

GLASGOW COLOUR STUDIES GROUP

Notes following the Ninth Meeting, 4th November 2009

The ninth meeting of the GCSG took place in Room 1, Dept of English Language, University of Glasgow. Thanks are due to Carole Hough, who acted as master of ceremonies, and to Christian Kay who organized the refreshments.

We were delighted to start our 2009-10 programme with a talk based on a major new resource of international importance which is also a product of Glasgow University's Dept of English Language. Many GCSG members will have seen Christian Kay on TV, heard her on the radio or read items about her in the newspapers, as she has been the chief spokesperson for the launch of this project, the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, edited by her and Jane Roberts (University of London), Michael Samuels (the originator of the project) and Irené Wotherspoon. We were all amazed to hear that this publication, having been launched on 22nd October 2009 is already sold out, and having to be speedily reprinted.

At this event, members of the Group were shown the potential of this resource, using colour terminology as an example.

Christian Kay and Marc Alexander spoke on 'Colour in the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*'

“For the last 45 years, scholars at Glasgow University and elsewhere have been developing a historical thesaurus of the English language, based largely on data in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. As in Roget's thesaurus, words are arranged according to their meanings, but in the Glasgow project they are then arranged by their dates of use, so that we can see how the vocabulary for a particular topic has developed during the 1300-year history of written English. Of the 800,000 words in the *Historical Thesaurus*, over 6000 refer to colour. The talk will focus on these and on what an examination of them can tell us about language and culture.”

News

- Membership currently stands at 91. We are considering offering our 100th member a free glass of wine (what generosity!).
- The email discussion list is very under-utilized. It would be an excellent place for those who have attended meetings to continue their discussions. The address is ColourStudies@www.jiscmail.ac.uk

Programme

Wednesday, 20th January 2010

Dr Heather Pulliam, *History of Art, University of Edinburgh*

The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat: Colour as Signifier in the Book of Kells and Related Manuscripts

Wednesday, 24th March 2010

Dr Natalie Uomini, *Dept of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool*

Colour in Prehistory: Materials and Symbols

All meetings will be held in Room 1, Dept of English Language, University of Glasgow, at 12 University Gardens. Members are welcome to arrive from 4.45 p.m. when refreshments will be available. The meetings will begin at 5.10 p.m. and usually last for about an hour.

Talks

- If anyone would like to volunteer a talk or session for next academic year's programme, please contact Carole Biggam at c.p.biggam@btinternet.com
- We do not want to exclude any format for future meetings, and, indeed, it would be good to have as much variety as possible, e.g. single lectures, collections of short talks, discussions on particular subjects or themes etc.