

IN THE NEWS

THE SECOND NAPLES CONGRESS May 29 - June 1 2008



A corner of Herculaneum, looking north - May 2008. Photo Daniel Delattre

Some thirty friends gathered on 29 May for the Society's Second Naples Congress (the First having taken place to universal acclaim in 2006). An informal gathering in the evening at the familiar Grand Hotel Oriente inaugurated proceedings, as Friends new and old renewed acquaintances. The next day, Friday 30th, began at 10:00 in the Aula Magna of the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, hosted by the International Centre for the Study of the Herculaneum Papyri (CISPE), whose director is Prof. Francesca Longo Auricchio, Professor of Greek at the University and successor of the Centre's founder, Marcello Gigante, and by the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, whose newly-elected Dean Prof. Arturo De Vivo welcomed the delegates. We were honoured also by the presence of Dr Mauro Giancaspro, Director of the Biblioteca Nazionale,

representing the Ministry of Culture; the British Consul, Mr Michael Burgoyne MBE; the Consulate's cultural attaché, Sig. Gerardo Kaiser; and Prof. Giuseppe Maggi, formerly Director of Excavations at Herculaneum (the archaeologist who discovered the skeletons of victims at the site). Dr Giancaspro addressed the conference in a gracious speech praising the advances in scholarship resulting from the international collaboration between the Friends, CISPE, and the Officina dei Papiri in the Biblioteca, whose Director, Dr Agnese Travaglione, was also in attendance. In response Prof. Robert Fowler thanked the Biblioteca and our hosts, and mentioned as a further example of our collaboration the studentship jointly offered with the new International Centre for the Study of Herculaneum based in Ercolano. He then presented to Dr Giancaspro a complete set of high-



(From left to right)
Professor Robert Fowler, the British Consul Michael Burgoyne, Sig. Gerardo Kaiser and Dr Maria Paola Guidobaldi.

Photo Dirk Obbink

resolution digital images on DVD of the Herculaneum Disegni held by the University of Oxford. These drawings of the papyri made in the early nineteenth century as the scrolls were unrolled or otherwise prised apart are the earliest and often only witnesses to the original papyri. The DVDs will reside in the Officina dei Papiri and will be an important supplement to their resources.

Professor Giovanni Indelli of CISPE gave the first talk on “Philodemus’ Ethical Works Preserved in the Herculaneum Papyri”. Prof. Indelli spoke in Italian, but a pre-prepared English translation was available if desired: Friends not perfectly fluent in the host language enjoyed testing their perceptions of what they were hearing (a beautifully delivered academic Italian) with the translation in front of them. The talk was designed for experts and amateurs alike and gave a detailed insight into the context and importance of the Herculaneum papyri, based upon years of ground-breaking research by Prof. Indelli. Prof. Daniel Delattre of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, followed with an overview of “Philodemus On Music”. Along with Dr Dirk Obbink of the Friends, Prof. Delattre has revolutionised the study of the Herculaneum papyri with a crucial discovery about the relationship of the inventory numbers to the original sequence of unrolling in the early nineteenth century, enabling accurate reconstruction of the rolls. In the case of “On Music” book IV, Prof. Delattre was able to produce a mock-up of the entire, 11-metre long papyrus. He described how he had in the early days of the project done this in the old-fashioned way, with paper, scissors and paste, a method now obsolete as computers can manipulate the images and try out many more combinations than were previously possible. Prof. Delattre also described his elation when Multi-Spectral Imaging produced pages of new readings, even though he had just completed his edition and would now have to revisit the whole text. The Friends have previously heard presentations on this space-age technique of scanning through the frequencies of infra-red light to capture otherwise invisible readings, and have contributed financially to research employing MSI. This book represents a first in several respects: the first edition of a full-length Herculaneum papyrus; the first Herculaneum Papyrus published in the venerable Budé series; the first Herculaneum Papyrus to require two volumes of text and commentary; the first to come with a DVD; the first supported by the Friends of Herculaneum Society. The audience was fascinated by Prof. Delattre’s presentation of the minute, painstaking work required to recover this wonderful text from the ashes of Herculaneum.



Left. **Members of the Friends during the coffee break:** (from left to right) **Revel Coles, Bonnie Blackburn and Peter Spital.** Photo: Alison Carter



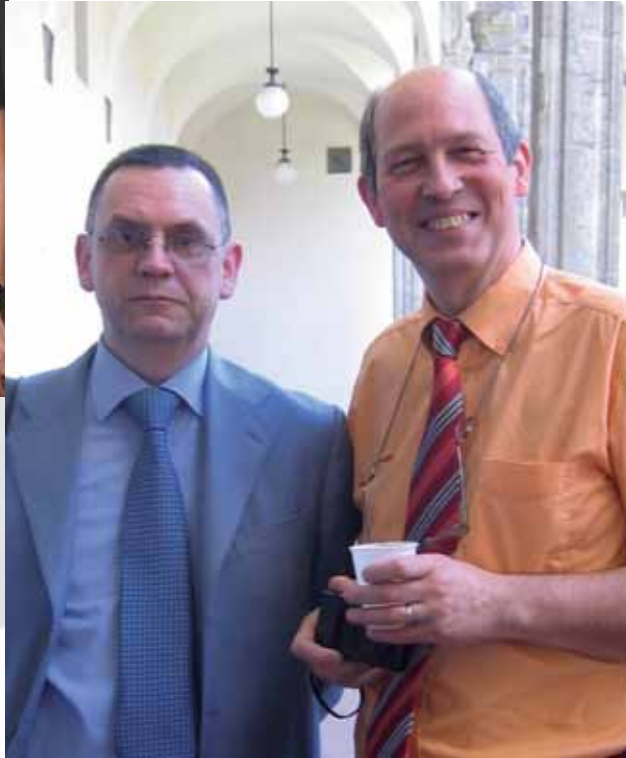
Right. **Members during the break.** Photo: Alison Carter

After a break (delicious Italian pastries) the floor was taken by the Director of Excavations at Herculaneum, Dr Maria Paola Guidobaldi. Dr Guidobaldi had previously addressed the Society at its meeting in the British Academy, and we were delighted and honoured that she agreed to bring news of the latest progress at the Villa of the Papyri to this congress.

As reported in the autumn (see the Society’s website under “News”) the Soprintendenza has undertaken an important initiative at the Villa, funded by a £2M grant from the EU. The project involves completing the 1990s excavation of the Villa (conservation, finishing the evacuation of the first lower level, and study of the structure itself so as to inform any future development or excavation), and further exploration and management of other structures in the vicinity including the bath complex brought to light in the 90s and a monumental structure of unknown purpose immediately to the south of the Villa. In the latter building was discovered the spectacular ornamental throne widely reported in the international press (again, see our News section). Given that the earlier excavation of the first lower level in the Villa only went down as far as a windowsill, not the floor, there remains another metre of earth to be removed which, in the nature of things, is apt to be where the finds are waiting to be made. Dr Guidobaldi’s superbly delivered talk (English translation ably prepared by Sarah Court of the Herculaneum Conservation Project) was luxuriously illustrated and left us panting to visit the site itself the following day.



Sarah Court (left), outreach officer for the International Centre for the Study of Herculaneum and Dr Maria Paola Guidobaldi (Director of Excavations) Photo: Dirk Obbink

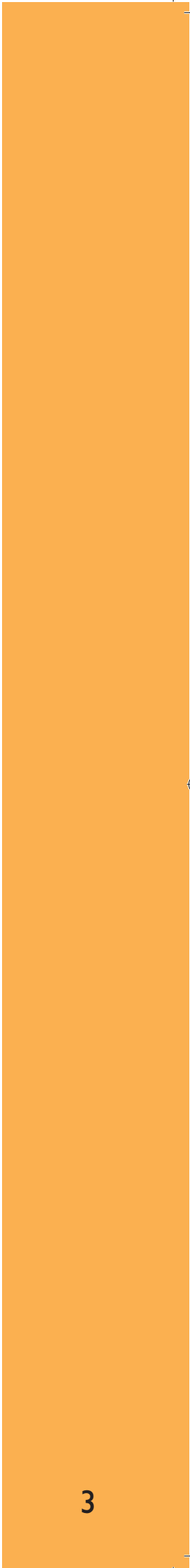


Prof. Giovanni Indelli of CISPE (left) and Prof. Daniel Delattre of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris. Photo: Alison Carter



Dr Mauro Giancaspro, Director of the Biblioteca Nazionale representing the Ministry of Culture. Photo: Alison Carter

To prepare for which, a banquet was clearly required. In the afternoon some Friends took a siesta (how quickly we go native) while others went shopping or touring; others, hardy scholars, met in the Officina with Italian colleagues for a study session with the papyri; but everyone met up again at Zi Teresa, legendary waterfront restaurant, for an excellent Neapolitan cena. The next morning we presented ourselves at the new main entrance to the excavations (what an improvement over the long trek from coach park to the old entrance, single file along the distinctly pedestrian-hostile Corso Resina) and proceeded down the hill to meet Dr Guidobaldi, who took the group to the Villa. The improvements in the care and maintenance of the site over our last visit were very obvious. Indeed the attention now being bestowed on the Villa and its immediate environs is most impressive and heartening. Of course, many of us asked when the excavation of the Villa was likely to be completed, and the answer was necessarily “unknown”: the excavation and conservation of the parts already exposed need to be completed, and key political and financial decisions will need to precede any decision to dig more. We also need to see the second part of the feasibility study on the technical options, which we hope will be ready soon (for Part I, see our website, link on the home page). However, one gets the impression that the Villa is now moving towards the epicentre of the





Soprintendenza's plans, which is very exciting. The work of Dr Guidobaldi and her team on the Villa has been truly outstanding and is to be greatly commended. Her thorough tour of the site—an active archaeological dig, and strictly off limits to the public—was a special privilege for the Friends, for which we are extremely grateful. Moreover, we were also permitted to tour the Suburban Baths, similarly closed to the public; our guide there was Christian Biggi of the International Centre for the Study of Herculaneum, mentioned above.

For lunch the group repaired to the picturesque village of Vico Equense. Gigino's Pizzeria claims to have invented pizza by the yard (or metre in Euro-speak; you can make it yourself if you like: see <http://www.tenspeedpress.com/page.php3?tr=159>) and by the yard/metre it was indeed delivered. Most of us were too stuffed to contemplate the puddings, for which we hadn't prepaid anyway, and time was running short, but there were some wistful backwards glances towards the overflowing trolleys as we returned to the coach. Thence to the Roman villa at Oplontis, connected by an inscription in situ to the Poppaea clan, which gives rise to the conjecture that it belonged to Nero's second wife, heroine of the Monteverdi opera. Most of us had never been there before, and it was an absolutely delightful discovery: a luxurious, multi-sectioned rural villa, with living, working and recreational spaces of many kinds (including an enormous swimming pool), and some exquisitely delicate frescoes.

Oplontis concluded the prearranged part of the programme, but Friends stayed on another day or two as desired—if as long as Monday, to enjoy the exuberance of Italy's national holiday. Sunday saw the hardy scholars continuing their seminar in the hotel, the Biblioteca being closed.

We hope to repeat this congress biennially. Future plans will certainly include other new discoveries like Oplontis, and perhaps a stay in the new Herculaneum 4-star hotel, so as to permit a longer visit to the site. In the meantime, Friends are invited to take advantage of the standing offer of reduced rates at the Grand Hotel Oriente; if going, do get in touch and we may be able to give you the latest advice, or people to contact. The success of this year's visit was owed to the efforts of Alison Carter and Krystyna Cech—many thanks to them for their sterling organisational work—to the hospitality of our Italian colleagues, and to the warm reception, indeed the red-carpet treatment, by the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Napoli e Pompei. We extend them our warmest gratitude and good wishes for the prosecution of their efforts to improve the site of Herculaneum.

Finally, the group received a detailed update from Sarah Court on the progress of the Herculaneum Conservation Project funded by the Packard Foundation, which has wrought visible improvements throughout the site and is now reaching the stage of being handed over to the Soprintendenza. The plans to go on now to a new excavation, of the splendid Basilica on one side of the ancient forum, aroused keen interest.

Robert Fowler
for the trustees



Above **Prof. Robert Fowler, Judy Fowler and Dr Dirk Obbink on Cardo III.** Photo Peter Spital



A corner of Herculaneum looking east, at entrance to the gymnasium.
Photo: Daniel Delattre





Left. **Sarah Court talking about the progress of the Herculaneum Conservation Project.**

Photo: Peter Spital



Right. **Friends walking down the ramp to the Villa dei Papiri (centre).** Photo: Robert Fowler

Right. **Villa dei Papiri, mosaic in atrium area.** Photo: Robert Fowler



Left **Villa dei Papiri, atrium complex.** Photo: Daniel Delattre





Clockwise from top left: **the Weber tunnel leading to the library quarter in the Villa dei Papiri** (Daniel Delattre), **the Suburban baths labrum (cold water basin)** (Daniel Delattre), **Atrium of the Suburban baths** (Peter Spital). **the ancient sea front showing boat houses** (Daniel Delattre), **suburban baths labrum with bust of Apollo** (Daniel Delattre)



Oplontis Photo: Robert Fowler

Oplontis: fresco. Photo: Robert Fowler



Oplontis. Photo: Daniel Delattre



Herculaneum: non-carbonised papyri. Photo: Alison Carter



Roman libraries and the Villa of the Papyri by Matthew Nicholls, University of Reading

The Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum offers us a precious insight into the private library in the late republic and its place within the world of high-status cultural collection. The period in which it was built and its library collection amassed was an era when ever-larger numbers of books were being collected, read, swapped, lent, and looted by rich Romans; collections like those of the Villa, and collectors like its owner, played an important part in Roman literary life and paved the way for the establishment of the great imperial public library foundations.

Lucullus' Pontic booty, to take one well-attested example, augmented his own library, which Plutarch describes as a sort of private academy, and which Cicero mentions in the *Hortensius* and *De Finibus*. Cicero himself was another leading late Republican book collector and patron of the intellectual arts; his letters talk about borrowing books and skilled library slaves from Atticus and employing Tyrannio to organise his extensive collection.

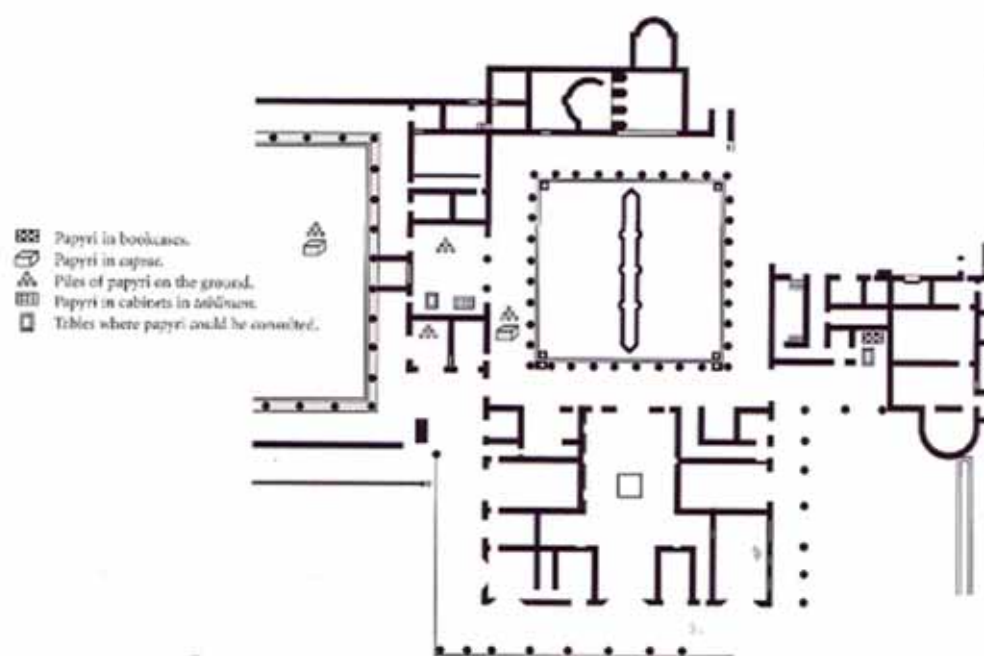
These libraries and book collections of these men were not public - access depended on being an amicus or cliens of the owner, as Cicero was with Atticus and Lucullus - but in their ostentatious deployment of expensive resources, and systematic collection and provision of books to scholarly readers, they did anticipate some of the important functions of the city's imperial public libraries.

The villa of the Papyri is our best source for the appearance of such a library. Its layout and the life of Epicurean debate evoked by its surviving papyri recall Plutarch's description of Lucullus' library:

But what he did in the establishment of a library deserves warm praise. He got together many books, and they were well written ... His libraries were thrown open to all, and the cloisters surrounding them, and the study-rooms, were accessible without restriction to the Greeks, who constantly repaired thither as to an hostelry of the Muses, and spent the day with one another, in glad escape from their other occupations.

Plutarch, Lucullus 42.

The Herculaneum Villa contains rooms suitable for storing and reading books but also colonnades, gardens, and very extensive collections in the plastic and graphic arts: the library was thus part of an environment designed to be a civilised backdrop for intellectual *otium* of various sorts, and could, like Lucullus' villa, have accommodated formal and informal gatherings of scholars, philosophers, and teachers.



The Villa of the Papyri, with book locations labelled.

The library room itself was described by the initial excavators as having had a mosaic floor, and a series of inlaid wooden book cabinets with volumes arranged in rows, perhaps resembling the arrangement shown in this relief from Neumagen. Any hope of recovering the collocation of books within this space vanished with the imperfect archaeological methods of the eighteenth century discoverers.



Scrolls on a shelf - a drawing of the late 2nd C AD relief from Neumagen

The room is so small that its books must have been read elsewhere in the Villa, perhaps in the colonnades and gardens or even the belvedere with its sea view.

Books were in fact found scattered through the villa, some on the floor loose, or stored in capsae, book-buckets, but this could be a result of the events of 24th August AD 79 – it seems that they were being removed at the moment that the eruption struck, carbonising and preserving them.



Scrolls and capsae: illustration MCN.

Before this, though, the Villa's book collection survived a series of political upheavals as cataclysmic in their way as the eruption of Vesuvius. The vicissitudes of the civil war meant that several republican private book collections ended up falling into imperial hands, probably contributing to Rome's first public libraries. While copying, purchase, and gifts or commissions from successful authors certainly supplied some of these new libraries' needs, as it had for their private republican predecessors, the core collections of the Augustan-era libraries may have consisted in captured, confiscated or inherited collections originally amassed by the rival scholars and politicians of the late Republic. Augustus thus found himself in possession of an unprecedented number of books, explaining the very rapid expansion of the city's public library provision in the early years of the principate (from no public libraries to three within 15 years).

Collections belonging to Varro, Cato, Pompey, Atticus, and Cicero might have been among those redeployed in Augustan public libraries: in each case it is possible to construct a fairly convincing trajectory from private to public library. The fact that our Villa's library remained intact is hardly evidence that it was owned, as is often claimed, by Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, but it does seem that whoever owned it successfully avoided incurring the displeasure of Caesar's or Octavian's factions in this difficult period – and Piso, Caesar's father-in-law, is a good fit in this respect.

As well as providing books, willingly or not, some of the great bibliophiles of late Republican Rome, contemporaries and probably acquaintances of the Villa's owner, were also directly involved in the foundation of the first public libraries at Rome. Marcus Terentius Varro, Cicero's *diligentissimus investigator antiquitatis*, author of a lost *De Bibliothecis*, and a key figure in first century intellectual life at Rome, was the man commissioned by Julius Caesar to found Rome's first public library (a project never completed because of Caesar's assassination). His involvement in early public library projects at Rome suggests that these libraries were intended to be serious, useful scholarly resources.

Gaius Asinius Pollio, who founded Rome's first public library in the Atrium Libertatis in 39BC (placing in it, uniquely for a living author, a bust of Varro), was another important figure in late Republican literary Rome. He was a tragedian, an Atticist orator, and an historian, a poet and friend of poets, the dedicatee of the opening poem of Horace's second book of *Odes* and of Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*. In his wealth, acumen, and serious literary interests we can see similarities to whoever owned the Herculaneum Villa.

Pollio's decision to make his library a public institution marks an important moment in literary history at Rome, paralleled in other forms of euergetism, in which the elite resources enjoyed by men like Lucullus and Cicero began to be deployed as public, civic benefactions. We can compare Pollio's sculpture collection which, according to Pliny, he put on display because he wanted as many people as possible to see it. Another of Pollio's literary innovations was, as Seneca tells us, the city's first public literary recitals.

The cultural life of first century Rome, then, was rapidly expanding beyond the confines of elite houses like the Villa of the Papyri, with their coterie of aspirant authors and Greeklings, into the provision of institutional, public libraries supporting public literary events. To some extent this burst of public provision represented a political reaction against the sort of private collection typified by the Villa and its library, which therefore preserve for us an important aspect of literary life in the late republic and early empire - a time when the politics of library collection and deployment were taking on great significance.

AWARD FOR RESEARCH ON HERCULANEUM

The International Centre for the Study of Herculaneum with the support of the Friends of Herculaneum Society. A research report by Dr. Ciro Montella who took up the award in July 2008. Translated by Robert Fowler

Aspects and problems of Insula II at Herculaneum

Thanks to the excellent conditions of burial, the archaeological site of Herculaneum constitutes a unicum of its kind: in consequence of the eruption of AD 79, the city was completely covered by a flow of mud which solidified and permitted the preservation of organic remains.

From 1738 the first systematic archaeological excavations in history began precisely at Herculaneum; after the first phases of excavation conducted by means of tunnels, in 1828 it was decided to begin 'open sky' excavations in the area we now know as Insula II.

The houses of which it is comprised—the House of Aristides, the House of Argo, and the House of the Genius—though among the first to be brought to light have not enjoyed great interest on the part of scholars, who in the course of the centuries have concentrated their efforts principally on other buildings or on other cities—Pompeii in particular. Yet these *domus*, in part still buried, can furnish important data from historical and artistic points of view.

In fact, from an analysis of the excavation diaries, of the maps of the period, of the building materials, the wall structures and the rooms of the lower floors, it will be possible to obtain a much clearer and more detailed picture of the issues concerning Insula II. Moreover, we will attempt to include the connections and problems relative to the area between Cardo III and Cardo II, an area of extreme importance given the proximity of the splendid Villa of the Papyri. Finally, it will be extremely interesting to study the shrine situated in the lower floor of the House of Argo, a very rare example of a private cult site placed in a concealed area, attesting a sense of religiosity one does not find in the common shrines ostentatiously positioned in the atria and peristyles.

Dr. Ciro Montella



Dr. Ciro Montella (right) (2008 Award holder) and Dr. Christian Biggi (Study Centre Manager) on site at Herculaneum

OTHER NEWS

Membership

First of all, a big thank you to all our members for supporting the Society over the years. We are very happy to welcome new members who have joined in the past year. Scandinavia is now represented by a new member in Denmark. Together with members in New Zealand, North America and Canada as well as various European countries, we are a truly international society. Membership fees contribute to the running costs of the Society which enable us to organise meetings, conferences and trips. In addition we support research in the field of Herculaneum Studies. In the past year we have financially supported the research of Duncan Keenan-Jones (see last newsletter) and, together with the International Study Centre of Herculaneum, we are this year supporting the research of Dr. Ciro Montella (see this newsletter). In addition we are about to launch drawing and essay competitions (with cash prizes) for the schools which have joined our new Schools Membership scheme. In July, one of our members, James Hopton from Eton College, joined me in the office for a week's work experience. Apart from helping with various administrative jobs, James was very helpful when discussing ideas for the Schools web page we will be adding to our website soon.

Please tell your friends about the Society. Those of you who went to Naples this year will be able to spread the word with fresh impressions from Herculaneum. You can join (and renew your membership) securely online. To reflect members' suggestions, we have introduced several new types of membership, the most popular being Joint Standard and Joint Concessionary. Also new this year are Life and Schools Membership. You may find details of all these different types of membership on our website. Just click Join on the homepage of our website (www.herculaneum.ox.ac.uk) and this will take you to the right page. Please do check our website from time to time as we are always adding fresh news as it comes in from Herculaneum.

Please send in any suggestions or comments you may have about the Society or if there is any news from Herculaneum you would like to share. We will be running our 'Christmas Gift Membership' again this year. If you would like to take out membership for a friend or a member of the family as a Christmas gift, please let the office know. Your friend or family member will receive a festively wrapped DVD 'Out of the Ashes' or 'Diari del buio e della luce' (Diaries of darkness and light), Marcellino de Baggis' superb documentary of the great excavations of Herculaneum by Amedeo Maiuri, plus copies of back newsletters.
Krystyna Cech

Virtual Archeological Museum at Herculaneum has a new website launched in July which is done in Flash and has parts of what the museum offers by way of computer generated reconstructions on-line. The museum itself offers visitors sounds (eg. of a market) and smells (eg. of perfumes) at appropriate points in the playback:

<http://www.capware.it/>

Kirsty Corrigan, student Member, writes:

"I visited the new Virtual Archaeological Museum at Herculaneum [in July] and was impressed: I recommend it. I'm sure that some people will consider it a waste of money, but I think it could bring in more money for the sites. It's easy to find, as it's on a hill on the way down to Herculaneum from the train station. At the moment it's all in Italian but, since it's mostly a visual experience, that doesn't matter much. The reconstructions of various sites across Campania, and the interactive nature, should be a good attraction to those who know less about the ancient sites ..."

Conservation and development issues at Pompeii: The following link leads to a recent article which might be of interest to Friends: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/26/arts/design/26ruin.html>

For more information about the Society, or if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas for articles for the next edition of *Herculaneum Archaeology*, please contact the editor.
Dirk Obbink - Editor
Krystyna Cech - Production Editor

The Friends of Herculaneum Society
The Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies
66 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LU, United Kingdom
Tel: (+44) (0) 1865 288260,
Email: herculaneum@classics.ox.ac.uk
Website: <http://www.herculaneum.ox.ac.uk/>

CONTENTS

- p.1 **In the News: The Second Naples Congress** Robert Fowler
- p.8 **Roman Libraries and the Villa of the Papyri** Matthew Nicholls
- p. 11 **Award or research on Herculaneum** Ciro Montella
- p 12 **Other News**