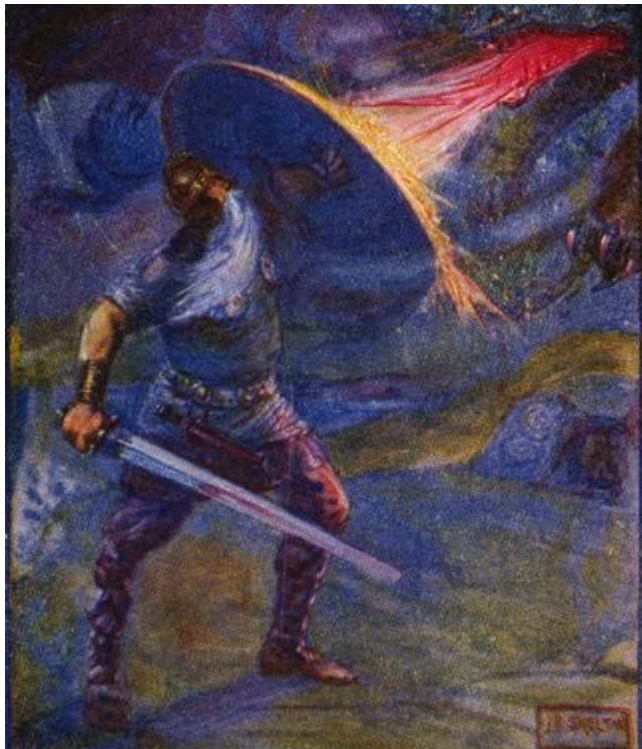


Ancestral Voices: Poetry in Old English



A study morning led by

Dr Elaine Oswald

William Elder Building

56-58 Castlegate

Berwick, TD15 1JT

Saturday, 5th January 2019,

10 am to 1 pm

We will undertake a brief voyage into the diverse themes of the poetry written in Old English, from lyrics to the epic Beowulf. The poetry has a distinctive alliterative metre, and explores such themes as heroism, loss, transience, and fate. The Bardic tradition that created this poetry celebrated the Germanic culture of the heroic warrior and the comitatus, the band of brothers who stuck together through thick and thin. After this period, the Norman Conquest added French to our linguistic diversity and changed the literature as well as the culture.

This earliest written poetry in our history, in Old English, has a fascinating history of chance survival, mostly in just four manuscripts. As we explore the ancient themes, we will discuss their relevance in today's world.

We'll explore short lyrics such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *The Ruin*, occasional poems such as *The Battle of Maldon*, and take an introductory look at the long, heroic narrative of *Beowulf*.

You will learn the significant themes in which Old English poets were interested, and the idiosyncrasies that exist within a manuscript culture, and see the relationship between oral and written poetic cultures. You will even learn what a kenning is!

Although this course focuses on Old English, it is not technical and requires no specific knowledge of linguistics or linguistic terms. All work will be looked at in translation and handouts will be provided. We won't have time to read the whole of *Beowulf*, but if you wish to purchase your own copy, please get the version translated by Seamus Heaney.

Tickets £9, including refreshments. All are welcome and no previous knowledge is assumed.

If you supply us with your personal data (name, address or email), we will hold this in accordance with our privacy policy, available [here](#) or by request to BEA, 7 Ravensdowne, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 1HX. If you have any queries, please email berwickea@gmail.com or phone Cian McHugh on 01289 303254

To book online, [please click here](#)

To book by mail, please fill in the booking form below, and mail to BEA, 7 Ravensdowne, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 1HX along with a cheque in favour of BEA.

Name

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Cheque enclosed £ 9

(Ancestral Voices)

