



In Memoriam: Derek Brewer (1923-2008)

Remembering Derek Brewer

By Richard Firth Green

With the death of Derek Brewer the New Chaucer Society has lost one of its oldest and staunchest friends. One of the Founding Trustees in 1978, Derek was the first of our Biennial Lecturers (1979) and the fourth of our Presidents (1983-4). He continued to attend meetings faithfully for over twenty-five years and delivered his last paper to the society, appropriately titled “Honour in Chaucer,” at the 2006 meeting in New York. Only ill-health prevented his attendance at this Summer’s meeting in Swansea. As Charles Muscatine, one of his fellow Founding Trustees, writes,

One cannot think of twentieth-century Chaucer studies nor of the New Chaucer Society without Derek Brewer. Apart from his great critical and historical works, I remember with gratitude that it was he who first introduced me to fellow-scholars in Britain, Europe, and Japan. I think that this broad and genial embrace of Chaucerians around the world has been the greatest influence in making NCS a truly international organization.

Many of us will associate this internationalism especially with Japan, a country Derek knew well. The strong support that the NCS has received over the years from its distinguished Japanese members (I think particularly of Professor Shinsuke Ando and of our former Trustee, Professor Toshiyuki Takamiya) owes much to his friendship and encouragement. Some of you will recall the speech of welcome in Japanese that he arranged to be given after the banquet at the NCS meeting in York. Japan was far from the only country to fall within his genial sphere of influence, however. Among the spontaneous outpouring of tributes sent in to Boydell and Brewer,* for instance, Leo Carruthers writes from the Sorbonne, “the world of medieval English studies has lost a champion, and here in France we have lost a good friend.”

Apart from bringing together medievalists from all corners of the globe, Derek’s other great service to the

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Some personal memories of Derek Brewer

By Derek Pearsall

When Derek Brewer came to the University of Birmingham on his first university teaching appointment in 1949 it was with a new message of hope for the beleaguered student, snapped at on all sides for accounts of the principal parts of the strong verbs or explanations of the decline of inflexional -e. For the new man, the study of early English texts was always the study of literature, and he knew that this was an activity which, if properly carried on, was strenuous and challenging as well as exhilarating. Even in his teaching of Old English, he would draw the student on to realise that the language was not just a graveyard of forms but was capable of living again as literature: all this while himself stoking the fire in his office in the basement of the building where the English department had its home. But it was Chaucer, always, even in those earliest days, that was the principal focus of his interest. His ambition was to share with students his love and understanding of Chaucer, not as an old relic or a store of linguistic data, but as a full member of the European community of poets and of the English literary tradition. It was a revelation to us to hear Chaucer talked about as if he were important to us, now, and important in the same way as Shakespeare or Milton or T.S. Eliot. Derek Brewer’s first book on Chaucer came out in 1953, and if Chaucer and other medieval writers are established now as an integral part of the student's experience of English literature, it is due in no small part to the writing of that book at that time. He brought the New Criticism to the study of Chaucer.

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profession (excluding of course his own magnificent scholarly contribution) was his unfailing encouragement of younger scholars. His bold venture into scholarly publishing was motivated in large part by his recognition that young scholars lacked a venue in which to air their ideas, and many well-established medievalists among us got their first leg up with a Boydell and Brewer imprint. As John Bowers has written to me, he performed “a vital service for medievalists everywhere by publishing our books when other presses would not.” Among the tributes his firm received we find many like these: “he was so generous to me at the beginning of my career and also so funny and so nice. He made a real difference for so many” (C. David Benson); “he was unfailingly generous to younger scholars, as I know from my own experience” (Felicity Riddy); “he helped me when I was starting out, as he did many” (Bob Yeager). Toshiyuki Takamiya tells an engaging story about Derek’s very practical assistance which also reveals much about the man’s generosity and modesty:

When we jointly edited *Aspects of Malory* in 1981 (now a classic in Malory studies), I was merely a PhD student at Cambridge, while Professor Brewer was already a distinguished medievalist and the Master of Emmanuel College. He insisted, despite this apparent hierarchical difference, that my name should be printed first, because the book was one that I had conceived and brought to fruition.

Many NCS members will recall first meeting him when they were still learning their trade, and being struck by the unfailingly courteous interest he took in their work.

In reality there must have been much in Derek Brewer’s professional life to try his patience and generosity. Among the poems in his collection *Seatonian Exercises* we find one, clearly indebted to the *Land of Cocayne*, which begins wistfully:

In that land shall be no committees
Nor arrangements to be made for anyone
But all will work well from good will

His equanimity when faced with a world so evidently lacking his own measure of good will was striking. No doubt a powerful sense of the absurd (no one who met him can have been unaware of the ironic twinkle in his eye) helped him face it. A set of riddles in the *Seatonian Exercises* (the model this time coming from the Exeter Book) includes,

A simple-minded man
Though super-subtle schemer;
Father-figure to a lot of bastards;
Nature’s busybody,

Idle as they come.

Why doesn’t he go?

But who would have him?

And the answer, delightfully, turns out to be “The Master of a College.” Perhaps John Bowers, who went to visit him shortly after our NCS meeting in Swansea this Summer, might be allowed to set the record straight. John reports that,

when the porter’s lodge learned that I was seeking directions to Professor Brewer’s home, my status as a college guest rocketed. The head porter allowed, “Derek Brewer was a very good Master of the college.” Those of us familiar with the unvarnished judgments of Oxford and Cambridge porters will appreciate the superlative cloaked in this remark.

And as for “idle as they come,” John tells me he came upon him immersed in a forbiddingly thick work of recent scholarship, and Helen Cooper, who visited him shortly before he died, found him “with a pile of half a dozen new DSB publications beside him that he was just starting to read.” As John says, “I had secretly cherished the notion that the day would come when I would be liberated from the obligation to ‘keep up’ with the latest publications, but apparently, according Professor Brewer’s example, this happy day will never quite arrive.”

Perhaps I might end with final quotation from one of his own poems—not intentionally autobiographical (indeed it is a dramatic monologue) but clearly deeply personal—called *The Farmer*.

Then I will walk those fields with their spring flowers,
As they used to be in England, till I come
To the graveyard, with the old brown stones
A bit askew, and even the marble chippings
Of recent graves lit in a softening light,
And a convenient hole left there for me,
All warm and welcoming, seed-bed like,
And company. So I’ll slip down there,
Beside my Lily, as if in our old double bed,
And she will touch my side and lie quite close.
(She always spread herself) and so I’ll say
‘Shove over a bit my dear’, as once I did,
And no grandchild will wake us with night fears.

Like his farmer, Derek Brewer has well earned his rest.

*I should like to thank Caroline Palmer for sending me these tributes, and also for contributing a charming story about having to steer Derek firmly past a series of pubs on a night when she had been entrusted with delivering him to a formal event where he was to be presented with a surprise gift. He was then over eighty.

Pearsall, Continued

Derek Brewer was a prolific writer, and brought out many books and articles, many of them innovative. He brought life, for instance, to the idea of the historically and socially ‘contextualized’ Chaucer in his *Chaucer in his Time*. Like his *Introduction to Chaucer*, this was a book that he recurrently rewrote and updated, a useful practice and a sensible economy. All this ran side by side with a full load of teaching and administration, two important years in Japan, and all the business of helping his beloved wife Elisabeth to bring up a large family. I had a glimpse of this when I went to see him in 1964 after my return from a year in North America. I found him at home in his large house in the suburbs of Birmingham, busy with his children and then busy with me, talking about America, and introducing me to the newly graduated John Scattergood. All this went on while he returned whenever he could to the latest book he was writing, sitting at the end of the room at a large desk with his typewriter before him and his current source-book on the desk beside him.

His energetic pioneering was accompanied by a shrewd and far-sighted recognition of the needs of his subject, and he put himself or got himself put at the head of a number of collaborative enterprises—editions, series, collections, surveys—which now form part of the foundation of modern medieval studies. It was partly as a product of this same view of the good of the subject that he took the extraordinarily adventurous step of founding his own publishing company in 1972. He ran his side of the press with his customary shrewdness and generosity. He knew what books to publish and how many to print. As he said to an old friend, David Benson, ‘The world needs your book, David, but it does not need many copies’. Looking back over scholarly publishing in the subject over the past thirty-odd years, one would find it hard to know how the subject would have managed without the existence of D.S. Brewer Inc.

Derek became Master of Emmanuel in 1977 and no-one could be imagined who would be better at such a job, with all its negotiations among potentially fractious members. I saw him in his chairmanly capacity on a number of non-college occasions, as for instance when he chaired the meetings of the Trustees of the New Chaucer Society. With his imperturbable good nature and geniality he seemed to be agreeing with everyone who spoke, but at the end of the meeting one would find that the committee had come to all the right and sensible decisions (the ones he had decided on) whilst at the same time all the members, however irrelevant and contentious their contributions, somehow felt pleased that their point of view had been so fully

represented in the final decision. This I take to be the mark of the master.

Though his views on literature, as they developed, were generally mainstream and traditional, Derek was capable of unexpected surprises. I remember well the conference on alliterative poetry at Binghamton in 1975 when he had the audience dumbfounded as he told them how Gawain’s winter journey was simply ‘going home for Christmas’ to see again his mother (in her two aspects, the one seductive, the other terrifying), and his father (who of course wants to do no more than castrate him). This idea of the ‘family drama’ he later extended to many other romances and novels in his *Symbolic Stories* (1980), a book that can still give pleasure.

Derek was open and generous as a person, inexhaustibly patient and imperturbably urbane. He was unaffectedly modest, despite all the honours that came his way. He spoke of literature always in a direct and personal way, involving his own experience of life in the experience of literature in a manner that he would have been entirely happy to have called old-fashioned, or perhaps ‘naïve’ or ‘traditional’. He is a published poet, and what I have seen of his poetry, in the volume of Seaton prize poems, speaks of his feelings and convictions with unembarrassed directness. His inaugural lecture at Cambridge began with an allusion to his experiences as an infantry officer in the Apennines of Italy during the war and the connection of those experiences with the importance of poetry that I found very moving. It takes courage to speak from the wholeness of experience in this way. His making as a man coloured his reading profoundly, perhaps most memorably in his writing on Malory, where his admiration of the chivalric values of courage, loyalty, courtesy and generosity was uninflected by modern irony.

We must honour Derek Brewer for the contribution he made to medieval English studies and for the dignity and respect he brought to the subject not only by what he did and wrote but by what he was. I myself feel extraordinarily fortunate to have known him for so long and to have had him before me all my life as a model.

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the New Chaucer Society, July 17, 2008, at Swansea University.

Those present were: John Ganim (President); Richard Firth Green (President-elect); Trustees John Fyler, Lisa Kiser, Helen Phillips (2004-8); Rosalind Field, Laura Kendrick (2006-10); Christopher Cannon, Juliette Dor, Ruth Evans, Stephanie Trigg (2008-12); David Lawton, Executive Director; and for individual items Mark Allen (NCS Bibliographer), David Matthews (Editor, *SAC*) and Alfred Hiatt (Reviews editor, *SAC*). Apologies were received from Elizabeth Archibald (2004-8) and Susanna Fein (2006-10), Trustees.

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Call for Session Proposals for NCS Siena, 2010

It's a hard act to follow, but while the inspiring model of NCS Swansea is still fresh in our minds, it's time to start planning the sequel in Siena in 2010. We will aim to capitalize on the strengths of the Swansea conference, without seeking to duplicate it. It seems we can get by very well without nominating a specific theme, but the idea of strands or threads running through the congress seemed to be an effective strategy.

The Program Executive Committee will meet in January. Members of the Advisory Committee will be asked to convene a thread for the congress, including at least a paper session, a panel and an e-seminar leading up to the panel. At this stage, we invite members to submit proposals for paper sessions (4 speakers), panels (7-8 speakers, with e-discussion or not, as you wish) and threads.

Proposals for paper sessions and panels need to be at least 150 words long with a descriptive title (we can make them more specific later on if you wish). Proposals for threads should be about 250 words long and should include suggestions for paper sessions and panels. This is a call for ideas and early session proposals. You should not normally at this stage nominate session speakers (unless, for example, a session is built around a specific person's work), and the call for participants will go out later, probably early next year.

Please send all suggestions for paper sessions, panels and threads to Thomas Hahn, Chair of the Program Committee, at: thomas.hahn@rochester.edu by **January 5, 2009**. Please also cc the Society (chaucer@artsci.wustl.edu).

Trustee Meeting Minutes, Continued

President John Ganim opened the meeting at 2 p.m.

1. President's report and new initiatives:

a. JG welcomed the news that the ED has signed contracts with Project Muse, as recommended by the Trustees in 2006.

b. By a unanimous vote of the Trustees, David Lawton has been reappointed Executive Director for a second term (until after the 2012 congress). JG expressed the Society's thanks to Washington University for its generous sponsorship and support.

c. JG noted the Trustees' decision to relocate *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* to Manchester (David Matthews, editor), and Leeds (Alfred Hiatt, review editor). This is the first time that the journal has been based outside the US, or been located in a different city from the Society's office.

Email and the internet obviate any disadvantage of such dispersal, and the Trustees' view, after careful consideration, was that the move would be a significant step in the internationalization of NCS. The President expressed warm thanks to all the institutions that had made bids, all of which had great strengths. It was an index of the Society's success that such multiple bids are now received, as for congress sites.

d. JG raised several matters concerning the teaching of Chaucer, including the major British report by Rosalind Field. After floating plans for an educational office for NCS, he preferred the model of an education committee. The Trustees agreed to this, with co-chairs Rosalind Field (UK and Europe) and David Raybin (North America).

e. JG raised the possibility of an initiative for a summer institute in the year between congresses. This drew support from several Trustees, but the matter was deferred for further consideration under the new President, Richard F. Green.

f. JG also raised the possibility of a Chaucer professorship sponsored by the Society that would rotate across host universities. This matter is also tabled for further consideration.

2. Executive Director's report:

a. The ED introduced the report of the Finance committee (Susan Crane, Richard Emmerson, John Fyler), to which John Fyler spoke. The Society is in good financial shape. The committee was satisfied with the probity of administration and the high level of support from Washington University. There was some discussion about possible changes of Vanguard accounts, and about placing more of the current account balance into the endowment or into a savings account.

b. At the ED's recommendation, the Trustees decided to raise the subscription to \$55 for full members (with no change to subscription levels for retired, graduate and unwaged members). This is the first change in a decade, and is made necessary by currency fluctuations and other increased costs.

c. The Trustees wish Marie Lay a speedy and full recovery from her recent illness. A considerable burden has been assumed by Empress Sanders, who attended the congress. The Trustees agreed to appoint her as membership secretary. The Society thanks Sarah Noonan for her outstanding service as graduate assistant, and for her particular contribution to the program committee.

d. As previously decided by the Trustees at the ED's recommendation, Siena will be the site of the 2010 congress. All looks good for the congress, with a very high level of support from local institutions, especially the Università per Stranieri. Stefania D'Agata D'Ottavi will serve as chair of the local arrangements committee (and

was present in Swansea, where arrangements began to be made).

e. It was agreed that the 2012 congress should be in North America, and that the ED should seek bids from the west coast. (Ongoing)

f. The ED spoke of future plans: for NCS to be an umbrella organization for societies in the field, processing web membership subscriptions on their behalf, and for an eventual permanent office for the Society (though this would take several years, and depended on continual long-term growth to the Society's endowment).

g. The level of travel subventions for graduates and recent Ph.Ds to attend the 2008 congress was the highest in the Society's history, totaling \$18,300.

3. Report by the program chair on 2008 arrangements:

Ruth Evans reported. The Trustees expressed the Society's thanks to Ruth and the other members of the program committee and program advisory committee, and to Helen Fulton, local arrangements chair, and members of that committee.

Program Committee:

Chair: Ruth Evans; Stephanie Trigg; Helen Fulton; Alexandra Gillespie; Ethan Knapp; Diane Watt; John Ganim, President, and David Lawton, ED, ex officio.

Advisory Committee:

Joyce Coleman; John Fyler; Frank Grady; Cathy Sanok; Nicolette Zeeman

Local Arrangements Committee:

Chair: Helen Fulton; Catherine Clarke; Geraint Evans; Liz McAvoy; Simon Meecham-Jones; Daniel Power; Sara Robb; Deborah Youngs; †Ifor Rowlands

There would be a thorough opportunity for all NCS attendees to give feedback at the end of the congress.

RE noted, in particular, the success of the threads model, and the new work done by their conveners; the health of NCS shown in the extraordinarily high participation and the quality of submissions; and the response given by the program committee to feedback in Fordham (on the need for more work in Anglo-Norman, EME etc.)

4. Report by Mark Allen, NCS Bibliographer:

Mark said that the NCS bibliography in 2007 and 2008 had contained 300-320 items. He was indebted to 30+ contributors, mainly from the USA, but regretted the lack of consistent input from the UK and Eastern Europe. There was a 10% turnover of contributors every two years.

Mark asked whether Project Muse is searchable (it is); and asked that NCS should poll members about the retention of a print as well as online version. NCS Trustees were strongly in favor of retaining the print version.

5. Report from Studies in the Age of Chaucer:

David Matthews, editor, presented statistics about submission and acceptance of possible contributions. These were in line with recent years under Frank Grady's editorship.

The Trustees agreed to DM's proposal that electronic submission be encouraged, and the published guidelines for submission changed accordingly. Other changes to the website were sent forward to the constitutional subcommittee. All agreed that longer than standard submissions would be welcome.

Alfred Hiatt, reviews editor, reported that there would be 26 reviews in the 2008 SAC, and hoped there would be 30 in future issues. The Trustees agreed that reviews are a high priority, and a major element in SAC's growing status. There was discussion about blog publication and about word limits for reviews (1000-1200 words was agreed upon).

Both DM and AH drew attention to the patterns of submission from the UK, and their linkage to the nation-wide research assessment process.

6. Discussion of policy matters and committee composition:

a. The Trustees expressed general approval of the notion of an interdisciplinary lectureship, and undertook to encourage program committees to propose a lecturer of their choice. This was not, however, to be an automatic feature of future congresses.

b. The Trustees discussed the composition of a program committee for 2010. [The committee consists of Thomas Hahn (chair), Marion Turner, David Wallace, Jessica Brantley, Stefania D'Agata D'Ottavi (chair of the local arrangements committee), with Richard Firth Green, President, and David Lawton, ED, ex officio.]

c. There was discussion of a nominating committee for 2009, to be finalized by Richard Firth Green (President).

d. The Trustees agreed on the appointment of a constitutional subcommittee, consisting of Chris Cannon (chair), Helen Cooper, and John Ganim.

7. Constitutional changes:

The Trustees forwarded to the constitutional subcommittee recommendations to allow Trustees the right to vote at all 3 Trustees' meetings they attend; and to consider models for direct election of the President. It was agreed that such issues, once considered, would be reported to a vote of the Trustees, and in the event of a positive vote then submitted to vote of the members for approval.

The meeting adjourned at 6.15.

David Lawton, ED

Announcements: (Conferences, Seminars, etc.)

After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England

St. John's College, Oxford, 16th-18th April 2009

Registration for this conference, which marks the 600th anniversary of Archbishop Thomas Arundel's Provincial Constitutions, is now open. Please see details at:

<http://www.medieval.ox.ac.uk/afterarundel/index.html>

Any queries about the conference should be directed in the first instance to Professor Vincent Gillespie (vincent.gillespie@lmh.ox.ac.uk).

Workshop on Cognitive Allegory: 26 June 2009

The Department of English, the Cognitive Science Program, the Faculty of Arts, and The Program in Medieval Studies at the University of Waterloo present a one-day, inter- and multi-disciplinary workshop on the cognitive underpinnings of allegory, bringing together medievalists who work specifically on allegorical texts with rhetoricians, literary theorists, psychologists, and philosophers who focus on representations of knowledge. The workshop opens with an address by University of Waterloo Research Chair, Paul Thagard (Molson Prize winner, Fellow of the Cognitive Science Society and the Royal Society of Canada; author of numerous articles and books, including *Mind*, and, most recently, *Hot Thought*); includes roundtable sessions on such topics as Narrative, Personification, Visual Allegory, Metonymy, and Cognitive Maps; and closes with a summative address by University of California at Santa Cruz Professor of Psychology, Raymond W. Gibbs (author of numerous articles and books, including *The Poetics of Mind* and, most recently, *Embodiment and Cognitive Science*, editor of the journal, *Metaphor and Symbol*). Invited panels are now full, but roundtable discussions will be open to other interested participants. Please see the website at <http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~raha/CognitiveAllegory> or contact Sarah Tolmie at stolmie@uwaterloo.ca.

The Medieval Association of the Pacific will be holding its annual conference March 6 and 7, 2009, at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Nine papers on Chaucer are on the program, which will be posted shortly at:
<http://www.csun.edu/english/map09/static.php?id=conferences>.

Magdalene College

Festival of Landscape: *Aspirational Landscapes*
Saturday 31st January 2009 (10am to 4.30pm)

A One-Day Symposium Open to All who are Interested

The way people see landscapes, talk about them, design them and inhabit them, can tell us a great deal about their hopes and their aspirations. This one-day symposium will look at landscapes in the medieval and early modern period, covering a range of topics including gardens and cities, the imaginary landscapes of Arthurian literature, paradisaical and Edenic landscapes, and musical landscapes. Many of the talks will be illustrated. Audience discussion will be encouraged.

Participants will include Professor Helen Cooper (Cambridge University Faculty of English), Professor Eamon Duffy (Cambridge University Faculty of Theology), Dr Jane Hughes (Magdalene College, Cambridge University), Dr Hester Lees-Jeffries (St Catharine's College, Cambridge University), Dr Christopher Page (Cambridge University Faculty of English), Dr Ad Putter (University of Bristol), and Professor Andrew Spicer (Oxford Brookes University).

Cost: Registration (including coffee and lunch) is £20, with a concessionary rate of £10 (full time students, job seekers, over 60s). Cheques should be made out to "Magdalene College".

Limited Space. All participants must register in advance.

Register by emailing litfest@magd.cam.ac.uk or by writing to: Dr Jane Hughes/Dr Tom Spencer, The Festival Directors, LandFest, Magdalene College, Cambridge CB3 0AG.

We regret that the symposium is non-residential and accommodation is not available in the college. We can supply a list of nearby hotels and bad and breakfasts on request.

The Chaucer Review will sponsor three sessions at the 44th International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, May 7-10, 2009:

(1) Post-Riverside Editions, E-Texts, and Digital Resources – Roundtable (Presider: Andrew Taylor), with Mark Allen, Robert Boenig, Edwin Duncan, Kathryn Lynch, and Kellie Robertson.

(2) Post Twentieth-Century Conceptions, Reconceptions, and Readings (Presider: David Raybin), with Timothy D. Arner, Peter G. Beidler, Ana Sàez Hidalgo, and Betsy McCormick.

(3) Post-Pinkhurst Manuscript, Early Print, and Textual Studies (Presider: Susanna Fein), with Daryl Green, Robert J. Meyer-Lee, and Sean Pollack, and with A. S. G. Edwards as respondent.

Symposium on:**"The Five Senses in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Pleasure and Danger in Perception"***January 23 - 24, 2009, Arizona State University, Tempe*

The symposium will examine aspects of sensory experience in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, from sounds and scents of sanctity in medieval hagiography and chant to sensuality and slavery in the English Revolution, from the ethical justification of sensory perception in early medieval science to the cultural constructions of saffron and the multisensory experience of memorials. Speakers will include Elizabeth Harvey (University of Toronto), David Howes (Concordia University, Montreal), and, from ASU: Mark Cruse, Cora Fox, David Hawkes, Ian Moulton, Richard Newhauser, Catherine Saucier, Volker Schier, Corine Schleif, Robert Sturges, and Juliann Vitullo. For further information, please contact Corine Schleif (Corine.Schleif@asu.edu) or Richard Newhauser (480-965-8139; Richard.Newhauser@asu.edu).

Birkbeck Medieval Seminar: Rethinking Medieval Marriage: 23 May 2009, 10am – 5pm

Speakers:

Glenn Burger, (Queens College and Graduate Center, City University of New York), In the Merchant's Bedchamber

Emma Lipton (University of Missouri), John Gower's Politics of Marriage

Shannon McSheffrey (Concordia University, Montreal), Marriage by Ravishment in Fifteenth-Century England

Pamela Sheingorn (Baruch College and Graduate Center, City University of New York), Embodied Meaning in Images of the Married Life of Mary and Joseph

Respondent: Isabel Davis (Birkbeck College, London).

Venue: Birkbeck College, University of London, Malet Street, Bloomsbury, London. WC1E 7HX

Free entry

For further information and to register, email:

i.davis@bbk.ac.uk or go to:

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/eh/research/research_seminar/bms

Ed Condren announces the recent publication of *Chaucer From Prentice to Poet: The Metaphor of Love From Dream Visions to Troilus and Criseyde* (Univ. Press of Florida, 2008). He writes that "though I trust its prose is congenial and collegial, each of the four poems discussed--Book of the Duchess, Parliament of Fowls, House of Fame, and Troilus and Criseyde--challenges traditional readings."

Esther Casier Quinn is pleased to announce the publication of her new book, *Geoffrey Chaucer and the Poetics of Disguise*. This work considers virtually all of Chaucer's writings as disguised reflections on matters personal and political.

Susanna Fein and David Raybin, editors of *The Chaucer Review*, announce that the April 2009 issue will be devoted to the special topic *Time, Measure, and Value in Chaucer's Art and Chaucer's World*. Guest editors are Carolyn P. Collette (Mount Holyoke College) and Nancy Mason Bradbury (Smith College). The contents are:

Changing Times: The Mechanical Clock in Late Medieval Literature (Nancy Mason Bradbury and Carolyn P. Collette)
Imprecise Chaucer (Daniel J. Ransom, *University of Oklahoma*)
Tricks of the Time in the *Miller's Tale* (Dawn Simmons Walts, *Indiana University*)

Measuring the Immeasurable: Farting, Geometry, and Theology in the *Summoner's Tale* (Glending Olson, *Cleveland State University*)

"Knowledge of the Files": Subverting Bureaucratic Legibility in the *Franklin's Tale* (Cara Hersh, *University of Portland*)

Chaucer and the Consolation of *Prosimetrum* (Eleanor Johnson, *University of California Berkeley*)

CFPs

Proposals are invited for a collective volume of recent articles on Lawman's *Brut*. The book will have as its theme 'La3amon: present and past contexts'. Please send 50 word abstracts by January 2nd 2009 to Rosamund Allen (r.s.allen@qmul.ac.uk).

Medium Ævum will host the Fifth Medieval Aspects and Approaches Conference at Lincoln College Oxford on April 3-4, 2009 on the subject of Play. This conference is aimed at early career scholars and graduate students. A volume of proceedings comprising selected papers will appear in the Medium Ævum Monographs Series. Contributions are welcomed from diverse fields of research such as history of art and architecture, history, theology, philosophy, anthropology, literature and history of ideas.

Papers will be 20 minutes or less. Please email 250-word abstracts (text only, no attachments please) to oxgradconf@gmail.com by 15th February 2009.

Suggested topics might include: Medieval drama; Games and game theory; Marginalia; Word play and puns; Children; Adult play, ritual, ceremony; Carnavalesque and subversion; Manuscript and art representations of play and games; The game of love, playfulness; Words, music, performance; Laughter.

All updates and further information can be obtained from www.medieval.ox.ac.uk/oxgradconf.html

**Canada Chaucer Seminar: Call for Papers
Saturday, 25 April 2009, University of Toronto**

Building on the success of the inaugural 2008 meeting, the second annual Canada Chaucer Seminar will be held in Toronto on April 25, 2008. The aim of the seminar is to provide a one-day forum that will bring together scholars working on Chaucer and on late medieval literature and culture.

The 2009 gathering will include plenary papers by John V. Fleming (Princeton) and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Notre Dame), several sessions of conference papers, and a final roundtable discussion.

Proposals are invited for 20-minute conference papers on any aspect of Chaucer's works. Submit one-page abstracts by 30 January 2009 to Professor William Robins (william.robins@utoronto.ca). William Robins, Department of English, University of Toronto, 170 St. George Street, 6th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 2M8, Canada

Funding Opportunities

Postdoctoral Research Opportunities at Birmingham, UK

The Medieval Literature Research Group in the Department of English, University of Birmingham, UK, seeks to sponsor applications from excellent finishing or recently completed PhDs in the field of medieval textual cultures for Newton International Fellowships and/or for Marie Curie International Incoming ('World') Fellowships. Successful applicants would carry out postdoctoral research within the group for one or two years. Proposals that involve working with the resources and data generated by the Vernon Manuscript Project and/or the Manuscripts of the West Midlands Project, or developing allied materials, would be especially welcome. Please contact Professor Wendy Scase as soon as possible to discuss your interest or to find out more (W.L.Scase@bham.ac.uk).

Further information:

University of Birmingham, Department of English,
Medieval Literature Research: <http://www.medievalenglish.bham.ac.uk/research/>

Newton International Fellowships (The British Academy, The Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society), call now open, deadline 12 January 2009: <http://www.newtonfellowships.org/index.html>

Marie Curie Incoming Fellowships (European Union Seventh Framework Programme), call to open in the Spring, deadline 18 Aug 09 (indicative date): http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/people/international-dimension_en.html

Newberry Library Fellowships in the Humanities, 2009-2010

The Newberry Library, an independent research library in Chicago, Illinois, invites applications for its 2009-2010 Fellowships in the Humanities. Newberry Library fellowships support research in residence at the Library, and all proposed research must be appropriate to the collections (excluding the Terra Foundation Fellowship and certain short-term awards). Long-term residential fellowships are available for periods of six to eleven months to postdoctoral scholars who must hold the Ph.D. at the time of application. The stipend for these fellowships ranges from \$25,500 to \$70,000. In 2008-2009 the Library inaugurated a new Terra Foundation for American Art Fellowship in Art History carrying an academic-year stipend of \$70,000 for a full professor (or its equivalent outside the academy) and \$50,400 for all other awardees. Short-term residential fellowships are intended for postdoctoral scholars or Ph.D. candidates from outside the Chicago area who have a specific need for Newberry collections. The tenure of short-term fellowships varies from one week to two months. The amount of the award is generally \$1600 per month. Applications for long-term fellowships are due January 12, 2009; applications for most short-term fellowships are due March 2, 2009. For more information or to download application materials, visit our website at: <http://www.newberry.org/research/felshp/fellowshome.html>

If you would like materials sent to you by mail, write to the Committee on Awards, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, IL 60610-3380. If you have questions about the fellowships program, contact research@newberry.org or (312) 255-3666.

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