



People

C.S. Lewis
1898–1963



Synopsis

Born on November 29, 1898, in Belfast, Ireland, C.S. Lewis went on to teach at Oxford University and became a renowned apologist writer, using logic and philosophy to support the tenets of his Christian faith. He is also known throughout the world as the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* fantasy series, which have been adapted into various films for the big and small screens.

Early Life

Author Clive Staples Lewis was born in Belfast, Ireland, 1898. As a toddler, Clive declared that his name was Jack, which is what he was called by family and friends thenceforth. He was close to his older brother Warren and the two spent much time together as children. Lewis was enraptured by fantastic animals and tales of gallantry, and hence the brothers created the imaginary land of Boxen, complete with an intricate history that served them for years.

Lewis's mother died when he was 10, and he went on to receive his pre-college education at boarding schools and from a tutor. During WWI, he served with the British army and was sent home after being wounded by shrapnel.

Teaching Career and Wartime Broadcasts

Lewis graduated from Oxford University with a focus on literature and classic philosophy, and in 1925 he was awarded a fellowship teaching position at Magdalen College, which was part of the university. There, he also joined the group known as The Inklings, an informal collective of writers and intellectuals who counted among their members Lewis's brother Warren and J.R.R. Tolkien. It was through conversations with group members that Lewis found himself re-embracing Christianity after having become disillusioned with the faith as a youth. He would go on to become renowned for his rich apologist texts, where he explained his spiritual beliefs via platforms of logic and philosophy.

Lewis began publishing work in the mid-1920s with his first book, the satirical *Dymer* (1926). After penning other titles—including *The Allegory of Love* (1936), for which he won

the Hawthornden Prize—he released in 1938 his first sci-fi work, *Out of the Silent Planet*, the first of a trilogy which dealt sub-textually with concepts of sin and desire. Later, during WWII, Lewis gave highly popular radio broadcasts on Christianity which won many converts; his speeches were collected in the work *Mere Christianity*.

'The Chronicles of Narnia'

During the '50s, Lewis started to publish the seven books that would comprise *The Chronicles of Narnia children's series*, with *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) being the first release. The story focused on four siblings who, during wartime, walk through an armoire to enter the magical world of Narnia, a land resplendent with mythical creatures and talking animals. Throughout the series, a variety of Biblical themes are presented.

Though the book received some negative reviews, general readers took to the story in a big way. The series has retained its international popularity over the decades.

The *Chronicles of Narnia* has seen a number of on-screen iterations, including a cartoon version of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* that was released in 1979 and a 1989 BBC film series. Additionally, in 2005, a big-screen adaptation of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* hit movie theaters, starring Tilda Swinton as the witch Jadis and Liam Neeson as the voice of Aslan. Two more Narnia films were brought to theaters as well: *Prince Caspian* (2008) and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (2010).

Source: biography.com

Isambard Kingdom Brunel

1806–1859



Isambard Kingdom Brunel, born in Portsmouth, 9 April 1806, was an engineer and innovator, whose designs and constructions revolutionised the industry and helped shape the framework of the nation. His first project was on the construction of the underwater Thames Tunnel, at the age of 20.

- His career nearly ended before it began

After completing his studies in France, Brunel's first project was the construction of the underwater Thames Tunnel, which began in 1825. Brunel was put in charge as assistant engineer, and quickly distinguished himself, although he narrowly avoided drowning after part of the tunnel flooded in 1828.

- His first major project was also his last

Brunel's first major commission was for a bridge spanning the Avon Gorge in Bristol, which he gained after winning a competition. Construction on what would become the Clifton Suspension Bridge was not completed until five years after his death. A plaque is placed on the bridge in his honour.

- Brunel put the 'Great' in the Great Western Railway

After being appointed chief engineer of the Great Western Railway in 1833. Brunel rightly proved that broad gauge tracks were better than standard gauge ones. His impressive achievements include the Maidenhead Bridge and Bristol Temple Meads Station.



- He built the first transatlantic steamship

Brunel was responsible for the design of the SS Great Britain, the world's first steamship to be purpose-built to complete transatlantic voyages. He also redesigned and helped construct a number of the UK's most important and major docks at the time — such as Cardiff, Bristol and Milford Haven.

Source: All About History Magazine

Thomas Gainsborough 1727–1788



The portrait and landscape painter Thomas Gainsborough was born at Sudbury, Suffolk, the fifth son of a cloth merchant. He was apprenticed at the age of thirteen to a London silversmith, and was taught by Hubert Gravelot, a French book-illustrator.

Despite his great success as a portraitist, he always maintained that he preferred painting landscapes. He wrote to a friend, William Jackson: 'I'm sick of Portraits and wish very much to take my Viol da Gamba and walk off to some sweet Village, where I can paint Landskips and enjoy the fag End of life in quietness and ease'.

Gainsborough exhibited at the Society of Artists from 1761 to 1769, and became a foundation member of the Royal Academy in 1768. He first exhibited there the following year, but in 1773 quarrelled with the Academy over the hanging of his pictures, and did not exhibit there again until 1777. In 1784 he again quarrelled with them over the same subject, and never again exhibited at the Academy, instead organising a series of annual exhibitions in his studio at Schomberg House.



He received commissions from the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland in 1777, and from the King and Queen in 1781.

Gainsborough died in London after a reconciliation with his great rival Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Source: tate.org.uk



The Blue Boy



Lady Georgiana Cavendish



Cottage girl with dog and pitcher