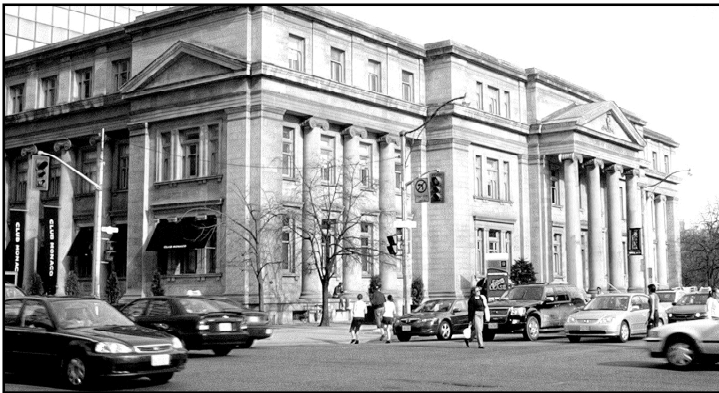




Poculi Ludique Societas

PLS Newsletter for Spring 2007

*PLS finally gets a new status in the University,
a new home, and the security it deserves!*



New home of PLS: The Lillian Massey Building, on Avenue Road just across from the ROM.

We are happy to bring you some very good and important news: the University of Toronto's faculty of Arts and Science recognizes PLS as a research unit of the Centre for Medieval Studies

As you may know, PLS began as 'Professor Leyerle's Seminar' in 1964, during the first graduate seminar in medieval drama taught in the U of T by Professor John Leyerle.

For the forty-plus years since, PLS has wandered, so to speak, in the academic wilderness.

Now at last, PLS has received recognition as the performance wing of a new addition to the Centre for Medieval Studies: The 'Centre for Performance Studies in Early Theatre'. I will be both chair of the PLS Board and co-ordinator of the new Centre. This gives us academic respectability and will facilitate our efforts to win research grants such as the one awarded to the Shakespeare and the Queen's Men Project. For the foreseeable future, nothing else about the organization of PLS will change.

We owe many thanks to David Klausner who, in his capacity as Vice-Dean, Interdisciplinary Affairs, steered our application through the Arts and Science process.

Home at last: PLS is no longer a 'squatter'

First it was the abandoned shed in the parking lot; then, the old furnace room at the Centre for Medieval Studies and the attics and other corners of basement space -- all by the grace and favour of the long-suffering directors of the Centre.

Now that we are a recognized research centre of the CMS, Arts and Science has officially allocated us space in the new CMS 'digs' in the Lillian Massey Building at the corner of University Avenue and Bloor Street. As well as a small office we have storage space for costumes, props and our archives.

But the really exciting possibility is the use of a large, multi-purpose room on the third floor as a permanent performance space for our indoor productions!

However, the move means we must reduce what we have by at least a third. Please see the notices about the archives and the yard sale in the following pages.

Call for archival material!

**Do you have programs, pictures or other memorabilia from the past of the PLS?
We'd love to have them.**

Our upcoming move has forced us to dig out the boxes of archival material stored for years in the Centre's attic. We are now trying to remove duplicates and get the papers ready for a proper archival assessment.

If you have any historic PLS material (especially from our first twelve years -- 1964 to 1976), please let Sandy Johnston know (ajohnsto@chass.utoronto.ca) or 416 585 4409.

We are especially interested in anything from that first seminar in 1964 and the early years of the 1970s.

Photo: PLS Chair Sandy Johnston, under supervision of chief archivist Gibbons, hard at work among the boxes containing PLS' history.



PLS MOVES TO A NEW HOME!

... but before we go, many treasures from our vast accumulation of Medieval and Renaissance play props, costumes and set pieces must be sold ...
at very attractive prices!



**ONE DAY ONLY –
Saturday May 26,
11 am to 3 pm.**

For info call 416-978-5096
or check our website:
<www.chass.utoronto.ca/~plspls>

Shakespeare and the Queen's Men: new workshops in the works.



In collaboration with Shakespeare and the Queen's Men, PLS continues our series of workshops exploring Shakespeare's plays in relation to their sources in the Queen's Men's repertoire.

This year, it's the two versions of Richard III. Join Jennifer Roberts-Smith for a day staging excerpts from both Shakespeare's and the Queen's Men's plays.

No previous acting experience is needed: the emphasis is on fun and exploration.

**Workshop date:
Saturday, June 9 – 10am to 4pm.**

**To register, contact Kim Yates at
crrs.vic@utoronto.ca
or Kathy in the PLS office at 416-978-5096.**

Shakespeare and the Queen's Men: an Update



January production of scene from "Famous Victories of Henry V"

Since our successful tour last fall with performances of *Famous Victories of Henry V* (edited by Karen Marsalek, St Olaf's College), *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (edited by Christopher Hicklin, University of Toronto), and *King Leir* (edited by Andrew Griffin, McMaster University), we have moved ahead in several areas.

Our first priority is to finalize the editions of each of these plays in old spelling and modern spelling, with annotations and introductions, so that the plays can be put online.

The Queen's Men Editions, under the general editorship of Helen Ostovich (McMaster), will be part of the electronic site, as will Internet Shakespeare Editions, under the executive editorship of Michael Best (University of Victoria, British Columbia). We have been assigned a separate space on the ISE electronic platform, and hope to have the first three plays up by summer's end. This site is free, open to worldwide use. Once this task is accomplished, we hope to continue with the six other identified plays of the Queen's Men.

Our next task is to have production notes prepared by our director Peter Cockett (McMaster) added into the online play commentaries. We will also add illustrations from our productions – still photos and (pending negotiation) film clips.

Peter will also be working with Holger Syme (University of Toronto at Mississauga, our executive producer of video releases of the plays in production), Helen Ostovich, and Geoffrey Rockwell (McMaster), our multimedia advisor, to generate DVD archival copies of the productions of Fall 2006 from our best filmed footage. Copies of these archival DVDs will be distributed to libraries or research units without charge. We will also select scenes and create commentary for a DVD on the pedagogical and research values of last fall's work. That DVD is primarily intended for use by graduate students and instructors as a teaching tool for classroom or library use. For undergraduate students, we will also prepare a streaming website as a simpler, more easily accessible and searchable resource.

This summer, we have acquired the services of a professional DVD technician who will work with Geoffrey Rockwell and Holger Syme on the pedagogical DVD. Peter Cockett, Geoffrey Rockwell, and Helen Ostovich have successfully applied for a grant from the Centre for Lifelong Learning (McMaster) to pay a graduating 4th-year student (Honours English and Multimedia at McMaster) to create the website, working closely with our professional.

At the same time, Holger Syme and Helen Ostovich, assisted by Andrew Griffin, are preparing a collection of essays on the Queen's Men, based on last fall's conference. We expect this volume to be published within the year.

Finally, we are preparing another play in the "Shakespeare and the Queen's Men" list, *Shakespeare's Richard III* – as we understand its evolution from The Queen's Men's *The True Tragedy of Richard III* – edited by Jennifer Roberts-Smith (University of Windsor), for a workshop in June and, we hope, a full production in the fall. That play will be the next text mounted on *The Queen's Men Editions* by summer 2008, possibly with film footage or archival DVD if funding becomes available. Further donations from PLS supporters for that purpose will be welcomed.

PLS Announces Exciting Plans for 2007-8

Plans for next season include:

FALL PRODUCTION: Shakespeare's *Richard III*, a co-production with the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama produced and directed by Jennifer Roberts-Smith. This play, clearly dependent on the Queen's Men's *Richard III*, will complete the productions of our Queen's Men project by applying what we have learned about the performance practice of the Queen's Men to this early Shakespeare play. This production will inaugurate our new space in the Lillian Massey Building.

CHRISTMAS SHOW: *The Parliament of Heaven and the Annunciation* from the *N-Town Plays* directed by Janet Ritch. The Parliament contains an important medieval motif of the debate among the four daughters of God about the salvation of man's soul. There are interesting French analogies to this debate as well as one in the *Castle of Perseverance*. The Annunciation contains one of the most challenging stage directions in all medieval drama and also presents the possibility that Mary might say 'no'. The Parliament will be remounted in May to be part of Tafelmusik's Toronto-wide project 'Sacred Spaces/Sacred Circles'.

WINTER: *Westward Ho!* by Thomas Dekker et al (1604-5). This play was first performed by the Children of St Paul's.

JUNE: A Jacobean Court Masque performed in the Inns of Court in 1613. Masques were performed at the court of King James and featured words, music, dance and lavish costumes and sets often designed by Inigo Jones. This production will be based on the records from the Inns of Court that will be being edited at that time by Records of Early English Drama. Peter Cockett will direct for PLS in a co-production with the Toronto Masque Theatre and REED. One of the three performances will be in the context of a major Renaissance Fair at Victoria College.

Preliminary Announcement. The wagons will roll again over three days of the Victoria Long Week-end 2010 with a production of the *Chester Cycle*. Newly discovered eye-witness accounts of the performances in 1572 and 1575 have cast a whole new light on the historic production of this cycle. We last produced these plays in 1983.

During the summer, PLS will move into our new space in the Lillian Massey Building on the south side of Avenue Road just opposite the Royal Ontario Museum. Our new address will be 125 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto M5S 2C7. Telephone number will be announced a little later.

Until we move, you will find us at our usual spot: 39 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto M5S 2C3. Telephone: 416-978-5096. E-mail: plspls@chass.utoronto.ca. Website: www.chas.utoronto.ca/~plspls