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Newsletter 58 – January 2016

Dear Supporter,

This has been a particularly exciting and successful Autumn for *Minimus*!

Time to Celebrate

Some time ago the committee decided that we should celebrate worldwide sales of *Minimus* of 150,000 copies and in April we spent the weekend at Vindolanda. For our main party we were extremely fortunate to be allowed to use the wonderful Classics Centre in St. Giles, Oxford and we are grateful to Chris Pelling and Mai Musié for making this possible and to Kate Del Nevo, the events manager from the centre, who masterminded delicious food and drink and excellent facilities. It was a splendid party; thank-you to so many of you for writing to say so! Those celebrating included some of our Sponsors, Committee Members past and present, many *Minimus* teachers, including those who have spoken at Training Days and so on; we very much enjoyed meeting up with old friends and hearing how *Minimus* is developing.

The different members of the PLP Committee each spoke briefly in order to showcase the work in which we are currently engaged. Anna Donnelly updated us on events in Solihull and we enjoyed her pictures of pupils having fun on their day out to Cirencester. Jane Maguire spoke about the continuing success of the Norfolk Project, Catherine Jarvis spoke about her work in Vindolanda, Wendy Hunt outlined the way that the awarding of Grants operates and Michelle Anderson spoke about our *Minimus* Advocates' scheme. Pam Macklin spoke about the Mythology Competition which she has run now for several years. Illustrator Helen Forte spoke about *Minimus* and IT and in particular some of the latest additions to the *Minimus* website including the "Great Brittunculi Bake-Off". We even had congratulations messages from 2 others on the PLP Committee - Ruth Ann Besse in Baltimore, and a video clip from Zee Ann Poerio in Pittsburgh. It was heartening hearing some of her children telling us how much they were enjoying the book and wishing us a happy party. Our last speaker was my former pupil Elly Watson, who has just finished a degree at QMC in Comparative literature, Her dissertation was on English translations of Catullus. She spoke of being turned on to Latin at a young age- "It all began with *Minimus*!"

Subsequently worldwide sales of the first book have risen to 155,000 copies.

More to Celebrate

On an extraordinary day last week at 18:37 I received an excited e-mail from Paula in Brazil informing me that at last a Portuguese translation of *Minimus* had been published there. One minute later at 18:38 I received an e-mail from a teacher assuring me that *Minimus* is thriving in Moscow. Not bad for 2 minutes work! .

Since then I have heard from a former colleague who is teaching in South Korea and her pupils are loving *Minimus*. Recently there has been some interest shown in producing a Welsh version of *Minimus* and even one in Braille for those who are partially sighted. If you speak Welsh and can see an advantage in having a Welsh version please reply quickly (i.e. during January) to register your interest; please do the same if you think a Braille version would make a difference.

Who Sells What ? It is clear that there is some confusion over where to purchase the various *Minimus* products. Please note:-

1. The basic **Core Materials** have all been published by **Cambridge University Press**; this includes *Minimus* -starting out in Latin and its Teachers' Resource book and CD; similarly *Minimus Secundus* with its Teachers' Resource book and CD are also published by CUP. You can contact CUP direct or contact any good bookshop with the ISBN number. The Hellenic Bookservice in London always carries a good stock of *Minimus* materials.

2. Mini Books - We have now published 3 sets of Mini Books. These provide extra reading material but do not advance the grammar. These are published and sold here in Bristol via *Minimus et Cetera*.

3. *Minimus in Practice* - This is a Teachers' Resource book which emphasises the cross-curricular approach to teaching *Minimus*. You can only buy this from us via our business *Minimus et Cetera*. This is also true of *Minimus becoming Maximus* which tells the amazing story of how *Minimus* took off over the first 20 years and the new *Minimus Workbook*, which enable pupils to practise the grammar. Please contact Nick Bell (bmbellmini@aol.com) for more details of postage, order forms, invoices, etc. or see the website (www.minimus.com)

Feedback on our new workbook is extremely positive and pupils are enjoying reinforcing their grammar in such an attractive environment! "They didn't understand adjectival agreement before but the new workbook has made it clear." At £1 per copy this also provides the evidence of pupils' progress which Inspectors want to see!

4. Foreign Editions - An Italian version of *Minimus* was published in 2007, the Slovenian version in 2012 and the Portuguese version in Brazil has just been published in 2015.

5. Finally, all small items, e.g. pencils, erasers, badges, postcards, bookmarks, etc are available from our business *Minimus et Cetera*.

6. For those keen on drama there are 2 excellent books of Latin plays – **Playtime and Playtime Extra**; these contain a few *Minimus* dialogues and Latin versions of various classical stories. Each book ends with fun pantomime plays and a nativity play. All the plays are translated and a CD is included which helps with pronunciation. These 2 books have been compiled by former *Minimus* teacher Mrs Diana Sparkes. Although not official *Minimus* products they are excellent additions to the *Minimus* classroom. To buy these, contact Diana directly: Tel: 02380 556818 email: basp@soton.ac.uk

RECENT EVENTS

Jane Palfery, who runs a *Minimus* club in Edinburgh, writes:

Catherine Jarvis of Four Wynds, Longbyre, Northumbria, conducts first class *Minimus* tours. My husband (not a classicist) and I joined Catherine for a day at Vindolanda and the Roman Army Museum. The focus was on linking the archaeology and the items in the excellent museums to the context of *Minimus*. Catherine was engaging and informative and tailored the day to our needs and interests. On our return to the B&B she and her husband run, she thoughtfully provided extra relevant material and I was so enthused I spent all evening curled up with the books and have since ordered one for myself.

John and I would both highly recommend Catherine's tours and would encourage other *Minimus* teachers to see for themselves, under Catherine's guidance, how cleverly Barbara Bell has created a coursebook where the setting and artefacts can be observed. The opportunity to walk on one of the most spectacular sections of Hadrian's Wall is an added bonus.

UPDATE ON NORFOLK PROJECTS (December 2015) - Jane Maguire

A regional training day was held in November at Norwich Castle. The ten participants represented a mixture of teachers and TAs just beginning Minimus, some wanting a refresher course and general update and some, gratifyingly, teachers new to Minimus but from schools where the original trained teacher had moved on. Ongoing collaboration with the Education Department of the Castle Museum meant that, apart from a splendid venue, participants were given a guided tour of the Roman and Icenic Gallery and information about the Roman/Latin days offered by the castle. Thanks to Colly Mudie for facilitating the day.

Other exciting events have been developments at Woodgate Nurseries, near Aylsham. An exploratory trench was recently dug, which confirmed the presence of Roman kilns and fragments of pottery. This has led to the belief that there is a villa on the site and major excavations will start in the summer. The owner of the land is a Minimus fan and would like to involve local schools. So even more reason for primary children in Norfolk to learn Latin!

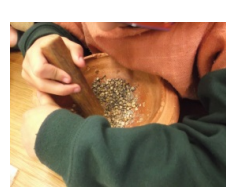
Support for Norfolk Latin also came from Boris Johnson, speaking at a Classics for All dinner in London: *“It was inspiring to hear from Jane about the benefits that primary school Headteachers in Norfolk are reporting back to her from the study of Latin. Her achievements as a regional Classics Champion prove yet again that all children can benefit from Latin, and it would be a tragedy if we were unable to build upon her success. We need to train more teachers to meet the growing demand and to carry these benefits into the secondary sector.”*

UPDATE ON NORTH SOLIHULL PROJECT (December 2015) - Anna Donnelly

This academic year has been a flurry of Latin activity in North Solihull! I have been working with schools (both secondary and primary) to encourage a love of the Latin language along with whetting appetites for investigating associated ancient civilizations. Fordbridge Community Primary School – a two form entry school - has taken Latin on as their language of choice from Year Three to Six. Teaching staff, senior leaders and teaching assistants have received training in the basics of Minimus and further support from Barbara will be arranged for the Summer to address and small ‘bumps’ along the road of understanding. They have applied for a Minimus grant and have invested heavily in Minimus texts so that students have a copy between two to share. Staff commented on how easy to navigate the website was, and how useful the supporting on-line resources were. It has been an absolute pleasure to witness the shift in thinking of the staff; at first, they thought that Latin had nothing to say to them and was nothing to do with their lives. As the year has progressed, it has been great to see the connections forming as a result of engagement with the Minimus texts – teachers and teaching assistants are finding lots of linguistic connections!

We have increased Latin provision from 390 students engaging with Latin in 2014-15 to 540 in 2015-16 and many students have benefited from enrichment trips to Bath, Cirencester and Chedworth, all with the support of Classics for All and in the context of a growing appreciation for Latin and associated Roman material culture. All of these students are benefitting from the structured and creative approaches that Minimus affords the teachers of these students new to Latin. Not a single student who attended the trips to sites had been there before and to accompany them on this experience was a privilege.

For those of you reading this and considering starting Minimus, however small of large the group, my message is to grab the opportunity with both hands...and bring a friend along with you on the journey! Something new is always going to be a bit scary, but watching these students develop and grow in their appreciation their shared linguistic and cultural heritage makes ‘feeling the fear and doing it anyway’ so worthwhile. If we don’t pass on the bug for classics, who else will?



WEBSITE & IT REPORT

Our online following continues to grow, especially since I revived the *Minimus* Facebook page. I have posted a daily picture and Latin sentence for *Minimus'* Advent Calendar on Facebook, the *Minimus* blog and Twitter. We have picked up 66 new followers already, in a week.

I am working on *Minimus* derivation flash cards, and hope to have a simplified set for download from the website as well as a printed set that will be sold by *Minimus Et Cetera*. I am also hoping to move forward with designing a *Minimus* app, and have a meeting with a specialist lined up.

The vocabulary testing page on the website is now complete for Book 1, and is proving very useful to pupils.

Helen Forte

GRANT FUND REPORT

We have contributed to the following schools from the beginning of June to the beginning of December, 2015. This includes 31 state schools, 3 independent schools, 1 university and 1 home tutor. They are:

BERKSHIRE: Winnersh Primary School, WOKINGHAM; BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: St Mary and All Saints School, BEACONSFIELD; CAMBRIDGESHIRE: Longsands Academy, ST. NEOTS; CUMBRIA: Hayton C.E. Primary School, BRAMPTON; EAST SUSSEX: Patcham High School, BRIGHTON; ESSEX: Stambridge Primary School, ROCHFORD; GLOUCESTERSHIRE: Marling School, STROUD; GREATER MANCHESTER: Ladybarn Primary School, WITHINGTON; Mauldeth Road Primary School, WITHINGTON; HAMPSHIRE: Forres Sandle Manor School, SANDLEHEATH; HERTFORDSHIRE: Shona Shahryar (Home Tutor) HARPENDEN; KENT: Saltwood C. E. Primary School, HYTHE; St Thomas Moore Catholic Primary School, BEXLEY HEATH; Bean Primary School, DARTFORD; LINCOLNSHIRE: Barnack C.E. Primary School, STAMFORD; LONDON: La Petite Ecole Bi-Lingual School, W10 5UW; Grove Park Primary School, CHISWICK; NORFOLK: St Martha's Catholic Primary School, KING'S LYNN ; Icen Academy, THETFORD; The Nicholas Hamond Academy, SWAFFHAM; Diamond Academy, THETFORD; NORTH SOMERSET: Sidcot Junior School, WINSCOMBE; NORWICH: Charles Darwin Primary School, COLEGATE; POWYS: Llaneanatock Church in Wales V.A. Primary School, LLANEATTOCK; SUFFOLK: Risby CEVC Primary School, BURY ST EDMUNDS; Westbourne Academy, IPSWICH; Sexton's Manor Primary School, BURY ST EDMUNDS; Guildhall Feoffmont Community Primary School, BURY ST. EDMUNDS; SURREY: Focus School, CARSHALTON; Beaumont Primary School, PURLEY; SWANSEA: Swansea University (Department of History and Classics), developing hubs within local schools; WEST MIDLANDS: Marston Green Junior School, Marston Green, BIRMINGHAM; Coleshill Primary School, Chelmsley Wood, BIRMINGHAM; Bristnall Hall Academy, OLDBURY; Fordbridge Primary School, Chelmsley Wood, BIRMINGHAM; WIRRAL: Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School, GREASBY.

It is so pleasing to see that our little mouse is still very popular after all this time! The application forms for grants keep coming in and this is certainly stretching our capacities. We must give our gratitude to the CA for their very kind generosity, as well as to Classics for All who have helped hubs to be set up in local primary schools and to all the other sponsors of the course. I must also thank Diana and Bob for their constant support, Jeremy for 'keeping an eye' on the state of funds and Rachael who sends the cheques to the schools so speedily. We all hope (including our little mouse '*Minimus*') that everyone will continue to enjoy Latin – and more schools will join you in the coming year!

Wendy Hunt

FUTURE EVENTS

On **Saturday 6th February 2016** I will be speaking about *Minimus* and how it can be taught in primary schools at an important conference in Swansea organised by Evelien Bracke.

On **Friday 11th March 2016 and Saturday 12th March 2016** an important ALL (Association for Language Learning) conference will be taking place in Rugby. On the Saturday morning Sue Balmer will be speaking about *Minimus* from 10:40 to 11:25.

Throughout the summer term I will be again training **Bristol PGCE Students** in English and Modern Foreign Languages to teach *Minimus*. This year we are dividing the group according to its experience of Latin rather than by their subject disciplines.

On **Wednesday 18th May 2016** I will be running a one day training course for teachers at primary schools in the Chew Valley region.

Saturday 18th June 2016 - MINIMUS at the BRITISH MUSEUM DAY — this is the date for your diary. There will be two separate sessions, morning and afternoon. The morning session will start at 10am and the afternoon at 2.15pm with registration during the preceding 30 minutes. Each session will have 150 pupil places. The morning is primarily for schools/clubs within reasonable reach of London, the afternoon for those with farther to travel. Please bring enough helpers (free adult places in the ratio 1 to 5) to supervise your group. The day is designed for pupils between years 4 and 8. The programme is not generally suitable for children below Year 4 (aged 8 years upwards). Please contact the organiser if you have younger pupils whom you feel are mature enough to benefit from the activities.

Participants will enjoy various themed activities, including an opportunity to view the Vindolanda tablets, meet a Roman re-enactment group, and complete a quiz. There will be a short break in each session for the children to “snack” (Please bring something suitable). There will also be a chance to spend pocket money on *Minimus* items such as pencils, erasers, key-rings etc. The cost will be £10 per person (plus your travelling costs). Places will be allocated on a “first come first served” basis. Initially, please contact (by e-mail only) the organiser Pam Macklin pam@nethaus.co.uk to indicate an idea of numbers and to ask for any further details.

Please complete the reply slip on the website (www.Minimus.com) and send it together with a cheque for full payment (NON-REFUNDABLE) by **31st March 2016** to the address given. Cheques should be made payable to The Primary Latin Project. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible.

Pam Macklin

MINIMUS MYTHOLOGY COMPETITION 2016 We're running this popular competition again this year on the theme of either Perseus and Medusa (Level 1) or Pegasus the Wonder Horse (Level 2). We invite pupils to submit entries in the following categories:

A) Art e.g. painting, drawing, collage, craftwork etc.

B) Creative Writing e.g. poem, playscript, 1st person account etc.

C) Drama – a version of the story, written and performed by pupils, and submitted as a DVD.

A & B must be the work of individual pupils and are to be photographed and emailed to this year's organiser – lindasoames@home.3b.co.uk. Book token prizes are generously awarded by the Jowett Trust. The deadline for submitting entries is **Monday 2nd May 2016**. For inspiration, look at the website: find the Mythology Competition in the Teachers Resources section where you will also find full details of how to enter.

Goodluck, everyone, and let's have a bumper entry this year!

Linda Soames

A New Type of Training

In July Marion Gibbs retired as headmistress of James Allen's Girls' School in Dulwich. Marion kindly offered the use of the school for *Minimus* Training Days several years ago and many of you reading this have told me how much you enjoyed the excellent facilities and refreshments at JAGS and that you found the days helpful as you prepared to move into *Minimus* teaching. Marion's retirement (which we hope will be long and happy!) seemed a natural breaking point for us to review the way that we offer training. Increasingly primary schools are approaching me asking for training for their whole staff as they have made the decision to put Latin onto the curriculum for all children, therefore we will not be holding official *Minimus* Training Days as such but we will respond to local demand. If you personally are hoping to run a *Minimus* club or introduce *Minimus* into a school and feel that you would benefit from training, by all means get in touch, making it clear where you are based, and we will see whether we can set up something in that area.

It was clear to me last year that I could not run all the training events myself and so on Saturday 5th September 2015 I ran a *Minimus* Day at Birmingham University to Train the Trainers, I chose a group of 12 experienced *Minimus* teachers from around the country. In each case I knew that they were passionate about Latin, knew the *Minimus* resources well and are great communicators, and at the end of the day they said they felt confident to run *Minimus* events and give talks on my behalf. Little did I know how soon I would be calling on their services. During a period of illness I have been able to call on this group to represent me on numerous occasions. The feedback has been extremely positive, so I know that *Minimus* is in good hands.

And finally... To end on a cheerful note: It has been excellent to renew contact with a former colleague and teacher of Russian and French, Dr. Helen Tilly. Helen is now teaching French in Slimbridge Primary School. She is passionate about Roman history and offered a session on Roman roads to the yr 3 class. How about the following for a novel way to teach Roman road construction:

Edible Roman Roads Year 3 and 4 pupils at Slimbridge Primary School in Gloucestershire were studying Roman history. As an MFL teacher, I had never taught Roman history before, although I have a keen interest in it, helped in large part by accompanying Barbara on her Hadrian's Wall trips many years ago when we were colleagues in Bristol. I wanted a first lesson that would really capture the children's interest, and knew that I wanted to start with Roman roads, before moving on to look at towns and houses. Whilst thinking about how to enthuse a class of almost thirty children, I had the idea of making Roman roads in cross-section and then thought it would be fun to make them edible. We used breakfast cereals of various shapes to recreate the stones, gravel and tiles, crushed biscuits and ice cream for the mortar.

The children worked in groups of four, lining a disposable foil container with Golden Nuggets or Coco Pops Rocks at the bottom to form the large stones of a base layer. They then formed a second layer from broken digestive biscuits and Shreddies, mixed with melted ice cream, to represent the layer of cement, broken +stones and sand. They added a third layer, made from more ice cream, broken Shreddies for tiles, and crushed digestive biscuits, before adding their paving stones to the top, made using Nice biscuits. The edible roads were then frozen, and later removed from the trays and sliced so the children could see their roads in cross-section before eating them! The children were hugely enthused by the activity and continued to be very excited by their Romans topic. One Year 4 boy went home and told his mum that it was the best thing he had ever done at school ... and he told his family all about the construction of the original Roman road outside their house whilst they were having dinner.

Helen Tilly, Slimbridge Primary School

Do book for the *Minimus* day at the BM as soon as you can.

With many thanks as always for your support,

Barbara Bell