

PROFESSOR RICHARD SEAFORD
CA PRESIDENT 2008–2009

We in the CA owe a great deal to Richard Seaford. He was a key player in the remodelling of our Annual Conference, as those who have read Malcolm Schofield's chapter in our Centenary Volume (2003) on the recent history of the CA will already know. Informed by his knowledge of the American academic scene, Richard urged that conference papers should be short and volunteered, not invited, as before, and that they should be presented in several parallel sessions, as many as possible consistent with the accommodation available, with plenty of time for discussion, and financial support for graduate students. The first of the new-style Conferences on the pattern he suggested was run at Warwick in 1991.

Since then, attendance has soared. From a dwindling gathering of about 100 older classicists, the Conference has been transformed into a vibrant assembly of, at the last count, over 400, mainly young academics. It has become *the* central classical event of the year. What's more, it has given postgraduates an annual meeting-point, with the result that they have formed regional groups for mutual support and exchange of research news. The future of Classics in this country is the stronger for it. So we owe much to Richard for this transformation.

But to go back a bit: why did he choose Classics in the first place? He fell in love with Virgil at the age of 14, and with Sophocles at 15, and was keenly involved in Classics from then onwards. He was an undergraduate at Brasenose College, Oxford, and remained there for his doctorate (a commentary on Euripides' *Cyclops*, since published by OUP). Then after a two-year Junior Fellowship at Queen's College, he moved in 1978 to the Classics Department at Exeter and has been there ever since, helping it grow and flourish from a 4½-man department to one of 16. He was awarded a personal chair in 1994, his inaugural lecture being on "How did Western Culture Begin?".

He has a string of exemplary publications to his name, far too long to list in detail, starting with his groundbreaking article on Euripides' *Bacchae*, "Dionysiac Drama and the Dionysiac Mysteries" (*CQ* 1981), which argued for a way of understanding the play that was entirely new. Related to this was his later edition of the play (Aris and Phillips 1996) and *Dionysos* (Routledge 2006). In general, his main interest is in uncovering the relationship between how people think and the kind of society in which they live, as evidenced by an important trilogy of books: *Reciprocity and Ritual. Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (OUP 1994), and *Money and the Early Greek Mind: Homer, Philosophy,*

Tragedy (CUP 2004). The third volume, on Aeschylus – and embracing space, time and the cosmos – is in process and will be published in a couple of years' time, probably with the title *Polis and Cosmos in Aeschylus*. We look forward to it.

And also of course to our Presidential Address next April, which promises to be equally wide-ranging as well as up-to-the-minute: its title will be “Ancient Greece and Global Warming”. Come to Glasgow and hear it!