



Friends of the Wade

The Marion E. Wade Center Wheaton College

Guests Reflect on the Wade

The Marion E. Wade Center, from its small beginning in the collection of fifteen letters from C.S. Lewis to Wade founder Clyde S. Kilby, has steadily grown to provide visitors with a wide array of services and resources on our seven authors.

Museum

Our most visible service to the general public is the museum, which draws nearly ten thousand visitors a year. In just the last few months, guests from Australia, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Costa Rica, Canada, England, Northern Ireland, France, Cambodia, and nearly all fifty U.S. states have passed through the museum leaving guest-book comments such as “I want to go read *all* their books!”, “It’s like coming home,” “Interesting and peaceful,” and, of course, “Into the Wardrobe!” For some, the museum is a first-time exposure to the writings and lives of our authors, while for others it is a culmination of an already long familiarity with well-loved books.

Programs

Reading groups, school tours, and lectures are a growing means for sharing the Wade authors’ works with Wheaton College and the wider community. We were pleased and honored to receive an appreciative email

from a couple who attended two of the fall lectures in which they wrote, “We are very grateful for the opportunities offered by the Wade. The lectures were very thought-provoking for us and we can’t get enough of hearing people talk about these books.” Overflow attendance at many of these events attests to the eagerness shared by a diverse group of people to learn about the seven authors.



Dr. Diana Glycer teaches on C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien in the Wade classroom.

Research

Naturally, without the Wade Center’s primary sources (like the original fifteen letters) the museum and programming aspects of our work would not exist. Original documents continue to draw researchers from around the world, as does the comprehensive

collection of secondary sources such as journals, articles, and dissertations. One writer who researched for a biography over the past summer says, “The Wade Center is like ‘one-stop shopping.’ Their reservoir of resources saves me inordinate time tracking down obscure material, and provides primary source material—including oral histories with people long gone—unavailable anywhere else in the world.” Some guests use the materials for

*A free will is
not the liberty
to do whatever
one likes, but
the power of
doing whatever
one sees ought
to be done ...
There lies
freedom indeed.*

—George MacDonald



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The Wade Center has had since its inception a vital association with the United Kingdom. My October trip to England took me first to Durham University to research the 1943 Riddell Memorial Lectures delivered by C.S. Lewis that were then published as *The Abolition of Man*. The two files the archivists had waiting for me exceeded my expectations, providing hitherto unexamined information about the occasion of the invitation, the reception of the lectures, and follow-up points of interest between Lewis and Lord Eustace Percy, Vice Chancellor of the University.

My second stop was a little village just outside the city of Hull, where it was my pleasure to meet with Thomas McAlindon, emeritus Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature and the only person to have completed a PhD under C.S. Lewis while Lewis was at Cambridge. Professor McAlindon, whose recollections appear in Volume 27 of *SEVEN*, kindly supplemented his written contribution with an interview for the Wade Center's Oral History Project. On the final day of my trip, I gave a talk to the Oxford C.S. Lewis Society on "C.S. Lewis and Historic Evangelicalism."

I am grateful for the ways these interactions and others over the two weeks I spent with our British colleagues reinforce and strengthen the Wade Center's work here in the United States.

WITH ALL GOOD WISHES,



Did You Know?

C.S. Lewis's third Narnian story, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, has been adapted for film by Fox/Walden Media and appears in theaters in December 2010. With the release of the film, many school groups are reading Lewis's book and making a visit to the Wade Center to learn more about his life and works. Guests in the museum can trace the *Dawn Treader's* journey in a new display featuring a three-dimensional model of the dragon-prowed ship. Our thanks go to Wade Center office assistant Shawn Mrakovich and her husband Pete for their creativity in constructing and installing this exhibit. **W**



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non-academic purposes: a pastor who spends time in the Kilby Reading Room when he travels to the Wheaton area says, "There is so much inspiring writing and history there that it's almost like entering another world, like Narnia, that gives me a glimpse back at my world from a fresh perspective."

Relationships

Many visitors identify interactions with the staff as one of the main advantages to researching at the Wade Center. An experienced researcher new to the Wade commented: "I was a bit startled to discover that everyone at the Wade actually cares, genuinely, about me and my work." Another observed, "The accessibility of the scholars who serve there is like no other library I have used." Contrary to stereotypes of musty lonely repositories, researchers use words like "relational," "congenial," "inviting," and "supportive" to describe their experiences at the Wade Center.

Catalog Update

While the Wade has much to offer in terms of materials, staff expertise and availability, as well as a beautiful working environment, the matter of ready information about our holdings continues to concern researchers. As one otherwise pleased guest said "I couldn't find everything I needed. You might look into making your holdings more obvious." Another user suggested, "An online catalog would be wonderful." This feedback confirms that the investment we are making in the catalog update project (see Spring 2010 Newsletter) will be greatly appreciated and put to immediate use by researchers. At present, we have raised just over half of the funds needed for this project, and will be able to begin the initial phase soon. We are grateful for the gifts from many Friends of the Wade that have made it possible to start addressing

this urgent need. However, we still need to raise around \$75,000 to bring the catalog update to completion, so please consider making a gift to the Wade Center designated for the “Cataloging Project.”

Your Role

We hope that in hearing directly from Wade Center users you can feel a sense of ownership in this work, and see its immediate and lasting value to many people. As one author declared, “I have worked in or consulted over three dozen archival repositories and libraries, from small town historical societies to manuscript collections at Ivy League universities; I can say with absolute conviction that the Wade Center is a precious blend of the best qualities of them all.” We could not provide the services and programs that we do without the financial gifts, volunteering, and encouragement of the Friends of the Wade. Thank you for your support. **W**

Spotlight on *SEVEN*

Volume 27

The Wade Center is pleased to announce that Volume 27 of our annual journal, *VII: An Anglo-American Literary Review*, will soon be forthcoming.

Of particular interest this year is the publication of a manuscript fragment by C.S. Lewis. Identified by Dr. Stephen Beebe of Texas State University, this text appears in the same notebook containing the “Lefay Fragment” (held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford) and is an exploration of language and meaning. Also featured in this volume are poems by Owen Barfield, review essays on MacDonald and Chesterton scholarship, and a talk on J.R.R. Tolkien by Clyde S. Kilby. Order forms are available online at www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter/seven/sevenvolumes.htm. **W**

Where Lasting Things Come Into Focus



The Wade Center is one of those precious places on earth where I have most clearly felt the vast communion of saints. It is where I have felt anew the glorious weight of G.K. Chesterton’s admonition that we must be democratic and include the council of the dead in taking a vote on things. And grinned to feel George MacDonald correct him with,

“The living, the council of the living! We are more alive now...” It is where I could more easily put off the burden of competitiveness and know that indeed we are each called to a particular task and everyone’s call matters. There’s simply so much to do! There’s

always enough work to go around! Here, whether much-published or not at all, I know I’m part of a special inner ring—the concentric kind that keeps widening in weird and wonderful ways. At the Wade, every day is hobbit day. Here I can better learn how to do my work. Here I can better hear the “vast whispering gallery of the universe” (G.K.C.), and better feel what Eugene Peterson captured in his wonderful paraphrase of Colossians: “So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding ...—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies...” The beautiful Wade Center is one of those places on earth where lasting things come into focus and astonish with bold hope and deep, deep joy.

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Highlights

Fall Programs at the Wade Center



Will Vaus reads to families from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.

The eager response to the Wade Center's programming reminds us that the audience for the Wade authors' writings continues to grow. We are grateful for your support as we look for ways to share Wade Center resources with visitors of all ages and backgrounds. **W**

It was the pleasure of the Wade Center to host several guest speakers this past fall. The talks given by Matthew Dickerson and Diana Glycer in October were so well attended that our classroom was filled to capacity—several students even gave up seats for other guests and listened from the hall! Accordingly, we arranged to have Will Vaus give his first presentation in a larger venue on Wheaton College campus, and his second in the Wade Center museum. These venues rapidly filled as well! Our Saturday morning reading group led by Dr. Rolland Hein also continues to thrive. The



Matthew Dickerson lectures on C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien's views on technology and agriculturalism.