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Essays in Honour of Oliver Pickering

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Preface

Oliver Pickering's career calls for congratulations on notably combining personal and collaborative scholarship with the manifold helpfulness of a good academic librarian, a combination decreasingly found nowadays outside the 'golden triangle' of London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Not that he has neglected computers: he created the database known as BCMSV (Brotherton Collection Manuscript Verse), one of the few such tools in the field of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English poetry, and helped to devise a computer-based system for students learning to read medieval and renaissance English manuscripts. He also taught bibliographical research methods, and had earlier contributed to the teaching of medieval literature in the School of English at Leeds. It is, of course, his contributions to the study of Middle English literature we wish primarily to recognize here in *Leeds Studies in English*. Oliver Pickering, along with Manfred Görlach, virtually reopened thorough consideration of the *South English Legendary* and its associated lives of Christ, not least by his appreciation of vitality in the authorship. This work he has extended to accounts of other groups of poems and prose, and to collaboratively indexing prose texts in Yorkshire libraries and Lambeth Palace. He was for long (thirty years) joint general editor of thirty-five volumes of the Middle English Texts series which has performed a very valuable role complementing that of the Early English Text Society, and of which he was himself editor of two volumes. Furthermore, he was for ten years editor of *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, another demanding task requiring the wide range of knowledge and judgement he acquired in the course of his professional and academic work, and from which a variety of publications on other subjects has come over the years. We hope he will be encouraged long to continue his contributions to the enlarged understanding of English studies.

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