

Research Article

Forum

42nd JACT Latin Summer School – 2022 Director’s Report

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Abstract

This is a review of the activities and successes of the 42nd residential JACT Latin Summer School, run in July 2022. Specifically, it covers our typical teaching arrangement, lectures, trips and events and acknowledges the generosity of our sponsors.

Key words: Latin, outreach, Summer School, language learning, Hadrian’s Wall

‘Latin Camp has been a fantastic experience for me. For the first time in my life, I am with people who love Latin as much as I do and I have made friends for life who I can talk to about Classics. The Tutors have been wonderful and my Latin has improved greatly, from the lessons and also the excellent grammar clinics on offer. I have also hugely enjoyed talks from some inspirational classicists and learned so much amazing stuff from them. I have also had the chance to visit places I never would have otherwise – not only Harrogate (which has been a fantastic base) but Hadrian’s Wall and a trip to York. The Camp has reinforced my genuine love of Classics and cemented my decision to study it at university. I feel so lucky to have been able to come – it has changed me and my life.’ (Rose Stacy, student at Camp 2022.)

Latin Camp has officially exploded! After 136 students joining us live in 2021, I was delighted to welcome no fewer than 189 students for this our second summer at Harrogate Ladies’ College. This was comfortably our biggest ever (the second biggest having been 153 in 2010) and I was forced to scrape around for affordable (good luck in Harrogate!) Airbnbs to fit them all in. Sadly, there were six or seven other late applicants I just couldn’t find room for so I’m already rolling out the Airbnb bookings for next year to ensure that this does not happen again. (Happily, there are about 20 beds’ worth of local Airbnbs whose prices are tolerably similar to what I pay the school per person.)

We were basically back to normal though the precaution of establishing isolation rooms/areas in each house meant that we were able to deal quickly with a minor Covid outbreak in week 2 so that only six students had to leave us. Then, mercifully, we had several other negative LFTs and no further symptoms.

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Also, very reassuring was our international representation back up, with 9% of our population from USA, Spain, Italy, France and right out to Hong Kong. We had a similar overall U18:O18 ratio with 73% of our students of school age, of whom roughly 40% were from the state sector.

Staff and Teaching

‘Latin camp has been a wonderful opportunity and I’ve loved every minute of it. As someone who wants to study classics in the future, Latin camp has given me the chance to have a go at the intensive language learning aspect of classics, get a glimpse into what my time at uni might look like and most importantly to see if I actually like the ancient language (which after Latin camp I most definitely do!!!). It’s actually crazy how much I’ve learnt in just two weeks, I’ve gone from virtually no knowledge to being able to sit the GCSE language exam which has really inspired and motivated me. The lectures have also been as great as the language learning, it’s been amazing to hear so many established academics talk about a variety of topics (all of which were fairly new to me and so were both extremely informative and interesting). Finally, it has been great just to be in an environment with like-minded people where everyone is equally in love with Classics as I am! I have really really enjoyed my time at Latin Camp and hope that I will return in the future.’ (India Nayak-Sheehy, beginners’ group, age 17)

To meet this record student number, we have had the largest tutor team ever. After a massive influx of new blood in 2021, the 2022 team came entirely from the existing tutor pool.

- Mish Bancroft
- Maria Bergquist
- Naomi Bradshaw
- Johnny Boyd
- Natasha Crook
- Lindsey Cullen
- Peter Donnelly
- Rachel Hambly
- Lloyd Hopkins
- Katie Lathan
- Dick Mowbray
- Sophia Potter
- Laura Snook
- Rachel Starling
- Tarika Sullivan
- Rosie Sykes
- Ollie Thicknesse
- Hayler Walker
- Laura Warren

Naomi Bradshaw and Sophia Potter performed the assistant director roles (academic and student welfare respectively), keeping me relatively free to focus not on individuals but on the overall running of Camp. James Green – currently studying at Oxford – joined the team as my new assistant, a role which he fulfilled with great aplomb!

Please look on the website under ‘our courses’ for details on what we offer. Once again we had groups from complete beginners tackling the traditional and totally uncompromising *So You Really Want to Learn Latin* course aiming to cover all the essential grammar of current GCSE specifications and sit an actual past language paper at the end, to GCSE students who mainly focused on readers and other selections of the finest extant Roman literature reading more widely than they would have time for in school, to A Level students reading rather more demanding and ‘left field’ texts (Lucan 7, for example, or Seneca’s *Thyestes*) which they are highly unlikely to have met before to provide themselves with that edge for high-end university applications.

I was also delighted to see another big cohort join our new teachers’ courses; these are bespoke courses for people who are about to embark upon a PGCE or are indeed already working in a school without much Latin teaching experience. I am very grateful to Classics for All for the funding they provide to help enable teachers at or about to join state schools to attend.

The (optional) grammar clinics received a massive, long-overdue review courtesy of Naomi to address the increasingly diverse school experiences of our school-age students in particular. As well as the usual beginners’ drop-in clinics, we now have GCSE-level clinics running concurrent to GCE-level ones, but then there was a third clinic later each afternoon intended to stretch people pushing towards university entrance, with a particular focus on supporting Oxbridge aspirations.

Lectures, Trips and Events

‘Thank you so much for the support that enabled me to attend the JACT Latin Summer Camp. I study medieval history and

started my Latin much later than I should have. I felt so behind at the beginning of this program, but I have made so much progress in such a short amount of time. The tutors at the grammar clinics were very helpful as well and were even willing to correct work we completed with them outside of the clinics. Because I study specifically medieval history, I learned so many new things about classics and ancient history. The guest lectures were very intriguing and easy to understand, even without me having a classics background.’ (Emily Pain, beginners’ group, age 25)

We do our best to offer a lecture programme which appeals to those who are new to Latin and those who have studied it for several years. This year’s line-up was (Figure 1):

- Dr. Anthony Bowen, Jesus College, Cambridge – *The Sound of Latin*
- Prof. Caroline Vout, Christ’s College, Cambridge – *The Ugliness of Ancient Art*
- Dr. Ben Kane (novelist) – *Military Life on Hadrian’s Wall*
- Prof. Edith Hall, Durham University – *Rescuing Dido from Augustan Propaganda*
- Prof. Matthew Leigh, St Anne’s College, Oxford – *Livy: History as Example*
- Prof. Llew Morgan, Brasenose College, Oxford – *An Introduction to Horace*
- Prof. Costas Panayotakis, Glasgow University – *Petronius’ Satirical Odyssey*

Harrogate is close enough to Hadrian’s Wall to enable a day trip on the Sunday and (perhaps surprisingly, given the departure time of 6.00am) 149 Campers and a team of 8 tutors signed up. We began with the two-hour walk from Steel Rigg to Housesteads, the Roman auxiliary fort; there we were met by our local guides who showed us round before taking us to the fort at Vindolanda, rotating between that and the Roman Army Museum (Figure 2).



Figure 1. One of our excellent talks, delivered by Prof. Costas Panayotakis (Glasgow University).



Figure 2. Latin Campers walking along Hadrian's Wall (past a milecastle).

On the second Wednesday the entirety of Latin Camp went to York. As well as free time to enjoy that beautiful city, we had pre-booked visits to a combination of Roman and non-Roman venues. Much of the legionary fortress is unviewable, buried under modern York, but we were able to view a military bathhouse as well as various individual features scattered around the city. We also visited the Jorvik Centre, containing lifelike mannequins and life-size dioramas depicting Viking life in the city through which the viewer is carried in small carriages equipped with speakers. Various other options were there, perhaps the most classically significant being the Yorkshire Museum whose ground floor boasts the main Roman finds in and around the area (Figure 3).

It was wonderful to re-introduce our live quiz night on the first Wednesday (having taken the view last summer that it would have been an unnecessary Covid risk) so 20 teams of students competed fiercely for *kleos* ... and a Latin Camp mug! And what better an end to Camp than the final night staff play (based on 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum') then the Camp costume party?! (Figure 4).

It was also great to be able to safely resume our various Twitter and Instagram competitions (best selfie, best photo of Harrogate, Hadrian's Wall and York) and of course the best costumes from the last-night party.

Acknowledgement and Thanks

I would not have been able to come to the J.A.C.T's Latin Camp if I did not receive a generous bursary. I was thrilled at the time

when I was awarded one and, at the end of my camp experience, I am feeling gratefully indebted once again. Coming from America and a different style of learning, the intensity of Latin Camp was an initial shock—but now I can't imagine having done the work I have in any other way. I have done in two weeks a rigorous program that normally would've taken me several months to complete. Without compromising on quality or understanding, the tutors have taken us through two wonderful works of Latin poetry and prose'. (Tytti Hyttinen, post-GCSE group, age 16)

This year I awarded £13,780 for 27 free or subsidised places; it is always very important to us that we make the Summer School and the learning of Latin as accessible as possible and we welcome applications from all educational levels and backgrounds. The sponsorship we are given not only allows us to provide places to those who would not be able to come otherwise but it also helps us keep fees down overall and replenish textbooks, among other ongoing expenses. I would like to thank the sponsors whose generosity makes this possible:

- The Classical Association
- Faculty of Classics at the University of Cambridge
- The Craven Committee, University of Oxford
- The Jowett Copyright Trustees
- Trinity College, Cambridge
- Classics for All



Figure 3. Quiz Night.



Figure 4. Scene from the staff play.

The 43rd JACT Latin Summer School will run from Monday 24th July to Saturday 5th August 2023, again at Harrogate Ladies College. The website www.latincamp.co.uk continues to be the key source of information and contains a very simple online application form. If you have any questions at all after reading this, please do get in touch with me on d.stephenson@warwickschool.org. Do please sign up as soon as you can if you're interested – as I said, we did have to turn people away this time.

The success of the summer school is largely reliant on the quality of its students and of its staff. As well as the biggest, this really was one of the nicest cohorts of students I have ever seen (and I have been coming non-stop since 2002!) The same is true of this year's staff; I am especially grateful to Naomi and Sophia for their immense support but everyone rolled up their sleeves in typical Camper fashion, working tirelessly to make the experience as good as it can possibly be for the students.

'Everything about it was so well organised and it was sufficiently intense matched with social. She so enjoyed her time she has been pressing me to sign her up for next year so let me know when I can. But in the interim – a triumph! There are not many of these camps that can be so well praised. I only wish there were in other subjects.' (Mother of a pre-GCSE student, age 15)

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