

## CA PRIZE FOR FRANK MCGUINNESS

The seventh annual Classical Association Prize was presented at the Association Dinner, held on the last evening of this year's conference on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April at Durham's Radisson hotel. The Prize was awarded to Frank McGuinness, playwright, poet and Professor of Anglo-Irish Literature at University College Dublin, in recognition of his adaptations of classical tragedies for the modern stage. Prof. McGuinness is well known for his plays on modern Irish historical and social themes, notably *The Factory Girls*, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, and *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*. But over the past 15 years he has also produced adaptations of a number of classical tragedies – Sophocles' *Electra* and *Oedipus the King*, Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Helen*, and Seneca's *Phaedra* – performed variously in London, at the National Theatre, the Globe, and the Donmar, and on Broadway. All these productions have been critical and popular successes, Prof. McGuinness' texts being praised by reviewers as offering 'a fast, snappy take on the story', 'sharp and staccato, with a real muscular vitality', and articulating the plays' relevance to modern-day audiences, without labouring the modern parallels. If you have not yet made it to one of Prof. McGuinness' plays, the scripts are all available on Amazon, but we can also look forward to the major production he is currently working on, an operatic version of all three of Sophocles' Theban plays, with a score by Julian Anderson, for performance by English National Opera in 2013.

Professor McGuinness's plays are clearly in the front rank of works which promote Greece and Rome to a modern audience, placing them firmly within the Prize's frame as 'a significant contribution to the public understanding of Classics'. The £5000-cheque was presented by the outgoing President, Prof. Christopher Rowe, after which Prof. McGuinness made a short but moving speech of acceptance.

Members are invited to send nominations for the 2012 prize, with a short statement outlining why they think the nominee might qualify, to Claire Davenport in the London office by 28 September 2010.

Emma Stafford, CA Honorary Secretary