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## Letter from the President of EACLALS (August 2003)

Geoffrey V. Davis

Marc Delrez

Benedicte Ledent

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### Abstract

The new executive committee took over after the Copenhagen Triennial conference in Spring, 2002. It consists of Geoffrey V. Davis, University of Aachen (Chair); Marc Delrez, University of Liège (Secretary); and Bénédicte Ledent, University of Liège (Treasurer).

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The Triennial 'Bodies and Voices' conference in Copenhagen (21–27 March, 2002) organised by Bruce Clunies-Ross and his collaborators turned out to be a marvellous success despite certain odds. As is now all but common knowledge, only a few weeks before the conference was due to start a grant made by the 'Danish Centre for Cultural Co-operation with the Developing Countries' was blocked by the right-wing government which had just taken office in Denmark, so that plans to bring writers from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Pacific were suddenly jeopardised. The participation of Australian writers in the conference also had to be curtailed for lack of financial support. However, although the list of readings had to be substantially reduced, there were still many notable events included in the programme, and the participants had a most enjoyable and profitable time.

The conference was dedicated to the memory of Anna Rutherford, our founder, whose life of devotion to the post-colonial cause was poignantly evoked by Hena Maes-Jelinek, a former President of EACLALS, during the opening ceremony. A series of 'Anna Rutherford lectures' was also opened — a new tradition which was inaugurated by Prof. Helen Tiffin (University of Queensland) and which will be carried on in the future.

One of EACLALS's traditional functions has been to make journal subscriptions available to members. This we now do for *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *Wasafiri*, and, of course, *Kunapipi*. Delivery of *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* to our members under this system has been subject to considerable delay due to the fact that the ownership of *JCL* has twice changed hands recently. We expect that normal delivery will now be resumed at regular intervals.

It has now been agreed that the next EACLALS Triennial Conference will take place at the University of Malta from 21–26th March, 2005, i.e. just before Easter. This should be an ideal time as Malta's best art treasures, which are kept in the churches, are traditionally brought out in preparation for the greatest liturgical event of the year in the week before Easter. This will include the 'vari' (groups of statues on large platforms representing the crucifixion), which will be exhibited in some of the villages during that week. The final day will be an excursion to Gozo. In view of the location the organisers intend to include a North African focus with both academic and artistic input. Writers such as Hoda Barakat, Tony Hanania, Albert Memmi, Ahdaf Soueif as well as the Booker-

prize short-listed Maltese fiction writer, Trezza Azzopardi, will be invited. The provisional theme is 'Sharing Places'. Further details will be available in the autumn.

The committee will be implementing a system of book donations for universities in Eastern Europe this year. Anyone with spare copies of publications is invited to pass them on to us; we will be happy to pass them on.

In the period after the Copenhagen conference we have experienced something of a reduction in membership numbers. This seems usual in the period between triennials, but we intend nevertheless to counter this by initiating a recruitment drive in the run-up to the Hyderabad and Malta conferences, both of which should prove very attractive venues.

Geoffrey V. Davis, Marc Delrez, Bénédicte Ledent