



# Minimus News

by Barbara Bell

In 1997 I wrote my first *Minimus* Newsletter, which consisted of two paragraphs. I made copies of it, hand-addressed the envelopes and posted them to the 50 people who had expressed interest in the book I was writing. 20 years on I am here writing Newsletter 63, which will be my last, since after our Committee Meeting on 11th November I will step down as Director of the Primary Latin Project. Nowadays the Newsletter is dispatched electronically by Cambridge University Press, to over 5,000 supporters all over the world. The intervening years have been an extraordinary adventure which has taken me, accompanied by my supportive husband Nick, all over the UK. We have visited *Minimus* classes and met teachers in Copenhagen, Italy and Germany (four times) and have made seven trips to the USA to attend the prestigious American Classical League (ACL) conferences.

My initial aim to ‘write a little book to help children with their English’ soon turned into an international project. In response to requests from children for more stories I wrote *Minimus Secundus* and both books needed an accompanying Teachers’ Manual. Local children and teachers recorded all the picture stories in both books on CDs. Foreign versions have appeared – Italian, Slovenian and Portuguese. Teachers asked for more stories, so three sets of readers – ‘Minibooks’ were written. I turned *Minimus* into a musical which was performed in Bristol and Geneva (2010)

and with a new cast in Monmouth and London (2012.) We have run a Mythology Competition for many years thanks to generous sponsorship from the Jowett Trustees in Oxford. For pupils we ran two sleepover weekends (‘Minidorms’), two special ‘*Minimus* Days’ at the British Museum and to focus on *Minimus Secundus* a day at the York Museum. For some time we had a pupils’ magazine – ‘Mousetrap’ and local teacher reps who gave advice and help to other teachers beginning *Minimus* – ‘Mouseholes’; these later became *Minimus* ‘Advocates’.

Following the explosion of interest in *Minimus* in 2014 (when the UK government made primary language learning compulsory), it became obvious that training in schools and in particular areas was the way forward. So we have established 16 official *Minimus* trainers, spread throughout the UK and I am greatly indebted to them for their help. They have shared their expertise and practical teaching tips at many successful training events which have been of enormous help to schools. Since my retirement Helen Forte (the genius behind the pictures) and I have written *Minimus in Practice*, *Minimus* becoming *Maximus*, *Minimusculus*, and the *Minimus* Workbook. We are so pleased that teachers are finding the workbook helpful and it is gratifying to hear that pupils ask to do their grammar book in lessons!

Unbelievably *Minimus* has taken me to Bristol University for an honorary MA, to Reading where I was presented with

the Classical Association prize for promoting awareness of Classics among the general public and, as the icing on the cake, to Windsor Castle for an MBE, where Her Majesty the Queen was delighted to hear that Latin is now a cool subject!

Nick and I created a small business which sells all these retirement publications, as well as the small items which pupils love – pencils, stickers, rulers, etc. People sometimes ask me where our shop is located as they would like to visit it. Initially our goods were stored at home in our downstairs loo. Such is the expansion of this project that *Minimus* has now spread to our utility room!

*Minimus* has become *Maximus* thanks to my wonderful committee, especially Rachael Jones, the Primary Latin Project (PLP) administrator and my personal assistant, who keeps the show on the road with her calm efficiency, the aforementioned *Minimus* Trainers, the very gifted Helen Forte and the scores of dedicated enthusiastic teachers whom I have had the privilege to meet and work with. Underpinning the whole enterprise have been Nick and our two daughters Joanna and Katharine and now son-in-law Thanh, who have been involved in many different ways since day one.

Someone said to me recently that being involved with *Minimus* is like being part of a huge family and I couldn’t have been more pleased, as this is just how it has seemed to me. Some of my

committee have worked closely with me for 20 years, and of course in that time we have shared many ups and downs, both professional and personal. At this point I am very sad to report that the Classics world is mourning the recent death of James Morwood. James was a great scholar, a brilliant teacher and a gifted writer, a lovely man and a great supporter of *Minimus*. I am delighted that many of us enjoyed his company at our celebratory party in Oxford in 2015. I very much hope to attend his memorial service on behalf of PLP.

I am pleased to be stepping down at a time when the project is in good shape and is in safe hands. Thanks to recent very generous financial support from the family of Sir Jeremy Morse, we have been able to reinstate the Primary Latin Project Grant Fund and schools can obtain help in purchasing *Minimus* resources. Wendy Hunt has run our Grant Fund for very many years with exemplary efficiency. Owing to recent ill health Wendy feels that she must leave the PLP Committee and I am grateful to Jayne Treasure for taking over the administration of grants, assisted by Diana Sparkes and Bob Bass. Later in this newsletter I will pay tribute to Wendy for all that she has done over so many years. Support from Classics for All has enabled us to run training events, even for small numbers, so all schools and individuals who would benefit from *Minimus* training are asked to contact my successor Jayne Treasure at: [jatpenallt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jatpenallt@yahoo.co.uk).

Further details of training and grants can be found on our website [www.Minimus.com](http://www.Minimus.com).

## Recent events

Vindolanda – What a Summer!

I'm sure you will have seen some of the regular updates on exciting finds at Vindolanda this summer. I particularly enjoyed the article in the Guardian newspaper when Anthony Birley, son of Robin, was interviewed about the new collection of writing tablets that he and volunteer archaeologists found in a trench on a red-letter day - 22nd June 2017. I love the idea of his father Robin receiving excited reports and quietly making his way through a bottle of champagne as he realised what a special day this was!

It may well be that these tablets are from the *Minimus* period, so we wait to see what more they can tell us about the family and their lifestyle. I asked Catherine Jarvis for a report in July which she duly sent; so much has happened since then that she has kindly sent a second report. Catherine is a member of the PLP committee and an official guide at Vindolanda. Enjoy her reports below.

## Vindolanda and Hadrian's Wall July 2017 – First Report

So far Vindolanda has had the most terrific excavation season by far in recent years – they are even comparing it with the fabulous year they had in 1992. The Vindolanda Trust began the year by opening refreshed outdoor facilities – a photographic exhibition (*locus*) space showing Vindolanda over the years; an educational facility for children interested in learning more about Roman life (*domus*) and an updated temple to the Water Nymphs. They also have an area which acts as an indoor artefact handling space. Graham Taylor, of *Potted History* fame, has created a replica pottery kiln at Vindolanda and also runs pottery courses from Vindolanda (this is in the same area as the other facilities just beside the museum in the outdoor area).

Many of you may have already read the Guardian article recording the discovery of more writing tablets (2nd timber fort c.AD92); there were at least 25 wooden tablets, over a 4m long area. This is all very exciting and a certain character called Mosclus who called for beer (in another tablet) is turning up in these tablets as well. They believe he may be a centurion who stayed with different regiments and seemed to be permanently posted at Vindolanda. For further information please look at these links: [http://www.vindolanda.com/\\_blog/excavation](http://www.vindolanda.com/_blog/excavation) (Dr. Andrew Birley writes about their exciting find...) [http://www.vindolanda.com/\\_blog/press-releases/post/tablets-uneearthed-at-vindolanda/](http://www.vindolanda.com/_blog/press-releases/post/tablets-uneearthed-at-vindolanda/)

What else have the excavators found? Wooden water pipes, leather shoes, glass bottles, brooches, rings, Samian ware, a goat skin tent panel, an intaglio showing a carved bull, a stylus pen, a wooden bowl and spoon, a decorative copper alloy plate for a comb showing a chariot and rider, to

name just a few things. There are many more items which have been found and these can be seen/read about on Vindolanda's blog, Twitter and Facebook feeds. Just go to [www.vindolanda.com](http://www.vindolanda.com) and click through on the links.

Vindolanda has also won some important funding to put many wooden items (still being discovered and other artefacts previously discovered) on display for the first time. The new gallery and activity room showing the wooden artefacts will be available to use/view from late Spring 2018.

## Hadrian's Wall News

The cavalry exhibition is still taking place at all the forts along Hadrian's Wall and continues until September. The *turma* (a squadron of cavalry displaying equine prowess/tactics) which took place at Bitts Park in Carlisle in early July was absolutely amazing. Professor Alice Roberts was there and did some filming. So the *turma* can be seen in the next series of *Digging for Britain* for those of you who would like to see more... Vindolanda will also be featured...

Many of the Roman forts (in the care of English Heritage) have been or are in the process of being updated: Corbridge / Chesters / Housesteads / Birdoswald. Birdoswald Fort is undergoing a particularly fine transformation and will be open for the new season in 2018. The campaign for the re-opening of Gilsland Station (right beside Birdoswald and the only station directly on the line of Hadrian's Wall) is gathering pace. Northumberland National Park is opening an extremely interesting exhibition, conference and Youth Hostel space (called the Sill after the geological feature, the whinsill, on which Hadrian's Wall is built) in the next week (29th July 2017): [www.thesill.org.uk](http://www.thesill.org.uk). For schools wanting to come and stay on Hadrian's Wall, this is a wonderful spot from which to stay and plan your school trips. The dormitories are excellent, there is a good offer, plenty of parking space and very good security. There is even a viewing platform to see Hadrian's Wall up close and personal!

Many local hostelries and accommodation providers are updating their offers on Hadrian's Wall so for any

of you planning trips/holidays etc. to Hadrian's Wall there is plenty of choice! Please do contact Catherine Jarvis if you need any further information or if I can be of any help at all.

## October 2017- Second Report

Swords, toy swords, ink writing tablets (plus many more artefacts) have been discovered during recent cavalry barrack excavations at Roman Vindolanda in 2017.

During the past few weeks archaeologists at the Roman fort of Vindolanda have made one remarkable discovery after another in what has been an exceptional year for the research excavations. Two magnificent swords were found in the cavalry barrack area and are now on display at Vindolanda in the Museum. The swords are truly remarkable, but they form only part of an outstanding collection of artefacts left behind in those cavalry barrack buildings. In another room there were two small wooden toy swords (just like Rufus' toy sword which already featured in *Minimus*).

Roman ink writing tablets on wood, bath clogs, leather shoes (for men, women and children), stylus pens, knives, combs, hairpins, brooches and a wide assortment of other weapons including cavalry lances, arrowheads and ballista bolts were all abandoned on the barrack room floors. There are also copper-alloy cavalry and horse fittings for saddles, junction straps and harnesses.

These remain in such fine condition that they still shine like gold and are almost completely free from corrosion.

N.B.: The garrison at Vindolanda at this time (cAD120) was made up of a combination of peoples including the 1st Cohort of Tungrians who came from modern day Belgium. They were joined by a detachment of Vardulli cavalrymen from northern Spain. It is likely that the base held more than 1,000 soldiers and probably thousands more dependents including slaves and freedmen.

Anyone thinking of visiting Vindolanda should try to stay at the wonderful B&B - Four Wynds – run by Catherine Jarvis and her husband Nigel. You will be very well fed and looked after and you are only 10 minutes by car from Vindolanda!

## Training Reports

I was very pleased to run two training events in Bristol schools in the summer term. Bristol Grammar School generously hosted a *Minimus* day for five teachers who came from far afield in the South West. The second one was at the Orchard Free School in Bristol where 10 teachers gathered from three different Bristol primary schools. It was interesting to work with staff from very different schools, one a small country primary school with 80 pupils on the roll, the other a large primary school on two different sites with a total of over 800 pupils! The teachers concerned were mostly new to *Minimus*, or had been using it for a short time, and wanted subject knowledge, help with pronunciation, a clear overview of the purposes and content of the book and the historical background of Vindolanda. Most of the group are already actively involved now in teaching *Minimus* and some have requested on-going further support, which our trainers are able to give them. None of this would be possible without the financial support from Classics for All.

It is quite clear that the Trainers have had an extremely busy summer term and I am grateful for the following reports.

### Birmingham *Minimus* Training Day with Jayne Treasure

A very successful day was held in Birmingham University on 22nd April 2017. The day consisted of 'Training the Trainers' in the morning, followed by Barbara Bell sharing her experience of the *Minimus* course she has run for the past two years for English/MFL PGCE students in Bristol. There was a very useful discussion about contact made with other universities and colleges; the PLP is keen to develop and expand these links.

There are currently 16 trainers who are based in all parts of the country. Hannah Walsh (Bristol Classics Hub) and Aryn Penn (Classical Association of Ireland) also attended as observers. Do get in touch with Barbara or me if you would like to find out more about becoming a *Minimus* trainer.

Our thanks go Dr Elena Theodorakopoulos, Birmingham University for hosting the day and to Hilary Hodgson and Classics for All, for funding not only the training sessions in schools but also for funding the Training Day itself.

### London *Minimus* Training Day with Anna Donnelly

In June I had the privilege of training teachers from Miles Coverdale and Sudbury Primary Schools in London. The former will target Gifted and Talented children and the latter will be using their language specialist to deliver sessions to students from KS2. One studied Latin at school and the other had no previous Latin at all! They are very much looking forward to beginning Latin in September and will have further training support before Christmas, responding to their particular needs. In feedback from the session, the teachers said, 'The session was informative and practical,' and, 'I liked the way that you presented the information you actually do for your pupils.' They were especially happy to be able to examine lots of resources and said, 'It was great to see them to give me an idea of what might be out there to support.'

### Activities to Support *Minimus* Training with Sue Balmer

Blackpool: Inspired by Peter Wright from Blackpool 6th Form College, two primary schools are continuing to deliver Latin very successfully since their initial training in October 2016. In mid-May I trained teachers from three further schools in the same area. The teachers were very receptive and were particularly interested in finding out more about improved literacy through Latin and different ways in which Latin could be integrated into the curriculum. The training was greatly enhanced by the attendance of a teacher from one of the original schools. The participants were impressed by the progress made by her pupils in such a short time and the obvious pride and enjoyment of the pupils in their performance of a play (*Medusa*) in Latin.

NUT Event: A two-day conference entitled ‘The Ancient World in Primary.

Schools’ took place near Grantham on May 23–24. Charlie Andrew and I shared the planning and delivery of the sessions to 18 NUT members as part of their CPD programme. The available time was divided equally between training with *Minimus* resources and Charlie’s course, which she has written and which she delivers to her pupils at Greig City Academy in London.

*Minimus* in Liverpool: On July 3rd, as a follow-up to training in Liverpool, Alice Case, Liverpool Classics Hub coordinator, invited me to support one of her target primary schools by delivering Latin lessons to all classes in KS2 as part of a Latin day. Further training for primary teachers was scheduled for the following day, but that had to be postponed due to an Ofsted inspection in the host school.

Sheffield training: On July 12th I delivered *Minimus* training to four teachers from two schools in Sheffield operating in a Federation. The Executive Principal had applied for funding from Classics for All with a view to introducing Latin across KS2 in her two schools. I delivered a full day’s training which was followed by a meeting of the four teachers to discuss possible ways forward. Interest in Classics in Sheffield has grown following Latin and Greek taster sessions for primary schools at Sheffield High School.

Light Bulb Languages: During training sessions, I always mention how useful some MFL activities can be in the teaching of Latin. Clare Seccombe is a teacher of MFL in the northeast. She also teaches some Latin with *Minimus* and has added free resources to her website.

## Scotland *Minimus* Training with Arlene Holmes-Henderson

On 5th July, Arlene Holmes-Henderson and Jennifer Wade delivered a *Minimus* workshop to modern languages teachers in Scotland. The *Minimus* taster session was part of the Languages Leadership Programme summer school being run by SCILT, Scotland’s national centre for languages. Other languages being showcased at the event were Mandarin, German and Gaelic. Scotland has adopted the EU’s 1 + 2 Languages model which means that all pupils in Scottish schools

learn English or Gaelic (L1) plus two additional languages (L2 and L3) in primary schools. Classics for All is working in collaboration with multiple stakeholders in Scotland to widen access to Latin as L3 in primary schools. *Minimus* is moving north from Vindolanda!

I am training teachers from five primary schools in Sheffield/Doncaster on 5th October (Astrea Academy Trust).

## Wales *Minimus* Training with Jayne Treasure

*Minimus* Clubs have continued to be very popular in the Crickhowell area again this year; the majority of the pupils will complete *Minimus Secundus* during Year 7 at the High School – at their own request.

In May, I delivered a two hour introductory *Minimus* session to student teachers in Swansea. The result was a request to visit a primary school in the Swansea area where one of the student teachers was based. They are now considering introducing Latin to boost literacy. I have been asked to deliver a similar session for the student teachers next year. Another date in the diary is already booked for April 2018 at Cardiff Metropolitan University, again to speak to student teachers.

The interest in Classics is certainly increasing in Wales – and not just at primary level.

## *Minimus* in East Anglia with Steven Hunt and Jane Maguire

Jane Maguire and I recently trained all the teaching staff of two schools in Lowestoft, Suffolk, to teach *Minimus*. The schools – Elm Tree Primary Academy and Dell Primary Academy - have chosen Latin as their KS2 language and are rolling out a programme for teaching every child from Years 3–6 with *Minimus*. The benefits of having all the teachers learn to use *Minimus* is that it overcomes problems when the lead Latin teacher leaves or is unwell and there is no-one to replace them. The Deputy Head, Sue Boor, who has taught Latin herself to the Year 6s, is completely behind the program and hopes that *Minimus* will instil a love of the

Roman world in the students, improve their English literacy and understanding for the KS2 SATs assessments, and prepare them for the next stage in the secondary schools where Latin is an option for GCSE.

I also trained all the teachers at Wisborough Primary School in Sussex, using *Minimus*.

## East London *Minimus* Training with Linda Soames

I did two sets of training during the summer: at Thameside Primary in Thurrock, where they have been teaching *Minimus* for four years, we focused particularly on Latin pronunciation. I also went back to Stambridge School near Southend to do a top-up after the introductory session we’d run in 2016. We looked at adopting a cross-curricular approach to teaching *Minimus*, particularly with art and drama. Earlier that day, I was at their sister school in the Hearts Academy chain, Waterman Primary. We looked at new ways of delivering *Minimus* and they came up with interesting ideas about relating *Minimus* with the British values part of the curriculum.

## Teaching PGCE students in Bristol with Jayne Treasure

It was a great pleasure to run the programme of training English and MFL PGCE students in the Bristol School of Education to teach *Minimus* this year. As in previous years, the students attended this extra-curricular training course over a number of weeks between April and June. The students were divided into two groups – those with no knowledge of Latin and those with some prior experience. It was really interesting to see how the groups responded to the course and their questions certainly kept me on my toes. In the end, 11 students received certificates and can now add ‘*Minimus* Teacher’ to their CVs. My thanks go to Helen Aberdeen and Lorna Smith for their support and to the Graduate School for giving their students this opportunity.

We continue to make links with PGCE students at various universities and I am very grateful to all the trainers who

have contacted local universities to see if they would be interested in a *Minimus* module for English and MFL students. This is an important opportunity to create Classics teachers for the future. We know of at least one MFL teacher trainee from Bristol who has obtained a teaching post in Bristol teaching modern languages, at least partly due to the fact that he could also offer some junior Latin.

## Visit by Ruth Ann Besse

Last summer we were delighted to welcome Ruth Ann Besse, one of our key *Minimus* reps in the USA, to spend some time with us. Ruth Ann and Zee Ann Poerio from Pittsburgh have been loyal supporters of *Minimus* since I first met them in 2003. They never miss an opportunity to promote it: Ruth Ann writes the US Newsletter and Zee Ann always mentions *Minimus* in the many IT talks she gives. They are both willing to deal with queries from the USA about how *Minimus* fits into their curriculum. I am so grateful for their support and all the practical help they have given me over many years. They are still members of the PLP Committee and I very much hope to see them over in the UK before too long.

*salvete* from across the pond! This is Ruth Ann Besse, one of the U.S. members of the PLP. I spent 12 awesome days last summer in England and Wales. Most of those days were spent with Barbara Bell and her family, seeing various sites and visiting some important PLP members.

As a U.S. representative, I was excited to meet Jayne Treasure, who will be taking over as Director of the PLP this fall. We met at the wonderful site, Chedworth Roman Villa. Jayne is everything we could hope for as Barbara's successor: enthusiastic, knowledgeable, kind, and confident. I felt at ease with her immediately. Imagining the leadership of the PLP without Barbara, the creator of *Minimus*, is difficult; nevertheless, Barbara has already dedicated decades to bringing Latin to children all over the world. I can see how Jayne will successfully carry on the mission and give Barbara a much-deserved partial retirement.

Another day, we met with PLP members, Brian and Diana Sparkes. What a great time I had listening to stories and learning from their many years of

teaching and promoting Classics! When I checked in with my 28-year-old son that evening, he wrote back immediately and asked, 'Prof. Sparkes?! The archaeologist from Southampton University?!' It turns out that my son's friend, who is working on her doctorate in Archaeology, is a fan of Prof. Sparkes and she was in awe that I had spent an afternoon with him. She even wanted to see our picture! I was truly struck by how Barbara's mouse had brought such an amazing group of Classics advocates together to accomplish so much and that the movement is gaining momentum even as new members step forward.

We also visited PLP member, Wendy Hunt, on my first afternoon. Wendy's welcome was so cheerful, it completely countered the terribly rainy day! I spent a thoroughly enjoyable English tea time with her—a perfect beginning to my trip.

In addition to being part of the PLP, I am vice-chair of the 'Excellence through Classics' (ETC) committee of the American Classical League (ACL). This committee promotes Classics in the U.S for elementary and middle school children. At our yearly meeting, I meet many teachers and spend time promoting *Minimus* wherever possible. Fellow ETC member and PLP member, Zee Ann Poerio, is a tireless advocate of *Minimus*. Zee Ann is also a computer expert, who has combined her experience teaching *Minimus* with innovative practice. She's an inspiration to me! So, we're working consistently on this side of the pond to make teachers and parents aware of a great Latin resource for children: the *Minimus* books! Zee Ann and I look forward to seeing the movement continue.

## Mythology competition

Once again last summer we ran a very successful mythology competition which was organised by Linda Soames and judged by Kate Macklin (art entries) and Kelly Vaughan (creative writing entries.) For many years this competition has relied on sponsorship from the Jowett Trustees in Oxford. We are delighted that they regard this as important and the number of excited emails I receive from participants and their teachers shows how much they value taking part and receiving

a prize. Our new judge, Kelly Vaughan, reported:

It was an absolute pleasure to judge the *Minimus* myth competition for the first time. I thoroughly enjoyed reading such varied and imaginative entries. It was fantastic to see children writing in so many different forms – from comic strips to poems, from newspapers to play scripts as well as many other text types. It was very clear to me that the children who participated in the competition enjoyed their tasks, as entries were of such a high calibre across the board – it certainly made judging winners extremely difficult. It would be wonderful to see even more submissions next year.

Phillip Jackson of Chicago Grammar School has supported his pupils in taking part in this competition for many years and he sent the following quote, to show how his pupils benefit from taking part:

Students at Chicago Grammar School participate in many competitions from math to Latin to Spanish. They LOVE the *Minimus* Mythology Competition! The myths are always intriguing, prompting great creativity and great fun in the execution of their pieces. More children should participate—they will love it!

## Latin at Verulamium Museum, St. Albans

Michele Anderson and Shona Shahryar have made links with the Verulamium Museum (St. Albans) and this has created opportunities to promote *Minimus*. Michele reported:

At the end of June I attended a meeting at Verulamium Museum where Eleanor Payne, Learning and Interpretation Officer, hosted a group of teachers representing both state and independent schools. There had been requests from many schools to include some Latin in the educational programmes offered by the Museum. Shona Shahryar (a *Minimus* trainer) and I had met with Eleanor a few weeks earlier to discuss the possible use of Latin in displays and worksheets. We suggested and discussed certain chapters / topics from *Minimus*. At the museum teachers had an opportunity to try out the

worksheets containing Latin words that Eleanor and her colleagues had constructed. There is a particularly good one on spotting the animals depicted in and on various artefacts and mosaics on display.

Since they are going to include a Latin element in their educational support programmes, it is hoped that copies of *Minimus* and *Minimusculus* may be available in the museum shop in due course.

## Norwich Castle Museum

For many years Jane Maguire has worked closely with the Norwich Castle Museum and in particular with the incredibly supportive Colly Mudie. Once again last summer the Castle Museum hosted a Roman day and Jane took an active role in which she promoted *Minimus* materials.

## Grant Report

Following a review, PLP grants are once again available. Grants may be used to purchase the two *Minimus* textbooks, the Teacher's Resource books and the CDs. Seven grants have been awarded since the reintroduction: Cavendish Primary School, Manchester; St Peter's Catholic Primary, Leatherhead, Surrey; Blackpool Sixth Form College (The Blackpool Hub); Rookwood School, Andover, Hampshire; Wisborough Green Primary School, West Sussex; Waldringfield Primary, Suffolk; St Augustine of Canterbury Roman Catholic Primary School, Bristol.

My very grateful thanks to Diana Sparkes and Bob Bass for their speedy decisions and eye for detail, and to Rachael Jones, the PLP Administrator, for dealing with all matters so swiftly.

## *Minimus* et cetera

*Minimus* et cetera is thriving, with especially good sales of all three sets of Minibooks and the *Minimus* Workbooks.

*Minimus* Workbooks. In the 2 years since publication we have sold nearly 5000 *Minimus* Workbooks and we are now beginning to see repeat orders from schools. It is very encouraging to receive enquiries and orders from the USA and

Canada. When ordering books please remember to get your orders in a few weeks before term begins as I am sometimes away on holiday myself. I do try to action orders as quickly as I can after I have received payment. Payment via BACS seems to be the favoured route for schools to pay within the UK. From abroad I accept payment via Paypal but please note that I do not normally accept payment via Paypal from the UK.

Minibooks. Most of you know that there are three sets of 10 minibooks. In set 1, each book is based on a character from the *Minimus* text books. The first set is appropriate for use alongside *Minimus* – Starting out in Latin whilst the third set would be appropriate for use with *Minimus Secundus*. The second set could be used with either text book. Note that the stories in the minibooks become slightly longer with more vocabulary in the later sets.

*Minimus* in Practice. This cross-curricular book is proving popular as it gives teachers so much help with ideas for lessons and activities for the pupils.

*Minimusculus* is a starter book for younger pupils aged approximately 3 to 6. It introduces them to the characters in the *Minimus* books and to the site of Vindolanda itself. It is mostly in English and is accompanied by a song sheet and adults' notes which enable parents or grandparents to use the book to inspire the next generation of *Minimus* readers. It teaches Latin greetings and numbers.

All our other products remain on sale. Please contact me, Nick Bell, at [bmbellmini@aol.com](mailto:bmbellmini@aol.com) if you have any queries. Whilst Barbara will be stepping down from being the Director of the Primary Latin Project, this will not affect the on-going success of *Minimus* et cetera providing materials which support the *Minimus* books.

## What of the Future? It's All About Myth!

I'm delighted to report that in response to many requests over a number of years we have had all the *Minimus* Myths recorded on a CD. They have been recorded by Daniel Morden and Hugh Lupton. Any of you who have heard these two professional story tellers performing will know that we could not have found anyone better. They have spent some time

this summer writing slightly longer versions and then recording them on a CD. This CD is available to listen to on the *Minimus* website: [www.Minimus.com](http://www.Minimus.com); for those of you who still play CDs we also have these now available to sell through our business *Minimus* et cetera. The price of the two CDs containing 24 Minimyths, as we have called them, is £5 each including postage and packaging. If you would like to order one of these please get in touch with my husband, Nick Bell, at [bmbellmini@aol.com](mailto:bmbellmini@aol.com) and ask for the new order form. When ordering any *Minimus* et cetera goods please remember to add appropriate postage; you can download latest order forms from our website. You can still send a cheque to us, but the best method is to pay by bank transfer (BACS) Please note that we send out the parcels as soon as we can after receiving payment; we do not have a facility for payment by card.

## A *Minimus* Day at the British Museum

I am grateful to Anna Donnelly who has taken on the task of organising our third British Museum Day. Unfortunately it has not been possible to arrange this for 2018 because of the very full diary of the British Museum. However, we are looking forward to a *Minimus* Day in 2019. At this stage we cannot give precise details of the programme but the idea is that if you live in or around London you should attend the morning session whereas if you wish to bring a group from further afield you should come for the afternoon. For full details of the programme watch the website or e-mail Jayne Treasure at: [jatpenallt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jatpenallt@yahoo.co.uk).

## Future Training Events

A number of training events have already been booked for the Autumn and beyond by our Trainers' group. If you would like to join them please get in touch with the organiser LINDA SOAMES is working with Rose Hill Primary School in the Cowley area of Oxford to train all their staff to teach *Minimus* from September 2018. This is a wonderful opportunity to plan the introduction of *Minimus* in good

time for everyone to familiarise themselves with the course and help build confidence before beginning teaching.

Although I will no longer be the director of PLP, I am very happy to run training events in and around the Bristol area; please get in touch if this is something you would like.

The PGCE course at Bristol which I have run for two years and Jayne Treasure ran this year will take place again in summer 2018 and Jayne and I have decided to share the teaching. This time, as well as MFL and English students it is also being offered to historians. Jayne will be teaching those who already have some knowledge of Latin and I will be teaching the beginners. Please email us if you wish to know more details of this course.

## Changing the Guard at PLP

The Hellenic Bookservice. If you wish to order the main *Minimus* text books, Teachers' Resource Books or CDs, you can order them direct from the publishers, Cambridge University Press, through any bookshop or you might like to contact the Hellenic Bookservice in London ([info@hellenicbookservice.com](mailto:info@hellenicbookservice.com)) who have done sterling work in dispatching thousands of *Minimus* books over the years. Their shop is worth a visit and they have an excellent second-hand section; they are based in Kentish Town.

Unwanted books. If you feel it is time to stop your *Minimus* club or you have moved schools and if for any reason the school is no longer teaching *Minimus*, please don't leave unused books festering in a cupboard or worse still please don't pulp them; there will always be other teachers who will use them. Please get in touch with the project administrator, Rachael Jones, at [Rachael-darren@hotmail.com](mailto:Rachael-darren@hotmail.com) with details of the name and address of your school and how many books you have available and we will organise collection/postage etc.

Sales figures. At the time of writing the first *Minimus* book has sold over 166,000 copies throughout the world and these are the countries that we know of where *Minimus* is being used: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cayman Island, 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 the USA.

If you know locations not on this list where *Minimus* is being enjoyed please do feed that back to us.

The PLP committee. A number of us will be leaving the committee after the 11th November meeting and newcomers are already joining the committee to take *Minimus* forward in new directions.

WENDY HUNT – Wendy Hunt has been the most marvellous support to me and to the Primary Latin Project for over 20 years. I first met her in 1997 when I visited All Hallows Prep School in Somerset. At that stage *Minimus* had no name, none of it was written and I was just beginning to assemble my Advisory Panel. I had a hunch that there was a gap in the market but we hadn't even decided on Vindolanda as the setting. I watched Wendy in action - an enthusiastic teacher with equally enthusiastic pupils. We agreed to keep in touch and she offered to help in any way she could. Little did I realise the many demanding roles that Wendy would take on in the intervening 20 years. Wendy has run our Grant Fund since taking over the job from Russell Shone soon after *Minimus* was published. She has done this with the support of Bob Bass and Diana Sparkes and it has to have been one of the most efficient, smooth-running 'committees' that I have ever come across. Those of you who have applied for grants will bear witness to the speed with which decisions have been made and cheques sent. Moreover, with the cheques Wendy has always sent a beautifully written letter of encouragement and has urged you to keep in touch and let us know how things are going. There were literally thousands of Wendy's letters and their replies all beautifully catalogued in chronological order in a series of ring binder files when Nick and I visited Wendy just before Christmas.

As well as the PLP Grant Fund, Wendy has been one of the judges in our Mythology Competition. Wendy has judged all the written entries, whether essays, poems, dialogues, etc. Each child who has sent an entry has received a valuable letter of encouragement and constructive criticism on how to improve their written skills in the future. This is an enormous commitment of time and I

hope Wendy feels proud and delighted to know that she has helped the writing skills of many thousands of young pupils.

As if this were not enough, Wendy has been an immensely loyal and supportive member of the Primary Latin Project Committee since it began in 2000. I don't remember her ever missing a meeting (oh there was one – on her granddaughter's birthday – well done Wendy.) Wendy is an immensely practical person who always sees the best of people and situations. She has been a huge help to me personally, especially as a member of both Advisory Panels. When I think of the early days of *Minimus* when six of us met at the late Martin Forrest's rooms at Redland College in Bristol, trying to decide where to set this book, how to begin, what grammar to cover and what Vindolanda resources would lend themselves best to stories, I can't imagine the book ever being written without Wendy's wise words, based on years of experience in teaching the very young.

Wendy took part with enthusiasm in both Minidorms and both *Minimus* days at the British Museum, in fact there has not been a *Minimus* event where Wendy has not been present, and not just present but fully involved, helping to organise, helping to make sure that all the I's were dotted and all the T's were crossed to produce a thoroughly efficient and enjoyable occasion. Her efficiency and organisation skills are legendary and I am deeply grateful for the several days that she has visited my home in the last two years to attack my study, paperwork and archives to make some sense of them!

We are all going to miss Wendy hugely, from her cheerful words, beautiful flowers brought to every meeting, letters of encouragement always written in her immensely stylish writing and so on.

JEREMY PATERSON – Jeremy Paterson took over as Chairman in 2008. At the time he was still a senior lecturer in Ancient History at Newcastle University and Chairman of Governors of a large comprehensive school in Newcastle – Walbottle. As well as these two extremely demanding roles he found time to teach his own *Minimus* club and indeed brought some of the children to a weekend at Vindolanda when we celebrated sales of 100,000 copies. Jerry has taken an active role in *Minimus* events. He spoke about the people at Vindolanda at one of our

*Minimus* Days at the British Museum and he helped 8-year-olds to decode Roman tombstones in the York Museum when we had a day based around *Minimus Secundus*. I will never forget Jerry lying flat on the floor with a group of very young children showing them how to decode the *signifer's* tombstone.

Unsurprisingly, since retirement, Jerry has been hugely in demand as a senior lecturer on cruise liners and the timing of our meetings has invariably had to coincide with his rare trips on land! He has been a brilliant Chairman, somehow managing to steer us through long and sometimes complicated agendas without anyone feeling they were being rushed. In between committee meetings he has been an enormous source of encouragement to me and indeed a source of knowledge; one can ring Jerry and ask him what was going on pretty much anywhere in the ancient world at any period of ancient history and he can tell you, and tell you in a way that doesn't make you feel stupid. This is a great gift and for someone who finds ancient history baffling it has been a very great help. We will all miss his wacky sense of humour and his indefatigable enthusiasm, but we are delighted to be keeping our links with universities. His successor is Elena Theodorakopoulos, Senior Lecturer and the outreach officer from Birmingham Classics Department. Elena is already a great friend to *Minimus* and the PLP. For three meetings now she has made available the splendid facilities of Birmingham Classics Department for our Trainers Days; moreover she is always present to help, to photocopy and to supply anything we might need to make

the day go smoothly. She has invited me several times to speak to her own students and work with them so that they feel they have a good knowledge of *Minimus*, particularly those who are thinking of going into teaching. Elena is already Deputy Chairman and will take over at the first meeting of 2018, next spring.

NICK BELL – My husband feels it is time for him to send written reports of the business, *Minimus* et cetera, rather than attending meetings, but we are still busy selling, and we are pleased to be helping create and dispatch materials to support both teachers and pupils.

Whenever I met the late Sir Jeremy Morse he was always encouraging about the growth of *Minimus* but would remind me rather sternly that it was time to be looking for my successor. I know that he would be delighted with my choice. Coincidentally he met Jayne when he and Lady Morse visited Haberdashers' Girls' School in Monmouth to watch *Minimus* the Musical and even more coincidentally Jayne's maiden name was Morse, so they enjoyed discussing Morses around the world! The future expansion of this project owes a great deal to the ongoing support of Classics for All and the Morse family. As well as these major sponsors, many of you reading this have regularly given money to the Primary Latin Project and every donation has been much appreciated, as have so many encouraging letters of support. My committee and I are deeply grateful.

And finally, I am stepping down as Director and handing over the day to day running of the Primary Latin Project to Jayne Treasure. She has shadowed me as my

Deputy for a year and as she is herself teaching two *Minimus* clubs in state primaries in Wales and has been actively involved in our grant fund, she is well placed to pick up the reins. I have known Jayne for 35 years and I couldn't have found a safer pair of hands to which to entrust this project. I am quite sure that with the new team in place, Jayne will lead *Minimus* into all sorts of exciting new adventures. Beware Jayne, sometimes this mouse almost has a mind of its own, and scuttles off in unexpected directions. I wish Jayne and all the committee great fun and satisfaction as they share their passion for Classical subjects, and especially Latin, with the next generation. I cannot thank all of you enough for your support, your friendship, your prayers and your love over 20 years.

I leave the last word to a young *Minimus* student. Recently Jane Maguire ran a Roman day at Norwich Castle Museum. The pupils were asked to give some feedback on their day. Young Evan said:

Thank you for the opportunity to go to Norwich Castle. It was EPIC! My favourite things were finding *Minimus* (a mouse on display in the Roman gallery) and the funny costumes for the play. The names *tres porci parvi* (the three little pigs) and *lupus* (wolf) are cool Latin names. In other words, you are AWESOME! Thank you lots.

I couldn't agree more!

**Barbara Bell**  
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