of Christian fantasy which Manlove has so precisely observed.

*Karen Armstrong's Holy War is published by Macmillan*



**BOOK NEWS**  
**THE LIBRARY, KINGS COLLEGE; STRAND, LONDON WC2R 2LS.**

Recent acquisitions – donated by the publishers:

- \* Kath Filmer ed; *The Victorian Fantasists*. Macmillan £35
- \* Karen Michalson, *Victorian Fantasy Literature*. Edwin Muller Press.

**THE GOLD THREAD**

*The Gold Thread: Essays on George MacDonald* edited by William Raeper was published in May by Edinburgh University Press. The contents is as follows:

George MacDonald and the Victorian Fairy Tale **Gillian Avery**  
George MacDonald and J.R.R. Tolkien **Dr Edmund Cusick**  
George MacDonald and C.S. Lewis **Kate Durie**  
*Phantastes and Lilith* **Dr R.F McGillis**  
MacDonald's Children Writing **Colin Manlove**  
George MacDonald and Romanticism **Prof Stephen Prickett**  
George MacDonald's Scottish Novels **David Robb**

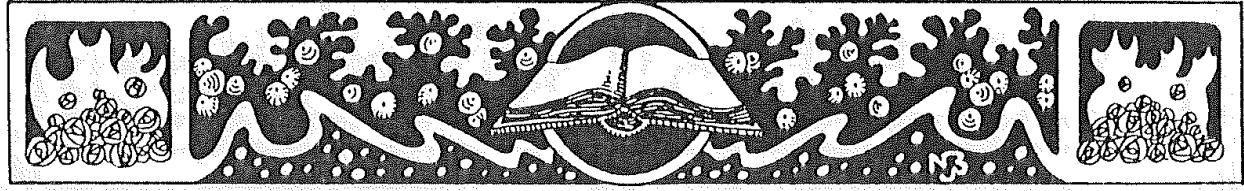
This paperback (216x138 208pp ISBN0748602089) is available at £12.95 through bookshops or from the Trade Department, Edinburgh University Press, 22 George square, Edinburgh. EH8 9LF. Add £1.50 postage per copy for overseas orders.

**UNSPOKEN SERMONS**

The society has obtained a supply of North American members J.J. Flynn's splendid unabridged facsimiles of the longman's edition of the *Unspoken sermons*. Copies of these were the only books C.S. Lewis would not part with when he was dispersing his library towards the end of his life! Lewis acknowledges his debt to these three volumes in his introduction to *George MacDonald: An Anthology* It is reported that he always suggested these sermons to people inquiring about Christianity.

The set of three high quality paperbacks is available to UK members, from the secretary, for £8 plus £3 postage.





## GEORGE MACDONALD IN THE PULPIT

J.J. Flynn is currently working on a collection of “spoken” sermons (sermons recorded live) discovered in various magazines from the late 1800’s. After having searched high and low for stray sermons that never found their way into MacDonald’s published work he has, to date, more than 20 sermons. These are to be included in a volume entitled *George MacDonald in the Pulpit*. Fellow members who know of any other sermons that might be added to this interesting project are requested to contact J.J. Flynn at P.O. Box 3855 South Pasadena, CA 91031, U.S.A (818) 441-9567.

## VARIOUS TITLES – FOR SALE

J.J. Flynn has a number of MacDonald titles for sale, yet far too many to list here. Among the list offered for sale are numerous first and rare editions. All who are interested are encouraged to write to J.J. Flynn at the above address.

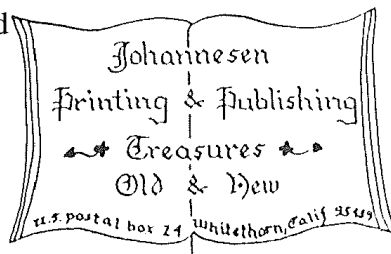
## NEW TITLES FROM JOHANNESSEN

Johannesen printing and publishing U.S.A are continuing to reprint the works of George MacDonald in their original format, at affordable prices. The titles already printed are:

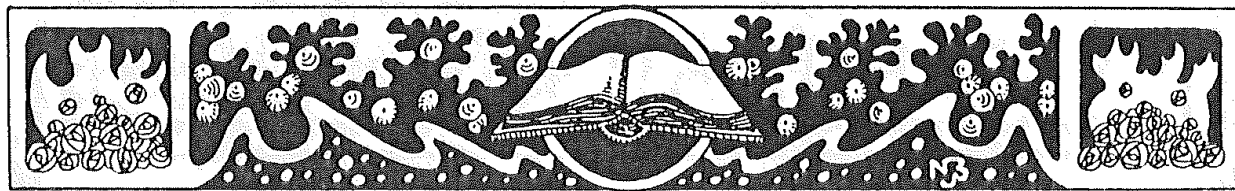
- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. What’s Mine’s Mine | 2. Sir Gibbie     |
| 3. Donal Grant        | 4. Castle Warlock |
| 5. A Rough Shaking    | 6. There and Back |

The next titles to be printed are as follows:

7. At The Back of The North Wind
8. Paul Faber, Surgeon
9. The Vicar’s Daughter
10. Guild Court, A London Story
11. Home Again
12. The Elect Lady



These hardback editions are available in the UK, at £10 each, from the secretary who has recently received copies of *A Rough Shaking*.



## ANTHOLOGY

Society member Gordon Reid is preparing a George MacDonald anthology which is due to be published in the near future.

## NOVALIS TRANSLATION

The Temple Lodge Press edition of MacDonald's translation of *Hymns to the Night* and *Spiritual Songs*, with an afterword by our member William Webb, is now published.

The 1897 *Rampolli* translation has been used and so readers may find ten of the fourteen *Spiritual Songs* over-wrought. However, the volume is well worth having for the translation of *Hymns to the Night* alone.

The only other version of *Hymns to the Night* currently in print appears to be the translation by Jeremy Reed (Enitharion Press, 1989) with an introductory essay *Novalis and the Night* by David Gascoyne.

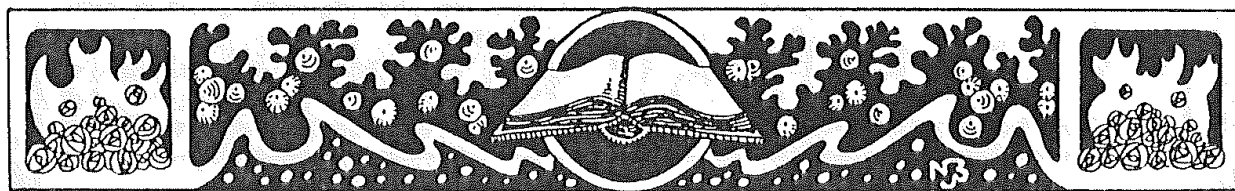
It may also interest readers to know that George MacDonald's translation of the parable from *The Disciples at Sais* was reprinted together with the original German, in *Inklings Jahrbuch*, No 9, 1991 published in Aachen, Germany. Included in this volume was the dedication to *Henrich Von Ofterdingen* translated by Peter Russel, again with the original German, plus spiritual song No.15 in German and with translations by George MacDonald and Peter Russell.

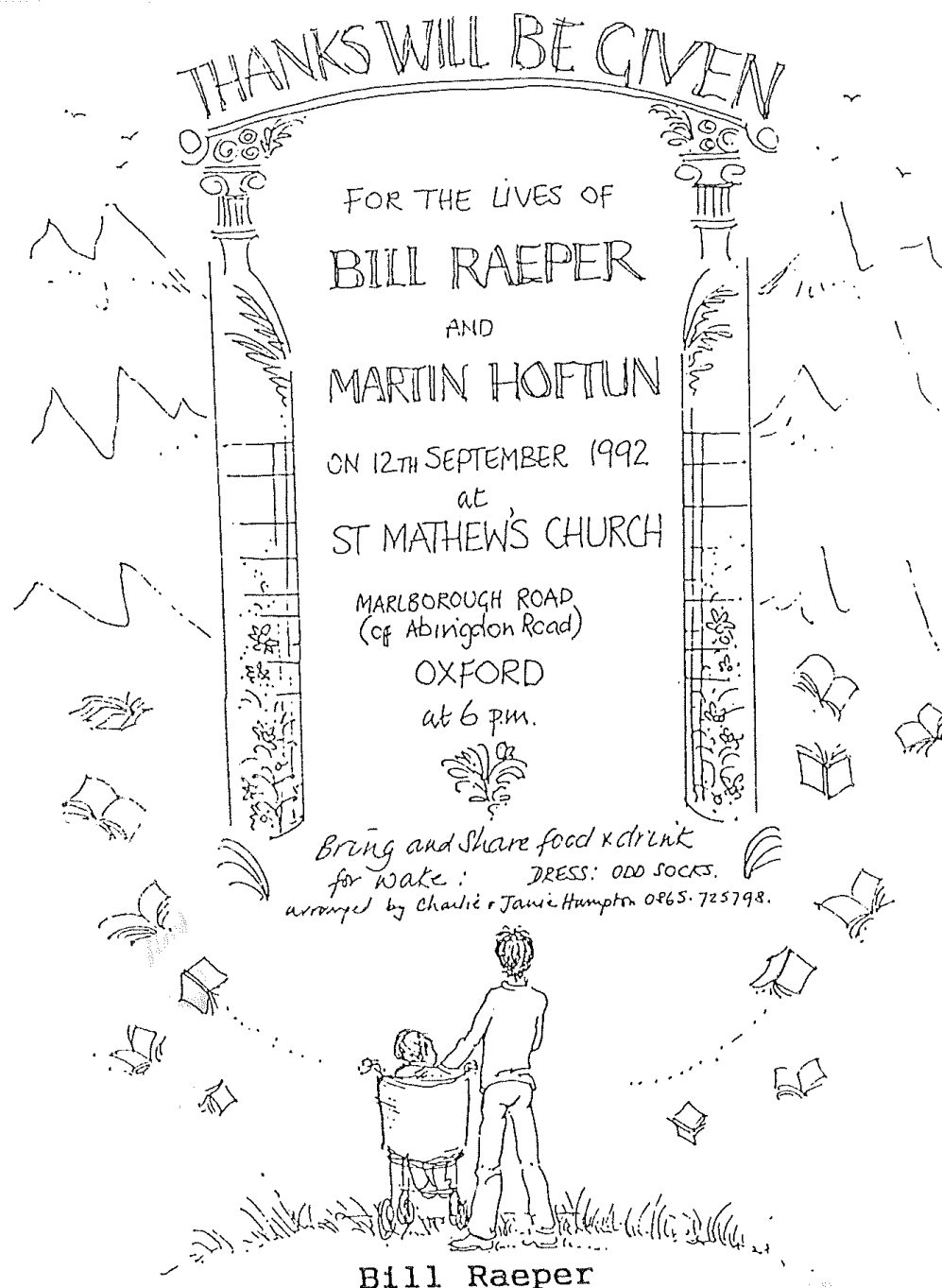
**Deadline for next issue: December 11th**

## Contacts

**The Secretary: John Docherty, 9 Medway Drive, Forest Row East Sussex TN20 5NU**

**ORTS Editor: Nick Bolton, Flat 2, 39 Pevensey Road, Eastbourne East Sussex. BN21 3HR**





Bill Raeper

February 16, 1959 - July 31, 1992

Bill died in a plane crash in Nepal on 31 July.  
He and Martin Hoftun were on their way to research  
their next book together on  
the history and politics of the area.

Bill's family and friends would like him to be remembered in  
an appropriate way. We are therefore setting up a memorial  
fellowship for struggling Scottish writers.

Please send donations to:-

William Raeper Memorial Fund,  
c/o Hampton  
118 Hurst Street, Oxford, OX4 1HG, UK.