

ANNUAL REPORT

of the Society's activities
including the Annual Accounts
for the Calendar Year 2009

c/o History Faculty, George Street, Oxford, OX1 2RL.
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THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF MEDIEVAL LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
(Registered Charity, no. 1130022)

c/o History Faculty, George Street, Oxford, OX1 2RL

Members of the Executive Committee and Trustees of the Society since Registration as a Charity

Dr Anthony Lappin (University of Manchester), Monographs Editor and, from 3rd April 2009, Hon. President

Dr Mishtooni Bose (Christ Church, Oxford), Vice-President

Dr Helen Swift (St Hilda's College, Oxford), Vice-President

Dr Simon Horobin (Magdalen College, Oxford), co-opted by the Committee on 24th January 2009, subsequently elected to the Committee at the 2009 AGM, and appointed Hon. Secretary on 16th May 2009

Dr John Watts (Corpus Christi College, Oxford), Hon. Treasurer

Prof. Nigel F. Palmer (St Edmund Hall, Oxford), Editor

Prof. C. J. Saunders (Durham University), Editor

Prof. S. Huot (Pembroke College, Cambridge), Editor

Dr Kenneth P. Clarke (Pembroke College, Cambridge), co-opted by the Committee on 16th May 2009

Prof. Jane Roberts (King's College, London)

Dr Magnus Ryan (Peterhouse, Cambridge)

Members of the Executive Committee retiring at the 2009 AGM:

Prof. Helen Cooper (Magdalene College, Cambridge), retiring Hon. President

Ms. Lucinda Rumsey (Mansfield College, Oxford), retiring Hon. Secretary

Mr Nicholas Jacobs (Jesus College, Oxford)

This Annual Report was accepted by the Trustees of the Society at the meeting of the Executive Committee on 20th February 2010. It is recommended to the Society at its Annual General Meeting on 16th April 2010.

The Report includes the Receipts and Payments Accounts for 2010, which have been independently examined by Mr Mark Luntley, CPFA.

All queries about this Annual Report or enquiries about the Society should be directed to the Executive Officer: ssmll@history.ox.ac.uk

Overview of 2009

Development and expansion were the keynotes of the Society's activities in 2009. The Society increased its support for conferences and workshops, and, at the same time, continued its successful publication activities, adding to them an attractive on-line presence. Underpinning these was the adoption at the 2009 AGM of a new Constitution for the Society and, subsequently, the registration of the Society with the UK Charity Commission, receiving the Charity number 1130022 on 8th June 2009.

The new constitution brings the Society into line with the Charity Commission's requirements while restating the Society's long-standing commitment to its principal purpose. Its Object continues to be: 'to advance education by the encouragement of research in medieval languages and literature and the dissemination of that research to the scholarly community and the wider public' (Article II). The Constitution is available for all members to consult on the Society's website at:

<http://mediamaevum.modhist.ox.ac.uk/society.shtml>

The activities undertaken in 2009 to meet the Society's Object are discussed below.

The Society's activities are, as before, overseen by the Executive Committee, but with its members taking on the legal status of Trustees when the Society became a Registered Charity. The Committee includes, *ex officio*, the Editors of the journal and the Monograph Series, as well as members each elected for a five-year term at the AGM (Article IX of the Constitution). In addition, the Committee has the right to co-opt up to two members. The President of the Society is elected at the AGM for a three-year term, with the possibility of re-election for a further two-year term. At the 2009 AGM, Prof. Helen Cooper retired as President and Dr Anthony Lappin was elected by the membership as her successor. The list of Committee members and, subsequently, of Trustees is provided at the start of this Report.

The Committee has, in the recent past, been supported by an Assistant Treasurer; Judith Schmidt retired from that role at the 2009 AGM, and the Committee wishes, once again, to record its gratitude to her. The day-to-day functioning of the Society is now looked after by an Executive Officer. The holder of this part-time post is Dr David Rundle, who was appointed for a year in October 2008 and re-appointed for a further year in October 2009.

Membership

Membership of the Society rose during 2009 by nearly a fifth, to 190. This includes a pleasing proportion of graduate students who benefit from our special rate, allowing them membership for two years at the price of one. The Society's new website has also allowed new members to join via Paypal which has a particular advantage for those wishing to pay in a currency other than sterling. The membership rate remained at £16.50 / \$35.50 (£16 / \$35 if paying by Standing Order); it is a regret that there is no Euro rate; the Executive Committee hopes the Society will rectify this at its 2010 Annual General Meeting.

Journal

Volume LXXVIII of *Medium Ævum* was published during 2009 in the customary two issues. The beginning of the year saw a change in the editorial team: Prof. Jane Taylor

retired at the end of 2008 and was replaced by Prof. Sylvia Huot (Pembroke College, Cambridge). Both Prof.s Nigel F. Palmer and Corinne Saunders continued in the role of Editor, and all were ably assisted by Jackie Pritchard as Assistant Editor.

The articles in volume LXXVIII covered, as usual, an impressively eclectic range of subjects and languages, including Old English, Old Irish, Medieval Latin, Middle English and French. This was also the second year when the journal was also able to publish the winning entry of the Society's Essay Prize competition. The winner of the 2008 competition, Dr. Elizabeth Boyle (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge), was presented with the prize at the 2009 AGM, and her essay, 'Neoplatonic thought in medieval Ireland: the evidence of *Scéla na esérgí*', appeared in the second issue of the journal.

Subscriptions to the journal remained healthy, standing at the same level as in 2008, despite the difficult economic climate.

Monographs

The Editors of the Monograph Series continued to be those for the journal and Dr A. J. Lappin. Dr Lappin oversaw the production of Medium Ævum Monograph, new series, XXVI: Anthony Hunt ed., *Three Anglo-Norman Treatises on Falconry* (Oxford, 2009), 179 pp., ISBN: 9780907570196). This elegant volume not only saw a welcome return to hardback publishing; it also marked a change in publishing practice which, by having a short print-run, allowed a substantial reduction in costs. This ensured the Society could offer the volume at a very reasonable cost to members (£15 / \$25), with the commercial rate being £30 / \$45. The volume has sold very well and the surplus produced will assist with the publication of subsequent volumes. Several proposals were submitted in 2009, ensuring that the Society will continue to be active in monograph publishing.

In addition, the Society has begun an exciting on-line publishing project. The intention is to make some of the better-known volumes previously printed by the Society available, free of charge, on our website. The first to receive this treatment is Roberto Weiss's classic *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*, first published in 1941, with subsequent editions in 1957 and 1967. The new fourth edition incorporates Weiss's own addenda and supplements them with up-dated notes and, when complete, will also include an introduction and appendix of previously unedited texts. The volume is being prepared for electronic publication by Dr Lappin, with the new addenda and ancillary material provided by Dr David Rundle. By the end of 2009, the first seven chapters of Weiss's texts, with the added references provided as marginalia, were posted on-line. It is intended that the whole volume will be available on-line by the end of May 2010, and will be subsequently available in hard-copy.

Conferences

In recent years, the Society has supported the Oxford Graduate Medieval Conference and it continued to do so in 2009. At the same time, it expanded its activities significantly, both through greater sponsorship and by organising its own event.

The 2009 Oxford Graduate Medieval Conference, organised by Dr Kenneth P. Clarke and Ms Sara Baccianti, was highly successful, its theme of 'Play' attracting a diverse and entertaining range of papers. It took place in Lincoln College, Oxford on 3rd and 4th April, and incorporated the Society's AGM and Annual Lecture. The Society's Lecturer

for 2009 was Dr Alixe Bovey (University of Kent), who gave a lively illustrated talk entitled 'Ludic Margins: the Gravity of Play in Gothic Manuscripts'.

Through the year, the Society sponsored a variety of events, including the 'After Arundel' Conference (Oxford, 16th – 18th April 2009) and the Palaeography Workshop held at University College, Cork (14th – 15th September 2009). In addition, the Society has committed to support, as well as the 2010 Oxford Graduate Medieval Conference (16th – 17th April), an international conference on 'Dante and Desire in the Middle Ages' (Oxford, 22nd – 24th April). In response to the increasing competition for the Society's support, the Executive Committee agreed a set of guidelines for those seeking sponsorship, which are available on the website at: http://mediumaevum.modhist.ox.ac.uk/conf_app.shtml

The Society also organised a conference under its own aegis. It was planned to coincide with the launch of the on-line edition of Weiss's monograph and its theme was on Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe. The event took place on 17th October 2009 in Corpus Christi College, Oxford and brought together an international cast of scholars working on various geographical parts of Christendom. The occasion was a significant undertaking for the Society; it was accounted a success. The proceedings will become the basis of a monograph to be published by the Society, and the arrangements for the day will serve as a prototype for future events. The Executive Committee is keen that such a conference becomes a regular fixture, arranged for a different location each year. Plans are already in place for events in 2010 and 2011.

Website

One of the most high-profile developments for the Society in 2009 was the unveiling of its website, which went live in February. It was designed by Richard Rowley and has received plaudits from users. It is a growing resource, with not only the on-line monograph project but its listings of relevant events and its links to other websites. Suggestions for further facilities and help in providing copy for the web-pages would be welcome from members.

Promotion of Medieval Studies

In 2009, the Executive Committee also decided that its Object should be fulfilled by promoting medieval studies in the public arena wherever possible. As a result, the Committee decided to build up links with the various Centres for Medieval Studies around the British Isles. In discussion with them, the Society also presented a medievalist perspective in response to HEFCE's consultation on the proposed Research Excellence Framework, a document being submitted in December. It is available to be read on-line at: http://mediumaevum.modhist.ox.ac.uk/society_news.shtml

Financial Review

It remains to demonstrate the impact the year of expansion has had on the finances of the Society.

The Society has accumulated significant funds over time and began 2009 with a high level of assets, held in various bank accounts and bonds. The previous year had,

however, seen a moderate deficit (£3,880.25), due in large part to a single payment of £10,000 for rent of the new office space for two and a half years.

As testified by the preceding paragraphs, the Executive Committee's conscious aim in 2009 was vigorously to employ its funds to achieve the Society's Object; this was, of course, done without losing sight of the need to safeguard the Society's financial well-being. To this end, at the Committee meeting in May 2009, two decisions were made. First, it was agreed that the monies in the National Savings Investment Account should be designated for the specific purposes of supporting conferences and encouraging medieval studies by graduate students (as set out at Article II, para. 2 of the Constitution), with the intention that, in future years, the interest should be used for those ends. Second, a reserves policy was established; this set the level of expected reserves, to be provided by those monies not held in the trading accounts or designated funds, at between 1.5 and 2 years of gross expenditure, calculated from the average of the gross expenditure of the last two completed financial years.

The expansion of the Society's activities has affected this year's accounts, with a significantly higher amount than previously being spent on organising and sponsoring events, as well as relatively large sums spent on the development of the website and on other publicity. At the same time, and as already mentioned, the core activities of the journal and of membership have remained healthy, despite the wider economic instability. There has been a substantial increase in the surplus from monographs, which reflects both the success of the new series volume 26, and sales of other recent publications.

How the after-effects of the credit crunch have affected the Society is in the collapse of interest rates. The National Savings Investment Account returned interest a tenth of what was gained in the previous year. Overall, income from investments is little more than a quarter of what it was in the previous year.

The overall result, as can be seen in the accounts which are presented as an appendix to this Report, is that 2009 saw a very small deficit (£450.12). This leaves the Society with acceptable balances in its trading accounts and reserves (at £68,057.92) which are in line with the policy as established by the Executive Committee. It should be noted that honoraria paid to Trustees amounted to £400 for the calendar year 2009, and that the total expenses paid to Trustees was £178.30.

The presentation of the accounts differs from previous years in order to reflect the developing range of the Society's activities. The figures for 2008 have been presented in the new format for the purposes of comparison. It should also be noted that the Charity Commission requests accounts on a receipts and payments basis; the accounts provided follow previous years' practice in including the income and expenditure relating to volume LXXVIII of the journal. This facilitates comparison with previous years.

Future plans

The Executive Committee is determined that 2010 will see further expansion building on the success of 2009. Some of the initiatives have already been mentioned: for example, there will be the completion of the first monograph e-text, another one-day conference under the Society's aegis (to be held in Durham on the topic of 'the medieval library'). In addition, the Society will be sponsoring a wider range of medievalist events, and is also

looking to assist scholars by establishing a set of travel bursaries. The Executive Committee will also be looking to bolster the Society's associations with the various Centres for Medieval Studies in the British Isles, with the expectation of organising an event to bring them together and to provide a public lecture.

These increased activities will occur without any diminution of your Society's core publishing ventures. Indeed, the Executive Committee is keen to make the Society's publications more accessible to its members and is recommending to the 2010 AGM the introduction of not only a Euro-rate for membership but also a category of institutional membership, which will assist those libraries and other scholarly organisations that avail themselves of it.

The Executive Committee believes the Society can both look back at 2009 as a year of significant success and look forward to ongoing achievements in the coming months and years.

Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature
(registered charity no. 1130022)

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS for CALENDAR YEAR 2009

	2009	2008
Summary of Accounts	£	£
Balance by Activity		
<i>Medium Aevum</i>	10,209.34	9,702.89
Monographs	1,191.78	-191.64
Conferences and Events	-2,915.84	-756.66
Society	-10,374.07	-17,791.30
Interest	1,438.67	5,156.46
Surplus to Reserves	-450.12	-3,880.25
Accumulated funds		
Carried forward	148,708.88	152,589.13
Surplus for year	-450.12	-3,880.25
Reconciliation	-0.93	
Total to carry forward	148,257.83	148,708.88
Represented by:		
National Savings Income Bond	50,000.00	50,000.00
National Savings Investment (designated funds)	80,610.73	80,249.50
At Bank	17,647.10	18,459.38
	148,257.83	148,708.88
Individual Activities		
<i>Medium Aevum</i>		
Receipts		
Subscriptions to <i>MÆ</i> 2009	19,352.63	19,436.71
Sales of back copies	177.67	126.00
Electronic Royalties	3,756.48	4,075.58
Adverts and Permissions	420.00	
Total	23,706.78	23,638.29
Payments		
Production	-9,198.52	-8,892.50
Postage	-600.62	-15.00
Honoraria to Editors	-300.00	-300.00
Assistant Editor (including expenses)	-3,220.00	-3,090.00
Editorial help		-952.07
Editorial expenses	-178.30	-685.83
Total	-13,497.44	-13,935.40
Surplus	10,209.34	9,702.89

Monographs

	£	£
Receipts		
Sales	2,243.86	1,236.20
Author contribution		711.85
Total	2,243.86	1,948.05
Payments		
Readers		-190.00
Production Costs	-952.08	-1,683.19
Honorarium to Editor	-100.00	-100.00
Editorial expenses		-166.50
Total	-1,052.08	-2,139.69
Surplus	1,191.78	-191.64

Conferences and Events

Receipts		
Registrations for Humanism Conference	305.00	
Grant from Society for Renaissance Studies	300.00	
Total	605.00	0.00
Payments		
Sponsorship of Events	-1,821.97	-756.66
Costs of Humanism Conference	-1,391.97	
Costs of AGM	-86.90	
Advert in M/E for 2010 Graduate Conference	-220.00	
Total	-3,520.84	-756.66
Surplus	-2,915.84	-756.66

Society

Receipts		
Membership	3,101.45	2,613.50
Total	3,101.45	2,613.50
Payments		
History Faculty rent (2.5yrs)		-10,000.00
Honoraria to Officers		-200.00
Expenses to non-trustees	-740.03	-256.10
Officers to the Society:		
Executive Officer	-9,038.00	-1,267.50
Asst Treasurer		-6,050.00
Office Costs	-1,489.03	-2,231.20
Essay prize	-250.00	-250.00
Post Office forwarding	-78.10	-150.00
Publicity	-545.36	
Website	-1,335.00	
Total	-13,475.52	-20,404.80
Surplus	-10,374.07	-17,791.30