



The Australasian Society for Classical Studies

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2012

RES GESTAE ET IMPENSAE
BRUTI MARTIALIS, LIBERTI AB EPISTULIS
PRO SOCIETATE AUSTRALIENSI
CLASSICORUM STUDIORUM

I wish at the time of delivery of this, my last Report, to survey the achievements of the Society, and the amounts of money spent, over the last ten years particularly during the second holding of the secretaryship, in promoting Classical Studies in this part of the world.

I took up my second secretaryship in 2003 at the bidding of my colleagues. My first act was to cross the Outer Sea and travel to the furthestmost parts of the Earth in an endeavour to bring the unruly Kiwis there into the orb of our society. By diplomacy rather than force of arms I did manage to persuade them to amalgamate with us in a society renamed "Australasian". Some 70 new members were added to our number, and we have managed to live in peace ever since (except for rugby and cricket).

My next endeavour was to set up an electronic distribution list – prior to that communications were infrequent – maybe three or four a year – and sent by snail mail. The take-up of the new technology was more spectacular – and faster – than the NBN roll-out: initially some 80% of members provided an email address, and the figure has gradually increased to around 95%. There is still a handful of luddites who are resisting the 21st century and require communications in hard copy (meaning they receive very few). The great majority of members now receive regular ASCS junk mail to clutter their in-boxes; the last two years have each seen more than a hundred messages sent out. Since 2012 it has even been possible to pay membership subscriptions electronically

I rejected the office of censor which was offered to me, preferring to use my powers as secretary instead to remove recidivist members who, despite constant reminders, failed to pay their subscription. In 2011 22 members were removed, and at the end of 2012 a censorial nota was issued to a further 47. From an initial membership of around 200 when I was re-elected to office in 2003, there are now 490 members. I regret that I never actually secured the magic figure of 500 members, which would, however, have triggered a fiscal cliff, whereby my resignation would have been instant.

An initiative proposed by some of the other magistrates has proved to be, mostly, a great success. For the conference in 2003 it was decided that an overseas scholar would be invited to be a keynote speaker. That tradition has continued, involving a total expenditure of \$35,000. The then President also persuaded the Society to meet annually and for a shorter number of days; this proposal was implemented for the 2004 conference in Bendigo and has been followed ever since, though this is the first conference actually to be fitted into the desired three days.

The number of papers has continued to grow with each conference; on my initiative in 2011 a conference review committee was established, its aim being to ensure the quality of papers based on an anonymous review of abstracts submitted and to maintain the overall standing of the conference as a professional academic activity. ASCS 33 in Melbourne in February 2012 was the first where this review system was used, and it was used again for the conference this year.

The Melbourne conference also continued a trend of holding the conference away from a university campus. Some previous conferences had used the facilities (conference, that is) of a hotel: Newcastle in 2007, and Christchurch in 2008. The Melbourne conference was held, appropriately, in the Hellenic Museum, and it was an inspired choice: there were 130 papers and 180 in attendance (a performance rate of 83%). Thanks were expressed to Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides and her team of helpers for their hard work in organising and running the conference.

The great initiative started by Neil O’Sullivan in 2010 to produce the *Proceedings* of the conference in electronic format was followed by Anne Mackay in 2011 and Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides in 2012.

This present conference sets some more precedents: it is being held on the premises of Sydney Grammar School (courtesy of the Headmaster and ASCS member, Dr John Vallance), and in conjunction with the “blockbuster” exhibition at the Australian Museum next door on Alexander the Great from the Hermitage State Museum in St Petersburg. Huge thanks must go to Ken Sheedy and Blanche Menadier for their enormous efforts to get the whole concept off the ground over several years and to put in place the administration and running of the conference; thanks also to Liz Baynham for her work on getting international and local speakers here for the Alexander stream in honour of Brian Bosworth’s 70th birthday; to the numerous sponsors who provided financial support; and to the convenors’ team of helpers who kept the whole thing ticking over. This magnificent occasion has been itself a “blockbuster” ASCS conference, as I am sure you will all agree.

In January 2011 I handed back control to the Committee and members when the Annual General Meeting voted to endorse the new Constitution for ASCS which was subsequently followed by incorporation through the Victorian Department of Consumer Affairs.

In 2012 I appointed myself journal production manager (a fancier title than “typesetter”). In that capacity it has been my real pleasure to work with the Editors, Elizabeth Minchin and Peter Davis. The latest issue of *Antichthon*, Vol 46, appeared *suo anno*. That was the sixth occasion on which the journal has come out in its own year – a truly remarkable achievement by the Editors, for which triumphs have been awarded *suis nominibus* (“in their own names”). Vol 47 for 2013 is well under way at this stage, and is likely to be a little over 200 pages in length.

The process of providing funding for one-off conferences and the like was rationalised in 2005 and a set of guidelines established. Up to the present some 33 conferences have been supported for a total expenditure of \$23,645, of this funding an amount of \$1475 has been returned. In addition six postgraduate conferences in the Amphora(e) series have received a total of \$7,000 in assistance. The total funding support for conferences in this period comes to just under \$30,000.

To further encourage postgraduate students in 2005 I proposed a scheme to the Executive Committee to make available a sum of money each year for travel subsidies to allow students to attend the annual conferences. So far these *annonae* have cost the Society around \$20,000, and the distribution has never gone to less than twelve students from Australasia (except this year when there was a disappointingly small number of applicants).

An initiative of the then President Greg Horsley in 2004 was to set aside funds each year to make grants to small departments to assist in the local promotion of the subject. In all a total of \$9957 has been expended on 15 grants to small departments since the setting up of the scheme.

Consequent on the amalgamation with the New Zealand classicists the existing annual essay competitions were re-organised in 2005 into an Australian and a New Zealand competition. Total prizemoney since the re-organisation has amounted to \$7500; and in the last three years I have been able to extort some books from publishers who were invited to put on book displays at the conference and these have been used to reward those students whose work received a “highly commended” result in both the essay competitions and in the translation competitions.

Two new competitions were introduced. In 2005 on the initiative of the then ASCS postgraduate representative, Silke Sitzler, an early career award to the value of \$2000 annually was set up for those who had graduated with a PhD from an Australasian university in the previous five years. There have been eight winners now, meaning an expenditure of \$16,000. On the initiative of Ian Plant and Neil O’Sullivan a Greek and Latin Translation Competition was set up in 2007, with a prize of \$250 for the winner in each language. The competition has been held six times now, with a total prize money of \$3000. In 2010 on the initiative of K.O. a prize for the best postgraduate paper at an ASCS conference (originally called OPA! and now OPTIMA) was set up with a first prize of \$400 and up to two runner-up prizes of \$100 each; \$1400 has been outlaid on this competition.

I will have the pleasure of reporting the results of this year’s various competitions later in the meeting.

My second tenure of the secretaryship has seen a large expansion in new schemes for spending ASCS’s money – nine in all. The grand total of ASCS expenditure in the ten years from 2003 to 2012

inviting keynote speakers to the annual conferences, supporting other conferences and seminars, providing student travel subsidies, and awarding prizes for various competitions comes to \$119,027. This does not include the regular expenditure on the publication and distribution of the Society's journal, which costs at least \$10,000 each year (over \$14,000 for the 2012 volume), on donations such as the fund for restoring the Logie Collection, the APA Foundation and the ICS Library, on some of the administrative costs of conducting the annual conferences, on the bi-annual Newsletter, and on the general running of the Society's affairs.

It remains my happy task, as I leave this position, to thank all those members who, over the years in which I have been Secretary, have given voluntarily of their time to assist in the Society's activities: the twelve Presidents whom I have seen off, er, under whom I have served, the Vice Presidents who have looked after some of the competitions, the Editors of *Antichthon* (at least ten of them) with whom I have worked over the years, the convenors of conferences, the Newsletter editors, Marguerite Johnson and John Penwill, the co-ordinators and assessors for the two essay competitions, the markers for the two translation competitions, the assessors for the early career award, the co-ordinators and panels for the Optima Prize, and the great majority of members who have expressed their appreciation of what I do and have done (and who have at times been amused, I hope, by some of my meandering general messages). To you all I say a fond goodbye.

At the time of writing I am in my 72nd year and the 20th year of my secretaryship.

Bruce Marshall
Honorary Secretary, ASCS
20th January 2013