

## Who was Chaucer?

- Chaucer was a medieval English writer. He was the first major poet to **write in English rather than Latin or French**. Instead, he used the language of the people.
- Chaucer did lots of different jobs. These gave him occasion to meet a **remarkable variety of people** from different backgrounds and professions. He used his experiences when writing *The Canterbury Tales*.

## What are *The Canterbury Tales*?

- They are a collection of stories told by fictional representatives of medieval society, united by their decision to undertake a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Thomas A Beckett.
- The stories are told in **poem form** and explore different concerns relating to medieval life. **(Rhyming deco syllabic couplets)**
- Each pilgrim was due to tell more than one story. The winner of the best story, as judged by the Host, would win a huge meal on their return to London. **The diversity of the tales reflects the diversity of the pilgrims.**

## Why does Chaucer write in a language so different from ours?

- The English that Chaucer wrote in is usually called **Middle English**. (1100 – 1500). He used a specific dialect, which evolved into modern English.
- English was a **Germanic language (Anglo-Saxon)**, which became **influenced by French** words and grammatical structures.
- The vocabulary became larger and was a mixture of **Latin words (from the church), French words and Germanic words.**