

JACT Durham Greek & Latin Summer School 2023

Director's Report

I am pleased to report that we were able to hold our first fully in-person summer school since 2019, once again in the beautiful setting of St John's College, Durham. The course ran from 22nd - 28th July, with teaching condensed into 6 days this year to allow students the option to leave on the Friday evening due to train strikes on both Saturdays. We were delighted to welcome students from as near as Durham University and as far as Beijing.

Recruitment

This year, we welcomed 69 students aged between 15-85, 26 of whom were aged 15-22. We started recruiting quite late this year as we were unable to contact the consultancy who have previously maintained our website and the domain name had expired, resulting in the need to develop a new website in house, which is now working very well.

In addition to our new website, I am also delighted to report that Tony Potter, previously a student on the course and now teaching our Beginners' Latin class, has taken on our Social Media. Tony is doing a fantastic job of being active across social platforms - of the students who filled in our feedback form, 23% said they found out about us online - a good number considering how many of our students are returners. The course was also advertised through the Classics list and by electronic flyers sent out to schools.

The College

We always enjoy our time at St John's, particularly the food, and are grateful to the Catering and Housekeeping teams for their hard work providing a warm welcome in an old building in a very chilly and rainy July. In particular, the Catering team were fantastic with one of our students who had severe food allergies, and in providing us with a formal dinner on the Thursday evening.

St John's have had to increase their prices significantly this year and we rearranged our own pricing structure to take this into account, and to ensure that everyone was paying the same amount for teaching, regardless of different types of accommodation. Rising costs were our most significant challenge this year; however, I had some very productive talks with St John's about next year and we have come up with a new pricing structure which will enable us to offer a new option of B&B-only accommodation with the use of kitchenettes. They have also kindly provided us with a discount for our staff accommodation.

We are particularly grateful to St John's for their flexibility regarding the train strikes - we had students arriving over a period of 3 days and the same with departures, and they didn't charge us for unused nights despite some quite last minute changes, which was extremely kind and enabled us to offer refunds to our students for unused accommodation.

Courses

After last year's increase in the number of 16-18 year olds attending, we redesigned one of the Advanced levels - now called 'Higher' - to fit around the A level syllabi. Selections for the Higher Latin group came from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Livy, and for the Higher Greek students, Euripides' *Medea* and Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. Both the Higher and Advanced levels read two texts during the week, allowing students to switch halfway through and study both a Latin and a Greek text. We also ran Beginners', Post Beginners', Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 Greek; and Beginners', Post Beginners' and Intermediate Latin. 39 students took Greek; 27 Latin; and 3 spent half the week on each.

Tutors

It was fantastic to welcome back our wonderful team of tutors this year - Alan Beale, Janet Watson, Terry Walsh, Emma Nicholson, Davey Benstead-Cross, Joe Watson, Matthew Ellard, Hedwig Schmalzgruber, Samantha Newington, Molly Orme and our newest tutor, Tony Potter. Their expertise and enthusiasm are so highly valued; feedback from students regarding teaching was excellent as always - 100% of evaluation form respondents rated teaching "good" or higher, with 96.8% of those rating it "excellent" - and it is a pleasure to work with such a willing and dedicated group of people. I am also grateful to Hermione Williams, to whom we were unable to offer a group this year due to lower numbers. Hermione was very understanding and kindly agreed to be on standby during the sign up process, and to join us again next year.

As well as our tutors, my heartfelt thanks go to Kate Addison-Baylis, who came back as Pastoral Director this year, taking charge of safeguarding and supporting me in my first year as Director; to Seb Nichols, our Director of Studies who spent a huge amount of time and effort liaising with students, juggling groups and assigning rooms; and to Rosie Nichols, in her first year as Course Secretary, who also worked extremely hard in staying in touch with students; compiling a very comprehensive schools mailing list, and coordinating arrivals, amongst other things.

A particular mention must go to Alan Beale, our previous Director of many years, who has now stepped down from teaching at the Summer School. Alan's incredible knowledge, kindness, wit, sense of humour, and recitations have been the beating heart of the Summer School for many years. In particular, the Hadrian's Wall trip will never be the same without Alan's sponge-on-a-stick routine and his recruitment of volunteer students to play the roles of sewage in the latrines at Housesteads, which is just as fascinating and amusing no matter how many times one witnesses it. Alan has taught the majority of our tutors over the years, including myself, and he will be sorely missed as a mentor, colleague and friend. I remain in touch with Alan and am grateful for his ongoing advice and support.

Lectures and Other Activities

On the first Sunday morning, due to our revised timetable allowing anyone who needed to travel on Sunday due to the train strikes time to arrive before teaching commenced, tutors volunteered to put on some optional activities, which included:

Guided walks around Durham with Davy

'Classics & First World War Poetry' with Terry

'Cracking the Code of World Change' with Emma

As usual, we had a programme of evening lectures, and I would like to thank Matt Ellard for organising these again for us this year. Our programme was as follows:

Saturday: Welcome talk by Lizzie; Quiz in tutor groups by Tony

Sunday: Anna Judson, Durham University 'Writing in Roman Britain'

Monday: Esther Meijer, University of St Andrews 'Fragmenting and Displacing Community in Seneca's Trojan Women'

Tuesday: Ted Kaizer, Durham University 'Palmyra'

Wednesday: no lecture (Hadrian's Wall trip)

Thursday: no lecture (formal dinner)

Friday: no lecture (most students departed early to avoid train strikes)

Afternoon sessions included presentations and workshops from students and tutors on a variety of topics, including:

Scansion

Creating Mosaics

Burying the War Dead

Greek & Latin in Durham Cathedral

Classical Reception of Medea

Hellenic Bookservice

We were pleased to welcome the Hellenic Bookservice back once again to ensure that students needed an extra suitcase for their return home! Monica and Fred brought a fantastic selection along as always and we are so grateful to them for their ongoing support. We hope and plan to see them again next year.

Hadrian's Wall

Our final Hadrian's Wall trip with Alan was enjoyable and informative as always, and well attended by approximately 35 students. We visited Housesteads and Chesters as usual and were very lucky to select the one sunny afternoon of the week to do so. We are grateful to English Heritage who continue to offer free entry for educational groups.

Bursaries

Our bursary fund continues to be dependent on the generous financial support of various organisations. We were extremely grateful to be able to offer £3595 worth of bursaries to 10 students this year: recipients included sixth formers at maintained schools, self-funded postgraduates, and mature students in receipt of PIP and Universal Credit, including one lady who was about to start her PGCE in Classics. We are grateful to the Classical Association, the Hellenic Society, the Jowett Copyright Trust, the Gilbert Murray Trust, and Cambridge University for their ongoing support and for providing us with the grants which enabled us to award this year's bursaries.

Looking forward

We have booked St John's College again for 20th - 27th July 2024 and look forward to returning with our usual language offer, plus a brand new classical civilisation course.

Lizzie Cooper
Course Director 2023

Appendix 1

Number of students	69
School pupils (from maintained schools)	6
School pupils (independent schools)	15
Undergraduates	7
Postgraduates	9
Classics Teachers	0 (1 maths)
Other	31

Age range **15-85**

15-17	18
18-22	8
23-29	8
30-59	9
Over 60	26

Appendix 2

Teaching Groups	Greek	Latin	Greek & Latin
Beginners	7	4	
Post beginners	2	4	

Intermediate 1	4	5	
Intermediate 2	8	-	
Higher	10	9	1
Advanced	8	5	2
Total	39	27	3