



University of  
St Andrews

# Classics News

Autumn/Winter 2015



The new academic year sees the relaunch of our alumni newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading!

2014-15 was a busy year, full of exciting changes for the School. I took over from Professor Stephen Halliwell as Head of School in August 2014. In December the results of the six-yearly UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) placed St Andrews second equal for research among UK Classics department (just behind Cambridge, equal with Durham, and a little ahead of Oxford). We appointed several new members of staff. Professor Thomas Harrison will be joining the School as Professor of Ancient History from November 2015. Tom works broadly on Greek history, particularly Herodotus and Greek religion. He was a lecturer here for several years before moving to Liverpool in 2004: we look forward to welcoming him back. Dr Carlos Machado arrived in January 2015 as Lecturer in Ancient History. He is an expert on late antique history and the city of Rome. We also appointed two new Latin lecturers, Tom Geue, who works on the literature of the Roman principate, especially Juvenal, and Giuseppe Pezzini, who works on Terence and Latin language in the Roman Republic. Professor Greg Woolf left to take up a prestigious appointment as Director the Institute of Classics Studies. We were sorry to see him go. Dr Emma Buckley won one of the University's prestigious teaching awards.

We also launched an expanded travel scholarships scheme, combining a series of generous donations

from recent alumni with our existing endowment funds to make one of the largest travel scholarship schemes in a UK Classics department. We funded 15 students to work on archaeological surveys, to attend summer language schools and summer courses in Athens and Rome, and for private travel linked to final-year dissertation work.

We aim to expand our recruitment to the M.Litt. over the next few years, and redesigned the course for 2015-16 both to reflect the interests of incoming staff members, and to provide an even better training for our Masters students.

Alongside all that, we held 11 conferences and workshops last year, ranging from 'Early Roman Historiography', through to 'Death and Immortality in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity', 'Literary Interactions under Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian' and 'Post-classical libraries', and welcomed Professor Denis Feeney from Princeton as our Distinguished Visiting Scholar.

This newsletter gives a taste of some of the other things we have been doing. If you're keen to know more, please do browse around the School's website, and please do keep in touch: we love to know what the School's alumni are up to!

Jason König

# Virtual Visitors: Exploring Lost Worlds Online



*This page from top: St Andrews Cathedral; Basilica at Velika, Greece; Caen Highland Township, Sutherland; scan of a Roman Samian ware lamp from the Bridges Collection, ready for uploading to the website.*

*Front cover: View from the summit of Zagaras, Greece*

The collaboration between Rebecca Sweetman and colleagues in Computer Science that began in 2007 with the virtual reality reconstruction of the acropolis of Sparta and its early Christian Basilica (Alumni Newsletter 2012) has gone from strength to strength and now includes collaborations with staff in Art History, History, Management and the University Library. The Open Virtual Worlds project works with subject experts and local communities to create fully interactive three-dimensional computer models of archaeological and historic sites. The range of the project has expanded far beyond ancient Greece and now includes sites around St Andrews, including the Cathedral, the Castle, and St Salvator's Chapel. 2014 saw the launch of the Mediaeval St Andrews app. The app allows users to wander the streets of today's town and concurrently explore reconstructions of key sites in the mediaeval city. Audio commentary and mediaeval material from the archives of the University Library and other libraries enrich the experience. Beyond St Andrews, the project has produced reconstructions of Linlithgow Palace, Scone Abbey, a Highland township, an Icelandic Viking longhouse and many other sites. These interactive reconstructions are now in use in a number of museums around Scotland and have also been used in schools. They can be accessed freely from the project's website. The team is currently in the process of reconstructing an early Christian basilica at Velika in the Larisa region of Greece.

Closer to home, work is under way to digitise objects in the Bridges Collection, the collection of mostly Cypriot pots, figurines and other objects kept in the Archaeology Room in Swallowgate. Thanks to the hard work of a postgraduate student in Museum and Gallery Studies and a 3D scanner from Computer Science, three-dimensional models of a selection of objects from the Collection can now be viewed online, making them available, if only virtually, to far more people than could ever visit them in St Andrews. The 3D scans offer the kind of all-round view that is usually impossible in a museum – all without the risk of dropping anything!

To explore the reconstructions for yourself, visit <http://www.openvirtualworlds.org/>

To learn about the scanning of the Bridges Collection and to see the first few scans, visit <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/bridges-collection/>

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## Classics with Impact

Over the last few years, UK academics have been grappling with yet another way of assessing their work. As well as delivering excellent teaching and conducting ground-breaking research, UK universities now have to demonstrate that their efforts have impact outside academia. Clearly this is easier to demonstrate in some subjects than others – some disciplines really can claim to be curing cancer or working for world peace. Within the more modest horizons of Classics, what this new component of the Research Excellence Framework has revealed is that staff in university Classics departments across the UK are energetically engaged in spreading their enthusiasm for the subject far beyond their lecture theatres – whether through programmes of events for schools, by assisting museums with renovations of their classical galleries, or by advising media companies on documentaries – and have been for a long time. The main impact of Impact (so to speak) has been to give these activities a higher profile within the academy and to encourage departments to think about them more systematically than ever.

The School's entry to REF 2014 focused on archaeology, drawing on Jon Coulston's decades of public engagement activities – he has advised groups ranging from major media companies to Roman army re-enactment groups, and is currently working his way along Hadrian's Wall, advising on the rejuvenation of its major museums – and Rebecca Sweetman's virtual archaeology projects (see previous page).

Over the next few years, we aim to develop our educational outreach activities further. Dr Jon Hesk has been developing a series of resources for schools, including podcasts of public lectures and worksheets summarising recent research on Greek drama in a format easily adaptable to school curricula across the UK. The first of these is downloadable from the School website now, and six more are in preparation. (See <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/research/impact/greek-drama/> or email [classics.impact@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:classics.impact@st-andrews.ac.uk) for more information.) Meanwhile, Dr Emma Buckley and Dr Alice König have been leading a project investigating the impact of different school Latin curricula on the experience of students arriving at St Andrews to study the language. The final report is expected in 2016, but interim results have already helped the School to adapt its subhonours Latin syllabus to the needs and strengths of today's students. For more information see <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/research/projects/llt/>.

## Geoffrey Rickman Prize for Ancient History

The School has established a prize for outstanding performance in Ancient History modules. The prize is fittingly named after the late Professor Geoffrey Rickman (1932-2010). Though he was not the first lecturer in Ancient History at St Andrews, he did more than anyone else to establish the subject here and to set it on the path to its current, flourishing condition. He became the first head of what is now the School of Classics when the departments of Greek, Humanity (Latin) and Ancient History were brought together in 1990.

Shortly afterwards, he took on a senior role in the University as Master of the United College, where he oversaw the transition to today's modular system. He was a regular visitor to the British School at Rome, having spent time there early in his career to conduct his pioneering research on the food supply of Rome. He is much missed by staff who knew him and will be fondly remembered by generations of alumni.

## Teaching Award for Emma Buckley

Dr Emma Buckley won one of the University's prestigious Teaching Excellence Awards for her pioneering Honours modules on classical reception, one on the reception of Virgil in mediaeval and modern authors and another on post-classical translations of Ovid. The award also recognised her work with



Alice König on the experience of Latin language learners from different educational backgrounds (see column opposite). The award was presented by the Principal, Prof. Louise Richardson.

## Climbing Mount Helikon

As preparation for a new research project on mountains in Greek and Roman culture, Prof. Jason König has been climbing mountains in Greece (see front page picture). You can read about his experiences (including his encounter with angry Greek sheepdogs) on the School's blog at <http://classics.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/2015/08/28/climbing-mount-helikon/>

# Professor Woolf leaves St Andrews, joins SAS

After sixteen years in the School, Prof. Greg Woolf left St Andrews in January 2015 to become Director of the Institute of Classical Studies. The Institute is part of the School of Advanced Study (SAS) which is the UK's national centre for the support and promotion of humanities research. Before he left, he wrote:



I am excited about the new post. There is lots to play for and it is a fantastic chance to be at the centre of it all, and to keep Classics in the centre too, where it belongs. All the same, the last sixteen years will be hard to beat. Classics at St Andrews has always been a class act. I am not going to name the famous, and now mostly deceased, classicists who built the subject here. But I have met many of their pupils, and some of their junior colleagues, now retiring themselves, and just a few words with them makes clear how long this has been a wonderful place to learn and teach about the Greeks and Romans and all their works. No one I know thinks REF results and survey scores are more than a crude tool for measuring university departments. But in preparing for three rounds of research assessment here I have read enough of my colleagues'

research to know how amazing it is, I have listened in awe at enough research seminars and conferences to see how close to the cutting edge they are, and as I travel around the country and abroad as well I always hear praise for those I work with. It has been a privilege.

All good university departments are in constant change, recruiting the best they can and watching as they move off to new challenges. That is the norm for undergraduates of course. Sixteen years is four generations of MA students. I have been lucky to supervise and examine some amazing graduate students too. Offhand I can think of recent St Andrews PhDs teaching on four continents. Faculty come and go too, if we are generally recycled rather more slowly. Yet only a handful of colleagues remain who were in the School when I arrived. Time to move on, obviously.

What have I learned in my time here? If you are taking a field trip to visit a whisky distillery and a Roman marching camp, don't visit them in that order. Try not to lead industrial action while you are one of those charged by the University with frustrating it. Learn when a conversation is better than an e-mail. Make time to read. Most of all, that it is the people, not the institutions, that make a place.

I have had a wonderful time here because of the people I have spent it with. One of the joys of academic life is that it is so easy to stay in touch, so I won't say goodbye. But it is an appropriate moment to say thank you, and cheers!

## Find out more

To find out more about the School's activities, visit our website: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/>.

To read about Prof. König's adventures on Mount Helikon, the scanning of the Bridges Collection, and other stories such as Dr Coderch's experiences speaking Latin in Pennsylvania or Dr Emma Gee's Lucretian poetry, or to find out what some of our postgraduates are up to, visit the School's blog: <http://classics.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk>.

You are welcome to follow us on:

Twitter [https://twitter.com/StA\\_Classics](https://twitter.com/StA_Classics)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/StA.Classics/>

## Keeping in touch

We do like to hear news of what our alumni have been doing since they left St Andrews. If you happen to be in St Andrews, you can always pop into the School and see who is around.

If you have news that you want to share, you can contact us on [classics@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:classics@st-andrews.ac.uk) - or look up an old tutor on the School website and write to them.