

Good news travels fast!

2012 proved to be a fantastic year for English at Southampton. The high quality of our course and teaching provision was recognised in the National Student Satisfaction Survey 2012, with 98 per cent of respondents satisfied with the overall quality of our course provision. This figure places us top for student satisfaction among our peers in the prestigious Russell Group of leading research-intensive universities.

We have had a number of exciting new staff appointments, ensuring our students continue to benefit from leading research in the discipline. Professor Catherine Clarke will be contributing to an interdisciplinary module on the Digital Humanities. Professor Claire Jowitt brings internationally recognised expertise to two new modules on early travel writing and piracy in literature throughout the ages. The appointments of Professor Daniel Brown from the University of Western Australia, Dr Clare Gill and Dr Verity Hunt are allowing us to expand our module offerings in Victorian Studies and the emerging field of Literature and Science.

We continue to welcome internationally known writers to campus to share their work with us. Award-winning poet John Agard (pictured) performed his poems on campus as part of Black History Month 2012, while Jason Cowley, English and Philosophy alumnus and now editor of the *New Statesman*, talked to students about careers in the media. Southampton English staff have also been out and about



John Agard reads from his work *Half Caste*

promoting the enjoyment and study of literature and film locally and nationally. Staff and students in English have been working with teachers and schoolchildren in Southampton to develop new study materials, helping them benefit from the latest research in the field. In summer 2012 Professor Linda Ruth Williams curated the Cultural Olympiad project 'A Hansel of Film - Shetland to Southampton and Back', which saw a relay of short films made by the public screened throughout the UK.

Southampton students out and about

English students continue to dazzle with their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment, both on and off campus. George Doel, deputy editor of student entertainment magazine *The Edge*, has been making sure we are watching and listening to the best entertainment that Southampton has to offer. Serious entertainments have also been on the mind of English student Lydia Longman. Lydia won the University Theatre's annual charity slot, and, together with assistant director and fellow English student Stephen Watkins, and a varied cast and crew of students and graduates from English

and other departments, staged a charity performance of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* from scratch in a week, raising over £800 for charity. Beyond Southampton, second year Alastair Dawson will swim from Dover to Calais in summer 2013 as part of a four man relay to raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital, of which one member of the team is a former patient. "We expect the swim will take us around ten hours to complete," says Alastair, "We now have our fingers crossed that there won't be too many jellyfish!" In autumn 2012, final year student Tim Deal struck out to more distant shores,

providing keyboard accompaniment to soul singer K Gabrielle at Bermuda's John Lennon Memorial Concert.



Members of the Shakespeare in a Week cast rehearse *Twelfth Night*

Uses of Austen

In October 12 English staff launched *Uses of Austen: Jane's Afterlives*, a collection of essays edited by Dr Gillian Dow and Professor Clare Hanson on the ways in which the life and work of Jane Austen is being re-framed and re-imagined in 20th and 21st-century literature and culture.

What would Jane do?

Autumn 2012 also saw the publication of the first work of non-fiction by Rebecca Smith, a novelist who teaches creative writing in English. *Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas* draws on Jane Austen's novels, letters and juvenilia to offer answers to over 70 burning questions on love and relationships, friends and family, home and garden, work and career, fashion and style, and travel and leisure. The book is published by Ivy Press in the UK and Tarcher Penguin in North America.

New directions in literary biography

Dr Mary Hammond has been awarded an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Fellowship to research and write the 'biography' of one of Charles Dickens' best-loved works, *Great Expectations* (1860-61). Her book, due to be published by Ashgate in 2014, will cover Dickens' own life while he was writing the story, the global distribution of *Great Expectations* and reader and audience reaction to the novel from the 1860s to the present day.



Chawton House Library

Eighteenth-century adventures

The Southampton Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SCECS) and the Chawton House Library are hosting three big events in 2013. The 200th anniversary of the publication of one of Jane Austen's best-loved novels, *Pride and Prejudice*, was marked by a day conference at Chawton in February. Speakers including Southampton's Dr Shelley Cobb explored Jane Austen's style, reception and legacy, her life and times, and 20th and 21st century adaptations (visit www.chawtonhouse.org for more information).

We are also commemorating the ten year anniversary of Chawton House Library with the major international conference, 'Pride and Prejudices: Women's Writing of the Long Eighteenth Century', an event that celebrates the achievements of the last decade, maps new directions, and allows reflection upon the work still to be done in the writing of women's literary history.

In summer 2013, SCECS is also hosting the prestigious Biennial British Association for Romantic Studies conference. The conference theme of 'Romantic Imports and Exports' is particularly suited to a port city such as Southampton; delegates are looking beyond British Romanticism towards the expansion of ideas and cross-cultural exchange, at literatures other than English in Britain, and at the fate of British Romantic writing and thought in Europe and North America. For more details visit www.southampton.ac.uk/scecs/newsandevents/conferences/.

In 2013, Professor Emma Clery won a prestigious three-year Leverhulme major fellowship project, 'Romantic Women Writers and the Question of Economic Progress'. Emma's interdisciplinary inquiry charts, for the first time, the active engagement of British women writers in debates about political economy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Lighting up the community

In 2012 PhD student James Cole ran a highly successful writing initiative with a local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in Bournemouth. For the National Lottery-funded project, supported by Lit Up! Bournemouth, James collaborated with the poet Andrew McMillan. They ran a series of poetry and prose workshops with Bournemouth's Over the Rainbow charity, working with a diverse range of groups in the area including LGBT youth, mental

health support groups, and the elderly. James performed a newly commissioned prose work inspired by his experiences. The success of the project led to follow-on funding, and a day-long writing workshop and 'Evening of Words' celebration event in December. You can read more about the project here: www.coursesforwriting.com/blog/.

James also completed a residency at Manorside Combined School in Poole

in summer 2012, where he worked with schoolchildren on a number of projects about war and piracy. His residency culminated with a display of all the children's writing projects. "It was great to see the children take such pride in their amazing work", says James. James is now completing his Creative Writing PhD in English, a fictional project exploring life in Bulgaria.

From medieval ruins to 21st century crises: knowledge exchange at Southampton

Academics in English are working with partners in museums, heritage and voluntary organisations on innovative and exciting projects. Professor Catherine Clarke's research on literature and the medieval city is helping to drive new heritage and tourism initiatives in Chester and Swansea. Her 'Discover Medieval Chester' Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Knowledge Transfer Fellowship involves collaboration with the Grosvenor Museum and local government in Chester to develop understanding of the city's medieval past (<http://discover.medievalchester.ac.uk>). As well as a major new exhibition and a permanent public artwork, the project is producing an interactive map, which enables visitors to create their own customised tours. In Swansea, Catherine is leading an AHRC-funded research project which links medieval witness statements describing a very bloody execution in 1289 to an interactive map. There will also be a series of pavement markers showing (now-lost) medieval features within the city.

Professor Nicky Marsh, alongside colleagues at the Universities of Manchester and Edinburgh, is co-organising an AHRC-funded exhibition entitled 'Show Me the Money: The Image of Finance, 1700 to the Present' at the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art in Sunderland (opens spring 2014). The first exhibition to provide a broad historical overview of how the image of finance has changed over the last three centuries, it will tell this story through around 100 images, including paintings, photographs, advertisements and prints, and new commissions from contemporary artists. Visit the 'Show Me the Money' website and blog at www.imageoffinance.com



Imagining finance in early-twentieth-century America. Will Crawford, 'Watching the Tape or Watching the Wheel - What is the difference, Morally' *Puck* magazine, 28 August 1912. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.



Southampton's schoolchildren benefit from our teachers network

Dialogues that matter

In 2012 the English Department successfully launched the English Teachers' Network, an initiative run by the English department for schools, teachers, and students of English around the city of Southampton. The project, funded by a grant from the Higher Education Academy and the Edyth Jeffries Shakespeare Project, promotes dialogue between teachers and academics, allowing them to develop and share innovative classroom materials for new and emerging fields in literary studies. It aims to enrich the educational experience of local children as well as giving them contact with undergraduates who can introduce them to the idea of university-level study.

The network has also allowed more undergraduates to take part in our successful school and college placements, whether they are using creative writing to explore other cultures with Key Stage 3 children in the 'International Writing in Schools' module, running workshops on *Macbeth*, or helping local schools mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Dr James Jordan, who runs the Holocaust strand of the scheme, says: "We are always looking for new ways for our students to engage with local schools. The workshops for Holocaust Memorial Day prompt questions of asylum, immigration and prejudice. This year we have worked closely with Itchen College, bringing our students into the classroom and asking them to lead discussions which encourage reflection on the form and importance of survivor testimony. These workshops are primarily about raising awareness of Holocaust Memorial Day, but they also provide our students with experience of the classroom and give the Itchen students the opportunity to discuss University life with those who know it best."

An on-campus day organised by Stewart Smith, network co-ordinator and PhD candidate in the department, allowed teachers and students taking part in the network to share best practice and celebrate the work children had done over the course of the year. "The closing event has contributed greatly to the cementing of those relations that we have been building with local schools and teachers involved in the network", says Stewart. For more information about the network, see www.southampton.ac.uk/englishteachersnetwork



Visitors enjoy 'The Poetry of FT Prince' at the Hartley Library

Rewriting poetic history

English also had the chance to look back at its long history of excellence in creative writing with the FT Prince Centenary Symposium, held last September. FT Prince (1912-2003) was Southampton's first English professor, and began teaching at what was then Hartley College in 1946. He is an internationally significant poet whose reputation continues to grow.

September's symposium included contributions from critics Derek Attridge and David Herd, and poets Lee Harwood and John Haynes. Haynes, a Southampton English graduate, was taught by Prince in the 1960s and later mentored by him, as he revealed during his tribute. He has since gone on to become a successful poet in his own right, and his poem *You* was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize in 2011.

FT Prince helped build the department we know today, and after retiring he donated his

archive to the Hartley Library. Embargoed until last year, it represents a substantial contribution to the UK's holdings of modern poetry material. Selections from the archive were included in the exhibition 'The Poetry of FT Prince' (Special Collections, 3-28 September 2012), curated by Dr Will May from the English department. Will is now co-editing a new edition of Prince's poetry and criticism which will include material from the archive.

The department will continue to celebrate his work with the FT Prince Memorial Lecture, which will run annually. Each year, a high-profile speaker will reflect on some aspect of Prince's historic and intellectual legacy. "This will be a great occasion for students and staff – both past and present – to come together and celebrate the department he helped to shape", says Will.

MA student publishes first novel

MA Creative Writing student Thomas Brown is celebrating the success of his first published novel, *Lynnwood*, (Sparkling Books, June 2013). He describes the novel, set in a fictional New Forest village, as "weird fiction". Its primal, often gothic, qualities were honed in his MA workshops, in response to feedback from tutors and fellow students.

Thomas revised the manuscript in every spare minute away from his part-time job in retail, and hopes the novel's focus on mystery will encourage people to think more intuitively: "... while I don't expect readers to abandon their material possessions, drop to all fours and race like dogs into the woods

on finishing it, I hope it challenges some of their priorities and their preconceptions about life."

Thomas began his MA course after completing his undergraduate degree here in English and his talent was spotted early on in his Southampton career. In 2010 his short story 'Crowman' won an English departmental competition, judged by novelist and tutor Rebecca Smith. She praised "the humour, the conjuring up of the character, and full and clever development of the theme." To find out more about the novel and Thomas' writing, visit <http://tbrownonline.wordpress.com>.

Lifelong legacies

Southampton English alumna Maureen Taylor made a generous gift to the department this year to create the Maureen Taylor Scholarship. This important annual donation will provide financial support to a PhD student each year.

Maureen was the first in her family to go to university. She says: "My parents both left school at 14 and were determined that their children should have the educational opportunities that they had denied." The scholarship will offer tremendous encouragement to those who may have considered further study but are unable to give up work or afford to enrol on a PhD.

Maureen read English and History at Southampton in the 1960s, when she involved herself fully in academic and student life. Her determination and commitment as Student Union Treasurer helped fund a new building. Her life since has been dedicated to improving educational opportunities in English. In the 1970s, she took up a post as Education Officer for a Community Relations Committee in the Midlands. Later, she worked as a Community Education Lecturer in Hackney Adult Education Institute, developing a range of returning to study opportunities in non-traditional spaces such as housing estate halls and community centres.

Maureen says: "All my life I have worked hard to open up educational opportunities and provide choices for people who might not see themselves as traditional students. This scholarship is a continuation of that work." In a year that has seen undergraduate tuition fees rise to £9,000 across much of the UK, Maureen's very generous gift will ensure that English at Southampton can continue to nurture and develop talent regardless of background or means.

See www.southampton.ac.uk/supportus for more examples of donations making an impact across the University.

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