**Report by the Director and Director of Studies on**

**the JACT Greek Summer School at Bryanston School 25 July - 7 August 2021**

Miraculously, after its unavoidable but still regrettable cancellation last year, the 53rd Greek Summer School (the 35th at Bryanston) took place, in person, and was wonderfully successful and enjoyable. Given the risks and uncertainties caused by Covid, an online version of the Summer School had been planned in detail by a group led by the Director of Studies, and much thought had been given by the Management Committee, and by the Course Secretary in particular, to special policies and procedures in the event of an in-person Summer School under various sets of assumptions. The decision to proceed in person was taken at the last possible moment, at the very end of June, and it was not taken lightly. Remarkably, Lateral Flow Tests of every member of the Summer School on three occasions through the fortnight revealed not a single positive result, and every possible in-person contact-hour of Greek was delivered as planned. Several Covid-dependent innovations proved their independent worth and will be retained.

**Students:**

There were 231 students, many fewer than usual, since bedrooms were all single-occupancy. This year, deliberately, our students were nearly all at school or university in the UK or Ireland. 57 of them attended or had attended maintained schools. There were 16 university students. Eight were teachers or trainee teachers, attending the summer school to enhance their ability to teach their own students.

**Greek classes:**

There were 56 Beginners in 9 groups, 35 Intermediates (i.e. pre-GCSE) in 5 groups, and 140 Advanced students (from immediately post-GCSE to university level) in 18 groups; there were 2 groups for the teacher courses. No group had more than 10 students, and the size of Beginners groups was again kept small thanks to a special grant from the Cambridge Classics Faculty. The Beginners all used *Reading Greek* except the teachers’ beginners group, which used Taylor’s *Greek to GCSE* since that is the textbook that the teachers are most likely to use in their schools. The Intermediates used either *Reading Greek* or the Taylor course, depending on the students’ level and previous experience. Amongst the Advanced groups, 8 groups read books of the *Iliad*, and 10 groups read from the *Odyssey* (book 21 of the latter proving particularly popular this year).Of the prose authors, Plato, Xenophon and Demosthenes were in highest demand; of the dramatists, Euripides was the most read, in particular his *Bacchae* and *Hippolytus*, while Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* and Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* were also each read by several groups. In addition to the 32 hours of formal lesson time, afternoon grammar clinics were provided in order to offer additional support and explanation of linguistic features.

**Tutors and staff:**

There were 35 tutors, including 14 from universities (Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Glasgow, Kent, Manchester, Reading, and Swansea), all of whom (as a matter of policy this year) had taught at the summer school before. Two filled gaps (*not* Covid-related*!*) at very short notice. One tutorship was again generously supported by Trinity College, Cambridge. Heather Sanger in her eleventh year as our matron was as always supportive and reassuring to students and tutors alike. Erica Humbey, Patrick Johnson, and Alex Orlov-Holmes were wonderfully reliable, energetic and efficient Director’s Assistants.

**Beyond the classes:**

Deliberately, all lecturers this year were on the home team. Large, socially distanced, and mask-wearing audiences heard Philomen Probert on the sound of Greek, Jo Willmott on Linear B and Homer, David Langslow on patterns in Homer, Nick Denyer on ways of getting people to agree, Maria Oikonomou on Aristophanes’ *Knights*, Eleanor Dickey on how the Romans learned Greek, Alastair Harden on storytelling and visual effects in Greek art, John Taylor on Herodotus and Thucydides, and Anthony Bowen on Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*. The early-afternoon seminar programme again offered an extraordinary variety of topics, from: Linear B, accentuation, scansion, the verb ἵημι, advanced prose composition, Herodotus and Persia, Zeno’s paradox of the stadium, Stoicism, the Greek temple, Petronius, the Greek novel, and New Testament Greek, to: Modern Greek for classicist beginners, introduction to Sanskrit, Oscar Wilde’s Hellenism, and Cavafy.

This year the ever-popular Greek and general knowledge Quiz, masterminded by Emma Woolerton, took the ingenious form of an outdoor Treasure Hunt for widely-spaced teams finding and solving clues against the clock. Eleanor Dickey and Philomen Probert led a walk to the Iron Age and Roman site of Hod Hill. About 30 students took part in the lawn tennis tournament organized by John Dant, and virtually the whole summer school enjoyed some aspect of the many-sided Entertainments programme devised and run by James Thorne, Rowena Hewes, and the Director’s Assistants, a highlight being the inter-House knock-out rounders competition. A beautiful and in places deeply moving concert was held partly out of doors, including performances by two bag-pipers, two choirs, and an orchestra with an organ, coordinated, rehearsed and conducted by Rosalind Aczel and Jo Willmott. Aristophanes’ *Knights* was skilfully and memorably produced by James Thorne, Georgia Condell, and Christopher Burden-Strevens, with a highly talented cast and production team. The Greek play on the final evening (kept indoors by the rainclouds) was Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, in a riveting and powerful production by Adrienne Gould. Clare Sharp and her team of helpers headed by Anne Bowers, Nick Denyer, and Cathy Hudspith produced literally spectacular costumes and props for both plays.

**Students’ feedback:**

162 students (70%) returned the online questionnaire which was circulated towards the end of the course; this response rate was, by some distance, a Summer School record. Almost all students (97%) felt that they had made as much (36%) or indeed more (61%) progress with their Greek than they had expected prior to arrival. It was a typically industrious cohort of Hellenists: the great majority of students had devoted at least 3 hours per day to independent study outside the tutor sessions, while some 30% of respondents had spent 4 or more hours on their Greek outside the lessons. The overwhelming sentiment was that the academic pace had been challenging but rewarding, the teaching clear and the atmosphere supportive. Almost all respondents had attended many of the evening lectures and afternoon seminars, and many had also found time to participate in the musical, dramatic or sporting activities. As in previous years, there were many comments praising individual tutors and the course as a whole, and many expressed an eagerness to return in future years.

**Our thanks:**

We gratefully acknowledge support from the Cambridge Classics Faculty, the Oxford Faculty Board of Classics, the Craven Committee (Oxford), the Jowett Copyright Trust, the Classical Association, the JACT Greek Project, Trinity College Cambridge, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the Gilbert Murray/Cromer Trust, and Classics for All. Fewer bursaries than usual were sought and made in this (in many ways exceptional) year, and the resulting operating surplus slightly exceeded last year’s operating loss.

The Summer School is as always deeply grateful to Bryanston School, whose staff always do – and this year more than ever did – everything possible to be helpful (and this year to make us safe as well as comfortable), and of whose world-class facilities we have free run. The Summer School also relies on the commitment and dedication of many individuals throughout the year. Special thanks are due to our Chair, Chris Burnand, to our Treasurer and Sponsorship Secretary, Julian Spencer, to our Outreach Officer, Emma Woolerton, for her ingenious initiatives through Covid, and to our new Assistant Director of Studies, Maria Oikonomou, who managed the teachers groups and the seminar programme, and acted as DoS in week 2. As ever, and especially this year, we owe a particularly large debt of gratitude to Cathy Bothwell, the Course Secretary. Every year, from autumn to late summer, Cathy arranges almost every aspect of the Summer School, from initial publicity, through the applications process and living arrangements at Bryanston, to the coaches that transport people away at the end. This year her work was greatly increased by the circumstances of the pandemic – especially in arrangements with Bryanston and in the preparation of the Risk Assessment (finalised in version 8*!*) – and its outcomes, including some innovations which we shall retain, were as clear-headed and effective as ever.

This year we mourn the loss of three of our champions, long-standing summer school colleagues and old friends all: Neil Hopkinson, many times tutor; Keith Maclennan, a former Director; and the Summer School’s co-founder David Raeburn. Each was remembered publicly before an evening lecture, and we are considering ways of honouring their memory in perpetuity. In Keith’s memory, the Summer School has received donations of £40k. In Keith’s absence, there were no Greek verses this year, but we felt and will always feel their presence among us at Bryanston.

David Langslow, Director

Henry Cullen, Director of Studies