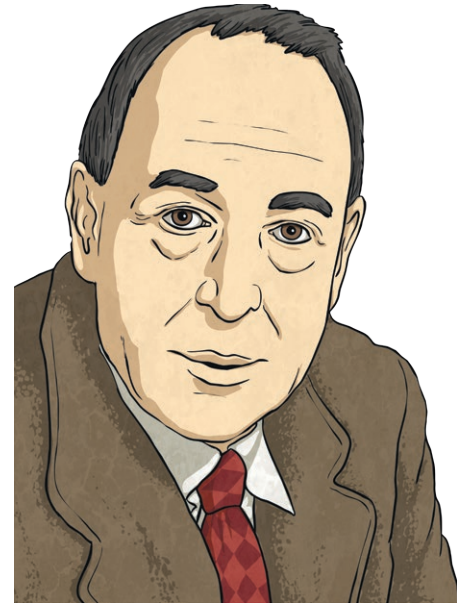


The Mourne Mountains and C.S. Lewis

Creative Writing Challenges

Clive Staples Lewis (C.S. Lewis), is a famous author who wrote the Narnia Chronicles series of books. The first of these books to be published was 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. The stories have a number of links to County Down. C.S. Lewis grew up in Belfast with his mother, father and his older brother, Warren. He lived close enough to the Harland and Wolff shipyard (where the Titanic was built). C.S. Lewis was proud of the place where he had grown up and often spoke of a strong feeling he had of 'Northerness' – he described how he'd had a longing for vast, empty spaces and cold, remote places. He admired many features of the Irish landscape, the beautiful coastline, the brooding mountains and the lonely scenic spots. His attention was also caught by castles and ruins, such as Dunluce Castle in County Antrim.

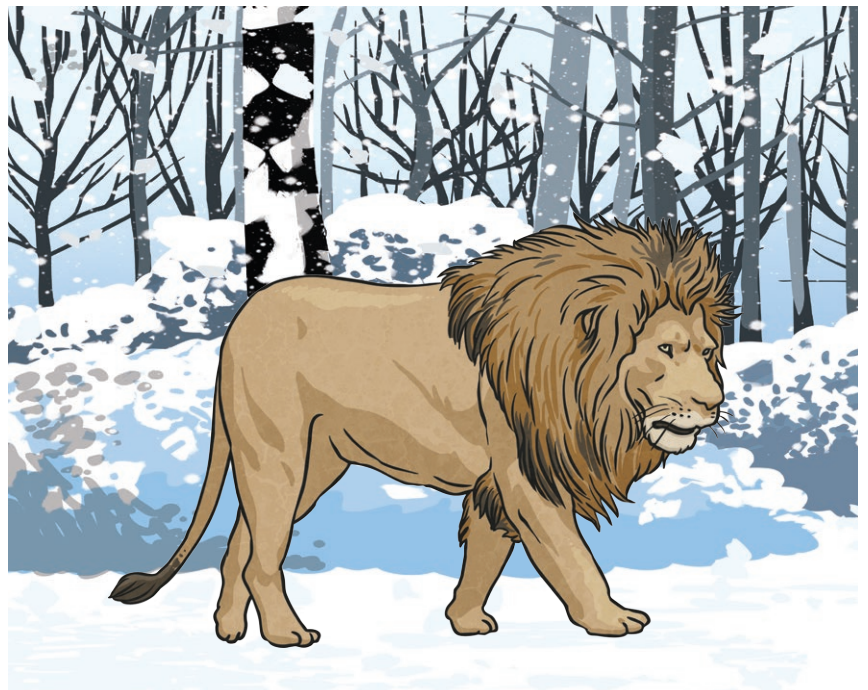


C.S. Lewis loved exploring the Mourne Mountains and was inspired by the magical landscape. He once stated,

"I have seen landscapes (in the Mourne Mountains) which, under a particular light, made me feel that at any moment a giant might raise his head over the next ridge. Nature has that in her which compels us to invent giants: and only giants will do."

Lewis also wrote a poem called 'The Hills of Down' to try and put into words his feelings about the area. These are some lines from it:

For I alone
Have loved their loneliness;
None else hath known
Nor seen the goodliness
Of the green hills of Down.
The soft low hills of Down.



Many of the adventures in C.S. Lewis' books take place in the mythical land of Narnia. 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' was published in

1950. Generations of children have since been fascinated and intrigued by this place.

"That part of Rostrevor which overlooks Carlingford Lough, is my idea of Narnia."

C.S. Lewis is thought to have revealed this fact to his brother in a letter. The boys used to go on holiday to Rostrevor when they were younger. This shows that there was a special connection between the Mourne area and the Land of Narnia, in the imagination of the great writer.

Today, people can visit 'The Narnia Trail' in Kilbroney Park, in Rostrevor. The park lies within the shadow of Slieve Martin and the Mountains of Mourne. The Narnia Trail seeks to celebrate the work of C.S. Lewis and his love for the Mourne area. As people walk the trail, they can see many of the most iconic features of The Chronicles of Narnia series, such as the wardrobe, the lamp post and the thrones.



Snowy scene in Rostrevor, Ireland, the inspiration for Lewis' Narnia.

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Creative Writing Challenge 1

“I have seen landscapes (in the Mourne Mountains) which, under a particular light, made me feel that at any moment a giant might raise his head over the next ridge. Nature has that in her which compels us to invent giants: and only giants will do.”

C.S. Lewis

Cut out this quotation and stick it in your book. Imagine that you are walking in the Mourne Mountains, climbing a steep slope, when suddenly you see a giant head bobbing up above the next ridge. Begin the story by setting the scene for the reader. Now, continue by writing what might happen if a giant really did appear out of the magical Mourne landscape.

Think about:

Setting the scene:

Where are you? What are you doing? What can you see / hear / feel?

The Giant:

How will you describe the moment when you see giant raising his head over the next ridge?

How do you feel when you see the giant?

What does the giant look / sound like? Think about interesting adjectives, phrases or similes you could use in your description.

Does the giant interact with you? How?

What type of character is he?

Does he need your help with something?

Why is he here?

What happens next?:

What happens after you meet?

The ending:

How will the story end?

Will you tell anyone about the giant?

Does he want to remain a secret?

Plan your story and then begin to write it under the quotation from C.S. Lewis. Try and structure your work in paragraphs.

Creative Writing Challenge 2

For I alone
Have loved their loneliness;
None else hath known
Nor seen the goodliness
Of the green hills of Down.
The soft low hills of Down.

C.S. Lewis, from 'The Hills of Down'

C.S. Lewis was inspired by the beautiful County Down landscape. Your challenge is to write a Haiku about the landscape of County Down or your local area. A Haiku is a traditional type of Japanese poem that has a set pattern of syllables. It has three lines; the first has five syllables, the second has seven and the last has five. Haiku are often written about nature. You can choose any aspect of nature that you like. Perhaps you will choose to write about the mountains, coast, wildlife, or countryside of County Down or your own area. First, write down a list of words linked to the topic you have chosen to write about. Plan and edit your Haiku before writing it into your book. Draw a picture to illustrate your poem.

