

Orts: The George MacDonald Society Newsletter

Volume 62

Article 1

2002

Orts 62, 2002

The George MacDonald Society

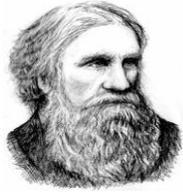
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Recommended Citation

The George MacDonald Society (2002) "Orts 62, 2002," *Orts: The George MacDonald Society Newsletter*: Vol. 62, Article 1.
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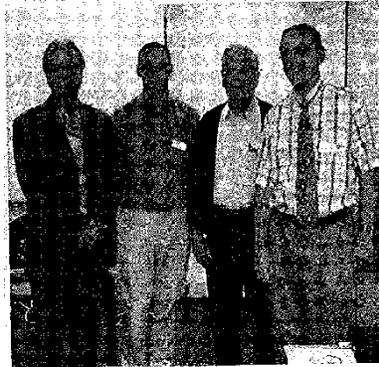
The George MacDonald Society Newsletter No.62 Autumn/Winter 2002

Editor finds unusual MacDonald Item.

It is always a pleasure to find a contemporary book, pamphlet or magazine article previously unrecorded in the bibliographies. Recently I came across-'The Elocutionist' with a portrait of George MacDonald on the cover and two poems for recitation within its pages: 'Abu Midjan' and 'After an Old Legend' - both from 'Parables and Ballads' (being Vol. IV of 'Works of Fancy and Imagination' 1871). It is good to know that the public at large were introduced to MacDonald's poetry in this way. I have practised reciting the poems (on my own) and would agree that they are worth reading out loud. The public reading of poetry is a lost art. Perhaps a member would like to organise a poetry reading?

The Editor of "The A1 Elocutionist" was Alfred H. Miles. No publication date was given.

Inside is quarter-page advert for 'George MacDonald's Poetical and other Works' - *Pocket-Volume Eiditon-10 vols. -in handsome cloth case.*



Huntly 2002: Speakers David Robb (far left) & David Neuhouser (second from right) with organisers Chris Hunt and Ian Blakemore.

Thank-you from the Society

Thank you to the main speakers at Huntly 2002: David L. Neuhouser, David Robb & Morag Black. Also to Colin Manlove who had to cancel his talk due to his wife's ill health.

- **David Neuhouser** spoke on 'MacDonald and Mathematics'
- **David Robb** spoke on 'Alex Forbes and Huntly'
- **Morag Black** spoke on 'Life at MacDonald's Farmhouse'
- **Colin Manlove** was to speak on 'George Macdonald's Christian Fantasy'

Huntly 2002. August 8th-10th

REPORT ON GEORGE MACDONALD 2002 EVENT N HUNTLY

Three days consisted of an exhibition of original manuscripts, letters and books lent by Aberdeen University and Library Service (Oldmeldrum), as well as personal items lent by Chris R Hunt. This exhibition ran for the full three days, and was located in the museum, Brander Library in the Square, Huntly.

Over the three days 225 people visited the exhibition. Two evenings of talks were arranged. These were held in Huntly Learning Centre, which has a purpose built conference room. Unfortunately Dr. Colin Manlove from Edinburgh was unable to come to Huntly and give his talk.

On the Thursday evening David Neuhauser from Taylor University gave a talk, and on the Friday evening David Robb gave his talk, followed by a short informal talk by Morag Black. Each evening wine was made available (gift from Essons of Huntly) at the beginning. After the main presentation, coffee and tea was served along with short- bread (a gift from Deans of Huntly). Attendance was good over two evenings.

A bookfair was organised on the Saturday within the Gordon Arms Hotel from 10.00 until 4.00pm. 66 paid to enter, along with pass holders around 80 people on the day.

A huge success which has created a lot of local interest as well as overseas interest.

Chris Hunt

TALK ON FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE BY PROFESSOR STEPHEN PRICKETT - ST PETER'S CHURCH, VERE STREET, LONDON W1 - SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER

Eighteen members and visitors gathered at St Peter's Church, Vere Street, just off Oxford Street in the heart of London's West End for a talk by our President, the eminent literary scholar Professor Stephen Prickett entitled "Frederick Denison Maurice: the Man Who Re-Wrote The Book". St Peter's church is now the home of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, but in the nineteenth century and afterwards it was a busy West End Anglican church. It is in the classical style and was built by James Gibb in 1724. Maurice became the Vicar there in 1860 and the MacDonald family (MacDonald had joined the Church of England under the encouragement of Maurice) would have been regular Sunday worshippers there when they were in London.

In his talk Professor Prickett showed how, from the eighteenth century, the notion of the Bible as a "grand narrative" which explained the meaning of everything had begun to collapse and it began to be seen more as literature, "the supreme novel". Professor Prickett emphasised the role of the Quakers, with their lack of credal theology and reliance on "the inner light", as pioneers. Only the Unitarians among Christian denominations approached them in their radical approach and in their attitude to the education of women. Maurice had been brought up as a Unitarian and

only entered the Church of England in adult life. His great book, "The Kingdom of Christ" (1837) is specifically addressed to Quakers. Maurice sought a universal spiritual church, but he did not attempt a Post-Kantian "grand narrative". Much influenced by his Cambridge tutor, Julius Hare, later Archdeacon of Lewes, who was one of the first Englishmen to study the German Romantics and Idealists, Maurice realised that language is always incomplete, that it always points beyond itself. Professor Prickett's view was that Maurice transcended his own age. He was so ahead of his times that he still has special relevance, along with the German theologian of the Romantic period, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Schleiermacher's contemporary Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to our post-modern twenty first century. The full text of Professor Prickett's talk will be printed in the next edition of "North Wind".

On sale at the meeting were paperback copies of Stephen Prickett's latest book, "Narrative, Religion and Science: Fundamentalism versus Irony, 1700- 1999". This book explores in depth some of the themes raised in his talk. Scientists, philosophers and theologians increasingly downplay the professional authority and describe their work as simply "telling stories about the world". If this is so, Stephen Prickett argues, literary criticism can (and should) be applied to all these fields. Cambridge University Press have offered copies of this book at a 20% discount to George MacDonald Society members. This means a price of £12.76 for the paperback and £36.00 for the hardback. Members wishing to buy a copy should ask Richard Lines for an order form.

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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING –
SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2002**

Because very few members had been able to attend the 2000 and 2001 Annual General Meetings held in central London, it was decided to advance the date this year and make the date coincide with Professor Prickett's talk. Professor Prickett had been unable to make an October date, our usual AGM time. The AGM followed his talk this year after a short break for refreshments. Apologies for absence were received from Ian Blakemore and from Chris Hunt. The Chairman reported that, although the Committee had met only once during the year, the Society had remained active. Ian Blakemore had produced two editions of the newsletter *Orts* and John Docherty had produced No's 18 and 20 of *North Wind* at the very end of the year. No. 18 was the edition that had failed to appear in 1999, although it did contain several articles not actually written until 2001. No. 20 contained an index for No's 11 to 20. For the fourth year running we had organised a members' meeting in September, this year Stephen Prickett's most distinguished talk. Ian Blakemore and Chris Hunt had organised a most successful three day summer school in Huntly in August. 225 people had attended over the three days.

Richard Lines was re-elected Chairman. Vivienne Forrest announced that she was not able to carry on as Treasurer and Membership Secretary, but wished to remain a Committee member. She said she would carry on as a "caretaker" basis until permanent replacements can be found. Volunteers are needed urgently for both these offices. Vivienne was thanked warmly for all she

had done for the Society 'over the past few years, often in the face of serious health problems. We wish her well and better health in the next year. Vivienne reported that the Society has 170 paid up members world wide (7 down on last year), but that membership was holding up well. Ian Blakemore had announced his resignation owing to his distance from London. However, he was willing to continue as *Orts* editor. He was thanked for his work and for this generous offer. Roger Bardet was willing to remain as Minutes Secretary and Geoffrey Straw as an ordinary Committee member.

In the discussion that followed it was suggested that a film maker might be approached to make a television film on MacDonald's life and work for the centenary of his death in 2005, but so far no obvious names had suggested themselves. Stephen Prickett suggested that we should participate in the book fair at the Edinburgh Festival that year. John Docherty said we should take up with the Royal Mail the idea of a MacDonald commemorative stamp. Stephen Prickett suggested further cooperation with Wheaton College and from the floor it was thought that we might approach a sympathetic charitable trust for financial support. We might also enlist a young scholar with an interest in working on MacDonald. The Society remains in good heart, but more active support from members is needed.

Book News

Phantases: A Faerie Romance

By George MacDonald. Illustrated by Arthur Hughes.

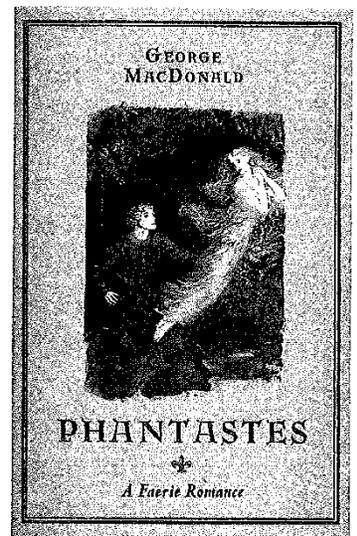
Introduction by Colin Duriez. Preface by Greville Mac-Donald. 8vo, pp. 320. Published 2002 by Azure, London. ISBN 1-902694-25-2. Price £8.99 [Copies available postage free from the Editor].

Readers will welcome the return of the best illustrated edition of *Phantastes*. Originally published in 1905, the year of George MacDonald's death it has long been out-of-print.

The 33 illustrations produced by Arthur Hughes for this edition are wonderful and are fully justified. They were completed when Hughes was 73 years old! The illustrations complement the text in an evocative way.

'C.S. Lewis observes:

"The quality which had enchanted me in his imaginative works turned out to be the quality of the real universe, the divine, magical, terrifying and ecstatic reality in which we all live".'



From the Editor

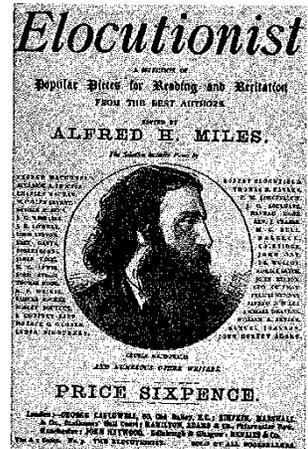
As a Society we have been delighted with events this year. Huntly 2002 in August was a great success and paved the way for a centennial event in 2005. It is good to hear people's views on what can be done to commemorate, celebrate and promote George MacDonald and his work. Please, please keep sending us ideas and offers of voluntary help. It was good to hold this event in MacDonald's home town. We are keen to promote events in England and America too.

Stephen Prickett's talk in September likewise was a success and helped keep interest in London and the South-East. It is certainly true to say MacDonald would have approved of such activity. He had a global view.

We always welcome news and views from members. Please send any items for attention of the Editor. Larger articles will be published annually in *North Wind*.

If you are aware of material that is unrecorded in Raphael B. Shaberman's 'Bibliography' please let us know and the results will be featured in *Orts*. Recently I managed to purchase for my own collection-'Gleanings for the People...' By G. MACDONALD. Edinburgh: 1855. Is this an undiscovered work of George MacDonald? Any light on this book would be welcome.

[Cover of 'The Elocutionist'. See page 1]



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