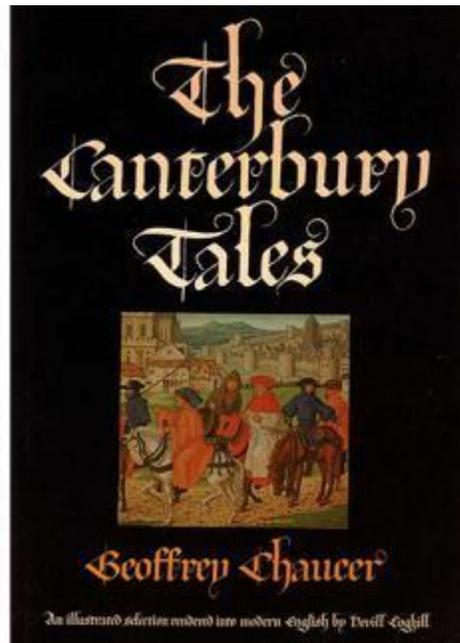


Barbara Rooke Travel Prize Grants Journey of a Lifetime
Trent English Literature students step out of the classroom



For most readers vivid characters and foreign lands leap off the page, infiltrating their imagination. Thanks to the Barbara Rooke Travel Prize, graduating [English Literature students](#), Peter Del Villano and Amanda Hobbs have each won a ticket to ride into the literary world of their dreams.

Intrigued by novelist Earl Lovelace and Jamaican dub poet Mikey Smith, Ms. Hobbs is planning to travel to Jamaica and Trinidad this fall to explore the area's unique literary heritage and to listen to the sounds of the West Indies beyond tourist itineraries.

"West Indian literature was one of my favourite areas of study," stated Ms. Hobbs. "I am very interested in mapping out alternative possibilities for travellers, focusing on expressive tools like language and the arts, to generate an interest in literature and make Jamaica and Trinidad seem accessible and interesting instead of simply exotic."

In contrast, Mr. Del Villano's trip of a lifetime was inspired by his medieval literature studies. The [Philosophy](#) and English major is currently retracing the infamous journey depicted in *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. However he decided to cycle the novel's pilgrimage in reverse, concluding his adventure at the British Library to view manuscripts of the renowned book.

He feels the prize proves to Trent students that there are tangible results for loving language and literature.

"Literature is about experiential fidelity," stated Mr. Del Villano. "Being able to go to the places which inspired *The Canterbury Tales*, to see, smell, hear and imagine how these same places may have been over six centuries ago, and compare that with how it is now is incredible."

The unique prize offered for the past three years is named after former department chair Barbara Rooke. The prize, valued at \$3,500, is usually awarded to one graduating English Literature student in recognition of high marks, faculty recommendations and compelling submissions. Yet this year, the jury led by associate professor Dr. Lewis MacLeod declared two winners as the submissions of both students were considered "truly extraordinary" by the committee.

"The prize helps students 'walk the walk' after they've experienced the talk," Dr. MacLeod says. "Now they get to see these places in more concrete and conventional ways, to place an imaginary world they have read about beside its real world counterpart."

While travelling, students submit two blogs describing their adventures to the departmental website. After they return they will be the guests of honour at a lively celebration.

"One of the great things about our English department is how supportive they are of the opportunities we get," emphasized Ms. Hobbs. "Organizing a prize like this and inviting recipients to share their experiences is a fantastic way to remind students to think about how to apply what they've learned outside of the classroom. Such opportunities inspire me to think about my literary favourites and what makes their perspectives so valuable."