MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear members

NCS wishes all our members a very happy late spring – or late autumn, if you are in the other hemisphere – and a productive research period over the coming summer or winter. We look forward to seeing some of you – we think about 460, in fact, which is a huge number – at our Biennial Congress this July in Reykjavík, Iceland.

NCS is flourishing. Our membership continues to expand; we currently have 1219 members. The 1200th person to join the Society was Elise Broaddus, a graduate student at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She was therefore the winner of our prize of an Apple iPad Mini, awarded to the 1200th member to join NCS. Congratulations, Elise! NCS is especially pleased that this went, fortuitously, to a graduate student. Our journal Studies in the Age of Chaucer received a staggering 8,882 article downloads via Project Muse in 2013.

NCS Website

The new NCS website, which launched in late 2013, is an important resource for members, with many useful and attractive new features. Visit the blog to read members’ views on Chaucer and his age: the latest, provocative post is by Mark Miller, “Why Do We Care About Chaucer?” If you want to add comments to this post, or to any of the other blog posts, you will need to log in, using your username and password. We encourage members to leave comments and to be part of the conversation.

We have recently posted on the Hub section of the NCS website the reading materials for one of the seminars that will take place at this July’s NCS Congress 2014. The seminar is 7A Ecomaterialism:

Questions/Problems/Ideologies. The posted material is a collection of published essays and book chapters that the organizers, Kathleen Kelly and Myra Seaman, are suggesting as useful preparation for participants in and attendees of their session (or, alternatively, that they might like to consult afterwards). They would like to share these readings with anyone attending NCS who would like to see them in advance of the conference, and with all NCS members.

Readings include:


To access these readings, go to the homepage, and then log on to the Hub (left-hand menu) to read or download the material.

NCS would like to make the website a hub for educational materials, and welcomes suggestions from members about how to expand this initiative.

**Chaucer Notes**

This issue of the Newsletter contains a note by Norman Klassen, “A Further Note on Editorial Punctuation of the *General Prologue*, ll. 12-16.” As we announced in the last newsletter, the Notes section is a new-old feature, revived from the earliest editions of the NCS Newsletter where it appeared from the inaugural issue in 1979 to the late 1980s. If you would like to submit a short note for consideration for publication in the Fall Newsletter, please email it to Ruth Evans at chaucer@slu.edu. Notes might include the announcement of new scholarly discoveries, new interpretations of textual cruces, new textual and codicological information, and material relating to the history of the Society. Submissions must be short (max. 1,000 words), must be of the highest quality and substance, and presented in MLA style. They will be peer-reviewed by the Executive Director and one other reader. Since these Notes are part of the Newsletter they will remain permanently on the website. NCS would like to establish our Newsletter as a site for the latest scholarship on Chaucer and his age.

**Next President and New Trustees**

About 50% of you participated in the online ballot for the next President and Trustees, which is exceptional for an online vote. There were 344 total responses for the election for President and 338 responses for the Trustees. The new President will be Susan Crane, who will serve from July 2014 until July 2016. We congratulate her warmly on this appointment. The current President Alastair Minnis, who will demit office in July 2014, has done a sterling job. The newly elected Trustees, who will take over in July 2014, are Alexandra Gillespie, Candace Barrington, and David Matthews. They will replace Alcuin Blamires, Frank Grady, and Larry Scanlon, who have served the Society extremely diligently. Susan Crane’s appointment means that she will have to step down as a Trustee. Following the provisions of our Constitution, the Board of Trustees selected Sarah Stanbury, who came fourth in the recent election, as Susan Crane’s successor as Trustee. Thank you to the nominating committee for their work in choosing the slate of Trustees for the ballot: Tom Hahn (Chair; Rochester), Sebastian Sobecki (Groningen), Andrew Cole (Princeton), Joyce Coleman (Oklahoma), and Marion Turner (Oxford).

**Congress Update**

The full program for the 2014 Biennial Congress in Reykjavík is available on the website: for an overview go here and for a PDF of the full schedule, go here. To date, 424 delegates have registered for the Congress. To the few who have not yet registered: please do so soon, so that the local organizing committee can have accurate numbers for events and an accurate program. Thank you. You must be a current member of NCS in order to present a paper at the Congress; you can see if your subscription is current by looking here.
The 2014 Congress Presidential Address, by Alastair Minnis, is aptly (for Iceland) titled “Fragmentations of Medieval Religion: Thomas More, Chaucer, and the Volcano Lover.” The Biennial Lecture, to be given by James Simpson, is titled “‘Not Yet’: Chaucer and Anagogy.” The plenary lecture, which will be given by the distinguished Icelandic scholar Guðrún Nordal, is titled “Manuscripts in Iceland in the Age of Chaucer: Production, Texts and Literary Culture.”

NCS wants to put in a special plug for the Posters session at the Congress: S 7I How to Do Things with Books, curated by Anthony Bale and Alexandra Gillespie. This session – common enough at many academic conferences – is an innovation for NCS, and one of which we are very proud. It will allow 13 outstanding established and up-an-coming scholars to present their work on posters that will be hung prominently in a walkway on the Congress site. NCS urges all delegates to visit the posters, to tweet them, and to mention them in other sessions, so as to generate a buzz around the important work that they present in book history and literary history.

NCS would also like to put in a plug for the seven seminars that will take place at the Congress, and to urge members to attend one of them. Differing significantly in format from the traditional paper sessions, these seminars invite a different kind of response to urgent issues within the discipline of Chaucer studies, often requiring advance reading of set texts before attending the session, as with Seminar 7A Ecomaterialism: Questions/Problems/Ideologies, whose advance reading material (see above) has already been posted on the website. For information on the content of the seminars, which will all take place from 11 to 1 on Friday July 18, go here.

The Congress will feature a couple of extra events:

- The theatre group Saga Tiata will be staging a Nigerian adaptation of the Miller’s Tale during the week of the Congress, The Miller’s Tale: Wahala Dey O. For those interested in attending the play further information can be found here: http://www.sagatiata.net/. Please note that the play is an independent event and that those interested will have to book their ticket through the theatre group ticket sales. The local organisers are not responsible for the event or admission.

The Congress dinner will be held at the spectacular award-winning venue Harpa Conference and Concert Centre. The pre-dinner reception will be held in Hörpuhorn, the open area in front of the main concert hall (Eldborg) on the second floor. Dinner will be served in the concert hall Norðurljós (Northern Lights), also on the second floor. Due to the unprecedented interest in the Congress dinner the venue has been moved from Kolabraut to Norðurljós to accommodate 270 delegates.

The Graduate Student Workshop will be held on Tuesday 15 July 2014, before the Congress proper begins, and will be run by Daniel Wakelin and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir. Further details about the workshop can be found here. NCS disbursed Howard Scholarships funds to 60 graduate students and newly-minted PhDs (those who graduated after July 2012) to enable them to travel to the Congress in Reykjavik this summer; 30 of those students have been accepted onto the Workshop.

We are all enormously grateful to Holly Crocker and Glenn Burger, the Program Chairs, and the whole of the Program Committee, for putting together an amazing program, and to Sif Ríkharðsdóttir and the rest of the local organizing committee in Reykjavik, who have worked (and continue to work) tirelessly and graciously to put all the arrangements in place and thus to ensure members enjoy to the full their experience of the Congress.

There will be live-tweeting at the Congress. If you do not wish your presentation or session to be tweeted, please inform your organizers and your audience. At the Congress, tweeters should tweet
sessions using the Congress hashtag (#ncs14) and session hashtags (e.g., #s2F – the individual session numbers are given in the online program). NCS recommends the protocols and etiquette laid out in Roopika Risam’s Virtual MLA: A Quick Guide to Using Twitter at the MLA Convention. Live-tweeting at conferences is widely accepted to be an access and disability issue, and it spreads news of the Society’s intellectual concerns to a very broad audience.

NCS is aware that there are some – probably many – members who will not have been able to attend this year’s Congress because of the prohibitive cost of travel. We continue to think of ways of expanding the Society’s outreach, especially beyond North America and the UK. It is hoped, for example, that future contributors to the website blog will be from outside these regions.

This Newsletter goes out to 1219 members. And the Society continues to be a focus for a more public appreciation of Chaucer; we have 580 “likes” on Facebook and 606 followers on Twitter. I look forward to welcoming delegates to Reykjavík in July!

Ruth Evans, Executive Director

NOTES

A Further Note on Editorial Punctuation of the General Prologue, ll. 12-16

In his 1903 edition of the General Prologue, Alfred Pollard presents lines 12-16 in the following way:

Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
   And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes.
   To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes,
   And specially, from every shires ende
   Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende ...

At l. 13, Pollard has this note: “It is usual either to print this line as a parenthesis or to put only a comma after ‘strondes’ so as to make ‘To ferne halwes’ follow ‘to goon.’ The punctuation here adopted was proposed by Professor Liddell and seems an improvement, despite the fact that it makes us want ‘wende’ at the end of l. 14 rather than 16.”

Mark Liddell’s 1901 edition also has a full-stop at the end of l. 13. The Globe Edition of Chaucer produced in 1898, of which Pollard was the general editor, with Liddell working as one of his collaborators, follows more conventional punctuation practice (before and since).

The decision regarding the punctuation taken by Liddell and Pollard aligns with the conclusions of Bernhard ten Brink and Otto Jespersen and solves a difficulty with the syntax that Julius Zupitza noted after “serve” was correctly identified as “ferne.” I have reported on this textual problem and the history of its development in the most recent issue of Modern Philology, but had not discovered the punctuation adopted by Liddell and Pollard until after that piece had gone to press. I found the Pollard edition of the Prologue, obviously used as a student text, on the shelves of the senior English academic’s house in

2 Ibid., 32n13.
which I am living with my family while on sabbatical in London. It is unclear whether Zupitza ever accepted as a solution the placing of a strong punctuation mark at the end of l. 13. Clearly, modern editors have not, inexplicably in my view. Many modern translators tacitly acknowledge the awkwardness of the syntax in the way that they construe the relevant lines. The residual hesitation that Pollard voices, regarding the placement of “wende,” is inconsequential; however, a semi-colon would be preferable to the full stop used by both Liddell and Pollard to preserve the integrity of the opening eighteen-line sentence.

In coming to punctuate l. 13 as he did, Liddell was likely influenced by ten Brink directly. Pollard comments in the preface of the Globe Edition of Chaucer on “the scientific training in the English language” not available to him when he was an Oxford undergraduate. He goes on to point out that “two of my collaborators have completed this training at the feet of those distinguished foreign scholars, ten Brink and Zupitza.” Although Pollard does not specify which two of his collaborators these were, the odds are good that Liddell was one of them. The latter also wrote An Introduction to The Scientific Study of English Poetry: Being Prolegomena to a Science of English Prosody (1902), among numerous other linguistic and editorial works of scholarship. Incidentally, he was not a son of Henry George Liddell, who co-produced the famous Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon.

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6 Klassen, 585-6.
7 Pollard et al., Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, viii-ix.
8 Ibid., ix.

OTHER CONFERENCES AND CALLS

Medieval Association of the Midwest 30th Annual Conference
January 23-25, 2015
Saint Louis University, Madrid Campus, Madrid, Spain
CALL FOR PAPERS
Theme: Medieval Identities
Papers in all areas of Medieval Studies, including medievalism, are also invited.
Proposals/abstracts for individual papers of no more than 20 minutes should be approximately 250 words long and include the presenter’s contact information and requests for A/V equipment. Proposals for full panels should contain no more three papers and one session moderator, as well as the titles of all the individual papers, contact information for each presenter, and the organizer’s contact information.
Deadline for abstracts: October 1
Contact: Francisco García-Serrano - fgarcias@slu.edu

32nd Annual Conference
Illinois Medieval Association
Medieval Narratives
February 20-21, 2015
Saint Louis University
Keynote Speakers: Cynthia Robinson & John Van Engen
We invite proposals dealing with any aspects of medieval narratives.
Questions are welcomed at: IMA2015@slu.edu
More information at http://ima2015.slu.edu
The University of Notre Dame
“Imagining Medieval English”
September 15, 16, and 17

The conference, which is open to the public, will bring together 12 distinguished scholars who will speak on topics such as the reasons for positing coherence in the linguistic record of 500-1500; the kinds of coherence and difference that can be identified among medieval English regional dialects; the role of historical grammars and dictionaries in the construction of medieval English; the nature of historical linguistic evidence; and the relations between literary language and linguistic history. For additional information contact Tim Machan (tmachan@nd.edu) or see http://medieval.nd.edu/events/2014/09/15/23889-imagining-medieval-english/

Texas Medieval Association
October 3-4, 2014
INTERDISCIPLINARITY in the AGE OF RELEVANCE
University of North Texas (Denton)
http://www.texasmedieval.org
in conjunction with the annual conference of the
NT Medieval Graduate Student Symposium
October 2, 2014
http://www.art.unt.edu/medieval-symposium/

Keynote Speakers:
Dr. Barbara Rosenwein, Loyola University, Chicago: “Jean Gerson's Interdisciplinary Theory of Emotions.”
Dr. Bruce Holsinger, University of Virginia, “Voice/Text/Character: Historical Fiction in the Archives.”

CALL FOR PAPERS AND SESSIONS
Deadline for submission of a 300 word abstract is August 15, 2014.
Abstracts and short CV should be sent to: Mickey.Abel@unt.edu

While we will entertain papers on any topic, from any discipline of Medieval Studies—Art History, Religion, Philosophy, English, History, Foreign Languages, Music, we particularly welcome those that engage the multifaceted topic of Interdisciplinarity in the Age of Relevance.

Many of us in the academy, even those amongst us who are preparing for a career in the academy, are confronted with the constant refrain of “relevance.” The state of the academy and its public rhetoric profess among its highest goals an emphasis on community engagement, tangible solutions to “real” world problems, and quantifiable results that produce change and progress. Highlighting the value of stem research, and stressing the potential for expansive pools of external funding, we in the Humanities are asked to consider the creative potential and lucrative benefits of interdisciplinary research clusters and cross-campus collaborative partnerships. The underlying suggestion in this none-to-subtle rhetoric—even recently professed by the President of the United States—is, of course, that the humanities in general, and Medieval Studies in particular, are less-relevant in our current era because we do not on the surface contribute to this over-arching public mission.

Beginning however, with the understanding that all the various disciplines comprising Medieval Studies—English, History, Music/Liturgy, Philosophy/Religion, Archaeology, Art History, Language Studies—are inherently interdisciplinary and in some sense inseparable, we seek papers that explore or exploit the difference between “Interdisciplinary,” “Intra-disciplinary,” “Extra-disciplinary,” and even “Super-disciplinary” studies. We are interested in examples of those who are engaging technology in their studies and/or have incorporated a theoretical stance in line with the hard sciences, or perhaps seek to turn the notion of “Relevance” on its head. We ask: What role do Medievalists play in this new age? Where do we see ourselves and our projects in the world of “real solutions?”
Dan Geffrey with the New Poete: Reading and Rereading Chaucer and Spenser
11th-13th July 2014
Clifton Hill House, University of Bristol

Confirmed plenary speakers: Professor Judith H. Anderson, Indiana University, Bloomington
Dr Helen Barr, Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford
Professor Helen Cooper, Magdalene College, University of Cambridge

Registration is now open. Please follow the link to access the conference website:
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/research/events/conferences/cspenser/
The deadline for registration is June 12th 2014.
To contact the organisers please email chaucerspenser@gmail.com

There is a persistent discussion between scholars of the medieval and early modern periods about how both periods are conceptualised and about the interrelations between them. How can reading, or rereading, the connections between these two poets contribute to this discussion? Chaucer is customarily read as a poet of the High Middle Ages, whose valorization of the vernacular had a profound influence on the poetry of subsequent centuries. Spenser is often read as a poet of the High Renaissance for whom continuity with the past (literary and historical) was a paramount issue. What are the connections between these two poets and how can they help to shape revisionist discussions about the periodization of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance? This conference aims to reread the connections between Chaucer and Spenser, in the light of recent critical methodologies and reformulations of historical continuity and difference. The organisers hope to publish a selection of the resultant papers as a single volume, and that the conference will address some of the following questions:

• How has the relationship between Chaucer and Spenser been read and how can it be rereded?
• How do these two poets together help us periodize / deperiodize / reperiodize the medieval and the early modern?
• What kind of continuum do they share? Is their relationship continuous, radically other, both or neither? Can we reconceptualise descriptions of poetic similarity or difference through discussing Chaucer and Spenser together?
• Can we think of their connection in terms of anticipation as well as influence?
• What can we learn about the phenomenon of intertextuality by rereading the connections between these two poets?
• Does Spenser present us with one Chaucer or many? How has this affected later versions of Chaucer?
• Do these two poets take analogous approaches to the task of making poetry?
• How do earlier fifteenth- and sixteenth-century readings and adaptations of the Chaucerian canon affect Spenser’s readings of it?
• How might a greater variety of critical approaches reveal new connections between the poets? (e.g. ecocriticism, posthumanism, studies of material cultures, studies of the digital humanities, cognitive approaches, histories of the emotions, disability studies).
• How does Chaucer imagine his poetic followers? What would Chaucer think of Spenser?

The conference is supported by the Modern Humanities Research Association, The Bristol Institute for Research in the Humanities and Arts (BIRTHA), and the Department of English and the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Bristol.

The International Piers Plowman Society
Sixth International Piers Plowman Conference
University of Washington, Seattle
23-26 July 2015

Please send abstracts or panel proposals by 1 September 2014 to IPPSinSeattle2015@gmail.com. There will be a Prize for Best Graduate Student Paper to be presented at the conference (eligible to those enrolled as of 1 June 2014), the award being free access to a selection of Brepols journals (Viator, New Medieval Literatures) plus membership in the IPPS for a year. Students should submit abstracts as normal, and then a complete copy of the essay to IPPSinSeattle2015@gmail.com by 1 June 2015.
**Science, Magic and Technology**  
*10th-12th* July 2015  
**Institute of English Studies, Senate House, London**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

Papers are sought on all aspects of ‘Science, Magic and Technology’ in late medieval literature and culture and particularly within Chaucer studies. Approaches might include:

- The presentation of scientific ideas in myth and poetry  
- Observation and naturalism in literature and art  
- Experiment and experience in science and literature  
- The occult sciences (astrology, magic, alchemy) and their relationship to literature  
- Technology as magic, magic as a technology  
- Scientific literatures and the literariness of science  
- Epistemology and taxonomy in late medieval writing  
- Technologies of writing, parchment making and codicology  
- Concepts of the material and immaterial worlds, the environment, astrology, astronomy and cosmology  
- Cartography; deep-sea and space exploration  
- The science of the senses, optics, sound or scent  
- The representation of medicine in literature or the literary modes of medical writing  
- Trade technologies in literature  
- Science, magic and technology in medievalism

Papers are welcomed on the work of Geoffrey Chaucer or, more broadly, on late medieval writing and culture.

Please send 250 word abstracts to Dr Isabel Davis; Birkbeck, University of London. [i.davis@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:i.davis@bbk.ac.uk) by 1st September 2014.

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**


Contributors: Julie Nelson Couch, Susanna Fein, Rosalind Field, Joel Fredell, Ralph Hanna, Michael Johnston, George R. Keiser, Julie Orlemanski, Mary Michele Poellinger, Dav Smith, Thorlac Turville-Petre.

**OTHER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Early English Text Society**

The Early English Text Society celebrates its one hundred and fiftieth birthday in 2014. If you would like to join or rejoin the Society, application forms can be obtained from our website, [www.eets.org.uk](http://www.eets.org.uk). The Society can also be followed on Twitter, @EEngTextSoc, where we are tweeting our way through our backlist of Old and Middle English literature.
The Miller’s Tale: ‘Wahala Dey O!’

Ufuoma Overo-Tarimo will be staging her adaptation of *The Miller’s Tale* in Reykjavik. The running dates are **12-20 July**, which nicely coincide with the NCS conference in July. Please visit [globalchaucers.wordpress.com/2014/03/13/the-millers-tale-wahala-dey-o/](http://globalchaucers.wordpress.com/2014/03/13/the-millers-tale-wahala-dey-o/) for more information.

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**The Early Book Society**

Save the date! The next biennial conference of the Early Book Society will be running from **Thursday 2 July to Sunday 5 July 2015** in Oxford. Most events will take place at St Anne’s College in Oxford, though we expect also to hold some lectures in the Weston Building, the re-opened special collections department of the Bodleian Library. Full details will be circulated later in 2014. For enquiries before then, contact Daniel Wakelin on daniel.wakelin@ell.ox.ac.uk.

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**The Chaucer in Canterbury Sculpture Project**

The Canterbury Commemoration Society has commissioned a sculpture to commemorate the life of Geoffrey Chaucer and his link with Canterbury. The proposed figure of Chaucer at the heart of the City of Canterbury will appropriately represent the relationship of this city with the county and the country through pilgrimage, and more recently, through tourism. It is most fitting for the author whose colossal genius and popularity fixed the form of our language today to be commemorated with a sculpture in Canterbury. The Project is in two parts and involves the commissioning and erection of a statue of Geoffrey Chaucer on a plinth. Around the surface of the plinth will be depicted the pilgrims described in Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. The carving on the plinth of the statue will be based on the work by the artist/engraver Thomas Stothard following a similar work, said to be his best, by Blake in 1810.

For more information on the project and to donate, please visit [http://www.chaucerstatuecanterbury.org/](http://www.chaucerstatuecanterbury.org/)

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*The Pilgrimage to Canterbury* by Thomas Stothard
The New Chaucer Society

President: Alastair Minnis
Executive Director: Ruth Evans

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http://newchausersociety.org/