



## *The Australian Society for Classical Studies*

### SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2003

It has been another successful and active year for the Society. The conference and general meeting held at Macquarie University in February was the largest ever in terms of number of papers and delegates attending. That record is about to be eclipsed, at least in the number of papers, by the present conference here in Bendigo, and all credit must go to the convenor, John Penwill, for this achievement. Two aspects of the Macquarie conference were very encouraging: first, the significant number of honours and postgraduate students attending, many of whom gave papers, and second, the experiment of funding a keynote speaker, Professor Greg Woolf, from the University of St Andrews, whose public lecture was well attended by both conference delegates and members of the wider community and whose approachability meant that there was good interaction with him during the conference. Both of these features are in place again for the Bendigo conference, and I hope will continue with future conferences.

The Newsletter was sent out twice during the year, in April and in September, and has been found to be a welcomed means of keeping members in touch with what is happening with the subject around the country. Contacting members by email has proved to be a convenient way of disseminating information: some 76% of members have now indicated that they are willing to receive communications by email, and the number is growing all the time. Provision is still made for those who wish to receive their communications in hard copy.

The executive committee had three "meetings" in the course of the year. Two of them, in May and August, were conducted by email consultation, and members of the executive committee have found this to be a convenient way to conduct the business of the Society. The third meeting was an all-day, face-to-face meeting held at the University of Melbourne in November. The agenda for all three "meetings" was very full, and a number of matters have been determined or significantly advanced.

The major item of discussion at all three meetings was the negotiations for the amalgamation with New Zealand classicists. The negotiations have advanced to the point where the necessary constitutional amendments have been drawn up and become the subject of a postal vote; the final decision will be taken at this meeting. Our New Zealand colleagues have been most enthusiastic for this move, and as a result of approaches I made to them in the middle of the year the Society now has 20 new New Zealand members, in addition to the 12 who were already members.

Membership of the Society has continued the significant increases seen over the last few years, especially among postgraduate students. In December membership passed the 300 mark – 301 in fact, though 33 of those were unfinancial for 2003. We will move well ahead of the 300 mark with the number of new members who will be generated from the differential registration fee for this Bendigo conference. There is still scope for attracting more members from among university staffs, students and interested others.

In addition to usual activities (like the essay prize competition) and some ongoing negotiations with the ATO (over tax deductibility) and the University of Adelaide (over the funding of the Hughes Chair), matters to be put in place or considered in 2004 will include a grants scheme for small departments to assist in the local promotion of the subject, the continuation of small grants to assist one-off conferences and seminars, the setting up of a translation prize competition, and the establishment of closer liaison with other academic and professional organisations. It will turn out to be another busy year.

Bruce Marshall  
Honorary Secretary, ASCS  
4th February 2004