



# Shadowlands

by William Nicholson

## STUDY GUIDE

**LEFT:** Hand-crafted by C. S. Lewis' grandfather, this is the actual wardrobe which inspired *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. As a child, Lewis used to gaze upon it; as an adult, it served as his entry into Narnia. This simple source of inspiration would enthrall millions for decades...

## C. S. Lewis' Oxford and England in the 1950s

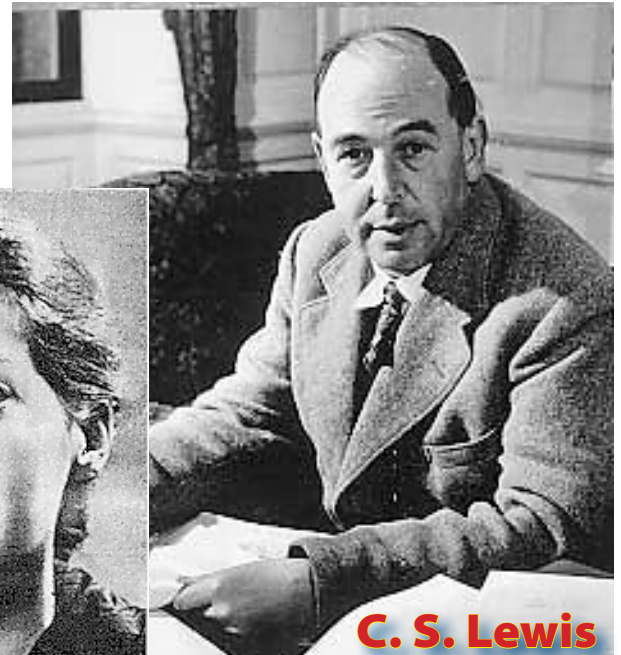
The fifties in England have been overshadowed by the war which preceded them and the lively sixties which followed. Although fifties fashion and music are having a revival today, it is still difficult to understand what it was like to live at that time. History rarely falls neatly into decades and the fifties are no exception. In the first few years, Britain was still recovering from the war, but by 1959 Harold Macmillan was able to boast, 'You've never had it so good', and an artistic and social revolt against the Establishment had started which continued into the sixties.

If a time traveller from the present day could be taken to a British town in 1950, he would immediately notice the dilapidated, unpainted buildings and the shabbily dressed people. Although five years had gone by since the end of the War, there were still gaps between buildings caused by bomb damage. Few cars were on the roads and people used bicycles or public transport.

The Labour Party had been in power since 1945 and laid the foundations of the welfare state, but had also faced post war balance of payment problems. As a result, the best British goods went for export and little was imported from abroad. Even patterned china was not available for the home market and Britons had to be content with white or pastel shades.

Many kinds of food, such as butter, bacon, meat, tea and sugar, were still rationed and would remain so until 1954. Few people ate in restaurants as the five shilling limit on meals was not removed until May 1950. Recipes of the period recommended the use of dried egg and suggested making 'Mock Cream' with a mixture of milk, corn flour, margarine and sugar, as the real thing was unobtainable.

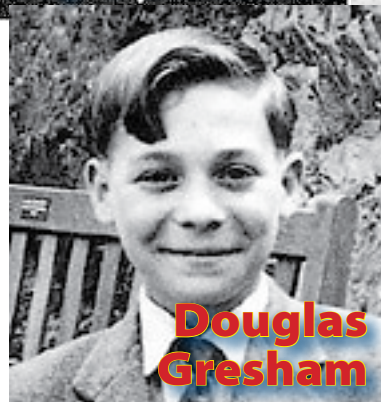
A 'points' rationing system for clothes had been abolished in 1949, but there was still little choice for women. Nylon



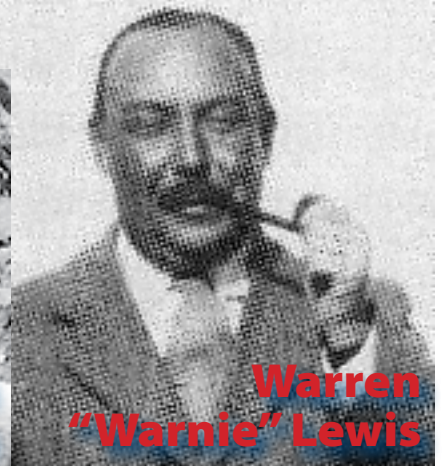
**C. S. Lewis**



**Joy Davidman**



**Douglas Gresham**

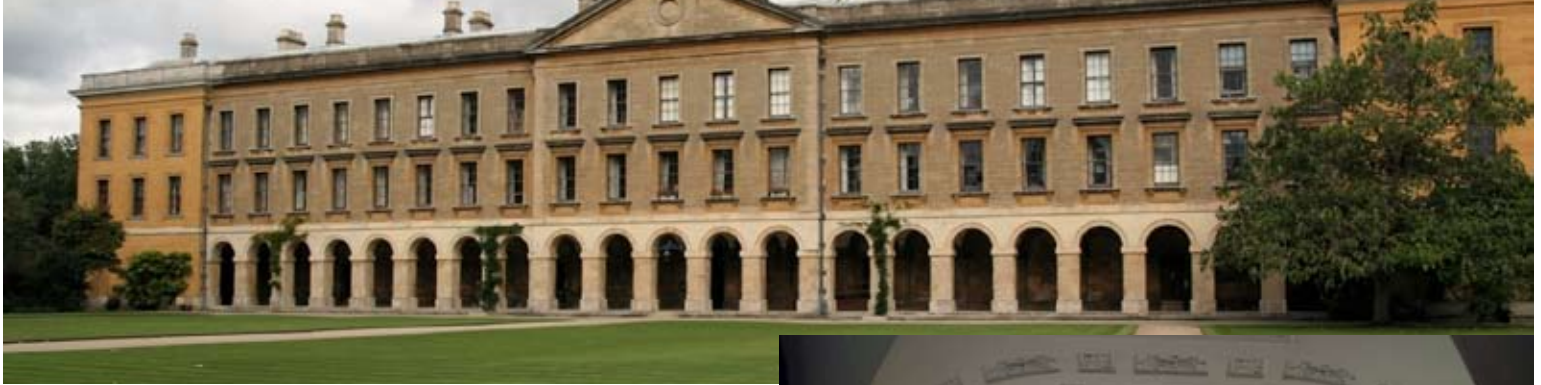


**Warren "Warnie" Lewis**

Continued. See **FIFTIES** on page 6



The New Building (1773) at Magdalen College, where C.S. Lewis was professor of English Literature from May 1925 to December 1954. His three rooms near the center are marked by flower boxes.



## Higher Education

Only about four percent of all British, and less than three percent of British working class adolescents, went to university by the late 1950s, a percentage that was much less than the United States and other countries in Europe. Education was a way to become socially mobile, but few were in the position to take advantage of it.

To become truly part of Great Britain's elite (leaders in government, industry, and banking), it seemed that one had to attend public schools (comparable to U.S. private schools) such as Eton. Just over 95,000 were in such schools at the end of the 1950s. Since many products of public schools went on to Oxford, Cambridge, and other select universities, educational opportunity greatly determined who would be in power and determine policy in Great Britain.



**BELOW:** Entrance to the dining hall in the Great Quad of Magdalen College, Oxford.

**RIGHT & INSET:** Magdalen College scholars and dons have dined in this hall for over three centuries.





LEFT: In the 1940s and 50s, C.S. Lewis was a member of a small group of like-minded friends called "The Inklings." They met at the Eagle and Child Pub on St. Giles Street in Oxford to discuss literature, writing, religion and life. Another prominent member of The Inklings was Lewis' Catholic friend J.R.R. Tolkien. Discussions at this pub contributed to the final form of both Lewis' *Narnia* books and Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series.

BELOW RIGHT: The Oxford Hotel, today. Joy Gresham and her son, Douglas, first met C. S. Lewis and his brother, Warnie, at the tea room here.



## Afternoon Tea

Afternoon tea is a light meal typically eaten at 4 o'clock. It originated in the United Kingdom, though various places that used to be part of the former British Empire also have such a meal. While afternoon tea used to be an everyday event, nowadays it's more likely to be taken as a treat in a hotel, café, or tea shop, although many Britons still have a cup of tea and slice of cake or chocolate at teatime.

Traditionally, loose tea would be served in a teapot with milk and sugar. This would be accompanied by various sandwiches (customarily cucumber, egg and cress, fish paste (bLOATER), ham, and smoked salmon), scones (with butter, clotted cream and jam) and usually cakes and pastries (such as Battenberg, fruit cake or Victoria sponge). The food would often be served in a tiered stand.

British tea rooms are generally feminine in decor — what the English call "twee." Furnishings are small and crowded fairly close together by US standards. In the 1950s, service would have been more formal than today — linen tablecloths and napkins, waiters in white gloves, and flowers on the tables.



## Magdalen College

Magdalen College (pronounced "maudlin") is one of the constituent colleges of the University of Oxford in England. Founded as Magdalen Hall in 1448 by William of Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, it became Magdalen College in 1458. The founder's statutes included provision for a choral foundation of men and boys (a tradition that has continued to the present day) and made reference to how the name of the College should be pronounced.

Widely regarded as one of the most beautiful of the Oxford colleges, Magdalen stands next to the River Cherwell and has within its grounds a deer park and Addison's Walk. The large, square Magdalen Tower is a famous Oxford landmark, and the college choir sings from the top of it early on May Morning to crowds of more than 20,000 each year.



The Kilns, C.S. Lewis' home from 1929 to 1963.



Joy's Room

## The Kilns


Lewis lived here with his brother Warnie, an older woman named Mrs. Moore, who was the mother of Lewis' college roommate who had died in World War II, and Mrs. Moore's daughter Maureen. Later, long after Mrs. Moore's death, Lewis' wife Joy moved in with them for the last few years of her life.

It was here at the Kilns that Lewis wrote all the Narnia books as well as his other classics. The two windows in the above right photo are his study (left) and bedroom (right). The house plays a significant role in the stories as well — in real life, a few children who were evacuated from London during the WWII bombing came to stay at the Kilns. And that's how *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* begins: a group of four siblings leave London in wartime and go to the country to stay at the "Professor's" house. The Professor is a gruff old man who is a little bit scary but believes their tale of the magical wardrobe - clearly Lewis himself.



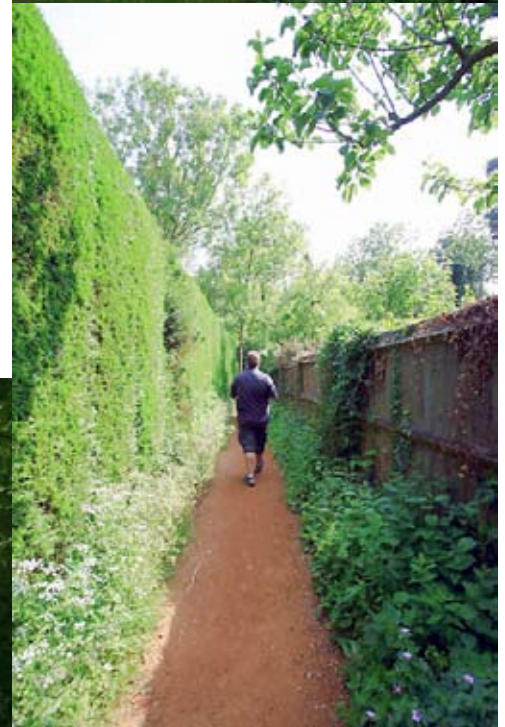
Joy & Jack in garden at The Kilns

He added the stairs on the outside so that he could come and go without disturbing his housemates, especially the elderly Mrs. Moore when she was living there. Lewis used to spend a lot of time in the back wooded area, and that inspired the land of Narnia.

The house is now on a cul-de-sac called "Lewis Close", but in his time it was all by itself in the middle of 8 wooded acres. Lewis' study was on the top floor and overlooked the wooded area with pond, which is now known as "The C.S. Lewis Nature Reserve." He used to take a punt out on the pond and even bathe in it. 



The C.S. Lewis Nature Reserve



# Holy Trinity Church



C. S. Lewis' Bedroom



Kitchen at The Kilns



**H**oly Trinity Church in Headington, an eastern suburb/village of Oxford. The church looks old but is quite new by English standards: built 1849. C. S. Lewis attended services here with his brother Warnie for 31 years, from 1932 until his death in 1963, and they always sat in the same pew near the back. There is a small plaque marking the spot. Apparently he and Warnie always arrived early for 8am communion, then left early before the service was over. Lewis didn't like sermons, church music, or small talk. Every time the Lewis brothers would leave early, the door would slam loudly behind them. Finally the churchwarden decided to line the door jamb with rubber to muffle the sound. So the next time they left, it closed quietly behind them. But then when the rest of the congregation went to leave, the door wouldn't open! Someone had to climb outside through an old back door, walk around to the front and shove it open with great effort. They took the rubber off again, and had to go back to the slamming. 🙄



Next to Holy Trinity Church is a pub called the **Masons Arms**, where Lewis and Warnie often headed after they left church early.

**LEFT:** The Kilns interior today, restored to its appearance when occupied by the Lewises and Joy.

**RIGHT:** The house rented by Joy Davidman when she moved to Oxford with her sons after her divorce.



## FIFTIES continued from page 1

stockings were scarce, although sometimes 'export rejects' could be found in shops or from a 'spiv' on the black market. Men wore drab 'Demob' clothes generally a sports jacket and baggy trousers or an ill fitting suit given to them in exchange for their uniform when they left the Army.

Looking back on the early fifties, Neal Ascherson described them as 'the years on the grey plateau...everything dangerous or vivid lay in the past' (*The Observer*, June 1987). On an average wage of £68 a week there was little to spare for entertainment. Suburban High Streets were deserted at night. An evening out for young people generally meant the movies or a dance. Couples were often chaste as they had nowhere to go to be alone together. In the pre-pill age, birth control was unreliable, abortion dangerous, and illegitimacy frowned upon. Girls married early and settled down to family life like their mothers. Although Labour had started to tackle the shortage of housing, much had yet to be done. Many lived in 'prefabs' – prefabricated houses which had originally been put up as temporary accommodation, but were to remain part of the urban scene for many years to come.

Towns were much dirtier than they are today, in spite of the lack of cars on the road. Before the Clean Air Act of 1956, smoke from factory chimneys and coal fires polluted the atmosphere, causing 'smog' – a combination of smoke, fumes and fog which made clothes and homes filthy, often causing the deaths of the elderly or those suffering from lung diseases.

The Festival of Britain brought new life into this grey world in 1951. Labour Minister Herbert Morrison had first planned the event in 1947, but by the time the Festival opened, there was a Conservative government, which was to remain in power for the rest of the period. London was transformed by the Festival. In *A Tonic to the Nation*, John Mackay remembers how impressed he was with the Dome of Discovery, feeling the 'newness of everything' and a 'sense of pride' in his country's future. In the same book, Gwendoline Williams recalls the Festival Gardens and funfair at Battersea: 'It was fun to cross Chelsea Bridge and enter the enchanted world of the gardens...'. The Battersea Funfair, the Festival Hall and National Film Theatre remained as permanent reminders after the Festival was over.

Apart from giving the British new hope in their future, the Festival promoted a style in architecture and design known as 'Contemporary,' which rapidly spread across the country, influencing a generation. Describing a 'Contemporary' living room, A.S. Byatt writes: 'The walls, in a way that was fashionable in those post festival years, were all painted in different pastel colors: duck egg blue, watered grass green, muted salmon rose, pale and sandy gold. The armchairs were pale beach, upholstered in olive cord.' (*The Virgin in the Garden*.) People painted their houses and put out window boxes, restaurants opened and towns became more cheerful places. The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 was another cause for celebration, some seeing it as the dawn of a New Elizabethan age.

The Festival was also a stimulus to the arts. Sixty painters and 12 sculptors were commissioned to provide works for exhibition, among them the painters John Piper, Lucien Freud, John Minton, Ben Nicholson and Graham Sutherland, and sculptors Henry Moore, Jacob Epstein, Reg Butler and Barbara Hepworth. Coventry Cathedral, designed by Basil Spence and commissioned in 1951, was a lasting monument to Festival style. The Council of Industrial Design (now The Design Council), which had played an important part in the Festival, became a powerful arbiter of taste in the fifties and sixties.

The deterioration of relations between East and West cast a shadow over the decade and nuclear war became a terrible possibility. In 1956 the brutal suppression of the Hungarian Revolution

by Russia showed the cold face of Communism to the world. Young English men still had to do compulsory National Service and many saw active service in Korea, the Canal Zone, Cyprus, with the British Army of the Rhine, and in other parts of the world. The fifties also saw a loosening of Commonwealth ties, and the gradual realization that Britain was no longer one of the leading powers, but that her future lay with America and Europe.

Scientists were horrified by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In 1955, 52 Nobel Prize winners signed an appeal warning the world that 'whole nations, neutral or belligerent' could be wiped out, stimulating a lobby for nuclear disarmament. Britain's first nuclear power station, Calder Hall, was opened 1956 and hailed as the first plant to harness atomic power for peaceful purposes. No one knew at the time that it would also be producing plutonium for military use. When a fire broke out at the Windscale nuclear plant in 1957, the British public were not told that it caused a radioactive cloud to drift over most of England.

A journalist called Henry Fairlie coined the word 'Establishment' in the early fifties to describe those with the power in Britain, who appeared to have a stranglehold on politics, art and social attitudes, mainly because they had been to the same schools and universities. Returning ex servicemen, many of whom had university grants, were unwilling to return to the pre war status quo. 1956 is now considered to be the turning point when the old guard lost ground, partly because it was the year of the Suez

Crisis, when Britain discovered that she was not powerful enough to pursue an independent, imperialist policy in the face of United States opposition. The same year also saw the beginning of an anti Establishment movement in literature and the theatre by those who became known as 'Angry Young Men'. The Establishment had received an earlier blow when the spies Burgess and Maclean defected to Moscow in 1951 and it became clear that they had not been suspected sooner because they came from the same social class as their seniors at the Foreign Office.

In 1956 teenagers began to be a social force to be reckoned with. As there was little unemployment, many young people now had lucrative jobs with money to spend on clothes and entertainment. Rock 'n' roll music came over from America and Tommy



British hospital facilities in the 1950s

Steele became Britain's first home grown pop star. A new teenage culture sprang up with its own music, meeting places and clothes, common phenomena today but quite new in the fifties. Gangs of 'Teddy Boys' were often feared when they carried their anti social behavior to extremes, and some helped to provoke race riots at Notting Hill Gate in 1958. The number of immigrants from the Commonwealth, particularly from the West Indies, increased in the fifties, and many encountered racial prejudice in their homes and workplaces, as well as from street gangs.

Reacting against the War, women during the fifties decided to become housewives again, after doing men's jobs in the forces and factories in wartime. Few married women now worked and equal pay was virtually non-existent until granted by the Civil Service in 1958. In 1954 the average annual wage for a man was £546 13s and for a woman £276 10s 6d.

*The Guardian* reported in 1959 that a group of Girton graduates had agreed that politics was not a good career for women and 'only the exceptional woman is now going to go on working outside her home' after marriage. Advertisements were blatantly sexist, emphasizing women's domestic duties something which television helped to promote when commercial television was introduced in 1954. *Picture Post* worked out in 1954 that a woman spent at least five hours in the kitchen each day. Even the elaborately corseted fashions of Dior, Sarah Mower of *The Guardian* realized with hindsight, 'encapsulated the spirit of the good little wife, the ideal woman of the fifties' (26 March 1987). The status of women in the fifties led to the women's liberation movement of the sixties. 📖

Extract from "Living Through History, Britain In The 1950s", written by Pat Hodgson. London: B.T. Batsford LTD. 1989.



was presented at the  
Hastings Community

Theatre on February 29th, 2008.

It also performed March 1, 2, 7, 8, 9.

The cast and production personnel were as follows:

C. S. "Jack" Lewis ..... Robert Nedderman  
Major W. H. "Warnie" Lewis ..... Larry Harvey  
Professor Christopher Riley ..... Patrick Crawford  
Rev. "Harry" Harrington ..... Eric Rothell  
Alan Gregg/Doctor ..... Shane Perkins  
Dr. Maurice Oakley/Waiter/Priest/  
Registrar's Clerk/Hotel Waiter ..... Corky Byers  
Joy Gresham, née Davidman ..... Cheryl Aubery  
Douglas Gresham ..... Ben Lamb  
Woman/Registrar/Nurse ..... Connie Harvey

Director ..... Randal L Kottwitz  
Producers ..... Donna Hastings & Patrick Crawford  
Set Design ..... Randal L Kottwitz  
Lighting Design/Technical Director ..... Eric Rothell  
Costume Design ..... XXX  
Assistant Director/Stage Mgr. .... Donna Hastings  
Sound Design/Tech ..... Bob Roberts  
Properties ..... Katharina Schwidtal  
Makeup Design ..... Christine Cottam



William Nicholson

That the core love story of William Nicholson's *Shadowlands* has staying power seems undeniable. The account of the unusual relationship between British author and scholar C. S. Lewis, who wrote on Christianity and literature, and also wrote the *Narnia Chronicles*

and many other children's books, and Joy Davidman Gresham, an American poet and self-described Jewish-Communist-Christian, has been told in three mediums. Nicholson originally wrote it as a television movie for the BBC in 1986 before adapting it for the stage in 1989, and for a feature-length film, which garnered an Academy Award nomination in 1993.

The theatrical production of *Shadowlands* debuted at Theatre Royal in Plymouth, England on October 5, 1989. The production later ran for approximately a year in London, winning the *London Evening Standard's* award for Best Play of 1990. *Shadowlands* made its New York premiere on November 11, 1990, at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on Broadway and ran for about 180 performances.

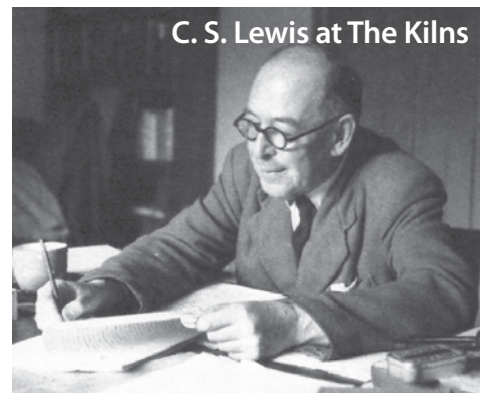
Reared as a Catholic, William Nicholson attended prep schools and public schools, mostly all-male boarding schools, in Great Britain before entering Cambridge University. After graduating in the mid-70s, Nicholson became a graduate trainee at the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). For the next ten years, he wrote, directed, and produced over fifty documentaries for the network. Nicholson also executive produced several television series. While working for the BBC, Nicholson pursued his dream to become a

## The Play & Author

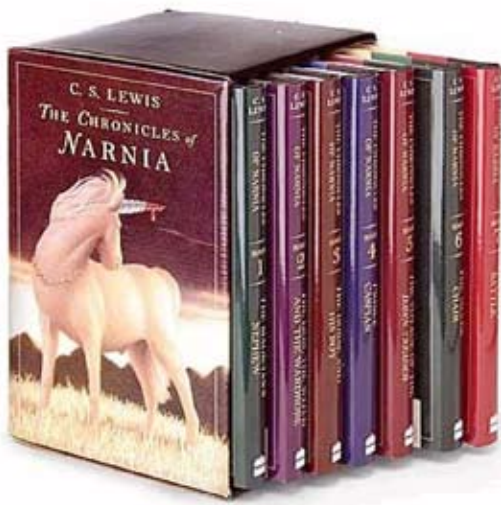
novelist. He wrote each morning before going to work, eventually producing eight novels. However, Nicholson could find no publishers and he abandoned this goal. Instead, in the mid-80s, he turned to writing dramatic scripts for television.

In 1985, he wrote a fifty-three-minute movie, called *Shadowlands*, about children's author and religious writer C. S. Lewis's relationship with American Joy Gresham. The movie, which aired on the BBC, met with positive reviews. Nicholson adapted his television movie into a successful play in 1989. In 1993, he adapted his stage play for *Shadowlands* into a major motion picture. He received an Academy Award nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay. Other movie scripts that he wrote or adapted include *Sarafina!* (1992, based on a stage play); *Nell* (1994, with Mark Handley, a fellow playwright), *First Knight* (1995), *Firelight* (1997), and *Gladiator* (2000, coauthor). Nicholson also tried his hand at directing with the script *Firelight*.

Nicholson never forgot his desire to write books. Influenced in part by his work on C. S. Lewis, Nicholson published his first children's book, *The Wind Singer* (2000), part of a planned trilogy called *The Wind on Fire Trilogy*. Nicholson resides in England with his wife, Virginia Bell, and their three children. 📖



C. S. Lewis at The Kilns



# The Chronicles of Narnia

**T**he *Chronicles of Narnia* is a series of seven fantasy novels for children written by C. S. Lewis. It is considered a classic of children's literature and is the author's best-known work, having sold over 100 million copies in 41 languages. Written by

but were not written entirely in either the order they were originally published or in the chronological order in which they currently appear (Ford 2005). The original Baynes simple pen and ink drawings are still used in publication today.



Lewis between 1949 and 1954 and illustrated by Pauline Baynes, *The Chronicles of Narnia* have been adapted several times, complete or in part, for radio, television, stage, and film.

The series contains many allusions to traditional Christian ideas, presented in a format designed to make them easily accessible to younger readers; however, the books can also be read purely for their adventure, color, and richness of ideas, and as a result have become favorites of children and adults, Christians and non-Christians alike. In addition to employing Christian themes, Lewis also borrows characters and ideas from Greek and Roman mythology, as well as from traditional British and Irish fairy tales.

*The Chronicles of Narnia* present the adventures of children who play central roles in the unfolding history of the fictional realm of Narnia, a place where animals talk, magic is common, and good battles evil. Each of the books (with the exception of *The Horse and His Boy*) features as its protagonists children from our world who are magically transported to Narnia, where they are called upon to help the lion Aslan right some wrong.

*The Chronicles of Narnia* have been in continuous publication since 1954 and have sold over 100 million copies in 41 languages (Kelly 2006) (Guthmann 2005). Lewis was awarded the 1956 Carnegie Medal for *The Last Battle*, the final book in the Narnia series. The books were written by Lewis between 1949 and 1954

## Influence on popular culture

As one would expect with any popular, long-lived work, references to *The Chronicles of Narnia* are relatively common in pop culture. References to the lion Aslan, travelling via wardrobe, and direct references to *The Chronicles of Narnia* occur in books, television, songs, games and graphic novels. For example:

- The American rock band Phish's song *Prince Caspian* from the album *Live Phish Volume 3* features what may be "the sound of horse's hooves galloping under water" and the repeated lyric, "Oh to be Prince Caspian, afloat upon the waves... with nothing to return to but the demons in their caves."
- In Roald Dahl's book *Matilda*, the title character Matilda says that she loves the book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.
- The computer adventure game *Simon the Sorcerer* contains a scene in which the main character finds a stone table and says, "perfect for troll meals and shaved lions".
- In the graphic novel *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (vol. 2, num. 1), reference is made in a text fragment to the apple tree from *The Magician's Nephew*. In the next comic in the series, a text piece refers to the possibility of making a wardrobe from the apple tree. 🍏

## The Magician's Nephew

Completed in the winter of 1954 and published in 1955, the prequel *The Magician's Nephew* brings the reader back to the very beginning of Narnia where we learn how Aslan created the world and how evil first entered it. Another group of people from Earth stumble into Narnia via an entirely different route. Many long-standing questions about Narnia are answered, such as how inter-world travel was made possible, how a lamp post came to be in a woodland and the origins of the wardrobe.

