



The DEFENDANT

Newsletter of the Australian Chesterton Society

Vol. 22 No. 1

Autumn 2015

Issue No. 85

'I have found that humanity is not incidentally engaged, but eternally and systematically engaged, in throwing gold into the gutter and diamonds into the sea. . . . ; therefore I have imagined that the main business of man, however humble, is defence. I have conceived that a defendant is chiefly required when worldlings despise the world – that a counsel for the defence would not have been out of place in the terrible day when the sun was darkened over Calvary and Man was rejected of men.'

G.K. Chesterton, 'Introduction', *The Defendant* (1901)

Greg Sheridan on Chesterton

Page 1

Antony Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest - A Mischievous Tale

Page 2

Chesterton's Last Will and Testament

Pages 3-4

A New Canon – Updating an Everlasting Author

Pages 5-6

Celebrating the Common Man

Page 7

Chesterton in Chicago – the Marion E. Wade Center

Page 8

Greg Sheridan on Chesterton

Greg Sheridan, Foreign Editor of *The Australian* newspaper, is a long-time fan of G.K. Chesterton whom he has highlighted at various times in his columns.

In *The Weekend Australian* (April 28-29, 2012), he offered these comments:

I was delighted to see a big new biography of Chesterton last year [Ian Ker's G.K. Chesterton] and a rash of new essays about him. Journalist, novelist, poet, essayist, columnist, religious apologist, biographer, historian and prolifically productive, Chesterton did not always have consistent quality but at his best he possessed an unrivalled genius.

One of his unique talents was to discern the real shape of things, not so much in politics, where he often went wrong, but in life, history, metaphysics and the biggest questions of purpose and society. His writing was clever and strange and familiar and unexpected all at the same time. Someone accused him of being as dull as ditchwater, to which he replied that ditchwater was singularly fascinating; it teemed with life and variety. . . .

One truth (and a happy truth) I learned from Chesterton is that there is no such thing as peace and stability in life, that the only temporary stability to be found in human affairs is the momentary balance of opposing forces. Nothing that is alive is stable.

Chesterton thought truth itself had this characteristic and his vision of orthodoxy was of a Roman chariot swerving this way and that, always on the point of falling but never quite tipping over: as he put it, "the wild truth, reeling but erect". . . .



Greg Sheridan

Again, in *The Weekend Australian* (November 8-9, 2014), Sheridan expressed his admiration of Chesterton in a tribute to the late Pierre Ryckmans (who was himself a distinguished Chestertonian, highlighted in Winter 2014 issue of *The Defendant*):

[Pierre Ryckmans] was a figure like George Orwell or GK Chesterton, a thinker of piercing directness who penetrated all manner of human reality, and a writer at once straight forward and extraordinarily original. . . .

*I think [Pierre's] spirit was closest to Chesterton's. . . . Pierre was alive to all the vast European influence of Chesterton, how his profoundly disturbing book, *The Man Who was Thursday*, inspired Franz Kafka, for example.*

He shared with Chesterton, and with Orwell, a love of physical things and a sense of spiritual and intellectual integration that not only made sense of the whole world but was open to the whole world.

Most recently, Greg Sheridan has conveyed this accolade to the Editor of *The Defendant* on the work of the Australian Chesterton Society:

A society devoted to spreading the knowledge and appreciation of Chesterton is doing God's work, opening up an immense store of fun for people, and lighting a candle in the darkness as well. ■

Antony Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest: A Mischievous Tale

(Inspired by *The Man Who Was Thursday*)

by David Daintree

David Daintree is a Classics scholar and a long-time devotee of Chesterton. After teaching Latin at several schools, he served as head of a number of university residential colleges and as President of Champion College, Australia's first liberal arts institution of higher education in Sydney. He is currently Director of the Christopher Dawson Centre for Cultural Studies in Hobart.



David Daintree

This is not a story about Chesterton himself, nor is it a scholarly analysis of any of his writings. It's just a tale about two rather nerdy undergraduates more than forty years ago who were moved to mischief by one very great and very funny book – *The Man Who Was Thursday*.

I was one of the pair, then reading Classics at the University of New England; the other was my old pal Fred Fitzpatrick, whose degree was in Philosophy. We both loved the sheer blatant charlatanism of the young man who pretended to be an aged professor, whose imitation was so effective that he was taken for the real thing, and whose unfortunate victim was therefore hounded out as a phony. I suppose it was one of the earliest known cases of identity theft.

We reveled in such passages as –

“You read all that up in Pinckwerts; the notion that involution functioned eugenically was exposed long ago by Glumpe.”

and

“‘I see,’ he sneered, ‘you prevail like the false pig in Aesop.’ ‘And you fail,’ I answered, smiling, ‘like the hedgehog in Montaigne.’ Need I say that there is no hedgehog in Montaigne? ‘Your claptrap comes off,’ he said; ‘so would your beard.’ I had no intelligent answer to this, which was quite true and rather witty. But I laughed heartily, answered, ‘Like the Pantheist’s boots,’ at random, and turned on my heel.”

We decided to write an impudent article for the University rag. It purported to be a review of a book by Antony Flew, at that time one of the world's most aggressive atheist philosophers (think Dawkins in today's terms), in which Flew supposedly described his conversion to a form of Christianity and his intention to join the Dominican Order. The latter *jeu d'esprit* was a nod at the fact that the Dominicans then ran the Catholic college, St Albert's, on the University of New England campus.

In *The Man Who Was Thursday*, the poet-detective Gabriel Syme to a fellow poet, Lucian Gregory:

‘Don't you see that we're both in the same boat? Yes, and jolly sea-sick.’

And, as to the first point, we were keen to stress Flew's decision to adopt a form of Christianity, because we had decided in advance to call 'his' book – *The Pantheist's Boots!*

Writing the review was such fun. We took it in turns, paragraph by paragraph, without any particular regard for coherency or sense, delighting in the outrageous bravado of the protagonist, and determined to adorn our piece with as many Chestertonian gems as we could squeeze in.

Immediate and Later Outcomes

The project had two unexpected and surprising outcomes, one immediate, one delayed by decades.

The first was that people believed the article to be genuine. I don't know if anyone actually wrote to the wretched Flew to congratulate him on waking up to the folly of his ways, but I do remember well that certain staff in both History and Philosophy were hooked.

One (rather appropriately a Dominican nun) did smell a rat, but it was an odd species of rat to smell: we had referred (don't ask me why: I said the thing was incoherent) to 'Justinian's cruel general, the eunuch Narses', claiming that he had lived in the fifth century. She objected that his floruit had been in the sixth century. I suppose like any good religious she was happy to accept that a godless man had come to Faith, but to err on the date of Narses was poor form on our part.

The second outcome, thirty years later, in 2004, was that Flew did in fact convert to a form of Christianity. His book *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (2007), co-authored with Roy Abraham Varghese (ISBN 978-0-06-133529-7) tells the story.

I haven't seen Fred for years, but I think he'd agree that we got there first. And while it may be thought presumptuous to say so, I rather think that Chesterton himself is enjoying the joke. ■

Executive of the Australian Chesterton Society

PRESIDENT and EDITOR of 'The Defendant'

Mr Karl Schmude, 177 Erskine Street, Armidale NSW 2350
Phone: 0407 721 458 Email: k.schmude@champion.edu.au

SECRETARY / TREASURER: Mr Ray Finnegan,
13 Fossey Street, Holder ACT 2611

Phone: (02) 6288 5137 Email: range2@grapevine.net.au

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Mr Symeon Thompson
Email: symeonjthompson@me.com

Chesterton's Last Will and Testament *by Dale Ahlquist*

In the January-February 2015 issue (Vol. 18, No.4) of *Gilbert* magazine, the President of the American Chesterton Society, Dale Ahlquist, reviewed the final volume of Chesterton's essays that originally appeared in the *Illustrated London News*. In many ways, they represent Chesterton's 'Last Will and Testament'.

Dale Ahlquist's review appeared in his regular column in *Gilbert*, 'An Introduction to the Writings of G.K. Chesterton,' and is reprinted with his kind permission and that of the American Chesterton Society.



Dale Ahlquist

A Review of: *Illustrated London News 1935-36. Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton, Volume 37.*

It was at about the time of the first Midwest Chesterton Conference in 1981, which kicked off the great annual conference we still enjoy today, that the beloved Frank Petta of Elgin, Illinois, first floated the idea of packaging all of G.K. Chesterton's columns from the *Illustrated London News* and bringing them out in book form. He knew it would be a big task: collecting almost 1,600 essays written over a period of thirty-one years (1905 - 1936).

Fortunately, Frank already had copies of every one of them. The ad hoc group of Midwest Chestertonians soon announced their plans to publish the collection. They wanted to have a scholar provide some annotations for the essays, and they found Lawrence Clipper, an English professor from Indiana University, who got the university to give him a grant not only to do the research and writing, but to have a bevy of secretaries type up all the essays.

Then, along came Father Joseph Fessio of Ignatius Press in San Francisco. He liked Chesterton. He had the grand idea to publish *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton*.

Enter George Marlin from New York, who became the general editor of the *Collected Works*, and who thought that including the *Illustrated London News* with the *Collected Works* and releasing them right away would be a great idea, because after all, Chesterton fans everywhere would be clamoring for all this previously uncollected material.

The first nine volumes of the *ILN* columns came out in short order, from 1987 to 1991. Only two remained to be published. There was only one problem. There were hardly any

"Chesterton fans everywhere" in 1991. John Peterson and I were about the only ones who bought the volumes. The rest languished on shelves in Ignatius' warehouse. There was still a lot of work to be done on the Chesterton revival.

But that work was done, thank God, though it would be twenty years before Ignatius finally brought out the last two volumes, completing the *ILN* collection. Both Frank Petta and Larry Clipper went to their graves without seeing the project finished. However, they saw the first fruits of their efforts, and I am very grateful for that.

Volume 37 of the *Collected Works* is the slimmest of the *ILN* books, as it contains only the last year-and-a-half worth of Chesterton's columns.

Subject index

However, its added value is a large subject index for the entire *ILN* collection, which was one of the things that Larry Clipper had worked hardest on. It is, of course, not only a valuable tool for any Chesterton scholar but for anyone to better enjoy the wealth of material from the whole collection. It sure would have been fun to have had this index twenty years ago.

It is poignant to read the final *ILN* volume, knowing its own long history, but especially knowing that in the last several essays, Chesterton is writing his last words. One gets the feeling that Chesterton knows it, too. He is saying good-bye.

What are his final thoughts for us?

He is prophetic as he always has been. He is concerned about the destruction of the family, which has come about through divorce and wage slavery, which have pulled both father and mother out of the home. But "nobody has really discussed the alternative to the Family. The only obvious alternative is the State.... If families will not be responsible for their own children, then officials will be responsible for other people's children." The result will be that the government will gain great power over our lives, as well as interference in our lives.

The most sobering prophecy: "The frightful punishment of mere sex emancipation is not anarchy but bureaucracy." Think of the enforced chaos that has come about as the State has redefined marriage and family.

Chesterton worries about "the madness of machinery," and

Christianity's Refusal to Die

A Final Chesterton Thought

In 1935, a year before he died, Chesterton wrote an *Illustrated London News* [ILN] essay on Christianity. He dealt with a controversy sparked by a proposal of the artist Eric Gill to erect a sculptural memorial for the League of Nations that included a Christian symbol. The suggestion was opposed on the grounds that non-Christians might not accept it.

In a remarkably apposite comment that applies to our own time, this is an edited version of Chesterton's reflections in his ILN essay (August 17, 1935).

I suspect that [the resistance to Eric Gill's proposal of a Christian symbol] was not so much a question of the non-Christians outside Europe as of the anti-Christians inside Europe. . . .

What produces a practical embarrassment in this case is the sincere and savage hatred felt by many Europeans for the religion of their own European past. And this interests me, simply as a historical comparison, because it is really a historical curiosity.

It is a difficulty quite peculiar to Christendom. There does not seem to have been anything like it in Paganism. In the last phase of Paganism there was every sort of doubt; there was every sort of denial; but there was not this particular sort of difficulty. The old gods were once perhaps really worshipped as gods; they were then enjoyed as legends; they were even treated lightly as jokes; but they were never hated as symbols.

The heathens grew cold towards their religion, or even contemptuous of their religion, but they never had any irritation against it that could make them refuse to use its images, or its imagery, in the realm of imagination.

There must have been multitudes of intellectuals, . . . who took even a bitter or mocking or pessimistic view of the gods; or simply thought there were no such things as gods in the world; but they would never have objected to gods as graven images. . . . And they may have known in their hearts that their religion was dead. But because it was dead, they had even less desire to make exhausting efforts to kill it.

If Christianity were really one of the cults studied in comparative religion, if it were really, as its critics sometimes say, a thing made up of materials borrowed from Paganism, if it were really only the last myth or ritual of the long undying death of the Roman Empire,

warns about a robotic world "where some horrible parody of human beings pretend to be human." This is all due to the loss of tradition, the loss of custom, the literal loss of significance, of meaning.

Everything is out of proportion, reflected in the world of art where "even the grotesque effects of deformity are lost in a complete loss of form." Along with this is the decline in the art of controversy, where men will "make a point merely because it is part of a controversy; without worrying about whether it is a part of a philosophy."

He sympathizes with the revolutionary idealist "who would defy and destroy all our corrupt compromises;" but he has no sympathy for the man who uses his arguments to show only "his superiority to anybody he happens to dislike."

Most argument is opportunism. Even the right morality is preached for the wrong motives. The result is "a chaos of caprice and anarchy" that threatens "to produce a world in which men differ too much even to dispute."

In Chesterton's parting wisdom to us, we can hear a weariness in his voice. But he has not given up. He still has time for literary criticism, as he devotes one essay to admitting that he has never understood what Shakespeare's poem "The Phoenix and the Turtle" is supposed to mean.

And his second-to-last essay is a grand tribute to his lifelong friend Edmund Clerihew Bentley, who has just published a sequel to his famous detective novel *Trent's Last Case*.

When Chesterton refers to the seeming irrelevancies in the plot that turn out to be not quite so irrelevant as we had supposed, I could not help but think of the detective novel that God has written for each of us, the story of our own lives, where we think we are misled by many irrelevant things that turn out to be very relevant after all, all leading to a surprise ending.

Chesterton, who made a life of seeing the meaning in everything, could look back to "those distant days" of his youth, when he dedicated *The Man Who Was Thursday* to Bentley. He could see that in spite of that novel's "melodramatic moonshine," he had the right notion of fighting against what appeared to be a world of anarchy and to resist the temptation to despair.

And thus he finishes in the light of hope. ■

then there is no reason why its symbolism should not be used forever by anybody. . . .

The real reason is that this religion does differ in one detail from all those ancient and beautiful religions. It is not dead. Everybody knows in his heart that it is not dead; and none better than those who want it to die.

A New Canon - Updating an Everlasting Author

by Mark Shea



Mark Shea

Readers of The Defendant are aware of the enduring power and appeal of Chesterton's thought. But does he need updating?

An American author, Mark Shea, has mischievously proposed a new Chesterton canon – a more modern set of his best-known books. Calling it a bibliography in 'the spirit of Vatican II', he satirises – in the professional jargon of our time - the tendency to adapt any philosophy of a former period to the presumptions of a new age.

The hope of the satirist is to ridicule a tendency so effectively, through the vehicle of humour, as to reduce or even banish its intellectual and social and political power. But a lurking fear is that the point of the humour will be monumentally missed – and that the satire is destined, perversely, to be taken seriously, and strengthen the very attitude it mocks.

This abbreviated version of Mark Shea's article is offered in the face of this fear – and in the spirit of Chesterton himself, who was often at his best in poking fun at the pretensions of his own time. The article is reprinted with Mark Shea's kind permission. The full article can be found at:

<http://www.mark-shea.com/chesterton.html>

A set of books for our time (but not necessarily for all time!)

Many people know that G.K. Chesterton, a famous defender of the Catholic faith as well as a prolific writer in fields as diverse as murder mysteries, literary criticism, biography, and political, theological and economic thought, fell strangely silent in the mid-1930s and ceased to publish for nearly 50 years.

As a result, some speculated he might have died.

However, the last few years have seen a fresh outpouring of new and markedly different material from that now-reclusive knight of Christendom. These new writings have been communicated to the outside world through the mediation of an elite team of American theologians from several major Catholic universities.

These men and women assure us that these writings authentically embody the thought of "the New Chesterton" - a Chesterton who is now (under their careful editorial supervision) deeply reflective of "Spirit of Vatican II" sensibilities and trends:

Francis of Assisi

Chesterton's powerful account of the 13th century animal rights activist and his struggles against an anthropocentric Church hierarchy.

Peeling away the hagiography which has traditionally focused

The Wisdom of Chesterton

'If we cannot provide the great cities and the great suburbs with some kind of poetry, they will simply go on breeding these broken fanaticisms that make women wave sabres and men found insane religions.' (*Illustrated London News*, October 21, 1905)



'What we call the new ideas are generally broken fragments of the old ideas.' (*T.P.'s Weekly*, Christmas Number, 1907)

'In expressing confused ideas, the moderns have great subtlety and sympathy. It is in expressing clear ideas that they generally find their limitations.' (*Illustrated London News*, September 12, 1931)

Quotations are reprinted from *Gilbert* magazine with the kind permission of its publisher, Mr Dale Ahlquist, President of the American Chesterton Society.

on Francis' incidental and culturally-conditioned Catholicism, Chesterton hails him as the original "medieval, musical, mystical, magical bear" and zeros in on the real core of his spirituality: Francis' concern for the environment and his insistence on "dialogue with organisms from diverse evolutionary traditions."

Comrade Thomas Aquinas: Quiet Person of Size (Revised 1985, with a new dedication to Daniel Ortega)

Chesterton, now acutely sensitive to the ideological oppression of suffering peoples at the hands of a Eurocentric Church hierarchy, reveals Thomas in his true light as the first architect of the *Philosophia Liberatione*.

He elucidates Thomas' misunderstood deep wisdom (long shrouded in the outmoded conceptual categories of "poverty," "humility" and "eternal life") that the True and Only Millennium could begin with nothing less than "political empowerment of the masses and annihilation of oppressive societal structures of injustice such as we now see beginning in Managua, in all Nicaragua, in Central America and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

In his chapter "The Real Life of Comrade Thomas," Chesterton deftly sketches Thomas' daily routine of classes, cell group meetings and crossbow factory sit-ins. Moreover, (because of his own experience as a victim of "weightism") he sympathetically discusses the controversy surrounding Thomas' personal struggles with "so-called consumerism," and boldly arraigns Thomas' critics as "elite bourgeois look-sists" while hailing Thomas as the Best Friend of the Food Production Worker.

The Eternal Feminine

A contrite and penitent reworking of his earlier (and clearly sexist) *The Everlasting Man*.

Chesterton, now on the cutting edge of gender theology, moves past the outdated status quo ideals of mere "fairness" which characterized earlier and more timid forms of feminist thought. Instead, he articulates the most up-to-the-minute demands for "a radical re-envisioning of the Sacred in light of Womyn in mortal conflict with patriarchy."

This "re-envisioning" goes far beyond a flat political demand for a resignation of the patriarchal Church hierarchy. Chesterton, with his typical insight, goes to the heart of the struggle and calls for the destruction of all male imagery related to the Deity. It is, he insists, "the concept of the Father which has destroyed our primeval bonds with Holy Mother Earth, led to our present environmental crisis and created all oppression."

Therefore, Chesterton (in his new chapter "Astarte and Her Consort Moloch: A Sensitive Reappraisal") calls for a fundamental cultural return to ancient, pre-Judaic, earth-centred forms of spirituality and cultic practice designed to promote new sexual paradigms while at the same time reducing human population and restoring harmony with the natural cycles of death and life, sacrifice and renewal. With his characteristic gift for aphorism, Chesterton writes, "When people stop believing in God, they won't believe in nothing; they'll believe in the Goddess."

Alternative Spiritualities (formerly *Heretics*).

Chesterton here attempts to "amend the unfortunate triumphalism of the earlier version of this book by affirming, in the Spirit of Vatican II, the equal validity of all faith traditions."

Eschewing a theologically imperialist Church hierarchy, Chesterton writes, "What we want is not a Church that will move the world, but a Church deeply moved by the world: a Church sensitive to the rhythms of earthspirit, womynspirit and manspirit, a Church that incarnates the Inner Light of the Christic dwelling within all equally and without limits."

Orthopraxy

In this companion volume to *Alternative Spiritualities*, Chesterton gives us the account of his faith journey from irrelevant, heaven-centered Catholicism to his embrace of "direct political action as the sole realistic means of speaking justice to dysfunction."

Acclaiming Jesus as a "fellow seeker of the Way" he states his newfound conviction that "only by believing in ourselves as Jesus believed in himself can we experience true Justice."

This list is not comprehensive. Readers further interested in the "New Chesterton" may also want to check local libraries for other recent Chesterton works such as *What I Saw in Central America*, *The Napoleon of Vatican Hill* and his upcoming *Wisdom-Elder Brown Novels*.

But whatever you do (Chesterton warns us through his editorial staff), stay away from the actual documents of the Second Vatican Council and the hidebound interpretations of the "official" Magisterium of the Church.

These writings can only be understood by those specially trained to discern the essential "Spirit of Vatican II" amid the cumbersome and unfortunate "letter" of outdated orthodoxy. For as Scripture more or less says somewhere, "The letter kills, but the Spirit is like an angel of light." ■

Celebrating the Common Man

by Ray Finnegan

Ray Finnegan is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Australian Chesterton Society

My casual reading over recent times has led me to a remarkable coalescence of ideas from wide ranging sources.

The first reading had a reference to the insight of Bernard Lonergan, described in the article as 'one of the great intellectuals of our century' who developed the idea of a 'differentiated consciousness', by which he meant the acceptance of seemingly opposing ideas and seeing them not as contradictory but as paradox.

That last word reminded me immediately of Chesterton, and that connection was reinforced when the article later quoted Aristotle: 'a society is healthy when the elite listen to the common folk and the latter listen to the elite.' Very Chestertonian!

Chesterton's teenage notebooks are full of a reverence for ordinary people, consistent with his reverence for the most ordinary of objects and things. Chesterton's respect for the common man was basically a respect for free will. He said that the actions of a beggar are as momentous as the actions of a prime minister.

In his seminal work *Orthodoxy*, Chesterton observed: '(The common man) has always cared more for truth than for consistency. If he saw two truths that seem to contradict each other, he would take the two truths and the contradiction along with them.'

Chesterton's admiration for the power of choice in the least of us, made him a true democrat in politics, championing individual

liberty. He called plain folks 'the million masks of God' and praised them for their common sense, common decency, and their humble institutions: hearth and home, the family, the church, and the pub. He rejected every sort of elitism.

Chesterton and Pope Francis

And who is echoing his thoughts? None less than Pope Francis.

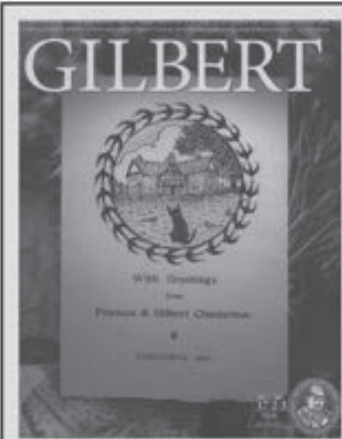
A recently released biography on Jorge Mario Bergoglio, better known as Pope Francis, recounts the political upheavals in his native Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s. Argentina was bitterly divided between Marxist guerillas and anti-communist death squads. The latter had the connivance of the military government.

The large Jesuit Order in Argentina, of which Father Bergoglio was provincial, was deeply infected with the ideological virus. Many Jesuits left the Order, some even declared support for Marxist ideals. Liberation theology was in favour with many.

In his talks to Jesuits and in his writings Bergoglio's constant theme was *santo pueblo fiel de Dios* – God's holy faithful people. In articles he wrote in 1980 he saw the common people as the key to promoting justice by action that was rooted in concrete demands and in the culture and values of the *pueblo fiel*. He scorned the approach of the enlightened class who were for the people but never with the people.

In another article he developed the theme more ardently. He wrote that 'while we argue [for change or no change] we do not see the real movement going on among God's faithful people.'

'It is with these people that effective power, wisdom, real problems, serious suffering, all move forward. The ideologues [of both left and right] are cut off in their elitism.' ■



GILBERT **GILBERT MAGAZINE**
JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CHESTERTON SOCIETY
Founded in 1996 – Published 8 times a year
HOW TO SUBSCRIBE
Online & Credit Card:
Via the American Chesterton Society –
www.chesterton.org/product-category/subscriptions/
Annual Subscription (International rate): US\$69.00

Chesterton in Chicago

The Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College



Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College

An important centre for the study of Chesterton is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Known as the Marion E. Wade Center (American spelling) at Wheaton College, an Evangelical liberal arts college in Chicago, it has become internationally renowned for its extensive collections, not only of Chesterton, but of six other English writers with a Christian perspective – C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, George MacDonald, Owen Barfield, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Charles Williams.

The Center was the brainchild of Clyde Kilby, a professor of English at Wheaton, who at first built a C.S. Lewis collection, based initially on a set of letters he had exchanged with Lewis.

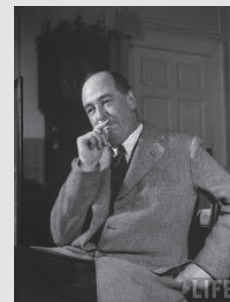
But from the outset, it was envisaged that other authors, including Chesterton, would be included, on account of their bonds of friendship and the spiritual and literary affinities they shared – as shown by the Inklings, a group of four of these writers who used to meet in Lewis' rooms at Magdalen College, Oxford, and at an Oxford pub, The Eagle and Child.

For his part, Chesterton had a significant impact on C.S. Lewis (see accompanying box), as well as on Sayers, Williams, Barfield and Tolkien. In her 2007 book, 'Chesterton and Tolkien as Theologians,' Alison Milbank notes that Tolkien knew of Chesterton's writings, particularly on fairy stories, and that they had a similar view of reality.

'[Chesterton's] stories are fantastic,' Milbank said in an interview, 'but always bring you back to the ordinary seen freshly as wonderful and exciting.'

The special collections at the Wade Center expanded rapidly in the 1970s, and major Chesterton acquisitions took place, including 700

C.S. Lewis recalling Chesterton's influence



C.S. Lewis

'In reading Chesterton, as in reading Macdonald, I did not know what I was letting myself in for. A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful of his reading.

'There are traps everywhere - "Bibles laid open, millions of surprises," as Herbert says, "fine nets and stratagems." God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous.'

* * *

'Then I read Chesterton's *Everlasting Man* and for the first time saw the whole Christian outline of history set out in a form that seemed to me to make sense. Somehow I contrived not to be too badly shaken. You will remember that I already thought Chesterton the most sensible man alive "apart from his Christianity." Now, I veritably believe, I thought – I didn't of course say; words would have revealed the nonsense—that Christianity itself was very sensible "apart from its Christianity."

Excerpts from C.S. Lewis' spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy* (1955).

books, pamphlets, and pictorial material bought from a Chicago bookseller and a set of photocopied material (19,000 pages) from the vast holdings of Dorothy Collins, Chesterton's long-time secretary and friend.

In 1984, the collection of John Sullivan, the Chesterton bibliographer, was purchased.

A continuing source of support and guidance in these acquisitions has been the Chesterton scholar, Aidan Mackay, who has been a great friend of the Australian Chesterton Society over the years as well.

The Wade Center is also renowned for an annual journal launched in 1979 – called, appropriately, *Seven: An Anglo-American Literary Review*, which has published articles by Aidan Mackay and John Sullivan as well as the Editor of *The Chesterton Review*, Fr Ian Boyd CSB.

Further information on the Chesterton collection at the Wade Center at Wheaton College is available at:

<http://www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter/Authors/GK-Chesterton/GKC-Resources> ■



G.K.'s Weekly at The Wade Center

Last October, as its 'Artifact of the Month', the Wade Center featured 'G.K.'s Weekly', the periodical that Chesterton edited from 1925 until his death in 1936. It was a successor to *The Eye-Witness* (founded by Hilaire Belloc in 1911) and *The New Witness*.

Original issues of the publication are rare, but the Wade Center has a complete set of it, and visitors are able to access it on request.