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Medieval Food for Canterbury Tales

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Medieval Food for '*The Canterbury Tales*'
School of Culinary Arts & Food Technology, DIT



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Background to the Project

On the 11-14 March 2015, the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama presented the BA Drama (Performance) Graduate Production of *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. It was adapted and directed by Peter McDermott and was performed in the Smock Alley, Banquet Hall, Exchange St. Lower, Temple Bar, Dublin.

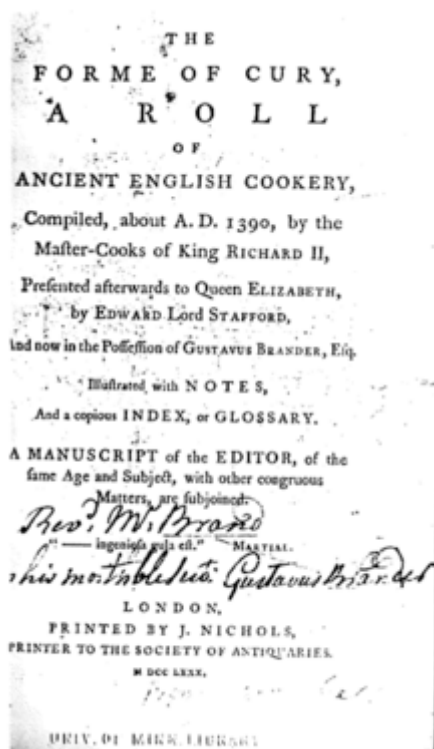
Six months prior to this, Peter consulted with Dr. Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire and Patrick Zaidan, both lecturers in Culinary Arts in DIT Cathal Brugha Street, and food historians. It was agreed that the two schools would collaborate to make the production truly memorable.

The location

Smock Alley is Ireland's oldest theatre dating back to the seventeenth century and the banqueting hall was truly apt setting for the staging of *The Canterbury Tales* as we were able to recreate the Tabard Inn of Chaucer's work.

Food

All the food had to be authentic for the time and research was undertaken by engaging with medieval culinary texts such as the 14th century recipe collection attributed to the Master Cooks of King Richard II *The Forme of Cury* and Taillevent's *Le Viandier* which may stem from the French court during the early 14th century. Constance Hieatt's *An Ordinance of Pottage*, which is a version of the fifteenth century culinary recipes in Yale University's MS Beineke 163, was also consulted. The final menu was Sourdough bread, hazelnuts and walnuts, apples, hard boiled eggs, olives, ale and a hearty vegetable pottage with pearl barley and lentils.



Utensils

The utensils were sourced to resemble that used at the time with wooded trenchers, wicker baskets, pewter tankards, and wooden bowls and spoons for the pottage. The only inaccuracy for modern ease was the use of the fork which was not in use in England until much later than Chaucer's time.



Logistics

There were four performances with 144 in the audience each night seated at nine long tables of 16. The bread, nuts, eggs, olives and apples were on the tables on arrival and the actors in costume poured ale or water. At the interval the hearty pottage was served in wooden bowls by the actors. The kitchen was run by staff and students of the School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology.

More Photos







DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama presents

BA Drama (Performance) Graduate Production

The Canterbury Tales

By Geoffrey Chaucer

Adapted & directed
by Peter McDermott

11-14 March 2015

Smock Alley, Banquet Hall
Exchange St Lower, Temple Bar

 **SMOCK ALLEY
THEATRE**



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