

RED Letter

The Newsletter of the Reading Experience Database

Winter 2005/6

WELCOME to the latest issue of RED letter.

We have some very good and important news to impart in this issue – on 19th December 2005 we heard that RED had been awarded a major grant of £292,108 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for an intensive period of development over the next three years, focussing on records from the period 1800-1945. This means that we should be able to carry out our plan to launch RED on the web at the end of 2006, and if all goes well by the end of 2009 we should have upwards of 25,000 entries in the database. We will shortly be appointing two full-time three-year postdoctoral Research Fellows, one based in the Literature Department at the Open University, and the other in the School of Advanced Study, University of London. The two Fellows will devote their time to collecting and inputting new data with the help of some part-time assistants, and also to gearing RED up for the web launch, disseminating findings via conferences and publications, and planning for a major international conference on reading to be held in 2009. A full job description and details of closing dates will shortly be available on this site, and also on the main OU web site.

In addition to this exciting new development, the RED team continues to develop in its own individual ways. On January 1st Simon Eliot moved from the University of Reading to a new appointment as Chair of the History of the Book at the Institute of English Studies, University of London, where he will also be General Editor of a new 4-volume History of Oxford University Press. In the late summer of 2005 Stephen Colclough moved from the University of Reading to the University of Wales, Bangor. Both will, however, continue to be part of the RED team and to play active roles in this new phase of development, Simon as Project Supervisor at the University of London, overseeing the work of the new Fellow based there, and Stephen as a key member of the management team.

The inputting of data by external researchers has continued apace since our last newsletter, thanks to RED's increasing international profile and the dedication of our many supporters, and one of the first tasks of our new Research Fellows will be to edit, check and verify these entries prior to their introduction into the database proper. There will also soon be a major overhaul of the online input forms, in line with the export to our new system and the useful feedback we have been receiving from researchers. It promises to be a busy and productive 2006 for RED!

If you would like to receive electronic updates on RED's progress, please email your address to m.e.hammond@open.ac.uk

New Publications

Robin Myers, Michael Harris and Giles Mandelbrote, eds. *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading* (New Castle, Delaware and London: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2005)

Forthcoming Events

Readers and Reading: Seminars in Book History and Bibliography, organised by the Open University and the Institute of English Studies.

Venue: Room ST276, 2nd Floor, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU
Tel: 020 7862 8675

Time: 5.30-7pm

January 30th 2006 (Room 276)

Stephen Bending (University of Southampton)

'Reading Landscapes: Gardens and Guidebooks in the Eighteenth Century'

Dr Stephen Bending is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Southampton. He is currently working on a study of women and gardens in the eighteenth century, and is a series editor for the new Pickering and Chatto Chawton House Library series, co-editor of *The Writing of Rural England, 1500-1800* (Palgrave, 2003) and *Tracing Architecture: The Aesthetics of Antiquarianism* (Blackwell, 2003), and the author of numerous articles on eighteenth-century landscape.

February 13th 2006 (Room 276)

Marie Rutkoski (Harvard University)

'One Penny Prodigies: Prophetic Children, Credulity and the Reception of Early Modern English Pamphlets.'

Marie Rutkoski is a PhD candidate at Harvard University in the department of English and American Language and Literature, and currently on fellowship at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London. Her dissertation is entitled: 'The Mouths of Babes: Children and Knowledge in English Renaissance Drama'. Her article 'Breeching the Boy in Marlowe's Edward II' is forthcoming in SEL (Spring 2006).

February 27th 2006 (Room 276)

William St. Clair (Trinity College, Cambridge)

'The Political Economy of Reading'

William St Clair is Senior Research Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge. He has had a distinguished career in the Civil Service and his works of history and biography have won a number of prestigious prizes, including the Heinemann Prize, the Time-Life Prize, and a Macmillan Silver Pen for outstanding work in British non-fiction. His most recent major work is *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, which was published by CUP in 2004.

March 13th 2006 (Room 248)

Mark Fairbanks (University of Nottingham)

‘An Unhappy Medium? Marie Corelli and Reading as Frustrated Intimacy.’

Dr Mark Fairbanks completed his doctoral project on the Victorian publishing house Lawrence and Bullen at the University of Nottingham in 2004. His current research interests include the development of English studies as an academic discipline, and popular fiction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.