

## Annual Report 2024/25

It is my pleasant duty to report, on behalf of the committee, our activities for the past year . The committee makes every effort to invite at least one archaeologist each year and in 2024-25, we welcomed two practicing archaeologists as guests; Professor Philipp Stockhammer, the Gale Visiting Professor and Professor Andy Fairbairn from UQ.

I will also report on the outcome of the AAIA review carried out by the new director, Professor Tamar Hodos, Professor of Classical Archaeology at University of Sydney. The future for QFAAIA looks very promising.

### Functions

In August 2024, we had the pleasure of welcoming Professor Philipp Stockhammer accompanied by his wife and two teenage children.

The professor spoke on the topic; 'Beer or Wine. What did the Celts do with Greek pottery?' Drawing on work from Celtic sites in Germany, Professor Stockhammer presented detailed analysis of the contents of Greek pots imported to the settlements as high status goods. They were used for multitude of purposes including wine and beer. The lunch was a great success and the Stockhammer family were delightful guests who thoroughly enjoyed the informal atmosphere and the wonderful memento of their visit.

Our speaker for October was the manager and curator for the RD Milns Antiquities Museum, James Donaldson. James has a special interest in the war time exploits of the AIF in the field of archaeology. His talk focused on the work of Chaplain William Maitland Woods who excavated the 'Shellal Mosaic' from an early Christian church in Palestine in 1917. The mosaic now resides

in the Australian War Museum, Canberra with one fragment housed in Saint John's Cathedral in Brisbane. The audience came away with further insight into a little known aspect of Brisbane's past.

The end of year show presented by Con + Company was entitled 'Inspired by Homer'. Billed as a 'multimedia showcase of literature, art and music', our players; Helen Griffiths, Keith Bickel, Ellie Penman and Con, sampled poetry, novels, painting, sculpture and music to bring the power of Homer to life. From Shakespeare, Coleridge, Kipling to Rick Riordan, creator of the Percy Jackson series, Margaret Atwood and C.V. Cavafy, Homer's finger prints are all over our modern world as much as they are on the world of the ancients.

This year, our program commenced with Professor Andy Fairbairn from UQ who took us on a 'roam through the histories and archaeologies of the Old World' seeking the origins and spread of pomegranate cultivation. With sophisticated micro analysis, samples of seed and pollen can be examined to reveal the secrets of ancient agriculture. Our thanks to Professor Fairbairn for a stimulating talk informed by the latest research from modern archaeology. We are going to plan a return visit of Professor Fairbairn .

*'But now in blood and battles was my youth,  
And full of blood and battles is my age,  
And I shall never end this life of blood.'*

With these words, the tragic tale of 'Sohrab and Rustum' ended. And it was that epic tale of tragedy that Con O'Brien retold so masterfully at the June function. We thank Con for the dedicated preparation of his monologues which never fail to leave the audience spellbound.

## Communication Technology

The distribution of our emails continues through the 'MailChimp' service. The open rate on our emails remained within the trends of past years. Newsletters were opened between 45% and 69% and function notices between 44% and 55%. No concerning changes to report. The membership renewal notice had a 55% open rate. We have 108 email recipients for this financial year compared to 109 last year.

## Student Support

This year we have extended our financial assistance to 5 students. Ben Lawrance, the RD Milns Museum Summer Scholars Research Project recipient, Amelia Mudge and Akamu Stark for the UQ Greek study tour and more recently Amelia Mudge and Louis Barberis who are currently in Corinth. UQ student Maria Andersen was a recipient of funding from AAIA. During the study tour, the students visited the American School excavations in Corinth. Former director Guy Sanders gave a presentation which greatly impressed the visitors. More importantly, Guy was taken by the 'quality of the students' questions and their engagement with the site'. Subsequently, Amelia and Louis applied to join the Lechaion Harbour and Settlement Land Project, encouraged by Guy and current director Paul Scotton. The committee gave financial assistance due consideration and, given the unique opportunity and the praise from Guy, decided in favour of a small contribution of \$500 each. This was approved by our treasurer being within our current means. We look forward to meeting Louis and Amelia later this year to hear about their experiences.

## AAIA Review Outcome

The AAIA reviewed its operations and the role of the Friends' groups. The new director is keen to see the friends given a voice in AAIA through an Advisory Council. Further change will be in the AAIA membership categories which need to reflect the Greek Ministry of Culture requirements regarding membership eligibility of the Greek foreign archaeological schools. There has to be a clear distinction between research members and public members.

[see hand out pages] From 1 February 2026, all public members will have to join through the AAIA website. Members will pay fees to AAIA which will be transferred to state friends' groups along with the members' details. There is also the prospect of our insurance being paid by AAIA. All other activities and finances will remain in the hands of QFAAIA.

Professor Hodos wrote to the committee praising our success as a friends' group and assured us that the changes will be beneficial. We wish the AAIA and Professor Hodos success in these changes.

## Committee

My warm thanks to all committee members for making this year a success. To Carmel who keeps our records up-to-date and accurate, Karen, our treasurer, keeping our financial feet on the ground, Helen and Rose for the catering services, Alastair and David for being our contacts at the UQ and George Psaltis who represents the Greek Community. These good people provide our wonderful food selections, making our lunches such an integral part of QFAAIA. I know our guest speakers and our loyal members go home after our Sunday lunches with smiles on their faces.

The committee look forward to the developments starting in 2026 and we wish Prof Hodos all the best in her efforts to reinvigorate the Friends' organisation.

Moved: Chris Griffiths second: Con O'Brien

