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The George MacDonald Society

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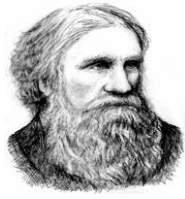


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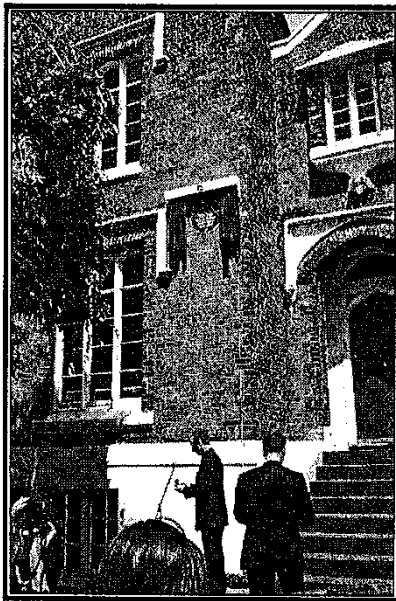
The George MacDonald Society Newsletter No. 68, Autumn 2005

100 *Centenary Issue* 100

News

**Aberdeen 2005 Details and
booking form**
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George MacDonald 'Blue Plaque' unveiling June 28 2005



An English Heritage blue plaque was unveiled by the well-known biographer and novelist A.N. Wilson at Tudor Lodge, 20 Albert Street, Camden Town in north London on Tuesday 28th June. George MacDonald and his family lived at Tudor Lodge from 1860 to 1863 in the early days of his career as a writer. The plaque describes MacDonald most appropriately as a 'Story Teller'. Mr. Wilson made a speech quoting from his favourite MacDonald book, *At the Back of the North Wind*. Then the Society's Chairman, Richard Lines, made a short speech giving an overview of MacDonald's significance, followed by John Docherty, who read an extract from MacDonald's novel *The Vicar's Daughter* in which the heroine gives a short description of the house. It was a sunny day and English Heritage staff were on hand to give help and take photographs and members of the Committee and of the Society were present. The present owner of Tudor Lodge, Sebastian Tennant, had given his permission for the placing of the plaque and he was present with his wife

for the ceremony. A.N. Wilson brought along friends, including the distinguished novelist Dame Beryl Bainbridge.

The house, at the end of a typical early Victorian terrace, is of red brick with stone-mullioned windows. Originally built by the historical painter Charles Lucy for his own residence, it was described by Greville MacDonald in his biography of his parents as 'a pretty little house, but with its bedroom accommodation all too small'. He went on to say that its chief feature was a big studio, used by George MacDonald as a study and lecture room, built out beyond the house and connected with it by a small steep stairway. It is still in use as an artist's studio.

The unveiling was reported in the Camden New Journal



which carried a short article headed 'Plaque at last' and more extensively in the Aberdeen Evening Express, which ran a two page feature article and photograph of the plaque and an interview with Richard Lines in which he emphasised MacDonald's importance as a writer in his own time and also his influence on twentieth century fantasy writers, particularly C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien.

William Carey Davies

Recently the Society was gifted the books belonging to William Carey Davies—George MacDonald's Secretary. These were passed on to his son George MacDonald Davies and the Davies family now wanted the Society to have them. Some books were bought by a bookseller from the family and recently sold for high prices in auction. The majority of the collection is in the possession of the Society—preserved for use by future generations. Society members meeting at the AGM will have discussions on how best to make the 'Davies Collection' accessible to the wider public here and make our other books more accessible too.

Some interesting items in the collection are:

The rare first printing of *The Princess and the Goblin*, Strahan & Co., 1872.

A Rough Shaking, Blackie and Sons, 1891. Inscribed 'George MacDonald Davies [i.e. the son of W.C. Davies) with love from George MacDonald'.

Heather and Snow, 2 vols. Chatto & Windus, 1893. Signed 'W.C. Davies with love from his old friend George MacDonald'.

Visit to Hastings - Saturday 14th May 2005

Society member and local historian and minister of religion Edward Preston organised another successful George MacDonald Society visit to Hastings and St Leonards on Saturday 14th May. The weather was unseasonably chilly and, perhaps because the Society had already had a hugely successful day conference in Hastings (also led by Edward Preston) in September 2001, take-up was low, but 16 members and friends had an enjoyable and informative day exploring this ancient seaside town which was a home to MacDonald and his family at different times in his writing career. Our venue was Holy Trinity Church, a large Victorian Gothic church in the centre of the town, and members of the church provided, not only a most welcome cup of coffee and biscuits on arrival, but an excellent salad lunch and tea and home made cakes at the end of the day. There was an opportunity to view the interior of this most impressive church during the lunch break.

After an introduction by Edward in which he referred to MacDonald's associations with the town, Mark Richards, Chairman of the Lewis Carroll Society, spoke of the friendship between the two writers which was originally forged in Hastings. Mark illustrated his talk with a number of photographs taken by Carroll. Edward had advertised a 'surprise item' before lunch and this turned out to be the singing of three hymns written by George MacDonald which were sung by a small choir from the Bexhill Free Church.

After lunch we boarded a small coach for a comprehensive tour of the town, taking in the MacDonald residences. He had two periods of residence in the town and lived in Hathaway House during his later stay. Unfortunately, we were not able to visit this house as we had done in 2001. In the course of our tour Edward pointed out the home of MacDonald's contemporary, the poet Coventry Patmore, and the Roman Catholic church, St. Mary Star of the Sea, which he had built. MacDonald and Patmore do not seem to have known one another, although they must have had many literary friends in common. The coach tour ended with a visit to St. Leonards, originally developed as a separate seaside resort by James Burton, father of the more famous Decimus, in the 1820s. We returned to Holy Trinity Church for tea before making our separate ways home. Warm thanks are due to Edward Preston for organising and master-minding the day, to Mark Richards for his excellent talk, to the Bexhill singers and to Hastings Borough Council for a generous grant which enabled the Society to keep the cost of the day low.

Were I a skilful painter

Were I a skilful painter,
My pencil, not my pen,
Should try to teach thee hope and fear,
And who would blame me then?--

From Parables

George MacDonald: International Symposium.

Organised by Inklings-Gesellschaft.

Friday to Sunday 13-15th May in Oberwesel (Rhein) in Germany

A report by John Docherty

Köln/Bonn airport is easy to reach from my local airport it now has a direct rail link to Köln Hauptbahnhof. So I was soon journeying on the upper deck of a double-decker train beside the Rhine to Oberwesel, a small town a few kilometres south of the famous Lorelei crag. I had not travelled along the west bank of the Rhine before, and indeed had not travelled along the Rhine gorge since cycling back from Austria during my student days. (I had hoped to be able to do a short cycling tour with my friends the Petzolds after the Symposium, but unfortunately a pulled muscle sustained a week before prevented this.)

Oberwesel is one of the most attractive little towns in the region, its mediaeval walls with many elaborate towers still largely intact, and was chosen for the venue because it was a particular favourite with British visitors in MacDonald's time. All the slopes of the Rhine valley and its tributary valleys here, except the north-facing slopes, are covered with vineyards. On a crag overlooking the town is what is probably the best-preserved of all the castles in the Rhine valley, and while the formal AGM of the Gesellschaft was being held, Hella Kegler led us up to it along

a precipitous path flanked by a glorious array of spring flowers, most of them unknown to me.

As always, the symposium sessions gave great pleasure with animated discussions with friends whom I have now known since our first joint symposium on *Lilith* in 1995.

On one evening, Adelheid Kegler had arranged for us all a visit to the cellars of a local wine grower, who had laid on a light supper with no less than seven of his wines, several of them very distinctive (he prefers to use the natural yeasts on the grapes) and a delightful change from the usual run of Rheinisch wines. On the other evening we were treated to an organ recital in the great Romanesque church of the town that included settings of MacDonald hymns.

Love is Home

Love is the part, and love is the whole;
Love is the robe, and love is the pall;
Ruler of heart and brain and soul,
Love is the lord and the slave of all!
I thank thee, Love, that thou lov'st me;
I thank thee more that I love thee.

From Violin Songs

George MacDonald and His Children

September 16 - September 19, 2005

Armstrong Browning Library, Baylor University

George MacDonald is seen as the founder of a literary genre: religious fantasy—which, as the 20th century has unexpectedly shown, has become a major and popular form. We welcome papers linking MacDonald and his circle (Charles Kingsley, Lewis Carroll) with his successors, including G. K. Chesterton, Rudyard Kipling, E. Nesbit, and the Oxford Inklings. Also of interest are papers connecting MacDonald with his German roots—Goethe, Schleiermacher, Novalis, and Hoffmann. In addition, we shall have a section on the development of children's book illustration from Arthur Hughes through to H.R. Millar, which covers the great age of illustrated books before World War I.

Papers given by the speakers were:

David Robb

'Perhaps he will need to love Scotland too': The Importance of George MacDonald's Scottish Sources.'

Colin Manlove

'MacDonald's German Sources'

Roderick McGillis

'Fantasy as Miracle: Tentative Beginning Without Conclusion'

Robert Trexler

'Sources and Inspirations for Lilith'

Fernando Soto

'Optics and Vision: A Structure for Lilith'

John Pennington

'A Wolff in Sheep's Clothing Revisited: The George MacDonald Industry and the Difficult Rehabilitation of a Reputation'

Susan Ang

'George MacDonald and the Gothic'

Dave Neuhouser

'George MacDonald and Social Issues'

George Bodmer, Louisa Smith, Jan Susina

'The Illustration of Faerie'

A report will appear in the next issue of Orts.

Centenary Events continued . . .

Thursday 20th October - 2pm

The Royal Parks Agency has agreed to the placing of an inscribed plaque commemorating Alexander Munro's statue 'The Boy and the Dolphin' in Hyde Park. Greville MacDonald was the boy and Lewis Carroll drew a picture of Greville admiring his head in Munro's studio and wrote an amusing account of the incident. The drawing and Carroll's text are reproduced on the plaque, which has been paid for jointly by the George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll Societies. The wording has been agreed by Munro's granddaughter, George MacDonald Society member Katharine Macdonald.

The unveiling of the plaque will take place on at 2pm at the statue in the Rose Garden in Hyde Park. The Rose Garden is at the Hyde Park Comer end of the Park and just a few minutes walk from Hyde Park Corner Tube station (Piccadilly Line). The plaque will be mounted on an oak post. All this is being done by the courtesy of the Royal Parks Agency (Tom Jarvis, Deputy Superintendent). All members and any friends are welcome.

The Hills

Behind my father's cottage lies
A gentle grassy height
Up which I often ran—to gaze

Back with a wondering sight,
For then the chimneys I thought high
Were down below me quite!

All round, where'er I turned mine eyes,
Huge hills closed up the view;
The town 'mid their converging roots
Was clasped by rivers two;
From, one range to another sprang
The sky's great vault of blue.

It was a joy to climb their sides,
And in the heather lie!
A joy to look at vantage down
On the castle grim and high!
Blue streams below, white clouds above,
In silent earth and sky!

From *Parables*

Sculpture for Huntly

Prominent Scottish sculptor Kenny Hunter is coming to Huntly in September to find out what Huntly people would like to see commemorated about his life and work.

Kenny has been commissioned by Deveron Arts to create a sculpture. So far funding for the project has been received from SAC and MAP-Initiative Grant Scheme. Kenny is well used to creating commemorative sculptures. His work is contemporary but also largely figurative. It can be seen around Scotland and he has exhibited worldwide. Citizen Firefighter—Central Station, Glasgow, 'Feedback Loop' and 'Girl with a Rucksack' –Aberdeen Art Gallery.

The sculpture for Huntly will not be a bust - already one in the Brander Library. It is more likely to represent an aspect of his work. What is going to be the challenge for Kenny is to decide on a theme, character or subject from the huge body of work which George MacDonald has created. Within the fantasy novels and fairy tales, which MacDonald was famous for during his lifetime, there is endless inspiration. His work was a major influence on fantasy writers such as C.S. Lewis who said that "I regarded him (MacDonald) as my master". MacDonald also wrote many novels, some of which are set in Huntly. What Kenny would like is to receive ideas and opinions from the people of Huntly about what aspects of MacDonald's life and work are important to them.

The Brander Library is a possible location for the final sculpture but we would also like to hear from people who might have other ideas.

For Deveron Arts part of the purpose of this project is to not just commemorate the life and death 100 years ago on September 18th of Huntly's most famous author but to raise his profile locally.

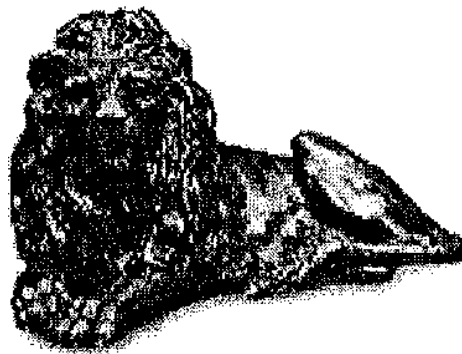
MacDonald's work is appreciated all over the world, particularly in the US and in Japan, but he does not seem to be hugely appreciated here in his birthplace. Many of his novels, fairy tales and collections of sermons and poetry, as well as biographies of his life, can be found in the Brander Library. We hope this project might inspire more people to try reading some of his work and finding out more about him.

In conjunction with Aberdeen Town Partnership we are trying to increase awareness of his work. The town trail leaflet has been re-launched so that tourists coming to Huntly will have something at least to guide them round the places that feature in MacDonald's work and life history. During this year it is hoped that more can be done to highlight the importance of MacDonald in the history of literature and create more for visitors to see here. As part of the sculpture project events such as lectures, workshops and discussions will also take place providing further opportunities for people to find out more and engage in debate.

If you have any ideas and opinions about the sculpture project Kenny Hunter & Deveron Arts would love to hear from you. Please contact Deveron Arts 01466 79 4494 or info@deveron-arts.com.

Also the Editor would be interested to know people's thoughts. Ideas will be published in *Orts*.

2006 Frances White Ewbank Colloquium on C.S. Lewis & Friends



**The 2006
Frances White Ewbank
C.S. Lewis and Friends Colloquium
June 1-4, 2006**

The 2006 Frances White Ewbank Colloquium on C. S. Lewis & Friends will be held at Taylor University on June 1-4, 2006.

The Colloquium will include featured speakers, discussion sessions, music, drama and more.

Featured speakers will include:

Louis Markos, Professor of English at Houston Baptist University and author of *Lewis Agonistes: How C.S. Lewis Can Train Us to Wrestle With the Modern and Postmodern World*.

Thomas Howard, author of *The Novels of Charles Williams* and *C. S. Lewis: Man of Letters: A Reading of His Fiction*.

Colin Manlove, a George MacDonald scholar from Scotland and author of *The Chronicles of Narnia: the Patterning of a Fantastic World*, *Modern Fantasy*, *Christian Fantasy*, and *From Alice to Harry Potter*.

Call for Papers

Papers are invited on any topic that concerns C.S. Lewis and/or his friends: Owen Barfield, G.K. Chesterton, George MacDonald, Dorothy L. Sayers, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams.

Papers should be no longer than ten pages, excluding bibliography.

Please send submissions as an e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word format to Dr. Richard Hill at rhill@ptloma.edu. Include name, contact information, and a brief biography in the body of your e-mail.

Deadline for submission is February 1, 2006.

As I was reading . . .

Robert Trexler - New York

I can't pass an antiquarian bookstore without stopping. And when I stop I'm always on the lookout for books by George MacDonald. My MacDonald collection began thirty-four years ago, long before MacDonald was considered collectible. In my travels through Massachusetts I found many nineteenth century editions of his books for between \$1 and \$3 dollars. Since then I have collected over seventy out-of-print editions of his books from two-dozen different publishers.

Books from Routledge Publishers comprise the largest group with seventeen different titles. Their covers are an attractive blue-green with gold lettering and usually include a facsimile autograph of MacDonald on the back cover. They also feature an engraved "front-piece" picture protected by an opaque page of tissue paper.

The books with the most ornate covers are generally from the end of the nineteenth century or slightly after. Of this type I have about eight titles. Other books are quite plain - some representing books from A.L. Burt's "Home Library" series or from other book-club subscriptions. Here you might find advertisements for other popular books of the day or contemporary reviews of MacDonald's novel.

I will mention two of the books I've collected which mean the most to me. The first is the "Everyman Edition" of *Phantastes*. That's the edition C.S. Lewis picked up and read when he was seventeen. Anyone who has read his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, knows that reading *Phantastes* was a turning point for Lewis's imagination.

More recently I purchased a first-edition copy of *The Seaboard Parish*, 1873, with MacDonald's dated autograph pasted in the front cover. The date written by MacDonald is May 3, 1873, a few weeks before his American lecture tour ended. We know from MacDonald's letters and from Greville Macdonald's biography that this was the date of a farewell dinner given for MacDonald by his friends in Boston. MacDonald wrote a letter saying it snowed that day. From Greville's biography we know that a large sum of money was presented to the MacDonalds to compensate for the pirated American editions from which he received no commission.

Many famous Americans, including the poet Henry Longfellow, attended that dinner. Also in attendance, I assume, were the original owners of *The Seaboard Parish*; a married couple who also signed the book. A copy of their marriage certificate indicates the couple, Charles P. Morrison and Mary Balch Morrison, was married in Newburyport, Massachusetts by a prominent Unitarian minister. Charles was a music teacher and his wife a descendant from one of the oldest, respected Boston families. The Unitarian minister was the grandson of one of the first men killed in the first battle of the Revolutionary War in Lexington, Massachusetts.

As my mind wanders, thinking about MacDonald being in America 132 years ago and signing an autograph for his admiring American friends, I like to imagine that I'm part of that history—or at least that I've done something to preserve it.

**George MacDonald Centenary
Aberdeen 2005**

Saturday, 22 October: AGM

4pm at the home of member

**Chris Hunt, 61 Woodcroft Avenue, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen
AB22 8WY
Tel: 01224-823-727**

Sunday, 23 October: 'George MacDonald Dinner' and presentation of 'Images of His World' at the Castle Hotel, Huntly, Aberdeenshire. Following the three-course dinner will be MacDonald readings. Tickets will have limited availability. Book now!

Tickets: Available from Ian Blakemore. Price £20. *Vegetarian option available (please indicate when booking ticket)*

Time: 7pm for meal at 7.30.

Guided tour of Huntly arranged over the weekend. Please let us know if you are interested.

Tuesday, 25 October:

The Elphinstone Institute Public Lecture

'The Scottish Sources of MacDonald's Fantasy'

Dr David Rob

At

Marischal Museum, Marischal College, Aberdeen 7.30-9.00pm (Doors open at 7pm)

Admission £2.00 includes refreshments

Dr. David Robb teaches Scottish Literature at the University of Dundee. A graduate of Aberdeen University he has written a book on George MacDonald's fiction as well as a number of articles on him.

All welcome

Mon 24th – Fri 28th. Exhibition of manuscripts, books, letters and original photographs at the Marischal Museum, Aberdeen.

Brochure and exhibition catalogue available early in October at price £3.00 inc postage from the Editor. Cheques made payable to 'The George MacDonald Society'. Donations also welcome. RSVP Please by letter or email. *Or mail us—completing the attached form.*

Ian P Blakemore—Editor of *Orts*

George MacDonald Society, Rosley Farmhouse, Rosley, Wigton, Cumbria, UK
CA7 8BZ

Tel: +44(0)16973 499 24 Fax: +44(0)16973 45 149

E-mail: sales@rosleybooks.co.uk

George MacDonald Centenary Aberdeen 2005

Please complete this form to address below:

Saturday, 22 October: AGM

I will be coming to the AGM: Yes/No

Sunday, 23 October: 'George MacDonald Dinner and Presentation'

Please supply _____ ticket(s) at £20 each. I enclose £ _____

Please order _____ vegetarian meal

Tuesday, 25 October:

I will be coming to the Lecture by Dr. David Robb: Yes/No

Admission payable at the door

Monday, 24-Friday, 28 October:

Please supply _____ brochure/exhibition catalogue(s) at £3.00 per copy
(no limit to qty)

Please make cheque payable to 'The George MacDonald Society'.
Donations also welcome

Please return this form to:

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Ian P Blakemore

Rosley Farmhouse, Rosley, Wigton, Cumbria, UK CA7 8BZ

Tel: +44 (0) 16973 499 24 Fax: +44 (0) 16973 45 149

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Newsletter Editor: Ian Blakemore, *Orts*, Rosley Farmhouse, Wigton, Cumbria UK CA7 8BZ

Tel: +44 (0)16973 49924 E-mail: orts@rosleybooks.com © George MacDonald Society 2005

Chairman: **Richard Lines**, 38 South Vale, Upper Norwood, London, SE19 3BA

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