

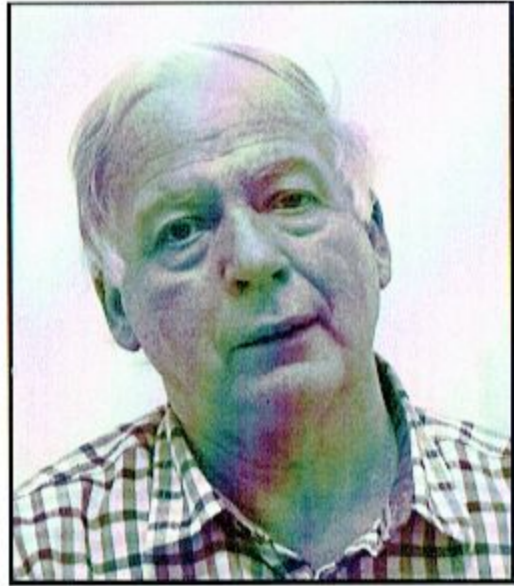
WIMBORNE
DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

Shadowlands

by William Nicholson

18 - 20 FEBRUARY 2016
TIVOLI THEATRE WIMBORNE

Director's notes



SHADOWLANDS is based on the true story of shy Oxford don and children's author C.S. Lewis and American poet Joy Gresham (née Davidman), set in academic Oxford in the 1950s.

Their relationship starts with an exchange of literary correspondence, but when they meet in person a true friendship begins. However, it is not until fate takes a devastating turn that they acknowledge

the depth of their feelings for each other. The play takes us on a journey with Lewis as he moves from being a shy, academic bachelor to a man in love, with everything he believes in challenged, literally turning his safe world upside down, alongside those around him.

Nicholson's stage adaptation of his award-winning TV play enjoyed successful runs both in the West End and on Broadway, winning multiple awards including best actor for the late Nigel Hawthorne.

I am very grateful to my stage manager, Phyllis Spencer, and her backstage team - particularly for their splendid organisation of the many scene changes required. My thanks also to the Tivoli technical team who have been so helpful. I believe this to be one of the most emotional plays we have performed and I so admire my leading actors, Sam Moulton and Tracey Nicholls, for their personal input into their characters, especially their own feelings towards the writing. Equally my sincere thanks to the rest of the cast - including young Gabriel Feltham, just 11 years old - for their terrific support and interpretation of their characters.

I have waited a number of years to stage this play. I hope you agree it has been a worthwhile wait. Thank you for coming to support us - enjoy the play.

Barry Baynton - Director

P.S. You will notice that the wardrobe is rather large, but this is how we imagined it would seem in the mind of young Douglas!

A journey to faith and Joy

CLIVE STAPLES LEWIS was born in Belfast on 29 November 1898 to a solicitor father and a mother who was the daughter of an Anglican priest. He had an elder brother Warren ("Warnie").

When Lewis was four years old, his beloved pet dog Jacksie was killed by a car, and he announced to his family that he was now to be called Jacksie. At first, he would answer to no other name, but later accepted Jack, the name by which he was known to friends and family for the rest of his life.

As a boy, Lewis was fascinated with anthropomorphic animals; he fell in love with the books of Beatrix Potter, and often wrote and illustrated his own animal stories.



After his mother's death from cancer when he was only nine years old, he was educated privately at several schools, including Malvern College, which he hated, and where he abandoned his childhood Christian faith and became an atheist, developing an interest in mythology and the occult. His Irish roots were important to him and throughout his life he took an active interest in Celtic literature and myths, and he was a keen admirer of the works of Irish poet W.B. Yeats, at a time when he was relatively unknown in England.

In 1917 he won a scholarship at University College, Oxford. His studies were interrupted by his service as an infantry officer in France, where he was wounded and then invalided home in 1918. He gained a double first in classics at Oxford, followed by a further first-class degree in English. For the greater part of his life, from 1925 to 1954, he was Fellow and Tutor at Magdalen College, Oxford.

During his time at Oxford, Lewis was a very popular lecturer on medieval and Renaissance literature, filling the largest halls week

after week. He also published a number of scholarly academic works culminating with his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (1954), which won him election to the British Academy.

With friends including J.R.R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson, he formed an informal literary group called the Inklings, and during many evening chats in Oxford pubs, they would debate the existence of God and Christianity.

In the early 1930s, Lewis converted from atheism to Christianity, and went on to publish lively works of popular theology such as *The Problem of Pain* (1940) and *The Screwtape Letters* (1942).

Lewis later wrote that he felt a reluctant and unwilling convert who came into Christianity “kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance to escape”.

During the war, he achieved national fame through a series of talks as “The Voice of Faith” on the BBC. These addresses were collected in the volume *Mere Christianity* (1952).

Lewis also wrote three works of science fiction during the 1940s, and after his last major theological work, *Miracles*, had been critically mauled in 1948, he devoted more and more attention to the writing of novels for children – a then unfashionable genre which he helped to make respectable. Influenced by his Christian beliefs, he created the imaginative world of Narnia, introduced by *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* in 1950, and further explored in six succeeding novels.

In 1955, after being long denied a chair at Oxford, Lewis became Professor of Medieval and Renaissance English at Cambridge, with a fellowship at Magdalene College.

As an Oxford don, Lewis lived in a house in Headington, The Kilns, with his brother Warnie, and with Jane Moore, the mother of Paddy Moore, a student contemporary killed in the First World War.

Sometime after Mrs Moore’s death in 1951, Lewis began his friendship with American poet and writer Joy Gresham, who like Lewis was a former atheist who converted to Christianity in the 1940s. She and her first husband, Bill, became deeply interested in Lewis’s writings. But their marriage was unravelling, as Bill

Gresham was abusive, an alcoholic, and a serial adulterer. A direct woman with a strong personality, Joy began writing to Lewis for counsel, and they became friends.



Joy’s best known work, *Smoke on the Mountain: An Interpretation of the Ten Commandments*, was published in 1954 with a preface by Lewis.

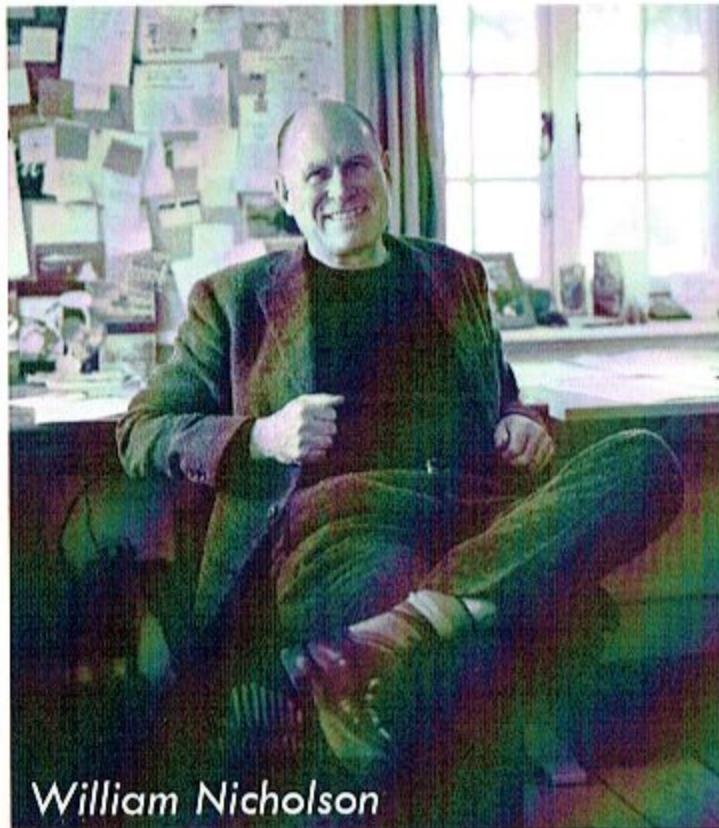
Joy eventually visited England to meet Lewis in person. While she was there, Bill wrote to her that he had fallen in love with her cousin Renée, and wanted a divorce. With Lewis offering to help her financially - something he did for many of his friends and acquaintances - Joy decided to move to England permanently and raise her sons there. Lewis eventually married her in a civil ceremony to allow her to stay in the country, and then, when he grew to love her, they held a religious marriage ceremony as well. Over time Lewis and Joy become very close, sharing intellectual and spiritual interests. Her strength, faith, honesty, humour and loyalty made her the best of companions, and brought out the best in him.

Joy helped him with his penultimate book, *The Four Loves* (1960), and her death in 1960, aged just 45, brought forth a poignant expression of mourning in *A Grief Observed* (1961). “[She] was a splendid thing; a soul straight, bright, and tempered like a sword,” he wrote.

Lewis’s own death from prostate cancer two years later was little noted at the time, occurring on the same day that President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, 22 November 1963.

In 2013, 50 years after his death, Lewis was finally honoured with a memorial stone in Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey.

A writer in pursuit of truth



William Nicholson

WILLIAM NICHOLSON is a multi-award winning novelist, screenwriter and playwright who has always been interested in dealing with the largest of emotional stories. His books and scripts often revolve around the importance of love and the difficulty of finding and maintaining it in a world where even the most apparently straightforward of human interactions can be misunderstood and feared.

In an interview for *The Guardian* in 2014, Nicholson explained that this emotional openness could be traced

back to his mother, a “woman who had no filter and just said what she thought, which produced enormous problems, but also gave her extraordinary access to people. I went through a period of being very embarrassed by her, but I eventually realised that opening up, being vulnerable, telling the truth as best you can about yourself, has a freeing effect on yourself and other people, and so it is unsurprising that it is reflected in my writing”.

Nicholson was born in 1948, and grew up in Sussex and Gloucestershire. He was educated at Downside School and Christ's College, Cambridge, and then joined the BBC, where he worked as a documentary film maker. There his ambition to write, directed first into novels, was channelled into television drama. His TV play *Shadowlands* hit the small screen in 1985 and starred Joss Ackland and Claire Bloom. His moving depiction of C.S. Lewis's heartache and doubt won Nicholson a BAFTA for Best Television Drama.

In 1989 Nicholson adapted *Shadowlands* for the stage, and it won Evening Standard Best Play of 1990, with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Lapotaire in the leading roles, and went on to a Tony Award winning run on Broadway. Nicholson then adapted the story again, this time for the big screen (1993) and was nominated for an Oscar for the screenplay which was directed by Richard Attenborough and starred Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger.

Since then his film credits include: *Sarafina*, *Nell*, *First Knight*, *Grey Owl*, *Gladiator* (he was parachuted in as co-writer to inject some emotional energy into a script in some disarray, for which he

received a second Oscar nomination), *Elizabeth: the Golden Age*, *Les Misérables*, *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, *Unbroken* and *Everest*. He has written and directed his own film, *Firelight*; and four further stage plays, *Map of the Heart*, *Katherine Howard*, *The Retreat from Moscow* (which ran for five months on Broadway and received three Tony Award nominations), and *Crash*.

Other television work includes *Life Story*, which also won a BAFTA, *Sweet As You Are* and *The March*. He has written several fantasy novels for children (including the award-winning *The Wind Singer*), as well as eight contemporary novels for adults - including *The Society of Others*, *Motherland* and *The Lovers of Amherst*.

He lives in Sussex with his wife, the social historian Virginia Nicholson, and their three children.

William Nicholson on his religious beliefs:

“I come from oddly mixed stock. My father, a doctor, is the son of a Methodist minister; my mother the daughter of a South African Jew. Both converted to Roman Catholicism when I was seven. I was baptised into the Catholic Church at the age of eight.

I was educated first by Dominicans and then, from the age of thirteen, by Benedictines at Downside. I came of age intellectually at a time of ferment in the Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council encouraged new thinking to sweep through the church, and the younger monks of Downside dared to think bold new thoughts. They taught me to pursue truth wherever it led. For a time this strengthened my youthful faith and made it strong and subtle.

I regarded atheism as the easy option, and enjoyed demonstrating to my contemporaries, most of whom had never been taught any theology, how shallow was their dismissal of belief. To this day it annoys me when people say they can't believe in a good God because of the suffering in the world.

I still considered myself a practising Catholic as I began my university career, as a scholar at Christ's College, Cambridge; but by the time I left all that was left was the space in me that my faith had occupied for so long. Much as I wanted to go on believing, it became clear to me that it's we humans who make God, in our great need. God, if he existed, would have no need of humanity. But as all my writing demonstrates, the need or the puzzle or the hunger has never left me.

Source: williamnicholson.com

Shadowlands

by William Nicholson

The Cast

in order of appearance

C.S. Lewis ("Jack")	SAM MOULTON
Major W.H. Lewis ("Warnie")	CHRIS DURHAM
Professor Christopher Riley	DAVID PILE
Rev. "Harry" Harrington	GARY PAINE
Alan Gregg / Doctor	COLIN PILE
Dr. Maurice Oakley / Priest	KEN FLETCHER
Woman / Waitress	VAL MANTLE
Joy Gresham	TRACEY NICHOLLS
Douglas Gresham	GABRIEL FELTHAM
Registrar / Nurse	ANN MCCOLGAN-CLARK

The action of play takes place in the 1950s over the course of three years in and around Oxford and in Greece

Produced by Wimborne Drama Productions at the Tivoli Theatre,
18 - 20 February 2016, by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.

The Creative Team

Director	BARRY BAYNTON
Company Stage Manager	PHYLLIS SPENCER
Tivoli Production Manager	KYLE BEST
ASMs	SHEILA DOVE
	KEN FLETCHER
	JUDY GARRETT
	CALUM HEARN
	ANN MCCOLGAN-CLARK
	JAN STEVENSON
	KIERAN HENSHAW-RAY
	JOHN WILLMOTT
	MOIRA HAWEY
	HEATHER FLETCHER
	Supplied by "HIREARCHY"
	BARRY BAYNTON
	COLIN PILE
	JACKSON ELLEN
	COLIN PILE
	MARK ELLEN
	JACKSON ELLEN
	and members of the company
Continuity	
Lighting	
Sound	
Costumes Supervisor	
Costumes	
Set Design	
Set Construction	

Production Acknowledgements

Wimborne Methodist Church for loan of a lectern
Dumpton School for loan of furniture and use of rehearsal space
A donation has been made to Julia's House in recognition of the generous loan of a hospital screen by **The Wimborne Clinic**
We are also grateful to the following organisations for their assistance:
Daisy Graphic, Forest FM, Gullivers Bookshop, Royal British Legion Wimborne, Tivoli Theatre and Wimborne Tourist Information Centre



Clockwise from bottom left: Ken Fletcher, Chris Durham, Sam Moulton, Gabriel Feltham, Val Mantle, Ann McColgan-Clark, Colin Pile and Gary Paine

Clockwise from bottom right: David Pile, Sam Moulton, Tracey Nicholls, Chris Durham, Tracey Nicholls and Sam Moulton

Cast in conversation

CHRIS DURHAM

(Warnie Lewis)

What have been your favourite acting roles? The Duke of Norfolk in *A Man For All Seasons* (Wimborne Drama Productions), Dr Arthur Wickstead in a 6 week run of *Habeas Corpus* (Balloon Theatre, Christchurch) and Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* (Blandford Camp Drama Club). **Tell us about your character in *Shadowlands*:**

Warren (Warnie) Lewis is the elder brother of C.S. Lewis. Commissioned from Sandhurst in 1914, he served in the Royal Army Service Corps during the First World War and finally retired as a Captain in 1932. Recalled to active service in 1939 and promoted to Major, he served throughout the Second World War. An author of historical non-fiction in his own right, he remained in the shadow of his more famous younger brother, although the two brothers remained close. A confirmed, pipe-smoking bachelor, he enjoys drinking, sometimes to excess, and has never been too keen on his brother's female friends – until Joy comes along.

GABRIEL FELTHAM

(Douglas Gresham)

Favourite roles: This is my first role with Wimborne Drama Productions, following in a long line of family members to join the company. Since

2011 I have been a member of Mainstage Performing Arts, with whom I have had the privilege to perform as a backing dancer on the *Pop Factor* tour, and as part of *Class Talent* at The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in London's West End. I am already looking forward to working with WDP again as I get to stay up late two nights a week!

Your character: I see him as a younger version of C.S. Lewis. They have a lot in common, and are very similar because of what they experience during childhood.

KEN FLETCHER

(Dr. Oakley / Priest)

Favourite roles: My first acting role was in Torquay aged 14 playing Buttons in *Cinderella*. I also joined a pop group as the vocalist. Then my working career kicked in. In 1996 in Wareham I set up a drama group raising thousands each year for the local cinema, which now celebrates its 20th year. As well as co-producing, I performed in many sketches as Charlie Chaplin, Arthur Askey, Flanagan & Alan and Houdini, and also did Music Hall, E.N.S.A. and *The Full Monty*. After a break of 15 years, and now living in Verwood, I was keen to join Wimborne Drama Productions.

Your character: Just a year in I was pleased to take the two small parts of Dr Maurice Oakley and

The Priest in *Shadowlands*. Now retired from the rat race, I look forward to a long-lasting relationship with WDP.

VAL MANTLE

(Woman / Waitress)

Favourite roles: During the many years I have been involved in amateur dramatics both on stage and behind the scenes, I have been lucky to play some wonderful roles. A few of my favourites have been Dotty in *Noises Off* for Broadstone Players in the '90s, and Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* twice – firstly for Broadstone's centenary celebrations in 2006 and then again for WDP's first open air production at Deans Court in 2010. Backstage duties have been fun (and frantic at times) but usually "all right on the night". **Your character:** I only make four very brief appearances in this play, but am in awe of the talent shown by the rest of the cast.

ANN MCCOLGAN-CLARK

(Registrar / Nurse)

Favourite roles: I joined WDP in 2015 having previously been with The Tower Theatre in London from 2007 and the Southbank Players in Belfast from 1986. Some recent favourite roles have been Her Ladyship in *The Dresser*, Margaret Bradley in *My Mother Said I Never Should*, and I did enjoy my first

role with WDP, Gerda in Agatha Christie's *The Hollow*. **Your character:** I play two small characters in *Shadowlands*, The Registrar, and Joy's nurse which means that I am a witness to some of the very poignant scenes of the play. *Shadowlands* is a beautiful play, exploring a wide range of human emotions. It lifts you up and drops you down. I find it captivates me at every rehearsal.

SAM MOULTON

(C.S. Lewis)

Favourite roles: This is my eighth role with Wimborne Drama Productions. My favourite so far has been Sir Thomas More in *A Man For All Seasons* and I am now delighted to be playing C.S. Lewis. **Your character:** I have always loved Lewis's stories and have long been fascinated by his relationship with Joy Gresham. This transported him from the safe world of books and academia to the real world of love and pain. Her illness and death led him to completely reassess his view of the world and of God. By the end of the play he has come to the realisation that to experience real happiness, you also have to be open to the possibility of real suffering.

TRACEY NICHOLLS

(Joy Gresham)

Favourite roles: I have been a member of WDP since 2001.

Among my favourite roles with WDP are Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Sheila in *An Inspector Calls* and Elizabeth Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*. I also loved directing *A Man For All Seasons* in 2014. **Your character:** It has been an absolute joy playing "Joy" - she is feisty, intelligent, vibrant and strong-willed, but she also has a huge amount of love in her heart and she cares deeply for those closest to her - most of all, her beloved Jack. Their relationship is a fascinating one, beginning with an epistolary friendship which matures into a mutually fulfilling marriage of true minds. I think C.S. Lewis described their relationship best: "We feasted on love; every mode of it, solemn and merry, romantic and realistic, sometimes as dramatic as the thunderstorm, sometimes comfortable and unemphatic as putting on your soft slippers." How wonderful does that sound!

GARY PAINE

(Rev. Harry Harrington)

Favourite roles: My favourite previous acting roles include Milo Tindle in *Sleuth*, Sydney Bruhl in *Deathtrap* and Edward in *Ghost Writer* - all with the Broadstone Players. I also had a 'ball' as Mr Bennet in the open air production of *Pride and Prejudice* with WDP. **Your character:** In this production, I play the role of the college chaplain but this is not the first time I have appeared as a 'man of the

cloth' as I once took on the character of Rev. Clement Mercer in a production of *When We Are Married*. Harrington sees Jack as a loyal friend and naturally wants only the best for him.

COLIN PILE

(Alan Gregg / Doctor)

Favourite roles: One of my favourite roles was Jacob in *Far from the Madding Crowd* for WDP in 2003 as I was able to play my flute on stage. **Your character:** As the Doctor in *Shadowlands* I have to tell Mr Lewis that his wife is seriously ill. Not an enjoyable job. And as Alan Gregg, be a supportive friend.

DAVID PILE

(Prof. Christopher Riley)

Favourite roles: I think my favourite part for WDP was Feste in *Twelfth Night* although lately I have found directing more fulfilling. **Your character:** My part of Prof. Christopher Riley in *Shadowlands* is the first serious part I have had for years and as such I have found it very rewarding. The character is misogynistic, probably lonely and jealous of Lewis's success. It may be deep down he is also jealous of Joy and given the opportunity to show his true feelings may have wished to be in Lewis's place, but is only able to express bitterness, although sympathetic to his friend's sadness.

WIMBORNE DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

RELATIVE VALUES

A comedy by Noël Coward

26th - 28th May 2016

The glittering world of 1950s Hollywood and the stiff upper lip of the English aristocracy clash in uproarious style in this satire on class and snobbery
Directed by Richard Neal

THE ACCRINGTON PALS

By Peter Whelan

20th - 22nd October 2016

Based on the true story of the Accrington Pals who fought in the Battle of the Somme in 1916, this powerful play contrasts the experiences of the Pals at the front with the women left behind in Accrington
Directed by Chris Brown

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WIMBORNE
DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

RELATIVE VALUES

A COMEDY BY **NOËL COWARD**

26 - 28 MAY 2016

TIVOLI THEATRE WIMBORNE



EVENINGS 7.30pm, £12. SAT MATINEE 2.30pm, £10

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