Note from the President of the English Association

On behalf of the English Association (the EA), I welcome you most warmly to Wadham College and to this Conference. I hope you will find the programme enjoyable, varied and rewarding. I also hope that you will feel, by the time you leave Oxford, that the Conference has been an appropriate and memorable way of marking the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War.

Many people have contributed to the preparations for this weekend, and the Conference Steering Group (which came together in 2012) wishes to thank them all. The EA is particularly grateful to the exhibitors and sponsors for their support. It was very pleasing to have so many offers to present papers, and the wide range of Panel sessions bears witness to the continuing fascination with British Poetry of the First World War. Indeed, since the beginning of this year the contribution of the war poets to the construction of cultural memory of the War has been debated - and in some quarters contested - more widely than ever before. It is fair to say that the recent commemorative events in Britain and elsewhere in Europe have drawn more heavily on the literary legacy of 1914-1918 and its aftermath than many people would have expected. All this makes our Conference both timely and topical.

The English Association has been active throughout this year in marking the centenary. In your Conference pack you will find complimentary copies not only of the latest issue of the EA Newsletter but of two special issues of the EA’s journal for teachers, The Use of English, which contain many articles and reviews on the literature of the First World War and its aftermath. The EA Trustees are also very pleased to be joint publishers with the Two Rivers Press of the new anthology, The Arts of Peace, to be launched at the Conference. If you are not already a member, we encourage you to consider joining the English Association, which was founded in 1906 and received a Royal Charter on the occasion of its own centenary. You will be very welcome!