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Newsletter 62 – April 2017

Dear Supporter,

Thank-you so much to those of you who have kept me posted recently with good news stories – new *Minimus* clubs, *Minimus* being introduced on the curriculum to one particular year – group and sometimes *Minimus* chosen as the designated language throughout the whole school. I always pass on these good news stories to the committee and it is so encouraging for all of us, when we are working hard to promote Latin and to support teachers with training, advice and resources to hear of such successes. Some of you have been involved with *Minimus* since its inception and I am deeply grateful for your commitment to the cause of Latin for young children; one such committed teacher is Maria Joyce:

16 Years of *Minimus* by Maria Joyce

After attending a *Minimus* Project Training Day I started to teach *Minimus* at Bathwick St.Mary Primary School in Bath in May 2001.

When the Deputy Headteacher of that school became Headteacher at Swainswick Primary School in 2003, she invited me to teach *Minimus* there.

The school is a small rural school, so numbers in the lunchtime Latin club are small, too. The present Latin club has five pupils, four girls and one boy, aged between 6 and 9 years.

I find it very rewarding to introduce the children to another language, their first foreign one.

It is great to see them making progress in reading Latin. They love acting the picture stories and the myths.

They enjoy learning new English words by working through the 'Latin roots' sections in the book. Their grasp of grammatical terms improves, also their spelling.

We often finish a lesson by playing 'Simo dicit', and here they add to their Latin vocabulary.

They also learn about Roman food: we mark the end-of-term lesson usually with a feast of Roman army bread!

RECENT EVENTS

January

The year began in a splendid fashion when I was able to talk to Australian teachers who were taking part in a Classical summer school in Sydney. Jane Maguire (Norfolk) represented PLP at the kind invitation of the organiser Emily Matters. Jane taught the Australian teachers for the best part of a week and unsurprisingly (for those of you who know Jane) the feedback forms were universally positive; words like “inspirational” “encouraging” “practical” were commonly used of Jane's helpful mode of instruction. On the last morning the group got together and “chatted to me” using Skype (a new skill for me!) I took their questions for the best part of an hour and it was extraordinary to make this link and to hear their concerns and what they felt they needed most from *Minimus* in the future. I am deeply grateful to Jane and her partner for undertaking the long journey and then delivering a week of thrilling but exhausting teaching. There has been considerable interest in *Minimus* in Australia over the years and this is perhaps the moment to thank those of you who initially set up *Minimus* in your schools and as clubs and have handed on the baton to others. Here is Jane's report on her exciting week:

“LATIN FOR LITERACY” – course for primary teachers January 2017, Latin Summer School, University of Sydney, Australia.

This was the 23rd Latin Summer School to be held at the University of Sydney, an event which offers a variety of courses and lectures for school students, teachers and others. All Australian teachers must complete 25 hours of professional development per year and this five-day course was approved for teacher accreditation. The organisers wanted our course to prepare primary teachers to incorporate the teaching of elementary Latin as a vehicle for improving children’s English vocabulary and their awareness of language structures alongside basic grammatical terms. It was also to show how *Minimus* encourages cultural enrichment, through the exploration of Roman life, an introduction to archaeology, and the inclusion of famous Greek myths. No prior knowledge of Latin was required.

The course was attended by seven teachers from a mix of different schools. Some had never studied Latin and others had high-school Latin, which they remembered to varying degrees.

The course was delivered by Dr Emily Matters, a very experienced Australian Classics teacher, and myself. For each chapter, Emily looked at links to the Australian Primary English syllabus and provided a brief, simple introduction to the particular grammar focus. I followed up by looking at how *Minimus* presents it, together with all the other aspects of the course and additional resources. We watched “*Minimus the Musical*” and, on the last day, enjoyed a Skype session with Barbara.

I delivered one of the afternoon Guest Lectures, which attracted a very diverse group of people and seemed to generate considerable interest in *Minimus*.

Feedback from the course was very positive and included the suggestions that there should be an Australian section on the website and that access to more resources on the internet (through purchase of a licence) might be made available.

Jane Maguire

February

Classics for All, the organization which has been such an important force in keeping *Minimus* and PLP afloat in recent years, is keen to establish “Classical Hubs” in different parts of the country. I’m delighted to report that one of the most recent is based in my home town in Bristol. This “Hub” was launched on 1st February and I was pleased to hear that two local school teachers, from the state sector who have recently established Latin in their schools, were among the speakers. I was invited to display *Minimus* goods by the organisers, Dr Genevieve Liveley from Bristol University Classics Department and Hannah Walsh, a Classics teacher who has recently begun working for Classics for All in an administrative post. The Bristol Hub is extremely fortunate to have two such dynamic leaders and to be able to hold meetings at the University where Classics students are keen to work with the young and thus gain valuable teaching experience themselves. Sadly on 1st February I went down with one of this winter’s particularly powerful viruses and was unable to attend, but my husband Nick and my Deputy Jayne Treasure (who will take over as Director of the Primary Latin Project in November) flew the flag for *Minimus*. They filled a table with display material and had many useful conversations with interested teachers.

March

I very much enjoyed working with a small group of teachers from the Westbury-on-Trym Academy and a representative from Bristol Free School, where it is planned that *Minimus* will be introduced throughout Year 7. These schools have benefited directly from the support of Classics for All and they are eager to get going. Any school that wishes to receive free training can do so thanks to their sponsorship.

It is surprising, yet delightful, to hear of those at the other end of the age range who wish to know about *Minimus*. Nick and I visited the U3A group in Dartmouth during March and had a splendid day meeting the members and talking about the extraordinary spread of *Minimus* throughout the last 20 years. The suggestion that I should visit and speak to them came from Jane Keynon and it was excellent to meet Jane again. Our recollection is that she attended one of the early *Minimus*

Training Days at Clifton High School in Bristol approximately 15 years ago. Jane and her husband bought and ran a small prep school and Jane taught *Minimus* there with enthusiasm for many years. The majority of members of this U3A group had done Latin at school but were intrigued to see how modern courses adopt a livelier story-based approach. As I left there was some talk of setting up a Latin course for those who have never had the chance to study it. I do hope this gets off the ground!

Finally, in March I paid another visit to Fairfield school in Backwell, close to Bristol. Their teacher, Alex Plumb likes me to do an introduction to *Minimus* for the students in Years 5 and 6. We look at pictures of the wonderful Vindolanda site, its artefacts and writing tablets.

Please note that I am more than willing to run training events or to give talks in the Bristol area and the South West; other trainers throughout the country run events further afield. The Official *Minimus* Trainers, who now number in the region of 20, are all experienced *Minimus* teachers and for various reasons have a little more time than we did when we were teaching at the coal face. Sue Balmer (Newcastle) is one Official Trainer who has done great work in setting up the Liverpool Hub. See her report below:

Liverpool Training Day: Alice Case, Liverpool Classics hub coordinator, invited Arlene Holmes-Henderson and I to deliver Latin training to 15 teachers from Liverpool primary schools on February 15th. The participants were particularly interested in how Latin can lead to improved literacy. We introduced them to the *Minimus* resources and enjoyed a full day of varied activities and discussion about cross-curricular opportunities. Our main aim was to enthuse the teachers and to give them confidence to begin the teaching of Latin in their schools. Evaluations were extremely positive. Alice is in the process of contacting participating schools to give further support. At present, she has 10 schools interested in delivering Latin across KS2 within the curriculum.

Liverpool Hope PGCE: Following the Liverpool training day, I was contacted by Dr Elizabeth Parr, Senior PGCE tutor for English from Liverpool Hope University. She was keen to give her students the opportunity to gain certification for *Minimus* training. With the support of Alice Case, I delivered 2 x 3-hour training sessions to 12 students, who were enthusiastic and pleased to be able to add the certificate to their portfolio.

Blackpool: 2 schools are delivering Latin following training last term. Peter Wright from Blackpool 6th form College has requested training for 2 more primary schools including a refresher for the original teachers. This is planned for mid-May.

Newcastle University PGCE: Lynne Kay, PGCE tutor for MFL, organised a varied day of training for 31 PGCE students on April 4th. As part of that day, I delivered *Minimus* training.

NUT Event: Charlotte Andrew and I are planning sessions for Latin training in a 2-day conference for NUT members on 23-24 May.

Sue Balmer

***Minimus*: What's happening in Wales**

Minimus Clubs have proved to be very popular in the Crickhowell area this year; the majority of the pupils are determined to continue with their Latin when they progress to the High School in September and want to complete *Minimus Secundus* during Year 7.

In January, a wonderful weekend of Teacher Training was arranged by Dr Evelien Bracke on behalf of the Cymru Wales Classics Hub (CWCH) at the very picturesque Gregynog Hall in mid Wales; the snow was an added bonus. This weekend was designed for current and prospective school teachers wishing to learn how to integrate Classical languages and/or cultures and history into their school curriculum. There was considerable interest in *Minimus* which, I hope, will lead to more schools in North Wales starting Latin. The CWCH second annual conference on February 4th was

held in Swansea University and was very well attended; the very varied programme was enjoyed by all.

A little further afield, I delivered a *Minimus* session at the ARLT's Refresher Day in Solihull at the beginning of March.

Jayne Treasure

Vindolanda

Graham Taylor, archaeological Potter, is building a kiln at Vindolanda. The Vindolanda Trust are also beginning to work on the new replacement buildings in the gardens which are to be used for educational purposes. There are new exhibits at the Roman Army Museum.

Catherine Jarvis

MEC Report:

Minimus Et Cetera (who can be contacted at bmbellmini@aol.com) are the sole distributors of the following *Minimus* goods:-

For Pupils: Bookmarks, Pencils, Erasers, Key rings, Badges and a set of 5 Notelets with envelopes - all @ 50p each.

Postcards @ 20p each, Rulers @ 75p each, Fridge Magnets @ £1 each & Post it pads @ £1.50 each.

Incentive stickers in sheets of 24 @ £1 per sheet.

Minimusculus - A book designed for 3 to 6 year olds introducing them to the family and to Vindolanda. It is mostly in English with simple greetings and numbers in Latin - £5 each.

For Teachers: *Minimus in Practice* - (Part A contains cross curricular links with all subjects in the primary curriculum; Part B contains games, quizzes and fun activities throughout the year - £20.

Minibooks - sets 1, 2 & 3 Each set contains 10 booklets with extra reading for pupils. £18 per set.

Minimus Workbooks - A pupil's workbook designed to accompany *Minimus – Starting out in Latin*. It contains exercises practising the grammar in the *Minimus* textbook. Fantastic value at £1 each for a 24 page A4 workbook.

Minimus becoming Maximus - A record of how *Minimus* came about and the story of the last 20 years of the Primary Latin Project. £10 each.

* Postage and packaging is charged on top of the prices quoted with a minimum charge of £3.

Orders from outside the UK can be accepted and paid for via Paypal. For postal charges please enquire. Do look at the *Minimus* website www.Minimus.com for further details.

Nick Bell

FUTURE EVENTS

Saturday 22nd April

Official Training Day at Birmingham University – Jayne Treasure and I are busy preparing for the next Official *Minimus* Trainers Day, which again is held in the splendid surroundings of the Classics Department at Birmingham University, thanks to the kind support of Elena Theodorakopoulos.

Approximately 20 experienced *Minimus* teachers will gather for a one day course. The morning will be devoted to basic training of *Minimus* and in the afternoon we will look at how to deliver *Minimus* to PGCE students.

Please Note: We do not run Official *Minimus* Training Days as we used to in London, Bristol and other major cities, but we prefer to respond to needs. If you, or members of your school, would like *Minimus* Training please get in touch, initially with me, or with Hilary Hodgson from Classics for All (hodgson.hilary@gmail.com) Hilary and I liaise and decide who would be the most useful trainer for your school.

The Trainers and their areas: (NB They are willing to travel)

Michele Anderson - Hertfordshire

Sue Balmer - Newcastle

Barbara Bell - Bristol

Sarah Bumphrey - Marlborough
Anna Donnelly - London
Arlene Holmes-Henderson - Cambridge
Steve Hunt - Cambridge
Catherine Jarvis - Cumbria
Jane Maguire - Norfolk
Linda Millington - Staffordshire
Maria Oikonomou - Swansea
Caroline Ostler - London (SW)
Julie Prince - Lancaster
Shona Shahryar - Hertfordshire
Linda Soames - Oxfordshire
Jayne Treasure - Wales
Jennifer Watson - Scotland

May

Entries for this year's Mythology Competition should have reached the organiser, Linda Soames (lindasoames@home.3b.co.uk), by the beginning of May. There may still be time when you receive this newsletter for your pupils to submit entries. This year's themes are Odysseus and the Cyclops from book one and Demeter and Persephone from book two. As ever, we are grateful to the Jowett Trustees in Oxford for sponsoring the organisation and judging of this competition and for providing generous prize money in the form of book tokens with specially designed bookplates. Since this is now an international competition, it is a great thrill for pupils to send prize winning entries. Please direct your queries about the competition to Linda Soames direct. See the website for full details.

Linda Soames

May

The next PLP Committee Meeting takes place on Saturday 6th May and we will be delighted to welcome to this my Deputy, Jayne Treasure and Elena Theodorakopoulos who will take on the role of Deputy Chairman.

July 6th

I will be running a training event generously hosted by Bristol Grammar School. Teachers, Head teachers and curriculum planners who are interested in exploring *Minimus* are invited to a basic information day about the book and how to use it. This is part of the Bristol Classics Hub.

July 12th

I will be visiting Orchard Free School to train their staff to use *Minimus*. This school is now an Academy and is doing its bit to spread Latin in the community.

After 40 years of teaching in the Bristol area, most of which was spent actively seeking ways to promote the study of Latin and Greek it is such a delight to see so many enthusiasts who are promoting Latin so eagerly.

Congratulations! The PLP committee has just heard that one of our USA members - Zee Ann Poerio, from Pittsburgh, is to be awarded the prestigious ACL (American Classical League) Merita award at this year's conference in Michigan. This award- the highest that ACL presents – is for "distinguished service to the profession and to ACL" and Zee Ann will join a list of outstanding Classics teachers. It has been a privilege to work with Zee Ann and PLP owes her a very great deal. Although she regularly works on technology and helping teachers with IT, Zee Ann always gives a big plug to *Minimus* at each of her presentations. Well done, Zee Ann!

With many thanks as always for your support, **Barbara Bell**