

## An Outline of the Life of C. S. Lewis

1898 - Born Clive Staples Lewis November 29 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, to Albert James Lewis (1863-1929) and Flora Augusta Hamilton Lewis (1862-1908). His brother, Warren Hamilton Lewis had been born on June 16, 1895.

1905 - The Lewis family moved to their new home, "Little Lea," on the outskirts of Belfast.

1908 - Mother died of cancer on August 23, Albert Lewis' birthday; C. S. Lewis (nicknamed "Jack") and Warren sent to Wynyard School in England.

1910 - Attended Campbell College Belfast for one term due to serious respiratory difficulties.

1911-1913 - Studied at Cherbourg School, Malvern England, following Warren; remained remarkably poor in mathematics, unlike his mother, but evidenced an increasing affection for "Northernness" e.g. Wagner's music and Norse mythology. It was during this time that he abandoned his childhood Christian faith.

1914-1916 - In April, Lewis met Arthur Greeves (1895-1966), of whom he said, in 1933, "After my brother, my oldest and most intimate friend." Extensive literary and philosophical studies (Latin, Greek, French, German, and Italian) under the private tuition of W. T. Kirkpatrick ("The Great Knock").

1916 - Won scholarship to University College, Oxford.

1917 - From April 26 until September, Lewis was a student at University College, Oxford. He enlisted in the British army during World War I and was billeted in Keble College, Oxford, for officer's training. His roommate was Edward Courtney Francis "Paddy" Moore (1898-1918). Jack was commissioned an officer in the 3rd Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry, on September 25 and reached the front line in the Somme Valley in France on his 19th birthday.

1918 - On April 15 Lewis was wounded on Mount Berenchon during the Battle of Arras. He recuperated and was returned to duty in October, being assigned to Ludgerhall, Andover, England. He was discharged in December 1918. His former roommate and friend, Paddy Moore, was killed in battle and buried in the field just south of Peronne, France.

1919 - The February issue of Reveille contained "Death in Battle," Lewis' first publication in other than school magazines. From January, 1919 until June, 1924, he resumed his studies at University College, Oxford, where he received a First in Honour Moderations (Greek and Latin Literature) in 1920, a First in Greats (Philosophy and Ancient History) in 1922, and a First in English in 1923.

1920 - During the summer, Paddy Moore's mother, Mrs. Janie King Moore (1873-1951) and her daughter, Maureen, moved to Oxford, renting a house in Headington Quarry. Lewis lived with the Moores from June 1921 onward. In August 1930, they moved to "Hillsboro," Western Road, Headington. In October, 1930, Mrs. Moore, Jack, and Major Lewis purchased "The Kilns" jointly, with title to the property being taken solely in the name of Mrs. Moore with the two brothers holding rights of life tenancy. Major Lewis retired from the military and joined them at "The Kilns" in 1932.

1924 - From October 1924 until May 1925, Lewis served as philosophy tutor at University College during E.F. Carritt's absence on study leave for the year in America.

1925 - On May 20, Lewis was elected a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, where he served as tutor in English Language and Literature for 29 years until leaving for Magdalene College, Cambridge, in 1954.

1926 - "Dymer," a book-length narrative poem, published under the pseudonym of Clive Hamilton.

1929 - Lewis became a theist: "In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed..." Albert Lewis died on September 24.

1931 - Lewis became a Christian: One evening in September, Lewis had a long talk on Christianity with J.R.R. Tolkien (a devout Roman Catholic) and Hugo Dyson. That evening's discussion was important in bringing about the following day's event that Lewis recorded in *Surprised by Joy*: "When we [Warnie and Jack] set out [by motorcycle to the Whipsnade Zoo] I did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did."

1933 - "The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason, and Romanticism" was published. The fall term marked the beginning of Lewis' convening of a circle of friends dubbed "The Inklings." For the next 16 years, on through 1949, they continued to meet in Jack's rooms at Magdalen College on Thursday evenings and, just before lunch on Mondays or Fridays, in a back room at "The Eagle and Child," a pub known to locals as "The Bird and Baby." Members included J.R.R. Tolkien, Warnie, Hugo Dyson, Charles Williams, Dr. Robert Havard, Owen Barfield, Neville Coghill and others.

1935 - At the suggestion of Prof. F.P. Wilson, Lewis agreed to write the volume on 16th Century English Literature for the Oxford History of English Literature series. Published in 1954, it became a classic.

1936 - "The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition" was published, for which he receives the Gollancz Memorial Prize for Literature in 1937.

1938 - "Out of the Silent Planet," the first novel in the Space Trilogy.

1939 - At the outbreak of World War II in September, Charles Williams moved from London to Oxford with the Oxford University Press to escape the threat of German bombardment. He was thereafter a regular member of "The Inklings."

1941 - From May 2 until November 28, The Guardian published 31 "Screwtape Letters" in weekly installments. Lewis was paid 2 pounds sterling for each letter and gave the money to charity. In August, he gave four live radio talks over the BBC on Wednesday evenings from 7:45 to 8:00. An additional 15-minute session, answering questions received in the mail, was broadcast on September 6. These talks were known as "Right and Wrong."

1942 - The first meeting of the "Socratic Club" was held in Oxford on January 26. In January and February, Lewis gave five live radio talks on Sunday evenings from 4:45 to 5:00, on the subject "What Christians Believe." On eight consecutive Sundays, from September 20 to November 8 at 2:50 to 3:05 p.m., Lewis gave a series of live radio talks known as "Christian Behavior."

1943 - "Perelandra," the second novel in the Space Trilogy, was published. In February, at the University of Durham, Lewis delivered the Riddell Memorial Lectures (Fifteenth Series), a series of three lectures subsequently published as *The Abolition of Man*.

1944 - On seven consecutive Tuesdays, from February 22 to April 4 at 10:15 to 10:30 p.m., Lewis gave the pre-recorded talks known as "Beyond Personality." Taken together, all of Lewis' BBC radio broadcast talks were eventually published under the title *Mere Christianity*. From November 10, 1944 to April 14, 1945, "The Great Divorce" was published in weekly installments in *The Guardian*.

1945 - Charles Williams, one of Lewis' very closest of friends, died on May 15. "That Hideous Strength," the last novel in the Space Trilogy, was published.

1946 - Passed over for Merton professorship of English Literature at Oxford, but was awarded honorary Doctor of Divinity by the University of St. Andrews.

1947 - "Miracles: A Preliminary Study" published.

1950 - "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe," the first of the seven Chronicles of Narnia, was published.

1951 - "Prince Caspian," the second of the seven Chronicles of Narnia, was published. Mrs. Moore died on January 12. Since the previous April, she had been confined to a nursing home in Oxford.

1952 - "The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'," the third of the seven Chronicles of Narnia, was published. In September, he met Joy Davidman Gresham, seventeen years his junior (b. April 18, 1915 - d. July 13, 1960), for the first time.

1953 - "The Silver Chair," the fourth of the seven Chronicles of Narnia, was published.

1954 - "The Horse and His Boy," the fifth of the seven Chronicles of Narnia, was published. In June, Lewis accepted the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge. He gave his Inaugural Lecture, "De Description Temporum," on his 56th birthday and gave his last tutorial at Oxford on December 3rd.

1955 - "The Magician's Nephew," the sixth of the seven Chronicles of Narnia, was published, as was his biography "Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life."

1956 - "The Last Battle," the seventh and final book in the Chronicles of Narnia, was published (he receives the Carnegie Medal in recognition of it), as was "Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold." On April 23, he entered into a civil marriage with Joy at the Oxford Registry Office for the purpose of conferring upon her the status of British citizenship in order to prevent her threatened deportation by British migration authorities. In December, a bedside marriage was performed in accordance with the rites of the Church of England in Wingfield Hospital. Joy's death was thought to be imminent because of bone cancer. Joy had converted to Christianity from Judaism in 1948 partly under the influence of Lewis's books and divorced in 1953 due to her husband's desertion.

1956 (23 April) - Married Joy Davidman Gresham in secret civil ceremony when British Home Office denied continuance of her residency permit. Davidman had converted to Christianity from Judaism in 1948 partly under the influence of Lewis's books, met Lewis in 1952, divorced in 1953 due to her husband's desertion and later developed bone cancer.

1957 (21 March) - Married Joy in church ceremony at her hospital bed.

1958 - Throughout 1957, Joy had experienced an extraordinary recovery from her near terminal bout with cancer. In July of 1958, Jack and Joy went to Ireland for a 10-day holiday. On August 19 and 20, he made tapes of ten talks on The Four Loves in London. Lewis was elected an Honorary Fellow of University College, Oxford. "Reflections on the Psalms" was published.

1960 - Subsequent to learning of the return of Joy's cancer, Jack and Joy, together with Roger Lancelyn Green and his wife, Joy, went to Greece from April 3 to April 14, visiting Athens, Mycenae, Rhodes, Herakleion, and Knossos. There was a one-day stop in Pisa on the return. Joy died on July 13 at the age of 45, not long after their return from Greece. "Studies in Words" and "The Four Loves" were published.

1961 - "A Grief Observed," an account of his suffering caused by his wife's death in 1960, published under the pseudonym of N. W. Clerk. "An Experiment in Criticism" was also published.

1962 - "They Asked for a Paper: Papers and Addresses" was published.

1963 - Lewis died at 5:30 p.m. at The Kilns, one week before his 65th birthday on Friday, November 22, after a variety of illnesses, including a heart attack and kidney problems. He had resigned his position at Cambridge during the summer and was then elected an Honorary Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge. His grave is in the yard of Holy Trinity Church in Headington Quarry, Oxford. This same day, American president John F. Kennedy was assassinated and Aldous Huxley died.