

The Charles Williams Society

NEWSLETTER

NO. 9, SPRING, 1978

SPECIAL NOTICE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Owing to a confusion over the bookings of the Institute of Christian Studies, the A.G.M. of the Charles Williams Society (on the 20th May, 1978, at 2.30 p.m.) will now be held in the Undercroft of St. Mary's Church at the corner of Bourne Street and Graham Terrace, London, S.W.1. The church is about five minutes walk from Sloane Square: turn sharp left out of the underground station into Holbein Place, left again into Whittaker Street, and right into Bourne Street. The entrance to the Undercroft is just round the corner in Graham Terrace.

PINNER CONFERENCE

"FAITH AND FICTION"

Members of the society will already have received a leaflet about the residential conference to be held at The Grail, Pinner, Middlesex, over the weekend 23 - 25 June, 1978, and a number of applications have been received. But there are a few residential places left and we hope that these will be filled quickly. Day visitors to the conference will be very welcome and I would be grateful if those intending to come could let me have some idea of the time they will be spending at The Grail and the meals they will require as catering arrangements have to be made quite soon. I hope that we can make this conference as successful as our first conference at St. Katharine's two years ago. It promises to be entertaining and stimulating.

- Friday Evening (23rd June) : Professor Ulrich Simon on "Some Aspects of Biblical Story-Telling".
- Saturday morning (24th June) : Martin Moynihan on "Notes towards the Figure of Arthur".
- Saturday afternoon : free
- Saturday evening : Barbara Reynolds on "Faith and Fiction in the Art of Dorothy L. Sayers".
- Sunday morning (25th June) : Eucharist with address by Brian Horne.
- Sunday morning : anthology of readings, read and chosen by members of the conference.
- Sunday afternoon : Humphrey Carpenter on "The Inklings".

There will be a bookstall, run by Nigel Sustins of the Church House Bookshop, where as many copies of works by, and on Charles Williams, Dorothy L. Sayers, J.R.R. Tolkien etc. will be for sale.

Notes on the Speakers

Ulrich Simon is Professor of Christian Literature and Dean of King's College, University of London. He will be known to members through his many books: Story and Faith, Heaven in the Christian Tradition, A Theology of Auschwitz, The Trial of Man, and, most recently, Sitting in Judgement, a kind of spiritual and theological autobiography.

Martin Moynihan is already well known to most members of the society. He is now the Administrator of the Kennedy and the Knox Scholarships, but spent most of his life as a diplomat representing the British Government in many parts of the world: High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, Lesotho, Consul-General in Philadelphia and Ambassador to Liberia.

Barbara Reynolds is one of this country's most distinguished Italian scholars and received the Silver Medal for services to Italian literature in 1964. Together with Dorothy L. Sayers she translated the Paradise of Dante's Divine Comedy for the Penguin Classics edition. In 1969 she translated the Vita Nuova and in 1975 Ariosto's Orlando Furioso. At present she is spending some time at Wheaton College in the U.S.A. and is organising a Dorothy L. Sayers celebration there.

Humphrey Carpenter will be known to members of the society as the author of the recent excellent biography of J.R.R. Tolkien.

B. L. Horne

AMEN HOUSE AND 'CAESAR'

by Ralph Binfield

Amen House, the London home of the O.U.P., where Charles Williams worked for so many years, stood at the Eastern end of Warwick Square, off Ave Maria Lane, which, with Warwick Lane, connected Newgate Street and Ludgate Hill. Nearby was Paternoster Row, once the centre of the book trade. The O.U.P. had been until the mid-twenties at Amen Corner, and had moved to Amen House shortly before I joined them in 1927. I was told that the old monks proceeded around the city saying their office, and that they began at Paternoster Row, went along Ave Maria Lane, finishing at Amen Corner. At least that is a pleasant guess.

Amen House, once the home of the Earls of Warwick, had been much modernised and extended, but the centre facade was much as in the 18th Century. Perhaps the foundations had subsided a little, for the tall front windows were slightly out of the perpendicular, like parallelograms.

Once up the outside stairs, visitors were greeted by the dignified war-scarred Sgt. Larmer. They passed the telephonist, Winnie Cox, perpetually knitting in the telephone box, but alert to all calls: 'Oxford Press!' and either went into the elegantly-furnished waiting room, which led to the library, stepped into the lift, or, if invited, mounted one of Amen House's six staircases.

Sir Humphrey Milford had definite views about staircases, and other symbols of hierarchy. The main elegantly-carpeted staircase was not meant for us members of the lower orders, and we were tactful in our use of it after 'Caesar' arrived at about ten o'clock. C.W. scorned the lifts and bounded up the stairs two at a time, hands in trouser pockets.

If one did dare to use the main staircase, whatever one's status, woe betide him who accidentally saw Sir Humphrey emerge from his curtained confidential lavatory. Such carelessness earned an angry scowl. As students of Fowler we did not sink to the word 'toilet'.

Lavatories were another status symbol at Amen House. On the first mezzanine landing was the male 'bosses' lavatory. When I eventually attained it, after 21 years, I felt I had 'arrived'. It was as good as a rise in salary.

The second male lavatory was slightly below the ground floor, and was used by a multitude of clerks, assistants, counting-house staff, chauffeurs and travellers, but not by stock-keepers, messengers, lorry drivers and cleaners, who used one in the upper basement by the back or Old Bailey entrance, where the packers and despatch staff worked. Finally, Sir Humphrey's personal curtained-off lavatory was on the mezzanine landing above his own first-floor room. The female staff, of course, had their own arrangements in another part of the building, but of that I knew, and still know, nothing. You may think it curious that I should spend so many words on lavatories, but my emphasis is on the hierarchies (a word often used by C.W.) in this unique, academic, not over-business-like, non-trades-union house.

Along a linoleum-paved corridor on the second floor C.W. had a small office along with Frederick Page ('Curly' to his contemporaries and 'Colin' in the Masques), a gentle man with whom he shared many views, yet with whom he was in great contrast. Their tiny room was packed with books - we had to have file copies of all Amen House books in print, in order to enter up missprints for eventual new editions. All missprints, incidentally, had to be humbly explained to Caesar, who had an unfailing eye for them. It is a good thing he cannot see modern daily newspapers, especially the 'quality' ones. As you approached the room, C.W. in his swivel, tipped-back chair was on your right, and F.P., also self-named 'Fanny Price', in his rigid armchair faced him, each immersed in his separate world of literature. The window of this room looked out onto the Old Bailey courtyard. It was permitted to be a clear window, only because of the influence of the O.U.P. The Old Bailey authorities had asked for it to be frosted, and clear glass was allowed only through a promise that no one would peer out of this and other windows. I and others were frequently shouted at by irate police sergeants: 'Get away from those windows!'

Those of you who have read the Masques must have wondered what sort of a man C.W.'s 'Caesar' was, to engender such tributes. I used to think that George Arliss, though hardly tall enough, would be the right man to play him. He had great dignity, and could be both very kind and so severe that one never forgot his rebukes. He once told me off in idiomatic Latin, without any translation, which was, I suppose, a compliment. He was pedantic in the best sense. To him 'tennis' meant 'real tennis', of which one of his sons was a champion. Once someone said to him: 'There's a good tennis match at our Sports Club next Saturday.' 'Oh?', said Caesar, feigning ignorance, 'I didn't know we had a court there'. 'Oh yes, Sir Humphrey', 'four courts.' 'Oh, I see, you mean lawn tennis' (he was no mean player of that inferior game himself) 'not the real thing. Why didn't you say so?'

Certain words must be avoided in his presence. One was 'advert'. Again he feigned not to understand what was said. 'Why should it be 'adverse'. Oh, you mean an advertisement! Well let us continue this discussion in English, shall we?'

C.W.'s casual poem, 'An Urbanity', which is in the Charles Williams Library, tells you a lot about Amen House. So do the Masques. And how like C.W., that great lover of the City, to turn the conventional 'pastoral' into 'An Urbanity'.

The staff at the O.U.P. were a more mixed lot than most. They consisted, at the Editorial top, of graduates of Oxford, then some 'gownless scholars' (to twist Lamb's phrase) such as Fred Page and me, and thirdly, as travellers, clerks, and typists) of a large number of 'Plymouth Brethren'. This may have been because the staff manager and his assistant came from that severe, self-disciplined sect. I once dared to criticise these unsmiling crop-headed

P.B.'s to C.W., who made his inevitable defence of anyone, from the Inquisition downwards, who was glibly criticised: 'God, doubtless has his use for them.'

Before leaving qualifications let me say that I once heard a male newcomer say of C.W. - 'The man has not even got a degree!' I replied: 'Oh yes he has - at University College, Gower Street (London University did not exist then). 'Oh, that's not quite the same is it?' I was wrong. He did not stay there long enough to take a degree. But, of course, C.W. did earn and receive his honorary degree at Oxford during the war years there.

But back, and sadly to my subject. C.W. wrote for one of the Masques 'The Carol of Amen House' with music by Hubert Foss. I have parted with my copy to the C.W. Library, and can remember only the first line: 'Over this House a Star'. But, alas, the star relaxed its vigilance. The building was damaged by bombs, and I believe its salvation at all was due to an ubiquitous junior named Sydney Cole, who belonged to the A.F.S. and knew this intricate building inside out.

But, alas, Amen House is no more. No longer can visitors be taken down to see a section of the Roman Wall in the basement. No longer can such poets as Robert Bridges, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats and Dylan Thomas (one of C.W.'s early students) be seen in that 'little room'. The noble, if lopsided facade has now been absorbed by that flourishing Institution, the Old Bailey, and the glorious front door is now relegated to being a back door, and a bolt-hole for indiscreet judges. Yet if the spirit of Charles Williams hovers anywhere, it is on the space which was once the second floor of Amen House.

FOR CHARLES WILLIAMS

Before you vanished with the speed of light
from Britain, where your sainthood spread
a lifelong leavening and bright
rumors of Logres (realm your poetry
illuminated for the Grail's return);
before you sped
to Sarras, island of the Trinity
you, the king's poet, sang so richly of --
no warning of your name or hint of dove
descending in a dream
came to me waiting unaware,
unknowing what I hoped to see or hear.

And then
(as did Another's once Who came
and went, releasing power
that circles worlds)
your flight from earth set free
the rushing wind of you in roaring flame
and music thundering across the sea.

And God's invisible landscape under me
shook
and the firmament revolved
around me, heavenly fire dissolved
grey mists of error, swept
the smoky glass of knowing all too clear.
Even with that first look

at your creation, insight leapt
into a vast and vibrant sphere
where archetypes began to surge
up to my startled conscious mind and merge
in intellectual nuptials, coinhere
with your heraldic forms and burning hues:

Marriage of faith
and the imagination; troth
of unicorn and lion; courtesy
drawn out of heaven to link the band
of blest companions hand to hand;
celerities of pardon; poetry
whose glory stormed the heart, transforming me.

Thenceforth your world was mine: now year by year
the coinherences appear
in every worldscape, sinewing
allegiance to the Holy Thing
I met within your vision face to face
when all my loves moved surely into place.

July 1976

Dorothy Hobson Fitzgerald

REFERENCE COLLECTION

Thanks to generous donations of books, booklets and ephemera by R. D. Binfield, Anne Scott, Jo Harris, Dorothy Fitzgerald, Alice Mary Hadfield and others, the Society now has the nucleus of what the Council hopes will become, either in original or xerox, a complete collection of all editions of books and booklets, and of originals or xeroxes of all ephemera. The Charles Williams Reference Collection is housed in the library of King's College, Strand, London, W.C.2., where since 29th March it can be consulted by members and serious students by arrangement with the librarian, Mr. Ian Angus. Those wishing to consult it should telephone the library first (01-836 5454, x 2140).

The listing, indexing and bibliographical control of the collection is the responsibility of our member Peter Thornber, working with the Secretary, Dr. Horne, until 1st September, 1978, and thereafter Alice Mary and Charles Hadfield. The collection is indexed using Lois Glenn's check-list, with added information on a separate card index. These indexes are available for consultation. It should be noted, too, that King's College Library has its own range of Charles Williams's books, to which members may refer.

In addition to the Reference Collection at King's College, Anne Scott still maintains the Society's lending library at 25 Corfton Road, Ealing, London, W.5., from which books may be borrowed personally or by post.

The Council's plans for the reference collection have, therefore, reached the end of the beginning. The next stage is to ask members' help, either in adding to the collection, or in giving money to be spent in augmenting it. There follows a list of what the reference collection so far has, complete except for some reviews. If any member or reader is willing to give any other books, editions of books, booklets or ephemera to augment the collection, will they please get in touch with Dr. Brian Horne, the Secretary, at King's College Hostel, Vincent Square, London, S.W.1. In doing so, will they please list what they are willing to give, providing a note on date, edition, publisher, whether with or without jacket, etc., and also whether, in the event of the Society's being offered more than one copy of the same book, the donation still holds, i.e. that the copy may be sold so that the money can be added to the Reference Collection Fund.

Dr. Horne will then arrange for the books to be sent to King's College for Mr. Thornber to catalogue them. If you would like postage or carriage expenses refunded, please say so when you offer books.

The Council also wishes to build up a Reference Collection Fund, from which copies of books, etc., can be bought, and xeroxes of ephemera paid for. The Society already has some money in this fund from donations kindly given when the Society was founded, but it is not nearly enough for likely needs. Whether or not, therefore, you offer a gift of books, we would be most grateful for donations to the fund, which we would like to build up from its present £75 to at least £500. Cheques should be made payable to the Charles Williams Society and sent to Dr. Horne, who will acknowledge them and pass them to the treasurer. Bequests in members' wills of money and/or books (which perhaps you cannot bear to part with now) will also be appreciated.

The Reference Collection will not include original manuscripts in any form. The Council considers that within the United Kingdom the central manuscript collection should be in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which already has a considerable collection. Any member wishing to donate manuscript material is asked to contact Dr. Horne in the first place. Such material will be xeroxed for the reference library and then deposited in the Bodleian, subject to any time embargo the donor may wish to impose. Bequests of MS material, e.g. letters, to the Collection and the Bodleian will be of the greatest value.

From 1st September, 1978, the contacts will be Alice Mary and Charles Hadfield, The White Cottage, 21 Randolph Road, London, W9 1AN, and not Dr. Horne.

Poetry

WINDOWS OF NIGHT	O.U.P. 1924
TALIESSIN THROUGH LOGRES	O.U.P. 1972 reprint
THE REGION OF THE SUMMER STARS	corrected galley proof

Fiction

WAR IN HEAVEN	Gollancz 1930
MANY DIMENSIONS	Gollancz 1931
ditto	p/b Penguin 1952
THE PLACE OF THE LION	mundanus (Gollancz) 1931
ditto	1947 reprint
THE GREATER TRUMPS	Gollancz 1932
DESCENT INTO HELL	Faber 1937
ALL HALLOWS' EVE	Faber 1945
ditto, 4th imp.	1947
ditto, with Introduction by T.S. Eliot	
New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy	1948

Plays

Typescript copy: THE MASQUE OF THE MANUSCRIPT
THE MASQUE OF THE MANUSCRIPT privately printed by Henderson & Spalding 1927
A MYTH OF SHAKESPEARE O.U.P. 2nd imp. 1929
TS: THE MASQUE OF PERUSAL
THE MASQUE OF PERUSAL privately printed by Henderson & Spalding 1929
TS: THE MASQUE OF THE TERMINATION OF COPYRIGHT
THREE PLAYS O.U.P. 1931
THOMAS CRANMER OF CANTERBURY O.U.P. 1936
JUDGEMENT AT CHELMSFORD O.U.P. 1939
THE HOUSE OF THE OCTOPUS Edinburgh House Press 1945
Christendom Sept. 1937: SEED OF ADAM

Criticism

POETRY AT PRESENT	Clarendon Press	1930
THE ENGLISH POETIC MIND	Clarendon Press	1932
REASON AND BEAUTY IN THE POETIC MIND	Clarendon Press	1933

Theology

THE DESCENT OF THE DOVE	Longmans	1939
WITCHCRAFT	Faber	1945
THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS	Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press	1942

Biography

Uncorrected proof copy - marked in hands of author and Fred Page - of BACON	Arthur Barker	1933	defective
JAMES I	Arthur Barker	1951	reprint
Uncorrected proof copy - marked in hands of author and Fred Page - of ROCHESTER	Arthur Barker	1936	
QUEEN ELIZABETH	Duckworth	1936	
STORIES OF GREAT NAMES (Indian Edn)	O.U.P. India	1944	reprint

Poems and Stories

STABAT MATER DOLOROSA (Oldroyd setting of latin text with English translation by C.W.) O.U.P. Music Department 1926 disbound
AN URBANITY privately printed by Henderson & Spalding 1927
THE CAROL OF AMEN HOUSE words by C.W., Music by Hubert Foss, privately printed by Henderson & Spalding 1927
London Mercury Dec. 1935, includes the story: ET IN SEMPITERNAM PEREANT

Items including articles, etc., by C.W.

London Mercury July 1937 includes essay reprinted in THE IMAGE OF THE CITY: THE NEW MILTON
ENGLISH POEMS OF MILTON O.U.P. World's Classics 1940
RELIGION AND LOVE IN DANTE Dacre Paper 6, Dacre Press 1941
THE WAY OF EXCHANGE James Clarke 1941
Time and Tide Feb. 28 and Mar. 7 1942 "Notes by the Way" by C.W.
photocopy of holograph MS for Time and Tide (Oct. 21 1939) of Don Luigi Sturzo: CHURCH AND STATE

Edited Works

xerox of POEMS OF HOME AND OVERSEAS	Clarendon Press	1921
A SHORT LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE WITH THE SOURCES	Clarendon Press	1933
THE NEW BOOK OF ENGLISH VERSE	Gollancz	1935
THE NEW CHRISTIAN YEAR	O.U.P.	1941
THE STORY OF THE AENEID retold by C.W.	O.U.P.	1936

Works about Williams

Lois Glenn: CHARLES WILLIAMS: A CHECKLIST Kent State U.P. 1975
Alice Mary Hadfield: INTRODUCTION TO CHARLES WILLIAMS Robert Hale 1959
Fernando de Mello Moser: CHARLES WILLIAMS: DEMANDA, VISAO E MITO Lisboa Grafica Santelmo 1969

The Christian Century, 73 (May 2nd 1956)
includes W. H. Auden CHARLES WILLIAMS: A REVIEW ARTICLE

Poetry London 11 (Sept./Oct. 1947)

includes John Heath-Stubbs THE POETIC ACHIEVEMENT OF CHARLES WILLIAMS
Christian Scholar XLIIJ, 1 March 1960 (Spring)

John O'Mellin "Mysteries Great And Small"

XLV, 2 Summer 1962

William V. Spanos "Charles Williams' JUDGEMENT AT CHELMSFORD:
A Study in the Aesthetic of Sacramental Time"

Michal Williams CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS

Talbot & Co. (1919)

TS extracts from C.W.'s letters to producer Phyllis Potter on SEED OF ADAM
extracted by A. M. Hadfield

Theology LXXIX, 668 March 1976: Raymond Hockley: "In the City and Under
the Mercy".

NEW MEMBER

Miss S. L. Hurst, 19 Russell Road, London, N.W.8.

CORRECTION

Dear Editor,

It was good to have Fr. Mascall's personal reminiscence in the Winter News-
letter, but his rendering of the opening lines of Paradise Lost as recited
by C.W. is wrong in at least one respect: Charles Williams did not drop his h's.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Ridler

15th February, 1978.

Copyright in this Newsletter resides with the Charles Williams Society. It may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the permission of the Editor.