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Newsletter 57 – September 2015

Dear Supporter,

Sad loss of 2 great *Minimus* Supporters

Some of you may remember our oldest *Minimus* teacher, **Helen Harris**. She attended one of our splendid *Minimus* Days at the British Museum on her 85th birthday! She brought her *Minimus* club with her and when I learnt that it was her birthday, the whole assembled company sang “Happy Birthday” to Helen in Latin! This story was told at her funeral as part of the tribute given by her grandson, Myles. Nick and I were so pleased to be able to attend her funeral as Helen was a committed supporter of *Minimus* for many years. I thought it remarkable that such a scholarly lady, a Cambridge graduate, after a lifetime of teaching Classics at secondary level was able to embark on primary teaching, showing the same passion and enthusiasm for Latin to young children. She loved working with them and they loved her, as was evident on that British Museum occasion. She was still teaching at the age of 90! Helen also gave generous financial support to the project and I felt thrilled and humbled to discover that all donations at her funeral were to be given to the Primary Latin Project.

I was also sad to learn recently of the death of **Frank Sharratt**. Many of you will also remember Frank; he was a member of Friends of Classics, where he first heard about *Minimus*. He gave very generously when I was raising money to launch the project and continued to do so over many years. He was also immensely encouraging whenever we met, which was usually in some of London's classiest restaurants!

The project has lost 2 great supporters and we send our gratitude and sympathy to their families.

Recent Events

This has been a great summer. The teaching of English and Modern Foreign Language PGCE students was stimulating, fun and very rewarding; in the end 39 students completed the *Minimus* course and received certificates. The feedback from them was most encouraging, and I quote from Ali Griffiths, an MFL student who had done no Latin before this, “*We all love Minimus, I can't wait to get to my first job and see if I can introduce it in some way.*” The Head of the School of Education was very pleased that so many completed the course and I have been asked to repeat this module next year.

***Minimus* in the Midlands**

Anna Donnelly continues to encourage and support *Minimus* teachers in the Solihull Project and I was pleased to train a small group in Solihull in June. Kelly Vaughan, who attended last year's Solihull training session, is part of the Academy Transformation Trust and she set up a training day in Birmingham. I worked with 8 secondary teachers who were all considering different ways of using *Minimus* at the lower end of the secondary school. Following that day all 8 have decided to implement *Minimus* in their academies across the country.

***Minimus* in Manchester**

In late June I was pleased to speak to a group of teachers and students in Manchester. John Taylor and David Langslow at the University are exploring ways to spread Latin in local schools, both primary and secondary. I took the

last workshop in a series and was most encouraged by the mixed audience who attended. We had university staff, teachers from both secondary and primary, from both state and independent schools and students from the university, not all Classicists. Their common passion was wanting to learn more about Latin and how to deliver it. I can't imagine that such a group would have assembled early in my career. All credit to the team at Manchester for stressing the common ground that the group shared.

Minimus in Somerset

In July, Nick and I were delighted to accept an invitation to visit a *Minimus* club at Winscombe Primary School, in Somerset. This was their last session of the year and their teacher, Claire Green, is moving to another school. She had organised with the children a Roman Banquet, which we thoroughly enjoyed. The children then asked me questions about writing a book and this happy occasion was rounded off with a rousing rendition of Senex MacDonald! It is very good news that Claire's replacement intends to continue the *Minimus* club, even though she is a non-Latinist herself.

Minimus in Bath

My final *Minimus* event of this academic year was a visit to Bath where a group of American teachers were staying at Bath University. This was part of an extensive tour of the sites of Roman Britain as most of the group were Cambridge Latin Course teachers. They were soon off to Hadrian's Wall and Vindolanda and asked me to tell them a little about it. It was great to meet some familiar faces from our visits to the American Classical League Conference last year as well as meeting new teachers. If you wish to read more about these events and see some pictures, check **Barbara's News** on the *Minimus* website where I have attempted to write a blog. I must be honest - I have no idea what a blog is, but I send my brief reports and photographs to Catherine Jarvis on the PLP Committee who kindly puts them onto the website for me!

Vindolanda Weekend

I am also grateful to Catherine for all her hard work in organising a celebratory weekend for the PLP Committee at Vindolanda. It was a rather wet and cold May weekend, but this did not stop us enjoying a dinner to celebrate sales of 150,000 copies of *Minimus* as well as excellent visits to the Vindolanda site itself and the Roman Army Museum.

Keeping our records straight

We endeavour to keep our Database up to date. If your school is giving up teaching *Minimus*, or if you as a teacher are moving schools or retiring, do let us know. If the school has a new teacher to teach *Minimus* please do give us their details. We have quite a number of newsletters which are simply addressed to 'The *Minimus* Teacher' and we have no idea if they end up in the bin or actually go to a person at the school. We really would appreciate information which will help us keep our records straight.

Minimus Et Cetera

We are sorry to report that we are having to increase our postage charges, particularly for parcels going abroad, as we have not been covering our postage costs recently. Parcels to America will now cost £10.00 for example. We will amend our order forms; please make sure that you use an up-to-date order form.

The PLP Committee works extremely hard and I am so grateful for all their support in many different ways; here are their reports:

UPDATE ON NORFOLK PROJECTS (SUMMER 2015)

Between 2011 and 2014 a total of 16 schools were funded by Classics for All to introduce Latin. A survey was conducted this summer to see what the situation is in each school now.

The 16 had increased to 19, this being the result of more schools opting in or teachers moving on and starting Latin in new schools. At present there are 10 schools (3 High Schools and 7 primaries) actively teaching Latin as part of the curriculum. The High Schools are using CLC and the primaries *Minimus*. Of the ones not at present continuing, 2 have definite plans to restart next term and all the others say Latin is just on hold and that they hope to restart in the future. All feedback has been positive. A training day is planned for the autumn for schools wanting to train new teachers.

We have continued to work with Norwich Castle Museum and their Roman Days now contain *Minimus* specific vocabulary in all the activities. A local Garden Centre has started an exciting dig as there is believed to be a Roman villa on the site; the owner is a Classics enthusiast, who immediately bought a copy of *Minimus* and aims to involve local schools in the project.

Main points to emerge from the Norfolk projects:

- The majority of the schools are still teaching Latin.
- Of those who are not, no school has given the reason that they didn't like it or didn't find it worthwhile.
- Reasons for not currently teaching Latin (primaries): teacher/TA has left school; teacher/TA off long-term sick; school needed to prioritise English and Maths as a result of Ofsted report; problems with timetabling.
- In High Schools there is an issue with finding teachers able and willing to teach to GCSE.
- In all the schools where Latin is being taught, it is as part of the timetable, at least once a week (with the exception of the voluntary GCSE courses)
- Meetings or active networks are needed to exchange experiences and keep up with developments
- It remains essential to stay in touch with schools and to keep the offer of further training and support open.
- In one group of schools it is significant to note that the High School reports increased interest in GCSE from Year 8 students. The majority of these are children who had two years of "*Minimus*" in their primary schools at the start of the project.

Jane Maguire

There are schools in East Anglia looking for teachers willing and able to teach Latin up to GCSE (either as part of the curriculum or as part of after-school provision). Whereas it seems to be very possible to train a school's MFL teachers to teach to CLC Book Two or Three, the expertise and confidence needed to go beyond this level can be a real challenge. If there are any part-time or retired Latin teachers who might be interested in discussing doing a small amount of work in Norfolk or Suffolk, please contact Jane Maguire (sjmaguire0401@aol.com).

GRANT FUND REPORT

From mid-April to mid-August, the following schools each received a grant. Although the term was only about 8 weeks long (since half term and the summer holidays occurred during this time), there were still 15 state schools and 1 Home Tutor:

CAMBRIDGESHIRE; Longsands Academy, ST NEOTS; EAST SUSSEX: Patcham High School, BRIGHTON; ESSEX: Stambridge Primary School, ROCHFORD; GLOUCESTERSHIRE: Marling School for Boys, STROUD; KENT: St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, BEXLEYHEATH; Leeds and Broomfield C. of E, Primary School, MAIDSTONE; Saltwood C. of E. Primary School, HYTHE; Bean Primary School, DARTFORD; LONDON: West Wimbledon Primary School, SW20 0BZ; MERSEYSIDE: Tianqui Liu (Home Tutor), LIVERPOOL; NORFOLK: St Martha's Catholic Primary School, KING'S LYNN; Icen Academy, METHWOLD; NOTTINGHAM; Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School, SUFFOLK; Risby C.E.V.C. Primary School, BURY ST EDMUNDS; WEST MIDLANDS: Marston Green Junior School, MARSTON GREEN; Coleshill Heath Primary School, CHELMSLEY WOOD

A very big thank you to the CA for their valued and continued support, to Diana and Bob who help me superbly, to Jeremy who wisely advises me and to Rachael, who posts the cheques so speedily – and to *Minimus*, the little mouse who travels so far, enabling many children to learn a wonderful language!

VINDOLANDA – ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEASON UPDATE OF 2015

As ever, many wonderful objects have been excavated during the 2015 (still-ongoing) archaeological season. Clockwise from top and then into middle: a human footprint beautifully preserved on a roof tile (period V/VI); an eagle blade terminal; a vibrant cobalt blue glass with white and yellow applied waves; a complete Samian ware cup bearing a clearly legible potter's stamp; excavation of the fort ramparts produced another wonderful tile with a dog print and a carved inscription of 'fidelis' on it (again from the later levels of the stone fort); a hare and hound relief; a ballista head; the first shoe of 2015; a finger ring (after/before) with jet stone; a crossbow brooch; a pre-Hadrianic bronze needle. Also found but not pictured - writing tablets, a boxwood hair comb, a quarter of a basket, a stylus pen and much, much more!

Catherine Jarvis



GOOD NEWS – LONG-STANDING MINIMUS CLUB CLOSING DOWN

For the past eight years, the children of St Olave's Preparatory School in South-East London have had the opportunity to learn about *Minimus* and friends thanks to a parent volunteer at the School.

The Club has been a great success, with up to 20 members (from a school of only 230 on roll!) even though it ran on a Friday afternoon after school, and even though it inevitably clashed with netball fixtures. Over the years, members have moved on to secondary schools locally and further afield where Classics can be studied to GCSE and beyond, and reported back that "It's still my favourite subject, Mrs Eaton!", and we have had some wonderful escapades...we have met Pompeian fish-sauce traders and Nubian merchants at some of London's best Roman addresses, we have spent the day at the British Museum with other *Minimus* schools, we have re-enacted A Day at the Baths for a school assembly, conducted archaeological experiments in the School garden, read the Gospel of the Nativity in Latin at our School Carol Service, and we even saw the wonderful "*Minimus the Musical*" when it came on tour to Dulwich.

And the good news is that Club closed in July!

Why is this good news? Because Mrs Eaton, who ran the club during that time, is delighted to be passing on the baton to the School's new French teacher, Mme Emmanuelle Banfield, and in September 2015 **LATIN IS BECOMING A CURRICULUM SUBJECT at St Olave's!**

With the enthusiastic support of so many of the School's staff, including the Heads Mrs Fisher and then Mr Tilly, the Club became a very special part of the enriched curriculum at St Olave's, and it came to be expected that once you were in Years 5 and 6, you could "do Latin".

It was always Mrs Eaton's hope that in some way Latin could be embedded in the curriculum, and when Mme Banfield, who has studied Classics at degree level, joined the staff, they hatched a cunning plan to make this possible.

Thankfully Mr Tilly and the Trustees were in agreement!

Mrs Eaton writes "I have loved getting to know *Vibrissa*, *Minimus*, and the family of *Flavius Cerealis*, along with the children of St Olave's, who have always been wonderful, engaging and entertaining company. I cannot believe that all this started when I read a snippet in the Daily Telegraph about Barbara's mission to make Latin accessible to primary aged children of all abilities and backgrounds. It's been so rewarding to run the Club and a pleasure to become part of the Advocacy network and meet other *Minimus* teachers, most of whom are education professionals and all of whom have been generous in sharing tips and ideas for running a successful Club. I am very glad that I will still be involved in encouraging PGCE students to find out more about the *Minimus* Programme, delivering talks to groups, and encouraging others to get involved."

Kate Eaton

PGCE REPORT

A sunny evening in August....

It started on a sunny evening in May 2014 when I met up with my friend and former colleague Barbara Bell. We had moved on since school days: I had been working at the University of Bristol Graduate School of Education as a teacher trainer in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and Barbara was trying to keep up with the rapidly increasing demand for *Minimus* training courses. As we talked, I became aware of the fact that some training in *Minimus* had the potential to add considerable value to the training which we offer our student teachers, not to mention to their employment prospects in a landscape in which interest in the Classics is undergoing a revival. Back at work, I shared the idea of *Minimus* training with my colleague Lorna Smith who heads up the English PGCE course. She was equally enthusiastic – not least because the English PGCE course also includes a session on Classical story telling with Bob Lister of the Cambridge Schools Classics Project, which resulted in published research, ‘Talking Together, Learning Together’. A breakfast meeting took place with Barbara in August where we discussed in more detail the form which the training would take. We settled on a ten hour module which would be delivered over five weeks in twilight sessions in the summer term when the students were in university. We are fortunate to have a new forward-thinking Head of School, Justin Dillon, who agreed funding for an initial course in 2014-15.

The next step along the way was to pitch the idea to the student teachers and to find out whether any of them would be willing to give up precious early evenings at a point on the course which is a very busy one. Barbara came in to the Graduate School to talk to them on 18th December and she was received with unbridled enthusiasm followed by a much higher sign up rate than expected! This led me back to Justin who agreed that two courses could be offered, one for the MFL students and one for English.

The course can be considered to have been a great success in terms of student participation, response and retention. The session which I attended myself was fascinating in terms of comparing the methodologies of MFL teaching and Classics; it has given both me and my students much food for thought. The English cohort particularly valued what they learnt about etymology and myths and legends. Those who had learned Latin at school and ‘new recruits’ all benefited.

At the end of the course, Justin was again called on to sign certificates for those who had attended at least four out of the five available sessions; we were all delighted by the number who gained certification. Students who had attended were asked to fill out an evaluation of the course. The response was overwhelmingly positive with almost all students judging the quality of the course as Very Good or Good. When asked about the aspects of the course which had been particularly valuable, the most cited were the cultural and historical links, the links with English and other languages and the engaging story-based format of the course itself. A large number of student teachers stated that the course would be likely to have an impact on the pupils whom they will teach in the future, particularly with regard to literacy and language awareness.

It goes without saying that there has been another breakfast meeting to look at feedback and to plan a similar course for 2015-16; we do not want next year’s English and MFL students to miss out on what will be a great opportunity. Lorna and I shall shortly be making our way down the corridor to Justin’s office to ask for more money; we feel confident!

Helen Aberdeen & Lorna Smith

SOLIHULL PROJECT

"The North Solihull Project has been going properly for about a year and a half now. All schools committed to the project in the beginning are still teaching *Minimus*! Some, still to small groups. Others have extended the reach of *Minimus* to incorporate it fully across a particular year group in a large three form entry, moving from impacting 15 Gifted/talented children, to all 90 in the year group! However, we have not stagnated... a further Primary school has been persuaded to make Latin their language of choice and will launch Latin this September, coinciding with some whole staff training in *Minimus* from Barbara during part of an INSET day. Furthermore, an additional secondary school will be using *Minimus* with less able Year 7 students to support their understanding of the English Language. One of our original Secondary schools will now offer a GCSE in Latin from September, which is sooner than expected and is excellent news for the primary students that are currently enjoying *Minimus* - they will have a possible route to take their new-found enjoyment of Classics.

Thanks to Classics for All, several trips, training and events have been organised this year to support the delivery of Latin here in North Solihull, still one of the most deprived areas of England, outside London.

Collaboration too is alive and well - links with The University of Birmingham, Solihull School and between Latin Leads in North Solihull and the Jubilee Academy (a nearby, newly established Latin hub in Mossley) are being cultivated. In short, Latin is looking rather healthy here at the moment!

Anna Donnelly

MOSSLEY PROJECT AND THE ACADEMIES TRANSFORMATION TRUST

It became statutory to teach a foreign language in key stage 2 from September 2014. In July 2014, after much research and as a result of disappointing Grammar Spelling and Punctuation SATs results, we decided that teaching Latin at Jubilee Academy would be the best decision for us. After buying *Minimus*, we introduced it to KS2 staff on the very last day of the school year and braced ourselves for any negativity. It didn't come. Once the staff saw the *Minimus* resources and enthusiastically started making links between Latin and languages with which they were familiar, they were hooked!

At Christmas we were encouraged by Dr. Elena Theodorakopolous of Birmingham University to apply for a grant from Classics for All. After sharing our early signs of success with our family of academies within Academy Transformation Trust we gauged their initial responses to whether they'd be interested in introducing Latin in order to improve outcomes for their pupils. Responses from senior leaders from most of our academies were very positive. We applied for a grant.

Ofsted inspected Jubilee Academy in March 2015. They asked about our grammar results from the previous year and what we were doing to address them. We invited them to observe *Minimus* in action and in their report they noted: *Leaders introduced the teaching of Latin in response to pupils' difficulties with spelling, punctuation and grammar. There was evidence during the inspection that this is having a very positive impact on pupils' understanding. Pupils showed great enjoyment in this learning.*

Our SATs results this year showed a great improvement with 96% of children achieving at least the end-of-key-stage expected level of Level 4 and 50% of children achieving better than expected with Level 5. The good news kept coming. We received confirmation of our grant from Classics for All and could begin to introduce Latin in academies across ATT.

Barbara led training for our ATT modern foreign language leaders in June this year. It was an extremely positive day and we now have a number of academies with strategic plans to introduce Latin using *Minimus* resources over the next academic year.

With the support of the grant from Classics for All and the Academy Transformation Trust, we are moving to a Trust-wide strategy to help improve outcomes for our pupils. ATT has a strong appreciation of what Latin can offer in terms of enriching pupils' linguistic and historical understanding across the curriculum.

Kelly Vaughan

MYTHOLOGY REPORT

Once again well over a hundred entries for our judges! View the winners on the website www.minimus-etc.co.uk
Schools' feedback:-

- *Thanks for this very pleasing news and for the book voucher – Tasmania*
- *The good news has just arrived and they are so excited in the Junior School! Many thanks once more to everyone who makes this competition run: our boys love it and it is now part of the Junior School calendar. – Manchester*
- *Thank you so much for your letter with its wonderful news. We had some very excited children...and teachers! – Hertfordshire*

Many thanks again our sponsors the Jowett Trustees, our judges and of course you the teachers who encourage your pupils to take part.

Mrs Linda Soames will be the new organiser. The topics for 2016 are Book 1 MEDUSA and Book 2 PEGASUS. Full details as usual on the website or from the organizer lindasoames@home.3b.co.uk Pam Macklin

WEBSITE & IT REPORT

There hasn't been much change on the website as all my energies have gone into the new *Minimus Workbook!* There are new posts on both Barbara's blog (news of events) and mine (which features my own teaching and artwork). The website continues to attract visitors from around the world. Our Twitter following (@minimus_latin) is growing - we are up to 1,999 followers at the time of writing. *Minimus* has posted tweets from his tent, from Vindolanda, from Segedunum and from the Museum of Classical Antiquities in Cambridge.

Helen Forte

New Resource Available

Helen and I got together for 3 days in July and very much enjoyed creating a Workbook for pupils. Thank you to those of you who gave helpful suggestions as to what support you needed. This book for pupils is based on the first *Minimus* book; there are 2 pages of exercises for each chapter, so 24 pages in total. It is all about practising grammar, both in Latin and English and we have tried to make it accessible and fun for children. Early reactions are encouraging:

Michelle Anderson and Wendy Hunt comment: A variety of exercises supplements the grammar topics of each chapter and pupils can get further practice with adjectives, adverbs, verb 'to be', concord etc. Fun-to-do activities include linking words, word searches, choosing words, drawing and colouring in. Teachers can also use the book to monitor pupil progress and to provide evidence for inspection purposes.

"I particularly liked the fact that it didn't look like a 'grammar workbook' with all the lovely pictures, yet it consolidated all the language work in *Minimus*. I thought that it was such a good idea to have somewhere at the bottom of each page where the teacher could write a comment and the inspectors would have something they could check"

"I so liked the variety of exercises, with plenty to stretch the gifted and talented"

"The children will feel they've achieved a lot when they have completed the story set in the baths and have put in the Latin words - yet it's such fun to do, being a good story!"

We hope that this will be a confidence booster for children and for teachers, especially those who are new to Latin themselves. Our aim was to provide more structure and practice and we know that inspectors require evidence that children are making progress in their designated languages. This will be a way of recording scores and progress on a regular basis. Please note that this book will be available from early September. It is being printed by Whitehall Printers in Bristol and is only available through our business *Minimus Et Cetera*. The cost will be £1 per book (24 pages of A4 size). When you place an order with us we will e-mail you the accompanying teachers' notes. If you have any queries about this new publication please get in touch with us by e-mail.

FUTURE EVENTS

Training Days

The nature of *Minimus* training has changed in the last 18 months. Sadly we have had to cancel 3 provisional training events because of very low numbers. This happened in June when we were due to hold a day at James Allen's Girls' School in Dulwich. In the end 3 delegates came to my home and I trained them in Bristol. The Head teacher, Marion Gibbs, has just retired and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for tremendous support over many years. JAGS has been an ideal location and many of you will recall happy and productive days with excellent lunches there. We wish Marion a long and happy retirement.

Increasingly I have visited schools to train whole staff and this has been stimulating and exciting. Nevertheless, to spread the load and to ease the pressure of so many events, I am training a group of experienced *Minimus* teachers.

They come from all areas of the country and represent both the state and independent sectors. If teachers contact me in future requiring training I am likely to call on these teachers to help me run events on a regional basis. This whole project has been generously funded by Classics for All and I would like to thank them most warmly for their support and encouragement, particularly in recent years. The splendid work done by Jane Maguire in Norfolk, Anna Donnelly in Solihull and now Kelly Vaughan with the Academies group is all funded by Classics for All and we have exciting plans to work with them in the future.

In September I shall be doing more initial *Minimus* training for a new group of teachers in Solihull and a further group in October, where a new school is making Latin its designated language.

Minimus Party on 26th September – Many of you will be attending our celebratory party at the Classics Centre in Oxford. I am very grateful to Mai Musié and Chris Pelling for allowing us to hold our party there. At the time of writing sales have now reached 152,000 copies and we feel this deserves celebrating; it is also a great opportunity to thank all of you who have given your money, time and encouragement over 20 years and to showcase what the Primary Latin Project does. I am sorry that quite a number of you who were invited are unable to come and I would ask you to raise a toast to PLP on that evening! Thank-you for your kind messages of good wishes.

November – I will be training a group of teachers at Sidney Stringer Academy in Coventry.

Minimus Day at the British Museum 2016

We are organizing our 3rd *Minimus* themed activity day at the British Museum.

This will be on Saturday 18th June 2016. Once again this will be masterminded by Pam Macklin who did such a wonderful job with the other 2 days. Please note the date now; places are limited to 150 in the morning and 150 in the afternoon, so do contact Pam soon if you wish to book a place. They are sure to fill up quickly. Details and application forms are available to download from the website or by email from the organizer Pam Macklin: pam@nethaus.co.uk

Finally, I am so glad that I decided to retire in 2013! As many of you already know retirement is busy, exciting and full of opportunities and this is particularly true in the world of *Minimus*. Nevertheless I simply could not survive without the unstinting encouragement and support both of my family and the wonderful PLP Committee and I thank them most warmly for all that they do. Thank you to those of you who have supported us financially in the last year; every donation is very much appreciated and I hope you feel is well spent.

The climate for Latin continues to be positive and I am proud and honoured to carry things forward.

Barbara Bell