

# Quid Novi ?

## August 11



Hadrian's Wall at Milecastle 39 (Castle Nick)

## From the Head of Department

Our first year as the **Department of Classics and Philosophy** has been a very busy one. We have been reviewing our curriculum, with the aim of making our courses still more attractive and better suited to the needs of today's students. Most of the changes will have to wait until 2012, but this issue includes a report from Boris Rankov on his **new third year course on Hadrian's Wall**, which starts in September 2011. Our **Centre for Oratory and Rhetoric** has now been launched, and Ed Sanders has joined us as a **Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow**. Our students continue to be active in many fields: Jack Lenox,

the first President of **Royal Holloway Entrepreneurs**, has won a prize of £5,000 in the competition for the Santander Universities Entrepreneurship Awards; his successor at Royal Holloway Entrepreneurs, Luka Blackman-Gibbs, writes in this issue about her own small business, SkillSwop. The student-run **Classical Society** staged a very successful production of Euripides' *Bacchae* and our **Leverhulme Artist in Residence, Tony Harrison**, is collaborating with Edith Hall on plans for a new translation and production of another Euripides play, *Iphigenia in Tauris*

Anne Sheppard

## Hadrian's Wall

### Boris Rankov describes his new course:

A new third-year course introduced this year takes a close look at Hadrian's Wall, one of the most impressive monuments of the Roman world. Commissioned by the emperor in person when he visited Britain in AD 122, the Wall stretches for 80 miles from the river Tyne at Newcastle to the Solway Firth near Carlisle. Apart from impressive sections of the Wall itself, together with its turrets and milecastles, some of the major forts can still be traced in detail including Wallsend, Chesters, Housesteads and Birdoswald.

Following a study of the archaeological evidence, the core of the course will involve an intensive three-day visit to Newcastle, the Wall and the forts. The final part will then look at the context of the Wall within the Roman province of Britain, its later development and history, and the story of its investigation and excavation. Before the sixteenth century,

the Wall was thought to have been built by the Pictish tribes who lived to the north of it, in Scotland. Then it was attributed to the Roman emperor Septimius Severus, who came to the throne more than half a century after Hadrian's death, and only in the mid-nineteenth century was it finally recognised as Hadrian's Wall.

It has long been seen as a symbol of the division between England and Scotland, but its precise function and how it actually worked remain a matter of debate amongst scholars to this day, despite the confident assertion of the fourth-century *Historia Augusta* that it was built to separate the Roman Empire from the less civilised world beyond. The Wall is now a UNESCO World Heritage site and the course will conclude by looking at the issues surrounding its present and future conservation.

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### New Research Centre for Oratory and Rhetoric

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Jonathan Powell writes about the Department's latest Research Centre, and explains why its symbol is a raven:



In these days of mass communication, the spoken word can influence major events as much as it did in the ancient world, as one can see from the excitement generated e.g. by speeches such as those of President Obama (above right). The history of oratory and its techniques in the modern western world has its roots firmly in the classical tradition. At Royal Holloway, several members of staff have long-standing interests in the history of Greek and Roman oratory and

rhetoric, and for some years we have been running successful courses on Greek law and advocacy, and on Logic and Rhetoric. In 2010 we established a new Research Centre for Oratory and Rhetoric (COR), the only research centre of its kind in the UK. As well as promoting research on classical oratory and rhetoric, with an emphasis on the practical aspects of oratorical strategy and performance, our work has a strong modern dimension. COR's inaugural conference, on the subject of 'Actio – Hypokrisis – Delivery', was held in November, and will be followed by others on speechwriting both ancient and modern ('From Antiphon to Autocue'), and on the religious sermon as a form of rhetoric. We plan to set up a Master's programme by research (MRes) on Oratory and Rhetoric which will provide valuable preparation not only for those intending to go on to a PhD, but also for students who aim at non-academic professions involving communication and argumentation, such as the law, politics, advertising and the media.

COR members: Professor Jonathan Powell, Professor Lene Rubinstein, Dr. Richard Hawley, Dr. Chris Kremmydas, Dr. Ed Sanders (Leverhulme Research Fellow).

The fabled founder of the art of rhetoric was a fifth-century Sicilian Greek called Corax, whose name means 'raven'. In late antiquity the symbol of the art of rhetoric was a raven with a golden beak, and we have adopted this bird as our logo.



### Orators and emotions

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Ed Sanders joined the Department in April 2011 for a three year Leverhulme-funded Early Career Fellowship:

My research focuses on the arousal of audience emotions in Classical Greek oratory, looking at both the Attic oratorical corpus and speeches in historiography of the period. In the course of this project I will examine which emotions orators choose to arouse or suppress, and the arguments used to do so, in a variety of performance contexts: lawcourt, assembly, envoy, exhortation, supplication, and display speeches. I will consider each type of speech in light of such variables – historical, geographic, ideological, military, personal, situational and authorial – as might influence whether emotion arousal could helpfully be used, and if so, which emotions and how.

Having worked in the City for seven years, I returned to academia in 2004, doing an MPhil at Cambridge and a PhD at UCL. The latter was on the topic of Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens, and is under contract to be published with OUP. In 2009 I co-organised a major international conference at UCL on Erôs in Ancient Greece and am taking the lead in editing the proceedings for publication – a volume also under contract with OUP, and some articles separately in the Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Before coming to



Royal Holloway I worked for nearly two years on the Oxford-based 'Social and Cultural Construction of Emotions – the Greek Paradigm' project, focusing on literary sources from the Classical period through the 'Second Sophistic'. While my post is primarily research-oriented, I will contribute to the Department's teaching programme in Greek history and literature.

Ed Sanders in thoughtful mood

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### Classical Entrepreneurs

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Luka Blackman-Gibbs' studies have led her to success in starting a small business:

I started SkillSwop initially as a language exchange service in my third year at Royal Holloway, whilst studying Ancient History with Philosophy, after becoming frustrated at the lack of facilitation by the university to help students with language practice. SkillSwop then grew in response to increasing interest in the service from fellow-students.

Initially I was able to manage and develop the service whilst studying full-time, but as it continued to grow, it required additional support and I needed to reform the service to cope with increasing demand. This required funding from the university, which was used to develop the website and create a SkillSwop resource and private learning environment. I also recruited and trained a committee of students, who shared some management aspects of the service, whilst I continued to develop improvements to the service, which included an expansion into an all skills exchange service.

I found that, in the main, European students were already proficient in English, and therefore did not always provide language buddy matches to English students. However, European students did require academic and technical support, and therefore SkillSwop evolved to accommodate all students' needs as an all encompassing skills exchange service.

Luka Blackman-Gibbs, Ancient History graduate and entrepreneur

Over the next year, whilst studying for my Masters Degree, as well as being employed with the Careers Service as President of Royal Holloway Entrepreneurs, I worked on improving and expanding the service at Royal Holloway. I am now expanding and promoting the service into other universities nationally. This was made possible



by the funding of several awards that the project has won, including the National Start up Smart Competition, which rewarded promising businesses in 2011 for their innovation and efficiency, the regional Bright Ideas competition, a regional best business idea run by Westfocus Entrepreneurship group, and a development award by Unltd, a UK charity that supports social enterprises. Collectively over £8,000 worth of funding has been used to enable me to turn SkillSwop from a small university scheme into a small business.

### Bacchic madness at the Students' Union

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Matthew Hyder was the producer for a very successful staging of Euripides' *Bacchae*

The Classical Society's annual play has never before been a contender for the biggest performance on campus – until now!

On 26th-28th February 2011 a production of Euripides' *Bacchae* was staged in the Students' Union building at Royal Holloway. Full of modern relevance, the show was a powerful piece of startling, shocking, physical theatre that had audiences captivated night after night. The idea of Bacchic madness was fully shown by the chorus who threw themselves into the roles and really made the show come alive. Freddie Clayton showed brilliantly both the strong and frail nature of the doomed Pentheus, whilst Zuri Warren played Dionysus as both a feminine and masculine icon of the past and the modern age, bewitching everyone in the room with ease. The translator, Colin Teevan, was there to give a post-show interview on the first night to an audience of students, lecturers and local schools.

Under the guidance of Director David Bullen and Deputy Director Lauren Green, the show was an unmitigated success, the likes of which the Society had never experienced before. Breaking all kinds of records as it went, the show completely sold out three nights running and in takings alone took just over £1,000. Reviews in *The Founder* were positive and there was a sense whilst the audience were leaving that they had seen something just a bit different.

The show was a truly special experience for everyone involved in it. The Classical Society is now set to produce at least two full productions next year and has never been more active or important.

*Bacchae* in rehearsal



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## Bringing Iphigenia home

Edith Hall is collaborating with Tony Harrison on a new venture in the modern presentation of Greek drama:

Fresh from being awarded the first Pen/Pinter Prize 2010 and the European Prize for Literature 2011, in January the renowned poet and dramatist Tony Harrison joined the Department as Artist in Residence, thanks to the generosity of the Leverhulme Trust. He is creating a new text of an ancient Greek tragedy, Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, in conjunction with a virtual exhibition to be published on the website of the Department's Centre for the Reception of Greece and Rome. Our initial inspiration was our discovery of photos of an extraordinary theatrical production. In 1887, at Bedford College, there took place the first British performance of Euripides' play. The other location integral to this project is Chersonesos, near Sevastopol in the Crimea, the actual ancient city where the action of the play takes place. 'Tauric' Chersonesos was not however excavated until the 1950's. Its Greek theatre, where *Iphigenia in Tauris* was almost certainly performed in antiquity, is the most northerly in the world, but the military importance of Sevastopol kept it from western eyes until very recently.

In the course of this remarkable play, the Taurian natives of Chersonesos hand over their ancient statue of the maiden goddess Artemis to the Greeks, who take her 'home' to the cult centre of Artemis in Attica. Bringing Tony Harrison to our Classics Department

has 'brought the play home' to Royal Holloway and Bedford where it was first revived as a performance text in modernity. It is now inspiring a new generation of young Classics students, and offering a focus for community interaction between creative art and scholarly research. Next year the fruits of the Residency may be involved in another exciting homecoming. Tony Harrison and I plan a production of his text which will begin in London, tour to Greece, and thence to the Black Sea theatre of Chersonesos, the very ancient city where the action is set.

*Iphigenia in Tauris* at Bedford College, 1887



## Departmental Prizes 2011

Each year the Department awards a number of small prizes on the results of summer exams. This year's prizewinners were:

Florence Hopkins Memorial Prize – Jaspal Ubhi  
Andrew Leno Memorial Prize for Ancient History – Anthony Assock  
Ancient Philosophy Prize – Sam Tobin  
J.M. McGregor Prize for Greek (second year) – Catherine Barnes  
Driver Prize – Claire Blevins, Bevan Woodhouse

Longfield-Jones Prize for Classical Archaeology – Sophie Organ  
D.A. Slater Prize for Latin (final year) – Emma Ramsey  
Slater Prize for the study of the Latin poets (second year) – Matthew Purdie  
Departmental Prizes – Elanor James, Jussi Nybom, Patrick Owen-Smith

## Departmental contacts

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For more details, and to book, visit  
[www.rhul.ac.uk/prospective-students/undergraduates/open-days.html](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/prospective-students/undergraduates/open-days.html)

### College Open Days 2011-12

Saturday 24 September 2011  
Saturday 17 March 2012  
Wednesday 13 June 2012

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