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The George MacDonald Society

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The George MacDonald Society Newsletter No. 40, August 1996

IMPORTANT NOTICE, AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the George MacDonald Society will be held on Friday 27 September 1996, at Freda Levson's flat, 58A Westbourne Park Villas, London 'W2 5EB, at 6.30 for 7 pm. Deirdre Hayward, who is currently exploring the background of MacDonald's religious and philosophic thought, will give a talk to members. There will also be a short tribute to the late Raphael Shaberman, and it is hoped members of the Lewis Carroll Society will join us on account of his long and close connection with Carroll studies.

PLEASE NOTE: At the AGM a new Committee will be elected. Under the terms of the constitution, the general Committee shall consist of a chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer, Hon Membership Secretary, Hon editors of 'North Wind' and of 'Orts', and not less than two other members (4.ii) and these 'shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting (4.iv). The present members of the committee are: Freda Levson, Phil Streeter (Chairman), Douglas Troup (Vice-Chairman and Secretary), Rachel Johnson (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), John Docherty (Editor, 'North Wind'), William Webb (Editor, 'Orts'), Roy Bricknell, Vivienne Forrest and Kath Macdonald. All of them are standing down, but willing for re-election (William Webb prefers not to have a specific office in future).

The Society would welcome new committee members. Please contact Phil Streeter with suggested names (having obtained consent of your nominees) as soon as possible. The resulting list for the new committee will be announced at the AGM and officers will be elected from it.

Please help to form a representative committee for the society!

THE WILLIAM MORRIS EXHIBITION

Even those who think they know William Morris's work well will be surprised by the great range of the exhibition at present at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; nothing on this scale has been attempted before. It is a fascinating show, and much could be written on the links between the worlds of MacDonald and Morris. In a small space one can only say that one's general picture of the Victorian age as it affected creative spirits is immensely enriched by a visit to these rooms.

THE MACDONALD MEMORIAL FUND

Some time ago an appeal was made for funds towards the cost of the MacDonald Memorial at Huntly. The architect, Anthony Richardson, has not yet received any token of appreciation for the enormous amount of work done to produce the fine memorial in Drumblade churchyard.

We now make a final appeal to those who have not yet contributed but would like to express appreciation and gratitude for all they have gained from knowing MacDonald's various works (and some may wish to make recompense for America's non-payment of royalties to the author, in the nineteenth century!) The names of donors are recorded in Anthony Barker's calligraphy in an impressive book, now kept in the Brander Library. Donations should be sent to:

The George MacDonald Memorial Fund
Royal Bank of Scotland, The Square
Huntly AB 54 5 AD Scotland

DOES ANY MEMBER KNOW

the source of the lines on the War Memorial at Huntly (which is the work of the architect F.W. Troup)?

Their land/they crowned with fame/that shall not die!
in death they died not,/being raised on high
To glory with/the brave.

THE 'MACDONALD WARD' AT HASTINGS

Mr Edward Preston, who has done so much for the fame of Charles Dickens, has also been most helpful in filling out details of MacDonald's life when he was at Hastings, Sussex. Mr Preston has now also been instrumental in having one of the wards of a Hastings hospital named 'The MacDonald Ward'—no doubt the first time he has been remembered in this way.

BOOK TOPICS

The MacDonald collection at Kings College, London, still urgently needs these three titles:

Stephen Prickett's Victorian Fantasy, 1979

Joseph Johnson's biography of MacDonald—the very first one, 1906

Greville MacDonald's Reminiscences of a Specialist, 1932

Acquisitions

We are very happy to have received Modern Fantasy and The Impulse of Fantasy Literature. Also, an unusual addition to the collection, a series of most of the papers on George MacDonald which have appeared in the last 25 years outside the pages of the main journals carrying articles on MacDonald. These are in the form of photocopies.

Book offers to members. We can supply the paperback Phantastes, published by Eerdmans, and the very fine Eerdmans/Gracewing edition of The Lost Princess (the latter only available in UK). Both are offered with a worthwhile discount, at £4 and £7 respectively. Please send orders to the Hon. Editor of 'North Wind.'

THE BILL RAEPER MEMORIAL FUND

In the four years since Bill Raeper's tragic death, friends and colleagues have contributed no less than £2,000 to the Memorial Fund. The mountaineer Doug Scott has ensured that this has been spent on rebuilding and equipping a school in the village of Ghuna in Nepal.

The fund is being kept open for the time being with a small residue. Anyone wishing to make a contribution at this stage is asked to contact Bill's sister Mrs S. Blakemore, at 3 Corsica, Buckbank, Dalston, Cumbria CA5 7AA; she can send details of the school's progress to anyone interested.

CAN ANYONE HELP US TO LOCATE A 'MISSING PERSON'?

We are anxious to contact Lesley Smith (nee Willis) who wrote several very interesting articles on MacDonald in the 1980s and was said to be working on a book about him. She then lived in Cornwall, subsequently moved to Little Staughton, Bedfordshire, but has since moved again.

THE RUSKIN SOCIETY OF LONDON

A number of literary societies have been described in 'Orts' in previous years, but not yet the one devoted to a most influential figure of Victorian art and literature—and a special friend of MacDonald himself. Indeed, their lives were intertwined in a remarkable and tragic fashion, as those who have read of Ruskin's great love for Rosela Touche in his—or in MacDonald's—biography will recall.

In response to many requests the Ruskin Society of London was founded in 1986 to promote knowledge of the life and works of John Ruskin and his contemporaries. The late Lord Lloyd of Kilgerran was the first chairman and he spared no effort to further our aims. Until his death in 1989, meetings and lectures were held in the House of Lords. Since then, the Society's functions have taken place in the Royal Institute or at the Antiquarian Society's base in Piccadilly. Except

for a visit to Oxford, where Ruskin played a vital part in introducing the study of art, functions are held in central London. Occasionally meetings are held jointly with other societies. We hope to organise a meeting with the George MacDonald Society in the future.

The Society has a semi-academic journal known as the 'Ruskin Gazette' which is circulated to Ruskinians in the USA as well as in European centres. All those interested in Ruskin and in his impact on nineteenth-century culture are welcome to join the Society. The annual subscription is £10. The Hon. Secretary is Miss O. Forbes-Madden, 351 Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 7NX; tel. 01865 310987.

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