

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF ROMAN STUDIES 2023–2024

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at 2 pm on Saturday 29 June, 2024, in Room G22/26, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. The President, Professor Roy Gibson, was in the chair and welcomed members and non-members to the AGM.

The President reported on the Society's activities during the previous year, starting with its publication programme. He thanked the current Editors, Professor Myles Lavan (*JRS*) and Professor Will Bowden (*Britannia*), and the Reviews Editors, Professor Neville Morley (*JRS*) and Dr Nick Hodgson (*Britannia*). The President also reported that since the last AGM, the Society had published *Britannia* Monograph 37, *Silchester Insula IX: Oppidum to Roman City c. A.D. 85–125/150*, by Michael Fulford, Amanda Clarke and Nicholas Pankhurst, and he thanked the *Britannia* Monographs Editor, Mr Paul Booth. The President also noted that two further editions of *Epistula* had been published online and emailed to members. He thanked the outgoing Editor, Dr Frances McIntosh, for all her work on *Epistula* over the years, and her successor, Dr Alex Smith.

The President then turned to the programme of events and lectures. The first event of the new academic year was held with the Classical Collections Network at the end of September at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. A number of speakers presented on their collections in local museums and the day ended with a guided tour of the classical collections led by Daniel Potter and Margaret Maitland. In November, Dr Fiona Haarer gave a talk on *Justinian, Theodora and Cultural Change in the Sixth Century*, and in February, Professor Dan-El Padilla Peralta delivered the M.V. Taylor Lecture on *338 BCE and the Transformation of Ancient Afro-Eurasia*. In March, we joined with the Hellenic Society at Senate House for a series of lectures on *Changing Attitudes to the Olympic Games* with Professor Paul Cartledge, Professor Tom Scanlon, and Dr Shushma Malik; and Mike Armstrong, Alex Donnachie and Danny Miller, who gave a dramatic presentation of their show: *The Hellenic Games: An Immersive Family Show*. There was also a joint event with the Society of Antiquaries in May when Professor David Mattingly (Leicester) gave a talk on *Talking to the Ancestors: Iron Age Painted Tombs of the Wadi Draa, Morocco*.

The Society has also organised several visits during the last year. In August, there was a four-day trip along Hadrian's Wall led by Dr Matt Symonds, and in September there was a visit to Richborough led by Dr Andrew Roberts: the President thanked both Dr Symonds and Dr Roberts for giving up their time to lead these guided tours. In April, there was a visit to the Villa Ventorum at the Newt in Somerset.

There were also several events organised under the auspices of the Archaeology Committee. In November, the second iteration of the day conference 'Reconnecting Roman Britain' was held in Newcastle, arranged by Professor Rob Collins. RAC/TRAC 2024 was held in London in April with c. 480 delegates and the President thanked Professor Andrew Gardner and the local Committee for making this event so successful. In May, Dr Tanja Romankiewicz organised a community event: *Hadrian's Wall in our time – safeguarding for the future* in collaboration with the doctoral students from the University of Edinburgh and the WallCAP project at Newcastle University.

The President noted that the various grants committees had continued with their work, disbursing grants from our various funds, and he recorded the Society's gratitude to the Polonsky Foundation for continuing its generous award to support our grants programme for schools.

He congratulated Farrell Monaco (Leicester), who had won the MA dissertation prize, and T.J. Kelly (Royal Holloway), the winner of the BA dissertation prize in Roman Archaeology. Kitty Low (KCL), Izzy Shirley (Sussex) and Erin Evett (Cambridge) had been recognised with awards for producing the best PGCE research paper at their institution. The Britannia Awards, offered by the Archaeology Committee to recognise voluntary contributions to Roman archaeology in Britain, had been won by Archie Gillespie (individual prize) and by the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group, Herts (group prize): their prizes will be presented at the next 'Reconnecting Roman Britain' conference in Chester in November.

The President also congratulated Mr Richard Beleson on his appointment by the Council as an Honorary Member of the Society.

The President thanked the Archaeology Committee, and its outgoing Chair, Professor Ursula Rothe, and Secretary, Mr Mike Luke; the Schools Committee and its chair, Dr Jean-Michel Hulls; and the Roman Studies Committee and its chair Professor Roland Mayer; and Dr Claire Millington for all her work on the Society's social media accounts. He also thanked Dr Haarer and everyone who had served on all the Society's Committees and Council, including the retiring Council members: Dr Caroline Barron, Ms Caroline Bristow, Dr Shushma Malik, Dr Mai Musić and Professor Jamie Wood.

The President thanked Professor Mike Trapp for his dedicated service as Hon. Librarian since 2016: he will be stepping down at the end of July and will be succeeded by Professor Gesine Manuwald. Thanks were also given to Ms Joanna Ashe and the team of Librarians for all their work during the last year.

The President noted that a number of events had been held in aid of the Library fundraising campaign, including with Professor Michael Wood who had given a talk on *In the Footsteps of Alexander. Further Reflections on an Epic Journey*; and an ancient wine tasting event with Dr Emlyn Dodd: *Tastes, Places, and Processes of Ancient Winemaking*. Members of the Societies also had the opportunity to visit the Library to see some of the rare books (*Palmyra and Rome in the Collection of the Hellenic and Roman Library*) and supporters of the Soane Museum and members of the Civil Service Classicists Group had also been invited to see the collection. The fundraising appeal continues and the Society and Library remain grateful to all members who continue to make donations: members can still easily contribute online via the HARL website: [www.hellenicandromanlibrary.org](http://www.hellenicandromanlibrary.org).

Professor Gibson then invited Dr Kay to introduce the accounts.

Dr Kay reported that following an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society in December of last year, UHY Ross Brooke were appointed to audit the Society's accounts in place of the previous auditors, Buzzacotts, who had proposed a fee increase of around 35%. The same EGM also voted to amend the Society's Articles to allow for an Independent Examination of the Society's accounts. An Independent Examination is a speedier and much cheaper procedure than a full audit. However, for various technical reasons, it was not possible to have an Independent Examination of the Society's accounts for 2023, so they have been audited by UHY Ross Brooke, as can be seen from the Annual Report. This audit was nonetheless less expensive than the amount which Buzzacotts had been planning to charge, and the aim is still to have an Independent Examination of the Society's 2024 accounts.

Moving on to the formalities, Dr Kay then read an extract from the report of the Society's independent auditors, UHY Ross Brooke, which is contained in the Society's Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2023:

'In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31st December 2023, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended.'

Turning to the 2023 financial results themselves, Dr Kay reported that total income for the year was £450,000 – down slightly compared to 2022. But the Society's total costs were also down – at £425,000 – so the result was still a positive one and the Society had net income (before investment gains and losses) of £25,000. Within those numbers, income from the publishing agreements with Cambridge University Press (for *JRS* and *Britannia*) increased by 6% to £132,000 and investment income grew by 9%, whilst revenue from membership subscriptions fell by 11% to £95,000. In addition, the Society's investment portfolio, which is managed by Newton Investment Management, delivered net investment gains for the year of £108,000. So, at the bottom line, net income for 2023 (after investment gains and losses) was a positive £133,000 compared to a net loss in 2022 of £110,000. Meanwhile, the value of the Society's investment portfolio at the end of the year had grown to just under £2 million.

Dr Kay said that he was hopeful that the Society's performance in the current year would be not that far different from what it achieved in 2023, but that the outlook for 2025 and thereafter was rather bleak.

This was because, in brief, Cambridge University Press had decided, unilaterally, to change the economics for the journals it publishes by reducing the amount they are prepared to pay to the producers of content like the Society. The problem is not unique to the Roman Society. It is shared with

other learned societies such as the Hellenic Society. The Society approached alternative publishers and found no interest, confirming that the market for academic journals is changing very rapidly in the face of the move towards Open Access. The financial impact of the new publishing agreement that the Society has had to sign with CUP will be an estimated fall in the Society's income from the publication of its journals of £70,000 per annum from 2025. That represents a loss of roughly 20% of the Society's annual unrestricted cash income. Obviously, the officers of the Roman Society and indeed those of the Hellenic Society are very concerned about this and, together, were actively trying to develop ways to increase revenue and also to control other costs. It was early days, but the officers would be in touch when ideas have developed a bit further.

Professor Gibson thanked Dr Kay for all his work as Hon. Treasurer. He asked the members to approve the Report of the Council and Financial Statements for 1 January to 31 December 2023; Mrs Samantha Rowley proposed and Dr John Bradley seconded the motion. That the Council be authorised to agree the remuneration of the Auditors was proposed by Dr Tim Leary and seconded by Mrs Susan Vincent. That UHY Ross Brooke be appointed Auditors or Independent Examiner of the Society for the period 1 January to 31 December 2024 was proposed by Mrs Sally Carter-Esdale and seconded by Dr John Bradley.

Dr Clare Harvey proposed and Dr Simon Corcoran seconded the following nominations for Council: as Vice-Presidents for 2024–25: Professor T.J. Cornell, Professor C.H. Edwards, FBA, Professor D.W. Rathbone; as Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary for 2024–25: Dr P.B. Kay, FSA and Professor R.G. Mayer, respectively; and as Council members for 2024–27: Professor Bruce Gibson, Dr Luke Houghton, Mr James King-Smith, Dr Micaela Langellotti, Dr Victoria Leonard and Dr Adam Rogers.

All the above Resolutions were passed *nem. con.*

There was no other business.

The AGM was followed by a Colloquium on **Recent Discoveries at Pompeii**

2.30 Dr Sophie Hay: 'Pompeii. A work in progress'

3.00 Professor Alison Cooley: 'New insights into Pompeian culture, society, and politics from inscriptions'

3.45 Tea

4.15 Dr Caroline Barron: 'Reconstructing Pompeii in pictures'

#### *Hadrian's Wall In Our Time*

5.00 Professor David Breeze: 'The Chain Saw Massacre and its Aftermath'

5.30 Reception