Welcome to this, first edition of *Non-Sequitur* for the academic year! Jointly run between the Classical Society and Classics Department, this is the in-house rag for everything Classics and your number one source for what has been going on this term. So, take a moment of your day to read about some of the great things the many Classicists of Royal Holloway have been doing with our busy and interesting lives!
Society News

Socials

Our social secretary Pierce Keating has not disappointed this year with weekly social events ranging from film nights (if you have never before witnessed the spectacular bodies of the gladiators in Spartacus then I highly recommend you join us for season two next term!) to competitive team socials and even a Christmas meal at the end of this term!

Keep an eye out on the society page for more events coming up, here are just a few photos of what we've been getting up to this term!
Trips

As the newly elected Trips Officer for the Classical Society I can confirm that we have a lot of exciting things in the works for the coming year. Of course all eyes are on the trip to Palermo, Sicily, in June which was voted for by the members. Both historically relevant and an exciting holiday destination, I can’t wait to take the society. However, the trip at the end of the year is no big news, a tradition if you will, so what else can you expect from Classics Soc for 14/15?

While I believe that one of the roles we play as a society is providing further education opportunities, I think it is equally important to step away from Homer and Cicero and try something new. We have already had a successful excursion to London, the British Museum being first on the hit list and later in the evening a meal at Nandos, very Classical. But it’s not all museums and south African cuisine. Later this year we have a Roller Disco Dance Off in Vauxhall as well as Ice Skating, Theatre trips, Go Carting and a weekend away (destination to be decided) coming up in 2015.

Sound good? It will be. While as a society we aim to provide study and careers advice, volunteering opportunities and numerous events to unwind and socialise with others interested in Classics, we most importantly want you to be able to say “I had fun with Classics Soc”. Keep an eye out on the Classical Society Facebook page to keep up with all of our events, hope to see you there!

Samantha Erwood, Classical Society Trips Officer
Summer Trip to Budapest

Have a read of what last years Trips Officer, Megan Wright, had to say about the societies summer trip to Budapest:

Our first day wandering around the 'Pearl of the Danube' was spent mostly on the Buda side of the river. We stayed on Castle Hill, going past the ruins, Matthias fountain and church, and the Fisherman’s Bastian. Along our tour we also popped into the Budapest History Museum, located within the palace. Now, I have been to many museums around the world, but this has got to be the scattiest yet. Unfinished and still a construction site in places, the lack of signage left us wandering around a maze, stumbling upon random exhibits that appeared to be in no organised order And yet, we all really enjoyed it; something about the mystery of what laid around the next corner definitely made it a bit more exciting.

The following day was kick started bright and early for the 10:30am walking tour of Pest, free with The Budapest Card. One of the side streets we visited was not supposed to be “most beautiful” street in Budapest (due to the bullet holes that decorated most of the buildings outer walls), but I would have argued otherwise and had she not pointed out the gruesome wounds I would have walked away thinking it was ever-so-sweet. Apart from groping a nice policeman’s belly to keep me slim, I was also impressed by the 'Hunger King’ – Burger King, but for the poor and homeless. Apparently this is a new addition to Budapest, and the guide didn’t have much more information on it, but I thought it was cool!

We then spent the rest of the afternoon in the Lukács Thermal Baths, another freebie off the Budapest Card. It took us a short while to find them tucked away in Buda, and the queue we created to get in was not as swift as we might have liked, but once in it was heavenly. The outside pool even had a ‘Lazy river’ which, as totally mature 19-25 year olds, occupied us for a good 30 minutes at least. Supposedly the water in the Lukács baths could heal all sorts of muscle and skeletal problems; I’m not so sure about that, but the stench of sulphur was a sure reminder this was a place of natural remedies.

Over the next few days the group split up and each of us went to seek out whatever took our fancy. This was a welcome change of approach for me, having a whole 7 days in one city, however, enabled us to take it eaaasy breeeezeyy.

Our first stop was Aquincum, the Roman town of Budapest. The ruins were situated about an hour away from our hostel, and the journey involved a tram, metro, and public train that took us way out into the suburbs, beyond the Buda Hills. Our first impression was something along the lines of “Holy moly, it’s
huge!” and we were surprised that they weren’t better heard of. As an Ancient Historian this was refreshing; all too often a museum’s summaries of objects over simplify to the point of being almost incorrect. Underground there was even an interactive game which, although certainly aimed at the younger generations visiting on a school trips, was pretty darn awesome

For the rest of the week, apart from eating our weight in pretty ice-cream, we were also repeatedly drawn back to the CAT CAFE, a wondrous little place where you could drink peanut butter coffee next to kittens and MAINE COONS.

Before we returned home, the group presented me with a Hungary Football Jersey signed by every one of them, including the hostel staff. It was a very sweet token to show their appreciation, and a perfect end to a spectacular week!
Charities

Following on from our success as RAG and Communities society of the year last year, I have been keen to involve the society in more charity work this year. Our primary charity for the year is the Malala Fund, which focuses on empowering girls in less economically developed countries through education, and the secondary is the Make-A-Wish Foundation, a charity focused on granting the wishes of children fighting life-threatening conditions.

Our charitable endeavors kicked off with Make a Difference day where keen volunteers helped with the tidying and gardening at the Forest Estate Community Hub. Since then, we have been involved in other events such as the hosting of the Day of The Dead social where a variety of games and face-painting was put on in aid of the Make a Wish Foundation, as well as the month long Movember, where some of the boys of the society grew out their moustaches and the girls endured a month without an ounce of make-up! At the end of the November, 8 members of the society participated in the Big Sleep Out 2014, where we spent a night outdoors in nothing but a cardboard box and a sleeping bag in aid of the Trinity Homeless Project. Despite the freezing cold temperatures and the rain, we managed to stick it out in the end!

Next term, the Classical Society will be holding our annual charity ball, renamed The Equinox Charity Ball which proceeds Toga Week. We will be fundraising for the Malala Fund which focuses on empowering young girls through education. All the money raised from ticket sales and donations go straight to the fund. The society has had a very successful term and apart from the volunteering work, we have raised over £700 for Movember, the Make a Wish Foundation, and the Trinity Homeless Project collectively. A big thank you to everyone who has given their support and participated in these activities and I look forward to carrying on our successes to next term.

Mala Ratha Krishnan, Classical Society Charity and Rag Officer
**Departmental News**

- Efi Spentzou is running a big conference on Classics and New Faces of Feminism in February. She has 50 of the biggest names in contemporary feminist studies in the Classics. The event is being held in London and is being run with our Centre for the Reception of Greece and Rome.

- Anne Shepherd has published a couple of items in the last few months: (i) a chapter entitled ‘Proclus as Exegete’ in the volume *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, edited by Stephen Gersh (Cambridge University Press 2014) pp.57-79; and (ii) an online bibliography on the Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry, in *Oxford Bibliographies Online*. On 15th December Anne will also be giving a paper to the Philosophy and Classics Departments at the University of Vienna, entitled ‘The role of imagination (phantasia) in ancient aesthetics’ and on 16 December she shall be running a workshop for them on ‘Ancient Aesthetics after Plato and Aristotle.’

- Richard Alston is running a College research theme of Society, Representation and Cultural Memory. We have a major College event on feminism and the Academy also in February and in the summer, he is running a big international conference with UCL. This is largely the Research Theme but also the Centre for Victorian Studies and Humanities and Arts Research Centre, looking at the remembrances of war, Classical and Modern. Furthermore, his book on Roman imperial history came out on the 13th December, which is aimed particularly at students with his next, *Rome’s Revolution*, hopefully a bestseller, will be out on May 1st. Available in all good retailers.

- Ahuvia Kahane will be chairing a roundtable on Classical Antiquity and Modern Visual Art on Saturday, Jan. 11, at the 146th Annual meeting of SCS (Society for Classical Studies, formerly the American Philological Association) on Saturday, January 10, in New Orleans.

- Liz Gloyn has also had an article entitled ‘Show Me the Way to Go Home: A Reconsideration of Seneca’s De Consolatione ad Polybium,’ published in the *American Journal of Philology*. 
**Electra: Live at the Old Vic**

Kristin Scott-Thomas as Electra was a constant force; in a play which requires the protagonist to be on stage for almost the whole show (not always conscious but always in character) she maintained the change of tone and delivery throughout, with not a waiver. Her comic timing was cripplingly funny and in a demanding role, she was with us from a manic start to her final screams for Orestes to kill their stepfather.

Orestes (Jack Lowden), in his debut role at the Old Vic, was surprisingly good. His final dilemma was well balanced between Orestes’ inexperience with his own destiny and his desire to fulfill the obligations placed on him by both human and divine authorities. He also played well against Electra’s childish desire for immediate action, struggling to assume the role of patriarch over as willful a character as Electra, while welcoming the chance to be her little brother again.

I’m afraid in my eyes the Chorus was disappointing. Weaker actors really can bring down these elements of Greek tragedy and if the director (Ian Rickson) gives the chorus no more creative merit than figures standing around waiting to speak, then they and their lines are entirely wasted. In this year’s *Medea* at the National with Helen McCory, the chorus reflected ideas, were used as interpretation of emotions and responses onstage, maintained tension and finally spoke with the voice of the Corinthian women. Unfortunately this trio were let down by the third and were disappointingly two-dimensional. They reflected very little except contemporary concerns of the Mycenaean women, with no sense of awareness of the wider situation or effects of the possible catastrophe. If this had been strongly acted, as it was by the first two (Julia Dearden and Golda Rosheuvel) showing the care of older, sager women we may have been convinced but the constant hysterical tone of the third (Thalissa Teixeira) undermined the character elements of the Chorus as a whole.

Aegisthus (Tyrone Huggins), not often seen in this production (as with the script), but his death march scene was tense: he and Orestes played off each other very well, with immaculate timing. Aegisthus’ calm reservation while attempting to manipulate the situation to the very last was beautifully set against Orestes’ struggle to assert any control over his life and his path. He was an unusually strong Aegisthus, a character who is often played as the subservient tool of Clytemnestra.

Chrysothemis (Liz White) was less sympathetically played than she can be, and they certainly made the most of the wardrobe to this end. The ‘lock of hair’ scene really wasn’t strong enough, we couldn’t quite believe that she believed Orestes had returned but undermined Scott-Thomas’ flippant reception of her news. Of course, Sophocles is hamming up the idiotic idea that this is anything like realistic, making Electra (unusually mannish and aware of her honour) and not Chrysothemis (a female subject) the rational character, but it is the actress of
Chrysothemis’ job to believe utterly and completely that this is in fact undeniable proof.

Similar to Aegisthus, Clytemnestra (Diana Quick) was an understandable, human character; terrified of all she has done to those she loved and loves. With her defeated air around her eldest daughter, and her rapid mixing of grief and delight upon hearing the false news of Orestes’ death, she draws equally our sympathy and our disgust. But it is certainly when she is placed against the power of Electra’s constant hatred and revulsion that we feel the inevitability of this play’s conclusion.

_Helen Rowland, MA Student_
Thank you!

That's it from us for this term, as always a huge thank you to the Classical Society Committee and the Classics Department, without whom none of this would happen!

If you would like to keep up with more of what we do, check out our Social Media pages:

Facebook:  
[Image of Facebook page]

Twitter:  
@RHULClassicsSoc

Departmental Twitter:  
@ClassicsRHUL

Good luck with your studies, we'll see you in 2015!