

Report by the Director on the JACT Classical Civilisation and Ancient History Summer School 2015

Held at Repton School from the 11th to the 16th July

Once again, I am delighted to report on another enjoyable and successful Classical Civilisation Summer School.

This year we were pleased to welcome 74 students. Of that 74, 63 had just finished Year 12. Despite increasing our numbers this year, we still had a long waiting list and unfortunately a large number of applicants were not able to join us at Repton. In the interests of widening participation, we decided to increase our numbers from 70 to 75, but in order to keep our class sizes small and continue to create the positive and friendly atmosphere that we have always enjoyed at Repton we cannot increase this number further.

As always seems to be the case, the majority of our students (84%) were female but this didn't seem to bother the boys who all worked with great focus and determination and who proved especially adaptable in our dramatic performances.

27 of our students came from independent schools, 21 from state comprehensives, 13 from state grammar schools and 10 from 6th form college within the UK. We were also joined by students from Northern Ireland, Singapore and the USA. We had fairly large contingents of students from Cirencester College and the St Paul's Trust School, with most other schools represented by just one or two students.

Of the students that attended 19 were not studying Classical Civilisation or Ancient History at A-level, however, 10 of these students were studying Latin.

This year we had 10 full-time tutors as well as a very versatile and obliging Director's assistant who was happy to turn his skills to anything that was required of him. A wide range of topics were taught, under broad subject areas: History (Minoans and Myceneans, Athens and Sparta, Roman Republic, Life and times of Cicero, Alexander the Great), Literature and Culture (Art and Architecture, Historiography, Tragedy, Comedy, Greek and Latin Lyric poetry), Epic (Iliad and Aeneid), Philosophy (Ancient and Modern Philosophical problems, Life and times of Socrates), Language (Greek and Latin) and Mythology. Students are expected to take five out of the six courses on offer, but in fact the majority opted for all six teaching sessions per day and all students decided to study a language either at beginner's or a more advanced level.

During free time in the afternoons all students were able to take advantage of the excellent swimming and tennis facilities at Repton, as well as the (Classics-related) books, DVDs and board games on offer. Evenings were spent preparing our drama productions for the final evening; all students were involved in some capacity - acting, singing, dancing, directing, costumes and props allowing our students to utilise and develop a wide variety of skills. We also offered a number of additional talks including a discussion on

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Gender in Antiquity by Peter Olive and a talk on the fieldwork taking place at Interamna Lirenas (Italy) by George Lord.

On the final night of the summer school, we were fortunate to be joined by Professor Edith Hall from King's College London, who sat in the audience during our performances of Euripides' *Helen* (directed by Dr. Steph Harrop) and Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* (directed by Rob Taylor) and who provided a wonderful feedback session to our students the following morning. Once again, our students really did shine in our productions. It was clear from the quality of the performances that everybody involved had worked with dedication and commitment and remarkable to see how much talent we had in our midst.

As always, the feedback responses from our students were excellent. A few complained about our early (8.30am) start, most commented on how much they had enjoyed the individual teaching sessions as well as taking part in the preparation of our performances. Many students remarked on how they found the summer school the perfect place to meet people with similar interests and further their love of classics. The vast majority of our students said that the Summer School had influenced them towards studying classical subjects at university or confirmed their decision to do so.

Of course many students would be denied this experience were it not for the generosity of a number of bodies. In total, 24 students received some form of financial assistance from the Summer School, this included 5 students receiving a full bursary. We gratefully acknowledge support from the Cambridge School Classics Project, the Classical Association, the Gilbert Murray Trust, the JACT Greek Project, the Jowett Copyright Trust, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, the University of Cambridge Faculty of Classics, the University of Oxford Faculty of Classics and The Friends of Classics. We would also like to thank the St Paul's Way Trust School for raising funds in part payment for their students.

The Summer School is, as always, very grateful to Elaine Shaw at Repton Enterprises, who always works so hard to accommodate us and to all of the other staff at Repton School who ensure that we have a safe and comfortable stay. My sincerest thanks go to Kate Baylis who has worked very hard in the role of Summer School Secretary and has proven herself time and again as an organised and diplomatic administrator, as well as Daniel Paul who took on many additional responsibilities this year in anticipation of becoming Director in 2016.

I would also like to take a moment to reflect on the sad passing of Mr Martin Hankey whose efforts and guidance have been much appreciated during our transition from JACT to JSST and who will be sorely missed.

Written by Lynette Fortey-Burnett

Course Director

September 2015

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