



# Report of the Primary Latin Project February 2015

by Barbara Bell

2014 was a particularly big year for *Minimus*. The DfE ruling that primary schools must teach a language which need not be a modern language (Latin and Classical Greek were among the options) has led to a pleasing increase in demand for *Minimus*.

**Training:** Many head teachers expressed interest in choosing Latin, using *Minimus*, because:

- Minimus* can be taught by non-specialists.
- Grants are available for start-up costs.
- Training can be provided.
- It is specifically designed to help children understand English.

In the Autumn I travelled to many parts of the country to train whole school staff, most of whom knew no Latin. In February I will be visiting two primary schools in Dartford which work in a partnership. Both schools will be teaching *Minimus* throughout the junior school to every year group and I will spend a day training 70 teachers.

The traditional *Minimus* Training Days held on Saturdays are likely to be phased out, now that I am engaged in this new form of training. We do however have one Saturday planned in London on 6<sup>th</sup> June at James Allen's Girls' School in Dulwich. Please get in touch if you would like an application form e-mailed to you or you can download one from our website: [www.minimus.com](http://www.minimus.com)

## Publications

In the last 12 months there have been three new *Minimus* publications:

- ***Minimus in Practice*:** I enjoyed writing this book which explores all the cross-curricular links that can be made in a *Minimus* lesson; every subject on the primary curriculum is included. In the last third of the book there are quizzes, games and other fun activities for the classroom.
- ***Minibooks*:** Helen Forte and I produced a third set of *Minibooks* in August. These do not advance the grammar but provide extra reading material for the classroom; they can also be used for drama or for prizes in competitions. This set is a little more advanced than sets 1 and 2 and characters from *Minimus Secundus* are explored.
- ***Minimus becoming Maximus*:** It is now 15 years since the first *Minimus* book appeared and 20 years since I had the idea of writing it. It seemed an appropriate time to reflect on the development of the Primary Latin Project and to tell the extraordinary story, hence this book. If you wish to purchase any of these 3 publications they are only available from our business *Minimus Et Cetera*. Please contact Nick Bell at the e-mail address below.

## Work with Students

In 2014 I spoke to students about *Minimus* at various universities: Swansea, Reading, York and Bristol and later this month in Birmingham and Nottingham. In most cases these were university Classics students but in York and Bristol I spoke to trainee teachers whose subjects are MFL and English. In Bristol I was asked by a former colleague of mine, who now trains students to teach French, to explain to them why I think Latin is important and why I wrote *Minimus*. We were joined by the English PGCE students, so I addressed a group of about 75. I was also outlining my plans to offer them an optional module in the summer term where, after 10 hours of training, they will be equipped to teach the first *Minimus* book. They will gain a certificate and Latin will be another string to their bow when applying for jobs. The response has been phenomenal: over 50 students have signed up to take this course and it may even be necessary to split the group and run two parallel sessions if funding can be found.

It is particularly pleasing that at a time when there is a national shortage of Classics teachers, these 50 new teachers of English and Modern Foreign Languages will be able to offer some basic Latin in their schools.

## Sales

At the time of writing sales of the first *Minimus* book are close to 150,000 copies. The committee feels that this significant milestone deserves celebrating and there will be special events in 2015 to mark this.

It has been exciting and a great privilege, during the last 12 months in particular, to meet so many Heads, teachers and students who are hungry to learn Latin themselves and who appreciate its benefits.

If you would like further details of any aspect of the work of the

Primary Latin Project, please contact me.

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