The John Beer Bursary

Tim Fulford

As many of you know, the great Coleridgean John Beer, died at the end of 2017 (see the memorial tributes in the Summer 2018 issue of the *Bulletin*). John was a wonderful scholar, whose ability to discover unexpected sources and intriguing connections made possible a more complete reconstruction of Coleridge's modes of thinking and writing than ever before. His work was genuinely exploratory, the expression of an open mind that was prepared to entertain, and then rigorously research, unlikely possibilities. As such, it not only gave rise to many seminal books and articles (the bibliography of his work was also published in the Summer 2018 *Bulletin*) but also broached new ground for other scholars to investigate. John, of course, supported such scholars: he was the epitome of a generosity, always willing to encourage and assist those, of whatever level of experience, who were fascinated by Coleridge—or indeed by Blake, Wordsworth, E. M. Forster and many others. Nowhere was this generosity more evident than at the biennial Coleridge Summer Conference. He was a gentle and genial presence at the very first, in Nether Stowey village hall, and a stalwart at the many held at Cannington College.

To honour John's contribution to Coleridge Studies, and especially to the conference, we are delighted to announce a new scheme through which the Friends of Coleridge will foster the work of a postgraduate student or postdoctoral researcher studying Coleridge and/or his circle. *The John Beer Bursary* will be awarded once every two years to assist a scholar to attend the Coleridge Summer Conference. Candidates will submit an abstract of the paper they propose to give, and the Conference Committee will choose the Bursar from among them. Papers that continue the kind of work for which John Beer is best remembered—the exploration of intellectual connections and /or of the development of the writer's way of thinking, and that demonstrate some knowledge of his work—may be at an advantage. The Bursar will speak at a plenary session in the conference, and may publish an article based on his/her paper in the Bulletin (subject to peer review). We are happy to publish here the first such article, by the John Beer Bursar at the 2018 Coleridge Conference, Dr Kurtis Hessel of the University of Colorado.