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Newsletter 51 - September 2013

Dear Supporter,

Thank- you for your positive reactions to the last Newsletter and the extraordinary *Minimus* story. Two items were omitted from that account. Maria Joyce has run a *Minimus* Club for many years in the Bath area; she was one of the "Granny Latin" brigade recruited in 2000. She has sent a brief report on some of her experiences, which I am delighted to include now. Maria, and many others like her, was responsible for the early spread and development of *Minimus* and I am so grateful to them for the huge commitment of time that they have made to the Primary Latin Project.

*The first Minimus Club I ran was at a Bath primary school. One of the boys transferred to an Independent school, where he studied Latin for AS and A level and attended two Classical summer schools during his Sixth Form. He is now in his third year at an Oxford College studying Classics. His mother believes that it was Minimus who inspired him! For some years now I have been teaching a Minimus Club at a rural primary school at the outskirts of Bath. Two boys were linguistically gifted and attended the lunchtime Minimus Club for five years before leaving for secondary school at the age of 11. By then we had finished "Minimus 1" and "Minimus Secundus", so carried on with The Cambridge Latin Course Book 1. Having learnt so much from this textbook about life in Pompeii, both boys are now determined to visit the exhibition at the British Museum. **Maria Joyce***

Many years ago Nick and I were invited to attend the American Classical League Conference, where I gave a presentation about *Minimus* for one of the pre-institute talks. After a lot of work I was dismayed to see an audience of 4! Nevertheless, 2 of those 4 were Ruth Ann Besse from Maryland and Zee Ann Poerio from Pittsburgh. They have been largely responsible for the development of *Minimus* in the USA and I owe them a very great deal. Ruth Ann sent some news about her own *Minimus* teaching (as a home-schooling mum) and I'm delighted to include that too.

One of my former Minimus students, Samantha, is now a junior at the University of

Maryland studying linguistics. In high school, she studied Arabic as well as Latin. Our mouse certainly helped plant that love of languages! **Ruth Ann Besse**

German Edition

There has been one disappointment since I last wrote. The publishers "Buchner" were keen to produce a German addition of *Minimus* until they discovered a very similar book "Fidus" which was published in 2011. *Fidus* is a dog who lives with a real family who lived at Cologne. It is an introduction to Latin for young children in a cartoon format - someone got there first! Understandably, they don't feel able to produce a second course which is along the same lines, so it seems that, at least for the moment, there will be no German edition.

Recent Events

May

Mythology Competition: Pam Macklin received a good number of entries during May for this year's competition and she has sent the following report:

Once again the competition attracted an excellent range of entries. The major prize-winners' entries will shortly be available to view on the website. This year saw an increase in the number of entries for Drama on DVD. Teachers tell us every year what a positive experience their pupils have had in taking part in the competition. None of this would be possible without our sponsors - The Jowett Trustees, our judges and of course you the teachers, who encourage your pupils to enter.

*Next year's topics will be Level 1 –Odysseus and the Cyclops and Level 2 – Odysseus and the Sirens. Full details for the 2014 competition, (including topics, deadlines and amended rules) will be available after the October half term from the organiser pam@nethaus.co.uk **Pam Macklin***

I am very grateful to Pam Macklin for masterminding this competition so efficiently and to our judges, Kate Hobbs and Wendy Hunt, who have undertaken their task so willingly and have given so much encouragement to the competitors. Do consider taking part next year; it is a great boost to children to win a prize and even to have their work submitted for an international competition is a great achievement.

The other regular aspect of our work is the awarding of grants and Wendy Hunt has sent

this report on those who have been successful recently:

Grant Fund Report - From the end of March to the middle of September 2013, there has been a steady flow of 20 applications, consisting of 1 home school, 1 high school, 1 community college, 1 combined school, 2 independent schools and 14 state schools.

These are:

BERKS: Brigidine School, WINDSOR; BUCKS: Halton Combined School, AYLESBURY: Andrew David (Home School Group), GREAT MISSENDEN; GLOUCS: Christ Church Primary School, CHELTENHAM; HANTS: Meoncross Independent School, STUBBINGTON; HERTS: Herts and Essex High School (teaching feeder primary school), BISHOP'S STORTFORD: St Michael's C. of E. Primary School, BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Our Lady Catholic Primary School, HITCHIN; ISLE OF WIGHT: Wroxall Primary School, VENTNOR; LINCS: Nettleham C. of E. Aided Junior School, NETTLEHAM; LONDON: St. Aidan's V.C. Primary School, STROUD GREEN: St. Benedict's Junior School, EALING: Mayville Primary School, LEYTONSTONE: Handsworth Primary School, HIGHAMS PARK; NORFOLK: Yaxham C. E. V. C. Primary School, DEREHAM; Millfield Primary School, NORTH WALSHAM, North Walsham Junior School, NORTH WALSHAM; SURREY: Meadlands Primary School, RICHMOND; TYNE AND WEAR: Longbenton Community College, NEWCASTLE-UPON- TYNE; WILTSHIRE: Eldene Primary School, SWINDON.

We thank the Classical Association yet again for their generosity to our Primary Latin Project, enabling *Minimus the mouse* to continue his travels! **Wendy Hunt**

Minimus can be taught successfully by non-specialists and the success of the 2-year North Walsham Project shows how a successful *Minimus* scheme has been introduced and has grown successfully in schools where there is no Classics specialist on the staff.

Latin in Norfolk - Our first Classics for All funded two-year project has now ended and, most encouragingly, all the seven state primary schools involved are now continuing Latin on their own. Most of the staff delivering *Minimus* worked alongside project teachers for a year before starting their own groups. Schools have developed the project in different ways, with some now teaching it to G&T pupils in small groups whilst others are teaching whole mixed ability classes (the youngest being a mixed Year 3 & 4 class). There was a significant amount of feedback from Headteachers who said what a wonderful opportunity it had provided for professional development. Interestingly, half of the staff involved are Teaching Assistants rather than teachers and, despite initial worries, very quickly began to enjoy learning with the children and then taking on their own groups.

There are now a further eight primary schools in different parts of the county taking part in the second CfA Norfolk project. Staff from these schools were trained last term and are just beginning their Latin teaching. Two enthusiastic Headteachers are amongst their number.

Our partnership work with Norwich Castle Museum has been enormously valuable and they will be hosting a "Latin in Norfolk" Celebration Evening in November.

These have been very rewarding projects for all concerned.

Benefits for the children are clear and they readily acknowledge the help it is giving them in other areas.

"Latin has helped me with my reading and made me more confident in myself"

"It's just brilliant. It's fun and I wish lessons were longer"

"It stretches my mind to a different level."

All the adults involved have spoken about their enjoyment in taking on something new and their sense of achievement.

"Latin has contributed significantly to enriching our curriculum"

"It has exceeded my expectations"

"It's really useful for Literacy, extending vocabulary and grammar and the derivation of words.

Jane Maguire

June

I visited Beachwood Park School in Hertfordshire twice at the invitation of Michelle Anderson. On the first occasion I worked with different groups in Year 5. We had enormous fun and I won't forget their inventive performance of "Odysseus and the Cyclops," in rather limited space, as they scuttled across the floor as sheep! On my second visit I was delighted to judge their Latin play competition. This was a most memorable treat with 12 groups performing various fairy stories and Greek myths in Latin. The costumes were stunning, the standard of spoken Latin was extremely high and it was all evidence of an enormous amount of hard work on the part of the children and of course especially of Michelle and her colleague Helen. It was well attended by parents and staff and I had a most enjoyable morning which was followed by a Roman banquet. The hall was beautifully decorated and the performers and staff enjoyed excellent Roman food. Michelle Anderson has done so much for the Primary Latin Project over the years with her inspirational talks at training days and her generous sharing of resources, so I was glad to do something for her in return.

We held a training day (James Allen's Girls School, Dulwich) for 8 people. I am most grateful to the Head, Marion Gibbs, for allowing us to use her school for so many years.

As numbers have been small I have decided not to book any more training days for the moment. It may be that we will put them into the calendar again in due course. Meanwhile, our training of potential *Minimus* teachers is taking a slightly different form; see later on my visit to Parkway School.

July

Latin Workshop at University College London – Lorna Robinson of the *Iris Project* invited us to join her at a big Latin event for primary children in July. Nick and I, together with Helen Forte, Jane Maguire and Richard Waddington attended. 160 primary children plus teachers came to UCL to find out more about Latin. There were various presentations and I enjoyed teaching Latin songs to my group. We had a *Minimus* stall and were glad that *Minimus* was part of this important event. This is all part of Boris Johnson's *Love Latin* project which aims to promote Latin in state schools in London. The 5 schools who attended were from the Hackney area and one of the most valuable things was to talk to their teachers about *Minimus*.

August

I was delighted to meet Mai Musié, (Outreach Officer, Oxford) and Evelien Bracke, (Outreach Officer, Swansea) as well as Lorna Robinson who have set up the Classics in Communities project. A number of Universities are willing to help Primary teachers to train to teach Classical languages. This important initiative deserves our full support.

September

Earlier this month I visited Parkway School in Erith, Kent, to train its staff to use *Minimus*. See more details below.

Never a better time for Latin

I am convinced that for the next 15 months or so, there has never been a better time to promote the Classics, and in our case Latin and *Minimus*. These are my reasons:

1. From September 2014 Michael Gove has insisted that all primary schools must deliver a language and that it need not be a modern foreign language. Latin and Classical Greek are among the 7 languages from which primary schools must choose. Nicole Bradley, the Head of Parkway School, Erith, believes that whilst any language learning at primary level is a good thing, Latin has the edge over modern foreign languages, because if children study Latin their literacy skills will show marked improvement.

2. **My visit to Parkway School in Bexley** - I was delighted to train 14 staff. The children

from Years 3 – 6 will all be learning *Minimus* on the timetable. Most of their teachers have done no Latin and some did it a while ago and claim to have forgotten it! We had a useful day and I believe they now feel confident to teach *Minimus* with enjoyment. It was so stimulating and encouraging to see the way that the whole school is embracing *Minimus*; even the teachers of year 1 and 2 children (aged 4 and 5) are keen to be involved and plan to introduce a little Latin, e.g.: singing Happy Birthday in Latin, introducing the children to the family and helping them learn their names and a few key words- mater, pater etc with simple derivations. This is a school where many children have English as a second language and it was low down the rankings until the new Head arrived 2 years ago. It is now a school which parents are regularly putting as their first choice. Under the strong leadership of Nicole Bradley, who is a Classicist, the school can only go from strength to strength and I am very pleased that *Minimus* will be part of these developments.

*If other schools would like me to visit and train their staff or the staff from several neighbouring schools, please get in touch.

3. Classics in Communities Project - Nicole knew the benefits of Latin and had heard about *Minimus* because she is a Classicist. The Classics in Communities Project has been put together by a group of universities that want to encourage and support the training of primary teachers to teach Latin and Classical Greek. They rightly concluded that unless Headteachers know Latin and its benefits already they are unlikely to make the decision to teach Latin. We have a big promotional job to do and then we need to offer a great deal of support in terms of grants and training. I was delighted to be invited to meet the 3 women who are behind this project and I'm looking forward to working closely with them in the future. Dr Evelien Bracke from Swansea has sent the following report. Please note that their first event is a conference in Oxford on Saturday 30th November 2013 which you would all be most welcome to attend if appropriate for you. This will be followed up by a series of workshops around the country to train primary teachers and I will be taking some of these workshops myself.

Classics in Communities: Preparing for Ancient Languages 2014 and Beyond

The Classics in Communities is a new and exciting project set up by the University of Oxford, Swansea University, and the Iris Project in order to promote Latin and ancient Greek in primary schools. This project responds to the inclusion of the two ancient languages in the primary curriculum from September 2014 onward. We start with a conference in Oxford on the 30th November, will tour the country with a series of 8 workshops for primary teachers in January and June 2014, and will provide help and

support to schools and teachers who wish to start teaching one of the languages. We are very excited to have the support of Barbara Bell, who will help us with some of the workshops. We will also start a research project on the impact of Latin and Greek teaching on children's literacy skills, so even if your school already teaches Latin or Greek, you are very welcome to get in touch.

As the project has only just started, everyone involved in it is doing so as a volunteer. While we have gratefully received financial support from the Classical Association and the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, we welcome support from anyone who would like to help. If you are interested in supporting us or getting involved in some way, or have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us by emailing e.bracke@swansea.ac.uk.

Our website is <http://classicsincommunities.org/>, and you can stay in touch on Facebook (Classics in Communities) and Twitter (@ClassicsinCommunity). Vale!

***Evelien Bracke** (Swansea University), **Mai Musié** (University of Oxford), and **Lorna Robinson** (the Iris Project)*

4. **Digital *Minimus*** - The Publishers, Cambridge University Press, have been working closely with Helen Forte, the Illustrator of the book, to turn *Minimus* into an i-book. I understand that it should be available by the end of September. It is so good that *Minimus* can be part of the digital age and this is another string to *our Minimus* bow. We have often been asked for more IT development for *Minimus* and somehow there has always been a more pressing project. I am delighted that Helen Forte is taking forward this aspect of our work and I look forward to seeing the i-book soon.

5. ***Minimus* Apps** - Again Helen Forte is keen to develop *Minimus* Apps. I can certainly see that some form of vocabulary testing on an App would be useful and attractive to our young *Minimus* users. Helen plans to work with a local App designer in Bury St. Edmunds and whilst The App will not appear immediately it is something to look forward to next year.

6. ***Minimus* Accreditation** - I am most grateful to Rachel Jones who has investigated the OCR entry level Latin qualification and has used it for the first time this year. It may well be that her experiences are of interest to *Minimus* users; she has attached a report of her experiences and is willing to be contacted for further information.

*After having run the *Minimus* club for a year, someone mentioned the OCR Entry Level*

Latin to me as something that the pupils could go for and I had a look into it. There are two test papers to be taken, both of which have 20 minutes in which to be completed (my pupils probably only took about 10 minutes on each one, but the 20 minutes are there if they are needed). The first is a lot easier. Both papers are mostly multiple choice, and although the main chunk of text for the translation one initially looks really quite scary, the questions themselves only focus on one sentence at a time so it's broken down quite nicely for pupils.

Towards the back of the specification, there is a vocabulary list which is quite comprehensive. I gave my pupils a copy of this but stressed that they didn't have to learn everything on there, but if they could have a look at it every now and then and try to pick up a few extra words, it would help them in their tests.

The two papers make up 50% of the qualification and then the other 50% comes from either 2 x 200 word written pieces or 1 x 400 word written essay. We went for the latter. As we are in the North East and had already had our field trip up to Vindolanda, we chose "What does the site of Vindolanda tell us about life in Roman Britain in the second century AD?" as our title, and then pupils came into the computer room every lunchtime for a week until they had written their 400 words. For their resources, the pupils used the Minimus book, their trip to Vindolanda, a couple of Vindolanda books that I had in the history room (I'm buying "V-Mail" for next year's group) and of course the internet. That was it for the pupils. The marking is quite simple too as Paper 1 can be marked while they do Paper 2; Paper 2 is slightly longer. There is a very good mark scheme for the written component within the specification. As it is not a GCSE, the two test papers do not have to be taken on a specific date and can be done in controlled exam conditions at any time or in any place. Indeed we did ours in the physics lab over a lunchtime. The closing date for all entries is around May so there is plenty of time to do things. I did the 400 words before the Easter holidays so I could mark them at home over the break and then not be pressured after Easter (I also teach history up to GCSE so that has to take priority as year 11 draws to a close).

The qualification is broken down into three levels. To achieve a Level 1 certification, pupils need to achieve 40% over all 3 components, for a Level 2 certificate, they must achieve 60%, and for Level 3, they must achieve over 80%.

By the time we did the tests, most of my class were in their second year of doing Latin, but 2 girls had only joined us in the previous September. My highest mark was 75%, and one of the new girls also managed to achieve a Level 2.

It is accessible for Minimus pupils and for KS2 pupils to achieve an officially recognised

qualification from an exam board is a real achievement.

Rachel Jones

Links to OCR site:

Main ELC Page:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/entry-level-latin-r445-from-2010/>

Specification:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/80492-specification.pdf>

Sample of paper 1 (Vocabulary, Grammar and Origin of words):

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/70614-language-test-1-vocabulary-grammar-and-origins-of-words-specimen.pdf>

Sample of paper 2 (Comprehension and translation skills) :

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/73596-language-test-2-comprehension-and-translation-skills-specimen.pdf>

The fact that primary schools could gain a National Qualification for their students using *Minimus* must be another attractive feature that we should push for next year.

7. “**Minimus Advocates**” - I have thought for some time that the way to promote Latin and *Minimus* is on a local basis. National publicity is all to the good and very important, but if you know your own area and its particular educational issues you can promote Latin appropriately. Some years ago we had a system of *Minimus* 'Mouseholes' who were teachers willing to be contacted to give advice to new *Minimus* teachers and who promoted *Minimus* on a regional basis by organizing local events - IF THEY HAD TIME..When Roger Davies, who coordinated this, left our committee the mousehole scheme disappeared. I should like to resurrect it. I am very grateful to Richard Waddington on my committee, who is Head of Classics at Northwood Prep School, who has agreed to co-ordinate this scheme. He will soon be sending letters to *Minimus* teachers, inviting you to become a local *Minimus* advocate. NB: this must not be an onerous job and we only ask you to give as much or as little time as you can manage. The idea would be that you work closely with me and with Richard to see how best to spread the word in your area. We cannot pay you for doing this job, but we would always pay any expenses that you incur. We intend to have an annual conference to which we will invite advocates and share good practice. We will supply you with large quantities of publicity material if you are willing to take this and spread the word. Please think whether you would be willing to help us in this way in your area. Thank-you to some of you who have already volunteered; I would suggest that you need at least a year's experience of teaching *Minimus* before you take on this job. The first annual conference is likely to be in Bristol at my home on 15th

March 2014. If you cannot make this date, don't let that put you off from offering to do this job. You could respond to me or better still to Richard directly as a result of this newsletter offering your help; his e-mail is: rwaddington@northwoodprep.co.uk.

The availability of a local experienced *Minimus* teacher who will support schools setting up *Minimus* and give teachers advice will also be a big help in promoting *Minimus* next year. Ideally I would like to establish 20 of these *Minimus* Advocates and we include the full extent of the British Isles here. We look forward to hearing from you.

8. **Minimus Bookmark** - We already sell a *Minimus* bookmark for children through our *Minimus et cetera* business. Helen Forte has now designed a *Minimus* bookmark which we will print in large numbers and which will be available to give to teachers, Head teachers, curriculum planners, governors, etc. It contains key information about the *Minimus* scheme and has an ingenious "bookmark" word to click on which will take you to an appropriate page of the *Minimus* website. This gives more detailed information about the various books and other resources available to support *Minimus*. We hope to have these bookmarks available by half-term. They are attractive and we are willing to give you any number of these that you believe that you can distribute within your area. Please don't leave them lying in my study! Ask for however many you can use and we will send them to you free of charge. I suggest that they are not best used by giving them free to children. They are a promotional item, so if you regularly meet other primary teachers or Heads and can give them out, please ask for some.

9. **Availability of Grants and Training** - If Heads want to implement *Minimus* at their primary schools they will be greatly helped by the availability of Training and a Grant to help with start up costs. Always mention this if you are speaking to interested parties.

10. **The New Teachers' Resource Book** - I had a productive week in Sorrento and have continued to work on the new *Minimus* book for teachers, which I have re-named *Minimus in Practice*. I continue to work on the new book whenever I have a space and in an ideal world I hope to get it published this side of Christmas. Most work remains to be done on the second half of the book which focuses on sharing games, quizzes and other fun activities for your class. If you have any resources of this nature that you would be willing to share with other *Minimus* teachers, please send them to me; thank-you to those who have already sent material. Feedback from teachers in whatever type of school or educational environment will be crucial to the success of this book. Please tell me what you need and tell me your biggest challenges in teaching *Minimus* and I will see what I can do to meet them in the new book.

* Please check the website for an announcement of publication details.

The Future

The empty diary that I mentioned in May now has few spaces! I am looking forward to visiting the Bloo School in Surrey in October as well as Staines Prep School a few days later and Western Green School in Thames Ditton in November. With my various other commitments I cannot undertake any more school visits then until February. If you would like a visit in the late spring or summer terms please get in touch. Please note that because of my 16 private pupils who come to me for Latin and Greek lessons (isn't it marvelous that both adults and teenagers are determined to find ways to study the Classics?!) I can only offer Mondays and Fridays for school visits.

As I finish may I ask you to think about the following areas of our important work:

- Might I become a local *Minimus* advocate?
- Whether I do or not, could I take some free bookmarks to spread in my area?
- Would the conference on 30th November in Oxford be useful and stimulating to attend?
- Do I have any resources that I could share with other *Minimus* teachers via Barbara?
- I must look on the *Minimus* website to see when the *Minimus* i-book, the new teachers book *Minimus in Practice* and the *Minimus* Apps are available and published.

And finally, the chair of the PLP, Jeremy Paterson, was asked for suggestions for naming a new road in Newcastle upon Tyne. His idea has been accepted by the Council and the developers so that in future you will be able to walk along **Lepidina Close!**

With best wishes and thanks as always for your support.

Barbara Bell

[TRAINING DAYS 2012-2013](#)

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