



Toebi Newsletter

TEACHERS OF OLD ENGLISH IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Issue X, Autumn 1999

TOEBI CONFERENCE AND AGM 1999

The University College of North Wales at Bangor is the location of this year's one-day TOEBI conference and AGM on Saturday, 13 November. The themes of the meeting will be The Canon, and Translation. If there are members of the association who would like additional information, please contact Margaret Locherbie-Cameron, Department of English, University College of North Wales, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DG. TOEBI is, as always, keen to encourage members to participate actively in events such as the conference, and it is hoped that attendance at this year's conference will match that of previous years'.

All members will shortly be receiving further details about the meeting directly from Dr Locherbie-Cameron. Please ensure that you register promptly.

The TOEBI Committee

It should be noted that Professor Donald Scragg was inadvertently omitted from the list of committee members in the last Newsletter. Our apologies for this oversight.

At the AGM in November, we shall be seeking nominations to the TOEBI committee to replace those members whose term of office is coming to an end. Please write to the Secretary (see p. iv) with any such nominations.

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

**CCUE AGM, St Anne's College, Oxford,
23-24 April 1999**

by Stuart Lee

At previous meetings of TOEBI, the possibility of forging stronger links with CCUE has been discussed. Such links might prove beneficial, particularly in the light of the high regard in

which the Funding Councils are believed to hold CCUE.

Thus, I attended the first day of the CCUE meeting with great interest, particularly as the discussion, led by John Barnard of the University of Leeds, centred on the imminent RAE. The new proposals for the RAE were outlined, including the subject categories under which work would be assessed. Old and Middle English has been retained as a separate heading and has not been merged into a larger History of the English Language section (although Old Norse scholars should note that they have been categorised as a 'special subject'). The most important point perhaps is that the previous ranking, where a monograph was considered to be more important than an article in a published journal, has now been dispensed with. As was the procedure with the last RAE, every academic should submit up to four publications, all of which will be read and judged.

The meeting was also addressed by Richard Townend from HEFCE speaking on the new subject Centre for English. This Centre will act as the disseminator of good practice in the teaching of English. It has not yet been decided where this new Centre will be situated (Oxford, and the Institute of Education are among the main contenders); second bids were invited during the Summer from those involved. It is hoped that TOEBI will liaise closely with whichever bid is awarded the Centre.

The British Academy

by Elaine Treharne

Is it the case that the discipline of English as a whole is under-represented in the British Academy? It is not, somewhat surprisingly, a subject section in its own right. While History, Archaeology, Linguistics and Philology, Law, and so forth have their own sections, English remains submerged under 'Languages and Literatures' in sections D and E, and 'Medieval Studies' in section G. Despite the fact that in most HE institutions English is a significant recruiter of students and usually one of the larger Arts departments, it is treated by the Academy as a linked subject-area. This has important repercussions for practitioners in

the field, particularly as the Academy channels millions of pounds of funding for academics.

It might therefore be of concern to TOEBI members to know that, in 1998-99, membership of the British Academy, section G, 'Medieval Studies: History and Literature', appeared to include among its 72 members only 3 members who are currently engaged as practising faculty in Departments of English (or related Departments), and only one of these scholars is presently at a British institution. The remaining 5 scholars of Medieval English are retired. For English within Medieval Studies, one would surely hope for a more substantial representation of practising section members than the 2% that is currently elected.

The Top Journals

It is the case that the top twenty journals for English as rated by HEFCE at the last RAE included, as periodicals of specific relevance to Medieval Studies, *Anglo-Saxon England*, *Medium Ævum*, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, and the *Yearbook of Langland Studies*. More generally, the *Review of English Studies* and *Notes and Queries* were included, but it is curious that journals such as *Anglia* or *Leeds Studies in English* or *English Studies* were omitted, while others such as *English* and *Paragraph* were deemed more worthy of being on the list.

ON-LINE EDITIONS

by Stuart Lee

TOEBI members may be interested to note that newly edited versions of Ælfric's Homilies on 'Judith', 'Esther', and 'The Maccabees' are now on-line at

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings/>

The site contains full introductory material, the texts with manuscript variants, notes, and a word-list. The texts are presented as Adobe PDF files to retain a feel of a standard edition, but more importantly, to retain lineation. You will need a web browser, and the Acrobat reader (free), and Peter Baker's Old English Fonts (again free, and there are links provided at the above address to the appropriate site for the downloading of the fonts). Respecting the aims of TOEBI, I have also included short extracts from 'The Maccabees' for teaching purposes, relating the famous description by Ælfric of elephants, and his discussion on the justification of war (with its useful contemporary resonances for teaching now). Access to the site is free.

E-MAIL AND WEB NEWS

by Stuart Lee

Members will hopefully now be aware of the electronic mailing list that has been set up, and to which one can subscribe by sending the message:

join toebi firstname(s) lastname

to

mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk

Alternatively, see the details on the TOEBI page at:

<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/humanities/toebi>

Readers might also be interested in the gradual appearance of Bodleian manuscript images at:

<http://image.ox.ac.uk/pages/list.htm>

These include Junius 11, The Leofric Missal, and St Dunstan's Classbook.

NEWS FROM MANCASS

Website: From October 1999 members will be able to find out about research seminars and lectures, the Toller Lecture, conferences and other events, and study programmes on our new improved web pages:

www.art.man.ac.uk/english/projects/mancass.htm

If members would like to put a link to their Anglo-Saxon pages on this site or if there are any other suggestions, please contact Susan Rosser (address below).

Events: Following the success of this year's conference on 'Edward the Elder', the annual Manchester Conference will be held on 26-28 April 2000 on the theme 'Æthelbald and Offa'. If members would like to attend this conference, please contact Margaret Worthington.

On 7-9 July 2000 (the weekend before Leeds IMC), MANCASS will be holding a study weekend on the topic of manuscript studies. Full details are yet to be confirmed but speakers will include Michelle Brown (British Library), Gale Owen-Crocker, Alex Rumble, Don Scragg, and Elaine Treharne. This meeting may be of particular interest to graduate students, and there will be workshops and lectures at both beginners' and advanced levels. To receive further details please contact Joana Proud:

jproud@soliva.freemove.co.uk

On 4-6 July 2001, a Manchester Conference will be held on the theme of 'Apocryphal

Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England'. This promises to be an exciting event with many well-known speakers from Britain, Europe and the USA already lined up. The deadline for submission of proposals for papers is 1 July 2000. To offer a paper or to receive further details, please contact Susan Rosser:

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ISAS CONFERENCE

The immaculate campus of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, was the setting for the week-long biennial August conference of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists, ably hosted by Professor Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe. Forty-five papers were delivered by scholars from Britain, Europe, North America, and the Antipodes on the theme of 'Imagined Endings: Borders, Reigns, Millennia'. The presentations covered literary, linguistic, historical, art historical, and archaeological subjects, and included the demonstration of a number of new and useful teaching and research computer packages.

Of particular note was the plenary paper on 'Beowulf and its Manuscript Exemplar' delivered by Professor Michael Lapidge, formerly of Cambridge, and now of Notre Dame. His palaeographical and contextual analyses of the text resulted in the provocative proposal that *Beowulf* is derived from a Southumbrian exemplar, datable to the first half of the eighth century. This new thesis caused great debate among the conference participants, stimulating substantial interest in, and renewed vigour on, the perennial issue of *Beowulf's* origin.

The week was a great success for the conference's one hundred-plus attendees, and the biennial meeting once again illustrated the flourishing international discipline of Anglo-Saxon Studies at its best.

For further information on the society, and news of the next conference at Helsinki University in 2001, visit the ISAS website at <http://www.nd.edu/~english/isas.html> and the related links.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

Last year at Oxford, there was great anticipation among TOEBI members about the imminent publication of Seamus Heaney's new translation of *Beowulf*, though, unfortunately, the enthusiasm of members at that meeting amounted to very little subsequent action. Still, the wait for the translation is over as it was recently published by Faber and Faber at £14.99. The 106-page volume includes a scholarly Introduction, with a discussion of how the translation was achieved, followed by the text itself.

ANSAXNET's US contributors have gone into overdrive, with numerous messages about the style of the translation being posted. Among these are complaints that Heaney does not adhere to the OE poet's appositive style, and that Heaney's diction is occasionally obscure. Be that as it may, this new translation is surely excellent news for Old English, and will bring the poem and the field as a whole to a larger audience, and greater recognition. Indeed, on Wednesday 6 October, Seamus Heaney lectured to an audience of 600 at Manchester University. Professor Don Scragg, who organised the visit, was delighted by the success of the lecture and the way in which Heaney's translation has brought renewed vigour and attention to Anglo-Saxon studies.

A full review of *Beowulf*, together with a report of Heaney's lecture at Manchester, will appear in the next Newsletter.

Also published this year is Kevin Crossley-Holland's new translation of *Beowulf* as part of OUP's World's Classics series (£5.99 pb). This will also be fully reviewed in the next Newsletter.

- Would TOEBI members be interested in lobbying the relevant Education Boards for the inclusion of Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* on A' Level syllabi?

AND FINALLY...

Congratulations to Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, formerly of Liverpool University, on her recent appointment to a Chair at Fordham University, New York. TOEBI will miss her valuable contributions, and wish her very well in her new post.

And congratulations also to Simon Keynes on his promotion to the Elrington and Bosworth Chair of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge.

TOEBI COMMITTEE

Dr Bruce Mitchell (President)
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Action points for Members:

- Contribute to the Newsletter: responses to this issue; book reviews; short articles on your Old English courses or assessment procedures; material about professional practice
- Please send information about the following items for inclusion in the Newsletter:
 - Conferences on Anglo-Saxon Studies
 - Special Lectures by Anglo-Saxonists
 - News about promotions, or general news about lecturers in your Department
 - The publication of new books or articles useful for teaching Old English