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Newsletter 47 - May 2012

Dear Supporter,

May I begin with a few reminders:

1 – Copyright Issues – the publishers of both books, Cambridge University Press, hold the copyright for them. If you wish to use the text of Minimus for any purpose, you do need to consult CUP for permission. Many of you create your own resource materials and worksheets and often want to decorate these with an image of the mouse. Helen Forte, the illustrator of Minimus holds the copyright for all the artwork. Please consult Helen and/or me if you wish to use an image of the mouse and normally we are very happy for this to happen; it is crucial that you do not create material using the text and then distribute it to others as this is infringing copyright law and could be very serious.

2 - Is your Minimus Club stopping? If you are no longer able to continue teaching Minimus, please let us know; we may be able to find a replacement teacher. If you have books that are surplus to requirements please also get in touch; recently we have been able to pass on books to people who are starting up Minimus.

3 – Offer of help with a Minimus Club in Worcestershire - I am a Classics graduate, old enough to have forgotten most of it, with experience of using Minimus with primary school children. If anyone is running a Latin Club and would like the equivalent of a classroom assistant, I would be happy to help with preparation of materials and support. Contact me by email susan.gee@hotmail.co.uk. Tel: 01527 66225

4 - Knitted Minimus Mouse- Would you like a knitted version of Minimus? This large mouse can provide a valuable addition to your teaching resources! He stands approximately 18 inches tall and is a very friendly looking mouse! Chris Bolton has kindly offered to knit Minimus. If you would like one, please contact Chris directly on classics.chris@talktalk.net or 0151 727 4142. Minimus will cost £15 each (plus P&P) and will take 2-3 weeks to deliver.

If you have any other craft patterns/kits for making Minimus characters, please share them as teachers like to have extra resources.

Recent Events:

North Walsham Project– I had a splendid visit to North Walsham in February when Jane Maguire held another meeting for the parents of those who are enjoying Minimus in 7 local primary schools and their teachers. Jeremy Paterson gave a most interesting talk on the people who lived at Vindolanda and then the next morning he adapted the talk for the children. As always I enjoy meeting the punters and hearing how they are getting on with their studies. Jane has recruited two splendid teachers to deliver the material, Mary Cheeseman and Maxine Wood and they are working with real passion and commitment. The senior management team of North Walsham High School is highly supportive of this project and that is a key element in its success. The really exciting news is that the High School has decided to offer Latin to the new cohort of Year 7 pupils coming in September so that they don't have to wait until Year 9 to continue Latin as at present. This is just the sort of development that I dreamt of 12 or so years ago when eager primary school students of Minimus could not continue with Latin at their local secondary schools. We are so grateful to Classics For All for the money which has made this project possible and I am indebted to Jane Maguire whose vision, energy and determination has made

it such a success. It may well be that this could form a model for other parts of the country and that would be a most exciting development

Jane Maguire Reports: Teaching in the primary schools is going well and there is consistently positive feedback. Interviews with all Headteachers are taking place early in the summer term to discuss how the project will develop in Year 2. Initial questionnaires so far suggest that all schools are planning for current groups of Year 3, 4 & 5 to be continued with the project teachers and a second group started in each school by a suitable teacher or TA. This will be ideally the designated "Latin link" person, who has been following progress all this year.

We have put on two events in North Walsham based on the format of inviting parents and teachers on a Monday evening and then repeating the content the next morning for the children. Barbara spoke at the first one and Jeremy at the second. Despite our best efforts, however, attendance was disappointing. Heads have reassured us that encouraging parents to attend such events is a general problem in the area. The final attempt in May will be a celebration evening for parents and children together with each school hopefully performing a short scene, song etc.

Norwich Castle Museum has supported the project with a day on 27th March for the High School students and one for all the primary pupils on 23rd April. High School students enjoyed workshops with a Roman soldier, artefact handling, visiting the museum's Roman/Iceni gallery and hearing a talk about the impact of the Romans on Norfolk. The day for younger children will include more Latin (linked specifically to Minimus). Colly Mudie reports that 69 children had a great day in April.

Norfolk Museum Day: Sadly the day planned for the Norwich Castle Museum in June has been cancelled due to the level of interest.

School Visits:

Because I am so tied up with directing 'Minimus the Musical' this summer (see below) I have only managed three school visits. I regularly visit Fairfield School near Bristol where I work with Year 6 and give them an introductory talk about Vindolanda before they start their two terms of Minimus.

In March I visited the club at Wells Cathedral School and enjoyed telling the children about Vindolanda and this real family.

Then last month I had a very happy visit to Bootham Junior School in York where I spent the morning working with Years 5 & 6. As well as teaching them some Minimus lessons, we had fun sessions of singing and drama.

If you would like a school visit during the next academic year, please get in touch. Because of the musical I cannot offer any visits in the summer term, but would be happy to arrange something for September onwards.

Training Days:

There is one last training day this academic year, taking place at James Allen's Girls' School on Saturday 16 June. The training course costs £60 and includes all resources and lunch. If you would like to attend this day, a booking form is attached.

Perhaps unsurprisingly in a time of recession, numbers at training days have been much reduced this year and we sadly had to cancel the proposed training days in Monmouth & Stratford. I was however able to meet with the one delegate who had booked for Stratford and we had a useful three hour lunch and training session in a Stratford hotel! Jane returned to Edinburgh with all the information she needs to set up a Minimus club and to teach with confidence.

It seems that schools do not have resources to send staff for Latin inset events. My committee and I are discussing this at our forthcoming meeting. We need to be inventive to minimise costs for schools

but still to offer a useful service. I am more than willing to visit a school if you can gather a small group of teachers together, perhaps from the local area. I will run a training event and the schools can share my expenses. Alternatively, if it would work for you, I am equally happy to meet more informally over lunch as I did with Jane, and just train one or two individuals. Please think about this and get in touch if this sort of format would be helpful in cutting costs. Meanwhile, I am proposing two training days in London in the Autumn Term, one specifically for those new to Minimus who are interested in introducing it in their school. The second inset day would be for more experienced teachers of Minimus who want to go into more detail about how to vary the activities in the classroom, how to develop the cross-curricular side of Minimus and how to use Minimus Secundus. Both these days would be at James Allen's Girls' School in Dulwich and the dates will be November 10th (beginners) & November 24th (advanced).

If your school would be willing to host a training day, please get in touch. It must be able to provide food on a Saturday and should be at a location which is easy for public transport. Many thanks. If you have any further thoughts on how we can improve our training day pattern, please do get in touch.

Forthcoming Events:

Mythology Competition– I hope that many of you have again encouraged your pupils to take part in the competition. Here are the details from the organiser, Pam Macklin : Topics – Procrustes (level 1) The Judgment of Paris (Level 2). The deadline for entries is slightly later this year, 11th May with results to schools by 22nd June. The Jowett Trustees are again kindly sponsoring this competition.

Book festivals– There is a possibility of Minimus being part of this year's Cheltenham Literature Festival in October. At the time of writing it is not definite, but if you live in that locality, please consult the website or the printed programme to see whether Minimus has found a slot. It would be a fantastic opportunity. Catherine Jarvis on my committee, who is doing such splendid work on Hadrian's Wall, is hoping to secure a slot in the Hexham Book Festival next April for me to talk about and teach some Minimus. Again, this is not definite but watch this space!

Interactive Material– I am frequently asked whether we plan to create more interactive material for Minimus. As I am sure you know this whole area is not my forte, but thankfully many of you do have the necessary skills. I have invited Richard Waddington from Northwood Prep School to attend our next committee meeting and to share with us the work that he is doing in the Northwood area, both in promoting Minimus in local primary schools and in creating interactive material. It may be that we can put together a small subcommittee who will develop this side of the work. If you have thoughts, materials or ideas to share, please get in touch with me and I will forward your ideas.

Similarly if you have outstanding examples of pupils' work that could be shared, please send it to nicolaprince99@hotmail.com for possible inclusion on the website. We reserve the right to select what we think is entirely appropriate.

Grant Fund Report: In the twelve years since I have written the Grant Fund report this is the first one where the number of applications has reached an all – time low. Since the end of September 2011 until the middle of April 2012 there have been 15 schools who have applied for grants. This consists of 9 state schools, 3 independent schools plus three more independent schools who will teach Latin to their local primary state schools. Our heartfelt thanks go yet again to The Classical Association for their very generous support. Grants have been awarded to the following schools, Long Crendon School- Aylesbury, Northborough Primary School- Peterborough, Hoole C.of E. Primary School-Chester, Old Vicarage School-Darley Abbey, Barton Junior School-Dover, Leicester High School For Girls (Junior

Department)- Leicester, Oliver House Prep. School- London, Our Lady's Catholic Primary School- Prescot, St Michael's High School-Liverpool, Church Cowley St James Primary School- Oxford, King Edward VI School-Southampton, Place Farm Community Primary School-Haverhill, Busbridge C..E. Junior School-Godalming, St Jude's C.E. Junior School-Englefield Green, Read School-Drax, nr Selby.

Minimus the Musical!

This is a very busy period in the run up to the musical. The cast (year 7 girls and boys from Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls and Monmouth School) are busy learning words. The orchestra is coming to grips with the music. We are gathering props and the wonderful Angela Wakeley who runs Carnival Costumes in Bristol is adapting the costumes we used in Bristol where possible or creating new ones. We will be putting the programme together quite soon. There is much to be done still but everyone assures me that it will all come together for July 2nd when we give our first performance in Monmouth for Inglefield House and The Grange, our respective junior schools. The first public performances will be at Haberdashers' School for Girls, Monmouth on Wednesday July 4th; the matinée at 1.30 is intended for schools and there is no charge for the tickets. If you would like to bring your pupils to this, please contact bursar@hmsg.co.uk The evening performance in Monmouth begins at 7.0 p.m. The final two performances will be at James Allen's Girls' School in Dulwich on Friday July 6th at 1.30 and 6.30pm. Again there is no charge for the matinée which is designed for schools and I hope many of you will be able to bring a group. At the evening performance, TV presenter, Bettany Hughes plans to attend with her family. Other members of the Great and the Good have been invited and we are hoping that other celebrities may come. The children are enormously excited, especially to be taking the show to London. For those of you who have not yet seen Minimus the Musical, it is principally in English with some key Latin words, which are all translated by the cast or in the programme. It is closely based on the stories in both the Minimus books. I do hope to see many of you there. Tickets are selling quite well so don't leave it too late to order yours. Tickets for the London performances are available from nicolaprince99@hotmail.com

May I wish you all a very happy summer. Thank you for those of you who have recently been in touch, either with donations for the Project or news of your activities. I always enjoy and appreciate both types of letter.

With my very best wishes and thanks for your support,

Barbara Bell.

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