

Mrs Barbara Bell
Director, Primary Latin Project
82 Swiss Drive
Bristol BS3 2RW
Tel 0117 953 1819
bmbellmini@aol.com
www.minimus.com
Follow us on Twitter:
@minimus_latin

Newsletter 54 – September 2014

Dear Supporter,

So much for retirement! As everyone predicted, retirement is turning out to be extremely busy. This has been an extraordinary summer, mostly involved in training events. To train people to use my book is enjoyable and a great privilege.

The highlight of the summer was returning to the American Classical League (ACL) Conference held this year in Virginia, USA. It is 6 years since Nick and I attended this event and it was great to be back, to meet up with old friends and make new ones. This is a prestigious conference attracting several hundred teachers from all over the States. I was delighted to work with 2 of the PLP committee, Ruth Anne Besse (Laurel, Maryland) and Zee Ann Poerio (Pittsburgh) to deliver 2 x three hour training sessions to 14 delegates. I gave the overview of the book and the support available from PLP, Ruth Anne focused on the teaching of grammar through Minimus and Zee Ann gave presentations on using technology in the Minimus classroom. We all very much enjoyed our group of delegates whom we got to know quite well and we were sad to say goodbye. In the main programme I also did a session on using music and drama in the Minimus classroom, it was excellent seeing these teachers act out the first story of Minimus. Accompanied on the piano by the wonderful Stan Farrow we also sang several Latin songs, including Senex MacDonald, which never fails! Finally they became Batavian Soldiers and marched round the room singing the opening song of the chorus from Minimus the Musical. I also attended the open meeting of ETC (Excellence Through Classics) the body which is responsible for delivering Classics at elementary level in the USA. I was pleased to pass on news about the development of Minimus and current issues, I explained our creation of Minimus Advocates (local reps who promote Minimus and support teachers in their area) and urged American Teachers to join the scheme. My aim is to create a Minimus rep in every state in America! So far 6 are represented: Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina, Pittsburgh, Utah and Virginia. If you teach Minimus in the USA and your state is not yet represented and you would like to become a Minimus Advocate please get in touch. This need not be an onerous job and need not take up a great deal of time.

Other Training

In **May** I visited Our Lady of Victory's Catholic School in Hitchin, Herts where I ran a twilight session. The school has run an after school club for some years and hopes to expand its use of Minimus. In **June** I trained all the staff for a whole day at Otterbourne Primary School near

Winchester, Otterbourne has decided to make Latin its designated language from September and it was excellent to see their enthusiastic approach to teaching Latin. Also in June I took part in 2 Classics in the Community workshops, first in Oxford and then in Birmingham. 6 of these took place around the country and delegates were given comprehensive information about all the resources available in teaching Classics as well as workshops on teaching Minimus and teaching Greek at primary level. Jane Maguire represented PLP at the workshop in Cambridge and Aisha Khan-Evans and Steve Hunt also spoke about Minimus and its resources at the workshops at Kings College, London and I'm grateful to Mai Musié for giving Minimus such support and so many opportunities in these workshops; the numbers attending were small but the schools represented were utterly committed to making a success of primary Latin.

On Saturday 7th June we had our official Minimus Training Day and as always I'm grateful to Marion Gibbs for hosting this at James Allen's Girls' School in Dulwich, London, 19 delegates attended. Finally in June I trained teachers who are part of the Solihull project; exciting things are happening in Solihull and I'll leave it to the project leader, Anna Donnelly, to tell you what it going on:

SOLIHULL PROJECT REPORT: Momentous. Well, that's how some might describe the statutory imperative to teach Languages to our children from the age of seven. Like, I suspect, the majority of the teaching profession however, the inclusion of 'Ancient Languages' in the 2014 Curriculum seemed a little too far-fetched. However, my background in English and my current position as English Advisor to twenty schools in North Solihull made me ask the question: Was it possible for us to deliver Latin? Pouring over the changes to the English curriculum, with the emphasis on word derivation, etymology and morphology from Year three, the dots seemed to join up; as 60 percent of our English Language was based on Latin and the new requirements specifically instruct teachers to investigate those roots. Teaching them, at least in part, through Latin, seemed a 'no-brainer'. Links between words and shades of meaning could be investigated, supporting linguistic deduction and a wider vocabulary, organised in an interconnected framework. Furthermore, the history and art curriculum seemed to offer exciting possibilities for meaningful cross-curricular work.

Like all of my favourite ideas, including my discovery of Minimus, it began with a hopeful email. Elena Theodorakopulos from the Classics Department at The University of Birmingham listened to my desire to bring Latin to North Solihull, one of the most economically and socially deprived areas outside of London. With Elena's support and guidance, a successful £10,000 bid to 'Classics for All' was achieved. Contacts with Solihull School were made to introduce the Cambridge Latin Course to teachers whom I had corralled into the project by joining the dots for them, as I had done myself several weeks before. However, as anyone who has used the Cambridge Latin Course Book One, I realised that Primary students needed something a little more accessible. Enter: Barbara Bell's 'Minimus' into the discussion. Exploring the book, teaching suggestions and resources and the fabulous ibook on my own, I had found what I had been looking for! A real family in the Roman Empire, or to be more precise, at Vindolanda next to Hadrian's Wall with characters that young students can connect with and a cannon of Classical stories brought to life in English, but rooted in Classics. Brilliant!

So, where are we now? One day of training with Barbara was completed in on 14th July and another is planned on December 1st. Teachers are downloading the app and considering how they will make it look in their school and are well placed to take Minimus on a test drive in

September.

Anna Donnelly

I'm looking forward to returning to Solihull later in the year to see how they are getting on. It is especially exciting to see teachers who know no Latin themselves embracing the challenge of teaching it and learning with the children.

As well as these training events, Nick and I enjoyed visiting St Alfege's Primary School in Greenwich on a beautiful sunny day in June. This school has run a Minimus club for many years and it was excellent to work with all the children.

The rest of the PLP committee have also been extremely busy this summer and here are their reports:-

Reports and Notices

MYTHOLOGY COMPETITION 2014: *From a total of 89 entries this year we were able to award 35 prizes. International entries came from Chicago, Tasmania and Korea!*

The Art and Creative Writing prize winners (including runners up) came from Channing Junior School, Chicago Grammar School, Kitebrook House School, Manchester Grammar School, Manuden Primary School, Millfield Primary School, Northwood College, The Red House School, The Richard Pate and Vinehall School.

Manchester Grammar School was given the school prize for the best set of entries.

The winning DVD's were produced by sixth formers teaching primary age pupils.

King's College worked with Hollymount Primary and Nottinghill and Ealing High School worked with both NHEHS Junior School and North Ealing Primary School.

The winning entries will be on the website shortly.

The committee thanks the judges and sends congratulations to everyone who took part – as usual the standard was very high.

Pam Macklin

I do urge you all to take part in this competition next year where the prescribed myths will be "Echo and Narcissus" for those using book one and "Romulus and Remus" for those using Minimus Secundus. We were delighted to hear from the teacher at Manchester Grammar School who told us how excited the children were when their prizes were announced and they heard that they had won the overall best school prize. We give a lot of prizes in this competition and it would be excellent if someone at your school won one. It is a prestigious achievement, after all this is now an international competition.

NORFOLK REPORT, AUGUST 2014: *Schools involved in both CfA funded Norfolk projects from September 2011 – July 2014 have been a total of 3 High Schools and 13 primaries (all state schools). Two of the High Schools now have Latin established as part of their language provision in Year 7 and one offers it as an after-school GCSE course (another is aiming to do this, but currently has problems staffing it). The third school has been unfortunately slow to get started, but from September hopes to establish a Latin club.*

From these three schools, seven teachers have taken part in training. These have been existing MFL staff (apart from one Drama teacher) who had some experience of learning Latin at school and an

interest in delivering it. Steve Hunt (PGCE Cambridge University) has led three separate sessions to train teachers to deliver the Cambridge Latin Course; these have all received extremely positive feedback with teachers stating that their initial nervousness has been dispelled and that they are really enjoying their teaching. However, it is clear that considerably more training is needed in High Schools than in primary schools, in particular (and not surprisingly) beyond Book 3 to GCSE level. Two of the Headteachers have proved to be very supportive and keen to embed Latin in their schools and have given freely of their time to discuss progress. The third is reported as being supportive, but contact has proved difficult.

Areas of difficulty have sometimes been identifying suitable teachers and timetabling (some MFL staff have been unhappy at losing some of their time). "Marketing" a GCSE course needs some thought. Of the thirteen primary schools, all have stated that it is their wish to continue with Minimus wherever possible (and one extra one will be starting). Schools have varied in size from 30 to 300 pupils and the children have come from Year 2 to Year 6. Since the start of the projects there has been a clear and exciting move away from teaching Latin to small groups and towards whole class, mixed ability teaching. Of the schools starting with small groups, some selected G&T pupils, one school selected children in need of extra support with grammar and another formed their groups on the basis of children submitting written applications to learn Latin. The move towards whole class teaching has been partly the result of the success of the work in small groups and partly influenced by the new curriculum requirements for primary languages. One school moved in one go from a G&T group of 8 to the whole of their Year 6 (60 children). The benefits of choosing Latin as a Key Stage 2 language must surely make it an attractive option to schools, as no specialist teacher is needed and there is considerable support including financial. There have been interesting discussions about the best time for Minimus, some schools using it as language extension and enrichment for their Year 6 children and others preferring it as an introduction to language learning in Years 3 and 4. At present none of our schools is intending it as their sole KS2 language. It was suggested by one school that Schemes of Work for Minimus would be helpful (as these are readily available for MFL) and these are currently being written, funded by CfA; they should soon be on the website.

Training for primary school teachers and teaching assistants has been ongoing, as schools wanted new staff trained. Barriers to progress have included schools having unfavourable Ofsted reports, feeling that they needed to prioritise and therefore temporarily stopping Latin; staff leaving or going on sick leave have also been problems (highlighting the need for more than one teacher to be trained).

The partnership with Norwich Castle Museum remains very strong and mutually beneficial. As well as running special days for schools, they have been generous in providing accommodation for meetings, including a whole day for the April PLP meeting. Latin events and workshops were staged alongside the BM Roman exhibition.

Classics for All have been extremely supportive of the Norfolk projects, funding not only the projects themselves but also extra training days and the writing of Minimus Schemes of Work. They arranged a meeting with Schools Minister Elizabeth Truss at the DfE to discuss the future of Classics. Although the meeting was not particularly enlightening (Ms Truss had not heard of Minimus and her only comment was "Ugh, I don't like mice!"), it did lead to the opportunity to film a podcast about Latin for the TES Week of Languages. It was also clarified that, contrary to some interpretations, schools may teach more

than one language at Key Stage 2.

There seems to be a significant amount of research going on at the moment by, amongst others, CfA's Carolyn Foreman and David Tristram, Arlene Holmes-Henderson (Classics in Communities) and Steve Hunt. Hopefully this can all be put together. We may find it easier now to obtain hard data from schools as Latin is introduced as an "official" language.

This is undoubtedly a time of opportunity, although a degree of tenacity is sometimes required to establish and then maintain a commitment to Latin. Even more publicity would be welcome.

Jane Maguire

GRANT FUND REPORT: From the beginning of April to the beginning of August, 33 schools have received a grant to teach 'Minimus - there are 30 state schools and 3 independent schools. This has been particularly pleasing since the numbers cover just four months and not the usual six months between written reports. After the government's recent policy on languages for primary schools, which begins in September 2014, many schools have chosen to teach Latin in their curriculum. The applications are:

BERKSHIRE: St Mary and All Saints C. of E. Primary School, READING; St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary School, MAIDENHEAD; CAMBRIDGESHIRE: John Clare Primary School, HELPSTON, PETERBOROUGH; Great Wilbraham Primary School, GREAT WILBRAHAM; CHESHIRE: St Mary's R.C. Primary School, CONGLETON; All Saints Upton C. E. Primary School, WIDNES; DEVON: St Leonard's C. of E. Primary School, EXETER; GREATER MANCHESTER: Rushcroft Primary School, SHAW, OLDHAM; HERTFORDSHIRE: High Beeches Primary School, HARPENDEN KENT: River Primary School, DOVER; Bromstone Primary School, BROADSTAIRS; St Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School, DOVER; LONDON: Radnor House School, TWICKENHAM; New King's Primary School, LONDON SW6 4LY; Gallions Primary School, NEWHAM; St Helen's College, HILLINGDON; Barnes Primary School, BARNES; MIDDLESEX: The Rosary Catholic Primary School, HESTON; Hillside Junior School, NORTHWOOD; Alperton Junior School, WEMBLEY; Bush Hill Park Primary School, ENFIELD; NORFOLK: Mendham Primary School, MENDHAM HARLESTON; Hevingham Primary School, HEVINGHAM; NORTH SOMERSET: Fairfield Independent Primary School, BACKWELL; RUTLAND: Exton and Greetham C. E. Primary School, EXTON; SUFFOLK: Martlesham Beacon Hill Primary School, MARTLESHAM; SURREY: St Peter's Catholic Primary School, LEATHERHEAD; St James the Great R.C. Primary School, THORNTON HEATH; WEST MIDLANDS: Lozell's Primary School, LOZELLS, BIRMINGHAM; Jubilee Academy, WALSALL; Marston Green Junior School, MARSTON GREEN; YORKSHIRE: Mount Pleasant C. of E. Junior School, MARKET WEIGHTON; Meadstead Primary School, ROYSTON, BARNSLEY

Very many thanks to the Classical Association for their extremely generous funds to help with all these applications, to Diana and Bob who give me constant support and very speedy replies, to Rachael who is always reliable in writing out the cheques quickly and to Jerry who keeps an eye on how the funds are going – and, last but not least, to Minimus, the little mouse who is visiting so many children in so many places!

Wendy Hunt

MINIMUS WEBSITE AND TWITTER REPORT: *Minimus has nearly 1500 followers on Twitter (@Minimus_Latin). We tweet in Latin, and post the odd mouse drawing, as well as helping people with all sorts of Minimus-related questions.*

Since the last newsletter, there have been several developments on the website. We received a lot of requests for a vocabulary test facility. I have now found a suitable format, and there are practice exercises and self-tests on the words from the first six chapters, as well as an animal noun matching exercise and one labelling parts of the body. The link is http://www.minimus-etc.co.uk/Vocab/Vocab%20tests/Vocab_test_page.htm. These quizzes work on an iPad and iPhone as well as on a PC. I would be happy to hear any feedback on these!

I have also been working on a 'Make your own Vindolanda tablet' game, in which you can drag cursive letters onto a 'tablet'. The current version is experimental, and only seems to work in Firefox and Internet Explorer, but I hope to iron out the bugs soon. The link is <http://www.minimus-etc.co.uk/VindolandaTablet.html>.

On the Minimus blog, I have posted a detailed account of my latest Archaeology Experiment, which I conducted with my Year 5 pupils last year. I have also put up a Latin play, along with the pupils' illustrations. <http://minimusthemouse.blogspot.co.uk/>

Any technological Minimus fans should really investigate the iBook version! It is particularly useful for teachers with access to an iPad and projector, or for homeschooling families.

I am still plotting a Minimus app!

Helen Forte

There has been one change to the PLP committee. Richard Waddington has left us following his promotion to Senior Management at Northwood Prep School, Congratulations Richard! I am very grateful for all he has done for the project, and particularly in setting up the Advocates scheme. In his place I welcome Michelle Anderson from Beechwood Park School, a most experienced and dynamic Minimus teacher who will take over the running of the Advocates.

New Resources

1. **A sheet on Latin pronunciation** Understandably those new to teaching Minimus are anxious about how to pronounce Latin, especially if they have never learnt it themselves, Jonathan Powell, Professor of Latin at Royal Holloway College, has written a detailed fascinating account of how Latin was pronounced, focusing on Latin in Roman Britain in the 2nd Century AD. There are 2 versions of this document, a shorter version for non-specialists and the full version for those who wish to go into more detail. These are available now and can be downloaded from the Minimus website. (www.minimus.com)

2. **ibook** - *Minimus* is available as an ibook and can be bought from the Apple Bookstore; see Helen's report above.

3. **Schemes of Work** - Schools have been asking us for Schemes of Work as a guide for those new to teaching *Minimus*. I am grateful to Sara Wilkinson from Norfolk who has spent time this summer compiling Schemes of Work. These are arranged for all 12 Chapters of *Minimus* and are available now on the *Minimus* website.

Resources in Progress

1. **Minibooks** – Helen Forte and I had great fun writing a third set of Minibooks when we got together in August. The stories are written and have been arranged into 10 small books as usual. All Helen has to do now is draw 140 pictures (her words!) As usual these books do not advance the grammar of *Minimus* but are there as extra reading material. They are however, slightly more demanding than the second set, involving slightly longer stories and more vocabulary. Sneak preview – in one story Flavia is helping her twins to walk and talk. Did you know that the Romans used baby walkers?! This was new to me until Helen showed me a painting of a child pushing a sustentaculum (lovely word) and this forms the subject of one book. These are being printed by Whitehall Publishers in Bristol as with the other 2 sets of Minibooks, and will be sold through our business *Minimus Et Cetera*.

I am working on my account of the extraordinary *Minimus* story – *Minimus* the first 20 years, and after a productive week in Sorrento, just 3 of the 20 Chapters remain to be written. I hope that both this and the Minibooks will be available in time to buy for Christmas. Watch the website for their availability and I will also circulate the membership by e-mail when they can be bought.

2. **Minimus Et Cetera** – May I urge you to order early for Christmas? Many teachers like to give small *Minimus* gifts to their classes at the end of the Autumn term, we do want to get stock out to you in good time for the end of term but sometimes this is quite a challenge. Please order as soon as you can – thank you.

3. **Mikromus** – It has been exciting to be involved in a small way with the development of the Primary Greek Course – *Mikromus*. Claire Marie Roxby has at last been able to have a sabbatical term and give a substantial block of time to writing her course. It will be aimed at children aged 10 – 12 and will be based in Athens. Claire-Marie has quite rightly focused on completing her first draft of the text and I understand that the first section is with her artist

awaiting illustrations. She hopes that this part will be ready for initial viewing soon. There is a long way to go but it will be exciting to watch the course take shape at last. Thank-you to so many schools who offered to test the material. In the end 36 schools wanted to be involved in the testing programme, Claire Marie will probably select 5 or 6 and I hope you will be hearing from her soon. We wish her well in this exciting development and I will include a brief report in each newsletter.

4. **2 Advertisements**

1. **Summer Schools** – Many of you reading this will be new to teaching *Minimus* and possibly new to Latin. If you get the bug, may I urge you to consider attending a summer school next year? For an intense week or two you can devote yourself to improving your own Latin and you may even want to go on to learn Classical Greek! If you Google ‘Classical Summer Schools’ you will find several taking place all over the country, I would particularly stress the summer school at St Johns’ College, Durham where you can focus on Latin or Greek or both for one week and the Latin Summer School held at Wells Cathedral School in Somerset where you can learn Latin exclusively for 10 days.
2. **Herculaneum Society** – May I recommend to those of you passionate about the Bay of Naples that you join the Herculaneum Society? For a modest sum of money you will be helping to support the aim of excavating Herculaneum further, you will receive a lovely annual newsletter and you will be invited to events such as lectures and conferences which focus on Herculaneum and Pompeii. The secretary, Krystyna Cech keeps us regularly informed of TV programmes, lectures, etc on Pompeii and Herculaneum which may be of interest. Every 2 years the society organises a conference based in Herculaneum, for more details contact Krystyna on krystyna.cech@classics.ox.ac.uk

Future Events

The PLP committee and I continue to be very busy in the Autumn. We must take the opportunities presented to us by the government’s ruling of compulsory languages in primary schools. *Minimus* seems to be on a roll at present and so many people I meet, who are nothing to do with teaching, say things like “Oh I hear that Latin is coming back” “I hear Latin is very popular again” and this is music to my ears!

In August I had a very enjoyable breakfast meeting with Helen Aberdeen, a former MFL colleague from Clifton High School in Bristol, who now trains PGCE students to teach French. Her colleague Lorna Smith, who runs the PGCE English course, also lined up. They are keen to include a Latin module in their PGCE courses. If funding can be secured I will be working with their students to inform them about *Minimus* and train them to teach it. This would be another string to their teaching bow. Watch this space for more details if this project takes off.

September – I have just returned from a great day at Thameside Primary School in Essex where I trained all 20 staff to use Minimus. It is exciting to think of the whole school starting Latin today and being taught mostly by non-specialists who will be learning with the children. I will be returning to them in March to see how they are getting on and provide further support.

13th September – The PLP committee meet in Bristol

18th September – A twilight session for staff at a school in Leytonstone in East London

29th September – A days training at Pimlico Academy in London

1st October – Training staff at a School in Derby

3rd October – I'm grateful to Lorna Robinson of the Iris Project who has invited us to have a Minimus stall at the Oxford Classics Centre Literature Festival of Ancient Tales. This family event celebrates literature and there will be some impressive speakers including the poet Carol Ann Duffy. Minimus is glad to be represented. (See programme of events below)

6th October – I am excited to be working with PGCE students being trained to teach Modern Foreign Languages in York. Suzie Bewell their teacher, is keen that they should know about developments in Latin.

3rd November – I will be spending the day at Reading University working with Classics students.

8th November – Minimus Training Day at JAGS ** If you would like to attend this day, please download an application form from the website (www.minimus.com)

1st December – I am looking forward to visiting the Solihull Project for a second INSET day to see how they are getting on and deal with any issues that have arisen in their first term of teaching Minimus.

Spring Term – I will be holding another Minimus Training Day at The Red Maids School in Bristol (my old school) again this will be particularly aimed at those new to Minimus but everyone is welcome. An application form can be downloaded from the website.

14th March 2015 – The Minimus Advocates will be having their second conference in Bristol.

If you would like me to visit your school or run some form of training event for your staff, please get in touch.

Festival of Ancient Tales at the East Oxford Community Classics Centre, 3rd October, 3.15 – 7.00

The East Oxford Community Classics Centre, hosted at Cheney School and run by educational charity The Iris Project, has been open to the public for a full year and in that time has been running a large number of free workshops, evening classes, projects and themed events for the local community and beyond on a wide range of Classical topics.

To celebrate its first birthday, we are holding the Festival of Ancient Tales! All aspects of the festival are free, and all ages are most welcome to attend. From 3.15 - 5.30pm there will be activities, stalls, dance,

drama and a large multisensory exhibition! There will also be live music performances by musician Anna Neale from her album "River Man", inspired by Pompeii.

We are also hosting the following author talks (please click on author's name for more details):

3.15 - 3.40 - [Caroline Lawrence, author of the Roman Mysteries series](#)

3.50 - 4.15 - [Adele Geras, author of "Troy", "Ithaka", "Dido" and many other novels](#)

4.25 - 5.50 - [Lindsey Davis, author of the "Falco" detective series](#)

5.00 - 5.25 - [Tom Holland, author of "Rubicon", "Persian Fire", "Millenium" and many other books](#)

6.00 - 7.00 - performance by Poet Laureate [Carol Ann Duffy](#), with music by John Sampson

No booking is required for attending the festival itself but author talks do require booking, so if you would like attend any of the author talks and/or performance by Carol Ann Duffy, please book by emailing info@irisproject.org.uk

Drinks in the library also require booking.

We look forward to seeing you there! See www.irisproject.org.uk for further details.

Sales

At the time of writing, sales of *Minimus* are just over 146,000 copies worldwide. It seems probable that the significant milestone of 150,000 copies will be reached by the summer of 2015, and that will certainly be something to celebrate! Watch this space.

You may be interested to know the countries where *Minimus* is being taught:

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cayman Islands, Denmark, Dubai, France, Germany, Guernsey, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Isle of Canna, Italy, Jersey, Kenya, Macedonia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Serbia & Montenegro, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka and USA.

I hope you feel as encouraged as I do by so much exciting news. It is only possible to sustain and develop this project with the on-going support of the committee:-

Barbara Bell, Nick Bell, Ruth Ann Besse, Helen Forte, Wendy Hunt, Catherine Jarvis, Pam Macklin, Jane Maguire, Jeremy Paterson, Zee Ann Poerio, and Michele Anderson - and in particular the PLP administrator and my PA, Rachael Jones, who makes sterling attempts to keep me in some sort of order.

If you are excited by all these events, any donations, however small, that you can make to support this flurry of activity will be very much appreciated. If you are a tax payer please complete a gift aid form to stretch your money further.

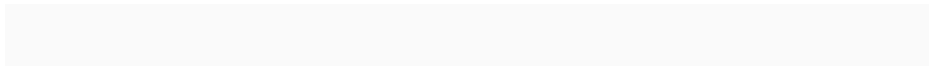
With my thanks, as always, for your interest and support.

Barbara Bell

[Minimus etc - Minimus in Practice form](#)

[Minimus etc order form](#)

[Training Day Form - Bristol, 7th February](#)



[unsubscribe from this list](#)