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Newsletter 45 – October 2011

Dear Supporter,

An exciting new era!

We were honoured to be one of only 8 successful applications to receive a grant from *Classics for All*. I am grateful to our chairman, Jeremy Paterson, and committee member Jane Maguire from Norfolk, who put together the successful bid. Thanks to a substantial grant over 2 years, Jane is now able to head an exciting *Minimus* project in Norfolk. At the time of writing I am about to visit North Walsham and meet teachers and children who are taking part. Jane sends this initial report:-

North Walsham Cluster Latin Project

The Primary Latin Project has been fortunate to receive a grant from *Classics for All* to fund the introduction of Latin into a Norfolk High School and its cluster of Primary Schools. There were 37 first stage grant applications, 19 of which went forward to a second round. Of those, 8 were awarded grants and so we feel very privileged to be amongst them. The terms of the 2-year grant stipulate that Latin will be introduced into state schools in an area where there is very little or no existing Classics teaching. We have established a team of 3 teachers and divide the work between us, according to our experience. Building in sustainability is an important aspect and in each school a Teacher or Teaching Assistant has been identified to work alongside us and eventually take over. The Cluster will work together and support the project.

North Walsham High School is running a voluntary, after-school GCSE course for Year 9 and 10 students, using the Cambridge Latin Course. The response has been excellent and 21 students have started learning Latin, the first for very many years at the school. 7 Primary Schools are taking part (2 in the town and the remaining 5 in rural positions). Around 70 children are involved, from Year 3 to Year 6. They are using *Minimus* and have one 45 minute session per week. Once a term we are holding special events for teachers, parents and children, starting with a Launch Evening in October where Barbara will talk about *Minimus*. Norwich Castle Museum has also received *Classics for All* money and we shall work with them to offer Roman Days in the museum. This is an enormously exciting project and we hope that these Norfolk children will enjoy it and benefit from it. J.M

Within Mouse-Scampering distance of Hadrian's Wall....

I am delighted that we have a new member of the PLP Committee, Catherine Jarvis, who lives and works on Hadrian's Wall. She is doing great work promoting *Minimus* along the wall and she has sent this report on her activities:-

"The Mouse is active along The Wall in 3 rural Church of England Primary Schools called Greenhead, Herdley Bank and Henshaw. All 3 are located within mouse-scampering distance of Hadrian's Wall. Henshaw School is a couple of miles down the road from Vindolanda. All 3 schools are coming together at Henshaw every Monday this term. (Each school takes it in turn to be the "host" school for 1 day a week for 1 school term of the scholastic year. Each school comprises approx. 30 pupils.)

I started teaching 3 *Minimus* lunch time clubs in March this year. To my absolute delight I had about a 50% take-up in each one of them, despite the fact that the pupils had not studied Latin before and that the lunch time class was entirely optional. The children do study Modern Foreign Languages so it was fantastic to introduce to them the roots of those Romance Languages using *Minimus*. They were also very interested in hearing about *Minimus*' adventures with his family at Vindolanda and on Hadrian's Wall. Furthermore they adore turning their names into Latin names.

We've done lots of fun and interesting things together and it's been so good that the Headteacher of the schools has decided to put *Minimus* on the curriculum. So at the beginning of this term I have started with 79 children (in Years 1-4). I've already had 1 group making a testudo/tortoise with some handily discarded computer cardboard boxes. So

there's more fun to come....and what's even better is that I'll be introducing *Minimus* to the Reception Class (who've already seen and heard about the extremely lively mouse in Pre-School) very soon too...." C.J.

I am looking forward to staying with Catherine soon at the B&B that she runs with her husband on Hadrian's Wall. For anyone who would like a perfect base from which to explore the Wall, please contact Catherine at countrymatters@hotmail.com.

Recent Events - Mythology Competition.

The response to this year's Mythology competition has also been most encouraging. I am enormously grateful to Pam Macklin for organising it and to Brian and Diana Sparkes, the judges, who had over 200 entries to assess! Pam has sent the following report:-

Another fantastic response to this year's competition with approximately 200 entries! They came from Australia, Belgium, the UK and the USA, from schools, clubs and home schoolers: some who had entered the competition previously and some who were entering for the first time. As usual the judges were extremely thorough in their considerations. They chose 25 winners. The work associated with so many entries has forced our judges, Diana and Brian Sparkes, to hand the baton over to new judges next year. Our sincere thanks to them for being so committed over the past 3 years. Thanks to the generosity of the Jowett Trustees, the competition sponsors, it was possible for the first time to make runner up awards too. The organiser, Pam Macklin, also had a hectic time correlating the entries prior to the judging; once again thanks all those teachers who encouraged their pupils to enter and then had to photograph and email the entries and accompanying details.

The topics for 2012 will be: *Minimus* – Procrustes and *Minimus Secundus* – The Judgment of Paris. Full details, amended rules and closing date will be available at the end of the autumn term via the website or by email from the organiser pam@nethaus.co.uk. P.M.

I do urge teachers to encourage their *Minimus* groups to take part in this competition. It need not take up precious classroom time and children certainly love the Greek Myths. They feel very honoured if they win a prize in this international competition!

Home-schooling *Minimus* group in North Wales

In August I was delighted to visit a home-schooling group which meets near Ruabon in North Wales. We had a very happy afternoon doing some drama, singing and Latin. The mixed age range (4 to 16) was quite a challenge, but they all seemed to enjoy themselves. It was a beautiful part of the world to explore and I am planning a return visit.

September JACT Inset Day

I very much enjoyed being part of the recent JACT inset day. This was a most imaginative day when Classics teachers had the opportunity to visit 3 key London venues and to explore ways of incorporating artefacts, paintings, inscriptions etc. into their teaching. I enjoyed meeting 30 JACT members, many of whom are using *Minimus*, but some had just come to learn more about it and about Vindolanda. I was based in the British Museum and we looked at the Vindolanda tablets and the famous Regina tombstone and discussed how to use such objects in our *Minimus* teaching. As always, *Minimus* teachers continue to be amazed seeing these tiny tablets for the first time.

Future Events - Vindolanda

I will soon be visiting the North East to attend a reception for Lindsay Allason Jones, who has just retired from the Newcastle Museum of Antiquities. Many of you will know and have used her books on Roman Britain and Roman Women and the *Minimus* books were greatly improved by Lindsay's scholarship. With her meticulous attention to detail she helped Helen Forte and me to create a much more accurate picture of the Vindolanda family both visually and in the stories.

While staying on Hadrian's Wall, I am fortunate to have the opportunity to visit Vindolanda to see the newly-refurbished museum. Some of the tablets have been returned to Vindolanda from the British Museum and I am looking forward to updating my knowledge of this wonderful site.

Training Days

As usual we will be running 4 Saturday training days for all those who are interested in using *Minimus*. Please note the following dates and venues:

Sat 26 th November 2011	– James Allen’s Girls’ School, Dulwich, London
Sat 28 th January 2012	– Haberdashers’ Monmouth School for Girls
Sat 17 th March 2012	– The Croft School, Stratford on Avon
Sat 16 th June 2012	– James Allen’s Girl’s School, Dulwich, London

Do consider attending a training day. They are still reasonably priced (£60) and those attending seem to find them practical and encouraging as they begin their *Minimus* work. I am looking forward to our training day at Stratford in March and I am grateful to Lisa Chowne for agreeing to host the day at The Croft School. This is a new venue for *Minimus* and I am sure no one needs much encouragement to visit such a splendid centre. If you are unable to attend any of these venues, but feel that you would benefit from some training in your area, please try to gather a group of teachers and I am perfectly willing to run a more localised event in your area. Similarly if you would like me to visit your school, do get in touch with Nicola Prince (nicolaprince99@hotmail.com) and ask for a flyer on school visits. I am now semi- retired and have a little more time for such visits.

Adverts from Teachers

1. Sadly our school has closed and Latin Club is no more. I have 14 copies of *Minimus* Book 1 plus a Teacher's Resource Book, all in good condition, which I'd love to pass on to anyone who can use them. There are also various other related books and resources which may be of interest. Free, or make a donation to Primary Latin Project. I'm in Mid Sussex, happy to deliver if not too far. Please contact Gerry Burgess, 01444 811628

stevegerryburgess@gmail.com

2. Latin Teacher Needed! Parents at The Oratory RC Primary School are looking for a Latin teacher to instruct between 12 and 20 children in a new Latin Club. This would ideally happen after school once a week from 3.30 to 4.30 and would be for girls and boys aged 9 and up. The school is a small primary on Cale Street in Chelsea SW3. If you are interested please call Laura Newland on 07773 226017 or email mrs_newland@yahoo.co.uk

3. In my last newsletter, I appealed for teachers who would be willing for their school to be designated as a *Beacon School* and who would be willing to offer support and help to other teachers. So far I have heard from just 3 teachers who have offered their time in this way. I get the impression that some of you think this may be a big commitment of time and understandably time is always at a premium for busy teachers. May I stress that this job would take as much or as little time as you feel able to give. My aim would be to have 20 such *Beacon Schools* in different parts of the country, so I hope that more of you will consider this. If you think it may be possible but would like to discuss it in more detail, please get in touch. I am hoping to organise a meeting for *Beacon School* teachers later in the year to see how we can encourage the uptake of *Minimus* and support *Minimus* teachers in our areas.

I have been greatly encouraged recently by the number of enquiries I am still receiving from those embarking on new *Minimus* clubs and from some of you who have managed to put *Minimus* onto the timetable in your schools. As soon as you express an interest in teaching *Minimus*, the Primary Latin Project will support you by offering training, a grant to buy the books, a set of teaching support sheets, help through the website etc. It may well be that you know others who are teaching *Minimus* but are unaware of the support that the project can give. Please do urge them to contact the PLP administrator (nicolaprince99@hotmail.com) to join the mailing list and to receive all the support.

Please note that this newsletter is only distributed electronically and approximately ¾ of those who used to receive it will no longer do so because we have not received their email address. I would love this newsletter to spread its circulation; please do help this to happen by urging teachers to get in touch with their email address.

And finally, one of the highlights of my career was directing *Minimus the Musical* last summer and then again at the International School in Geneva in November. I am now excited to report that I will be directing it again at the school where I now teach, Haberdashers’ Monmouth School for Girls, during the first week of July 2012. If you missed it first time round and can get to Monmouth, please book July 4th in your diaries. There is a lot of work still to do, but it is work that I happily embrace. Please watch the website for more details of the Musical. There will be a matinee performance on that day and it would be splendid if those living in the vicinity were able to bring *Minimus* clubs and classes for an end of year treat.

With my thanks as always for your support.

Barbara Bell