

Editorial

This issue of JACT Review is the first of a new series in which the combined resources of JACT and the Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching are engaged in a united venture. The JACT Review is henceforth the journal of both these organisations: *Latin Teaching* was published for the last time in 1986, and the efforts that went into it will now flow into this publication. This change represents the fruit of a long and difficult negotiation, as readers of the Spring Bulletin will be aware. That it has succeeded is a tribute to the patience of both sides, and the tenacity of the negotiators, in particular John Murrell and Wilf O'Neill.

Consequently recent debates about the respective functions of the various journals are now resolved. The role of *Latin Teaching* in speaking first and foremost to the teacher at the Classical chalkface (or marble quarry?) is one which now belongs uniquely to this Review. The editors are convinced of the need to fulfil this role as the paramount function of the journal, and will be happy to receive articles, letters, poems and other contributions from teachers for considerations. In fact for some time the two journals have been in competition with each other for articles of interest to Classics teachers; and whereas competition in itself may be no bad thing, in our restricted world and in the current threatened state of Classics teaching, it was certainly wrong for the two journals to be weakening each other's quality and the single voice with which we ought to be speaking to our profession and those outside it.

At the time of writing of this editorial there has been much interest aroused by developments in London culminating in a leading article in the Times and correspondence there and in other newspapers and though the loss of Latin in certain areas of the capital is utterly deplorable if it indeed takes place (and there are welcome signs that things may not be as bad as they at first seemed), it is reassuring to see how much concern there appears to be in some high places for the survival of the subject in maintained schools, including the support of the Junior Education Minister, Mr George Waldon. It is also pleasing that the proposed closure of the Classics course at St Mary's Teacher Training College, Twickenham, has been rescinded, not a little because of vociferous outside pressure.

But a particularly apposite point was made in a letter to the Times from Brian Wilks of Leeds to the effect that by far the greatest threat to Classics is the removal of these subjects from the training of teachers (St Mary's does not

cater for the Classical languages) and asking, somewhat wilyly, whether we may look forward to beneficial grants and incentive payments to save the day, as with mathematics. Let us hope that before it is too late the American lead is followed in this country.

The Reviews Editor wishes to clarify the situation regarding translation of quotations in reviews. The current practice, for considerations of space, is not to translate unless it is necessary to do so for the sake of the argument. It should also be noted that several commentaries on translations have been reviewed recently (see also Malcolm Willcock's article in JACT Review 3).

We welcome the revival of the conferences of JACT's early days, in an appropriately more specialised form; a computer familiarisation day was held in Loughborough last autumn, and language awareness was discussed in London in April. Both these topics have been aired in articles published in this journal. If other topics in our various series of articles strike any reader as worthy of concentrated treatment at a conference, we should be glad to hear of it.

SECOND-HAND AND OUT-OF-PRINT BOOKS ON CLASSICAL STUDIES

catalogues issued regularly
booksearch for any title not in stock
world-wide mailing service
we welcome offers of books and collections for sale

please write for our current catalogue

David and Chris Bland
20 Belvoir Gardens, Skircoat Green,
Halifax, Yorkshire, England
Telephone: Halifax (0422) 51212

What *Has* Classics To Offer – Some Personal Reflections

Brian Kay

The proceedings of a meeting of one of the Education Committees of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg some years ago were enlivened by the following story, told by one of the participants.

There was once a remote Indian tribe in South America untouched by western civilisation, which had three main sources of food, the jubjub fruit which grew near the top of very high trees with very smooth bark and few branches, the dubbub, a very quick, sly nocturnal animal which could only be caught by using very fine meshed nets and the rubrub, a small aligator-like creature, a very rapid swimmer, which was plentiful in the nearby river.

All the male members of the tribe were taught from an early age to climb with great agility to the very slender topmost branches of the jubjub tree and to swim under water in pursuit of the rubrub. All the girls became very skilled in making gossamer-fine nets to catch the dubbub.

Over the years there was a gradual climatic change. First of all the dubbubs became fewer and fewer, and eventually disappeared altogether from the surrounding forests; the jubjub trees produced less and less fruit and nearly all of them finally lost their evergreen leaves and died; and, worst of all, the rubrub vanished from the river.

But the tribe was resourceful, and when the first western anthropologists visited them they had learned to catch a variety of fish in the river with lines, they were cultivating a range of simple vegetables and hunting a variety of wild game in the forests with spears and arrows. But the anthropologists were puzzled at the fact that the boys spent hours of practice climbing the tallest and smoothest trees in the area under the stern direction of the elders of the tribe and training to swim under water for remarkable lengths of time and at great speed, while the girls sat practising the art of making very fine nets which were periodically unravelled so that they could get more practice without using up too much of the precious resources of yarn.

When the anthropologists asked the Indians why the children's education appeared to consist solely of these apparently pointless activities, wholly unrelated to the world they would live in, and the tasks they would be required to carry out as adults, at first they could not understand the answers, but in the end they managed to grasp what was meant: it did not matter, the tribal elders were saying, that the activities the children were practising had no immediate practical value; they provided an excellent general training for mind and body.

The allegory, told (need one say?) by a Scandinavian representative, rests on the very reasonable assumption that education's *raison d'être* is to be a preparation for life

and primarily for working life. This view has characterised many systems of education from the rhetorical training of the upper class Roman to the elementary education of the working class nineteenth century Briton, and has plenty of adherents in high places today. It also assumes that, where education fails in its vocational role, it may well be because it is still preparing for yesterday's world, its innate conservatism has prevented it from changing to meet changing circumstances: when the prime purposes for which its processes were designed no longer apply, new (and possibly specious) reasons for their continuance are brought in to obviate the need for change and reform. Although the Scandinavian speaker did not make the point, the progression of the allegory is closely matched by the transition of the classical education from providing an essential tool for the Renaissance scholar to the cultivation in the nineteenth century of the art of composition in prose and verse as a mental and moral discipline, as well as an elegant 'accomplishment', like singing ballads or painting water-colours.

Is the concept of education implied by the allegory a valid one for our time? On our answer to this question depends to a great extent the place, if any, that we give not only to classics but to many other subjects within the curriculum. Some fifty years ago as a schoolboy I was asked to write an essay on the proposition: 'The purpose of education is to enable a man to enjoy his leisure'. Such a title might have a cynical ring about it for some of the sixth formers of today – the connotation of *otium cum dignitate* that the word 'leisure' carries with it is a parody of the actual experience of many of today's unemployed. But, dated as it is by its aristocratic connotations of long vac reading parties and visits to Bayreuth, it still has a relevance to today's discussion of the aims of education.

However in fact the antithesis is a false one. There maybe some primitive societies where virtually the whole of adult life needs to be devoted to providing the material necessities for living. There have certainly been societies in which a section at least of the population has been able to devote much of its energies to the creative use of leisure. In our own country the balance between the work needed to provide an adequate basis for living and the leisure which complements that work is in a state of change – perhaps one of the greatest tragedies of our time is that when the balance appears to have swung decisively towards a greater overall plenum of leisure, we have been so unskilful in distributing it evenly and have in consequence provided for many too much *otium sine dignitate*. All this leads in my view to the not very startling conclusion that if education is to prepare for life it must prepare equally

effectively for both aspects of life which all will enjoy in different proportions – and indeed in changing proportions – over time.

One might add a further question, what does vocational education imply in a time of rapid change? If it does not make sense to train youngsters to swim under water after the no longer existing rubrub, does it make any more sense to train them to bait a hook and throw a line when that particular technology may be out of date by the time they are adults – except perhaps as a leisure activity, since leisure gives us the opportunity of carrying out for pleasure tasks which it is no longer necessary to do to survive? In our own curriculum those erstwhile important ‘vocational’ subjects like woodwork, metalwork, needlework are far more relevant to pupils’ future leisure activities than their working life – while the keyboard skills so vital, we are told, as vocational preparation for the computer age are already being rendered partly obsolete by newer forms of computer control. It is a truism to say that education should equip pupils to adjust to change in a world of rapid change – but this is something in which education performs rather badly and where itself it presents only an indifferent example to follow.

To cut out some steps in the argument (and the reader may already feel that there is an intolerable deal of sack for the pennyworth of bread he may hope to find later in the article) the most relevant parts of education, both for work and for leisure, are the most fundamental and unchanging. The use and understanding of words and symbols, the ability to use the processes of logic and mathematics and to gain the maximum control over physical skills such as observation and manual dexterity, the ability to test by experience or experiment, to form and relate concepts, to master a range of modes of learning and select those most suitable for any circumstances: these – or others like them – are the timeless tools for work and leisure. Add to them the beginnings of an understanding of the environment (religious and aesthetic as well as material, political and economic) and a continuing desire to understand them better, and we are beginning to get a reasonably rounded view of what education as ‘preparation for life’ is about.

At this point it would be fatally easy to repeat the glib generalizations that are so often made about the unique value of Classics for understanding the world of politics, literature, art and many other aspects of our daily life through our contact with their roots in Greece and Rome, about learning to use words with more skill and sensibility through our work in Latin and Greek, and so on. All this is very true, but we need to be far more specific if we are to make a worthwhile contribution to the educational debate.

For most pupils, at least in maintained schools, contact with Classics if any will be with Classical studies, not the languages. This subject, effectively little over twenty years old as an element in the general curriculum, is an example of the system’s response to change. It was initially in many cases an expedient both to make use of the redundant Classics teacher and to cater for the less able pupil. But if it had simply been an expedient, it would by now have suffered the fate of European studies, French studies and a number of other pseudo-subjects which emerged at about

the same time. In fact it rapidly developed a rationale and a discipline which potentially make it much more – though there is all too often a great gulf between the potentialities of the subject and what actually happens in a mixed ability second year class on a Friday afternoon.

Two weaknesses in particular have impaired the claims that the subject has upon a place in the curriculum. The first is the problem of progression – that of matching the tasks to the increasing maturity and developing skills and knowledge of the pupils. Ideally a fine example of the spiral curriculum, it sometimes more closely exemplifies a circular curriculum, because the gradient of the spiral is so slight as to be imperceptible. It is not alone in this. Progression has proved one of the major problems in many of the newer and less obviously structured teaching programmes, as compared with those whose progression was assured by close adherence to textbooks which, for all their weaknesses, did build in a steady gradient of difficulty. Where no overt structure exists in the teaching material, the gradient depends on the teacher – and faced with a group of widely varied abilities, the art of maintaining progression at different levels for individual members of a class presents severe problems of planning, assessment and recording, perhaps problems it is unreasonable to expect the average teacher to cope with.

The second weakness, which must be analysed rather more fully, is the failure often to achieve the right relationships and balance between the subject matter of Classical studies and the educational objectives to which it is harnessed. Selection of subject matter (Greek or Roman, Myth or Social History, etc.) at different stages in the course is important, but in discussion about the subject, one sometimes gets the impression that it is the only issue of importance, that all the desirable educational values will automatically follow the right selection and presentation of material. In fact if anything worthwhile is to be achieved, and achieved with reasonable efficiency, it is essential that at every stage teachers know what outcomes they are aiming at and plan for them by structuring the material accordingly.

One such objective which is rarely overlooked is an increase in the pupils’ knowledge of the Classical world. The information acquired may be important or trivial – knowledge about the ancient world is not intrinsically any more valuable than that of many other fields. Information about what the Roman ate for breakfast or how the Greek woman dressed her hair are in themselves valueless, unless either they throw light on other things such as class structure, trade and economic life or social patterns, or capture the pupils’ interests so that they are led on to more important matters. And information can be obtained by the pupils in more or less active ways: on the whole actively acquired information is more beneficial both because the process has useful by-products and because it is often better internalised. Information has the great advantage that its acquisition is easily assessed and this is one reason why it predominates at every level not least when it comes to the public examinations.

Classical studies is also concerned, as are virtually all subjects in the curriculum, with the pupils’ language

development. This in itself is closely related to experience – a narrow range of experience inevitably limits the range of a person's language. One of the opportunities offered by the Classical world, as by the past in general, is the broadening of children's experience into unfamiliar circumstances and ways of thinking which make wider demands upon vocabulary and forms of expression. To some extent this broadening of language experience will happen of itself, but to make the most of it opportunities need to be planned for and new vocabulary and structures reinforced.

A related aim is the encouragement of historical imagination – helping youngsters to think themselves inside the skin of the fifth century Athenian, not the easiest of tasks for the teacher if it is to be the real fifth century Athenian, or as near as we can get to him, rather than a cartoon figure. This is one of the objectives of Classical courses widely recognised and frequently cultivated by such exercises as 'imagine yourself a spectator at the Roman circus, describe...'. Unfortunately such exercises in imaginative writing are often superficial, full of anachronisms and lacking in any real empathy – under the mask the pupil remains a twentieth century youngster looking on with purely twentieth century attitudes and expectations. But historical imagination is worth working for at a deeper level than is often achieved, and drama is perhaps a better way of helping the pupil to empathise than is the essay.

Another objective of Classical studies is the pupil's emotional development. There is something basic and universal about myth and especially Greek myth, as is shown by its frequent reinterpretation from Homer to Freud. One of the problems in a society which forces the growth of adolescence into roles more fitted for older and more mature persons is that below a sophisticated and worldly wise exterior the emotions have not developed far beyond childhood. There are few better ways of exploring a range of these emotions and giving a better understanding of their power for good or evil than an introduction to myth, first through story and then through the more sophisticated treatment in epic and drama.¹

The moral issues raised in the myths and developed in epic and drama are as fundamental and universal as the emotions portrayed, and closely linked with them. Conflicts of loyalties, revenge and reconciliation, selfishness and self sacrifice, a sense of duty and treachery – all these are illustrated and their effects on people and events explored in Greek literature in perhaps a more stark and dramatic way than in most later writing. Here is the raw material for teacher and pupils together to analyse moral issues with a view to sharpening the thinking of youngsters in a field where ideas are often left comfortably fuzzy.

Classical courses which include a study of the material legacy of the classical world also give opportunities for training powers of visual observation through the accurate study both of objects in a museum or archaeological site and, at second-hand, of drawings and photographs. Some Examining Boards have introduced areas of work which depend on this sort of study, and this is a welcome addition to the purely verbal. Accurate observation is not a natural gift. Many children, and many of us adults, are

very bad at it. But it is a skill of wide relevance and importance and one which can well be trained on material which is intrinsically worth studying for its aesthetic value or its relevance to our understanding of the age which gave rise to it and which is itself of some significance.

One further objective must be mentioned, that of training pupils in the art of reasoning – in particular the use of evidence, written or visual, to establish facts or at least probabilities, and the learning through experience of handling evidence, about what can and what cannot properly be deduced from it. The Roman material produced for the Cambridge Classical Studies Course is particularly strong in this respect, and the fact that reasoning is a difficult skill to develop may in part account for the fact that the material is both less used and less well used than one would like. The remoteness in time of the period pupils are studying makes it more possible for pupils to isolate manageable areas for study so that they are not overwhelmed with the mass or complexity of evidence or with the range of issues. The use of visual material, accurately observed as part of the evidence studied, links with the previous objective and enhances the importance of both.

One could continue to enumerate further objectives of a Classical Studies Course, but these are among the major ones. No one of them in itself is the peculiar province of Classical Studies nor is any one of them in itself uniquely well achieved by Classical Studies. There are however few other subjects which provide all these opportunities, and if a Classical Studies Course is broad enough to advance on all these fronts it has few rivals within the curriculum. Add to this the unique creative relationship between the ancient world and our own, and the virtual impossibility of adequately understanding a whole range of aspects of our culture without a knowledge of the ancient world, and Classical Studies has a unique claim to a place on the curriculum for all pupils. Conversely, if only a few of the objectives listed above are actively pursued within the course, or if the study of the ancient world is not carried out in such a way that it throws light on the present, the claims must fall to the ground. The comprehensive curriculum has become increasingly packed like a supermarket with rows of preprocessed denatured foods stuffed with artificial flavouring to make them palatable. If Classical Studies falls into this category it does not deserve to survive.

To turn to the languages, the nature of Latin's claim to be part of the curriculum has also changed markedly over the last twenty years. Until the classroom revolution brought about by the (then) Nuffield Classics project, Latin's contribution for pupils up to sixteen was almost exclusively linguistic. Its strength lay in the experience of an inflected language that the pupils gained through the endless manipulation of words from Latin into English but mostly from English into Latin. Its weakness lay in the meaninglessness of much of the language that was so manipulated. Even when the material used for practice was not patently nonsensical (and some of the early material was, communication being limited by the self-denying ordinance of introducing declensions and conjugations one by one) much of the Latin remained essen-

tially 'meaningless' even when it could be correctly 'Englished', because the words had little understood content and context. Forum, servus, domus, and a host of other words were visualised by the pupils, if it was ever considered relevant to visualise anything, in mainly English terms. It is true that some schools introduced after a year or so a book about 'Roman life' to complement the aridity of the language, though in practice there was often little exchange between the two, and some courses ('Latin for Today' was a landmark in its time) tried to build in some feeling for life in Rome. Even set books when they were studied were studied primarily as exercises in language. But out of all this came an expectation by teachers of accuracy and precision, care for the minutiae of language and an awareness that language had a structure which needed to be respected, even though the temptation to impose the structure of Latin on English was not always resisted.

With the coming of Nuffield and later Cambridge into the field all that changed. There was a new emphasis on the meaningful – the ugly hybrid 'paralinguistic' came into our vocabulary and we began to realise that to translate servus as slave and forum as market place was not the end of the matter but the beginning. The first two or three units of the course took the pupil inside the life of Pompeii, Roman Britain, Alexandria and Rome authentically, since it was a scholarly enterprise even if inevitably in an over-simplified form. The later stages introduced the radical notion that youngsters of fifteen or sixteen could appreciate Virgil and Catullus and even Tacitus not only as a quarry of linguistic material but as literature.

The ambitious scope and aims of the Cambridge Latin course are both its strength and its weakness. When they are compared with the objectives of a Modern Language course up to 'O' level, while rather narrower linguistically (we don't require oral fluency!) they are far more demanding in terms of understanding of context and appreciation of literary quality, and that with a literature which by any standards is austere and sophisticated in its style. Compared with the modern linguist the Latin teacher usually has far less time in which to achieve these far more ambitious aims.

It has become clear to me that there is a threshold in terms of conditions of teaching which must be passed if the fruits of this or any comparable course are to be won. These include a reasonable homogeneity of group at least for the greater part of the course, an above average level of ability in the pupils (though not necessarily the high fliers as of old) an adequate amount of time both in terms of years of work and of weekly allocation, lessons reasonably spaced throughout the week and an expectation that an adequate amount of homework will be done. It would be rash to quantify these, but less than a four year course of four reasonably spaced periods a week backed up with at least an hour's homework a week rarely makes possible a worthwhile course. There are plenty of teachers struggling with far less than this, and with far from able pupils moreover, for whom the CLC has become a scramble through the first two and a half units, followed by a struggle through the set books, for which the pupils are

not ready and which can only be 'taught' by spoon feeding techniques undermining the whole educational value of the course. Overall standards are then so poor that one is forced to question whether the pupils would not be better served by a good Classical Studies course involving the reading of Greek and Roman literature in translation.

Perhaps indeed we ought to be considering a reversal of present practices – a foundation course for all, or for the great majority of pupils, in Latin, using the approach of the first two units of the CLC, and an examination course in Classical Studies with a greater Greek emphasis. This would go some way to providing the linguistic impact which some schools now feel the lack of, and incidentally be more meaningful than the use of Latin *in vacuo* as part of a language awareness course. It would also mean that the pupils' first experience of Classical literature could be of Greek literature which is far more accessible to the sixteen year old than Latin literature.

Constraints of space mean that I have had to restrict myself to the pre 'O' level curriculum and even within those limits to make statements which could with advantage have been expanded or qualified. I have also focussed attention mainly on the maintained school, because if Classics disappears from the maintained sector it can only be a matter of time before it disappears from schools altogether. Our best hope of preventing this remains to ensure that the reality of Classical work within the schools fulfils as nearly as possible the potentialities explored in this paper and elsewhere.

Note

1. '...understanding of life is incomplete without an understanding of myths, legends and fairy tales, ... the process of growing up would be harder and drearier without them'. Elizabeth Cook, *The Ordinary and the Fabulous*, still one of the best books on the use of myth in education.

BRIAN KAY

is a former H.M.I., now retired and involved in educational research

The Classics in New Zealand

J. A. Barsby

I last wrote about the Classics in New Zealand in a pair of articles in *Didaskalos* in 1974 and 1975. In this brief sequel I concentrate on what seem to me the most significant developments of the last twelve years; anyone who wishes to understand the background in detail is referred to *Didaskalos* 4:3 and 5:1. It is worth repeating by way of introduction that in New Zealand secondary schooling begins in the 'third form' at age thirteen, that the state system is (and has long been) genuinely comprehensive, that the private schools are mainly denominational schools and are increasingly being integrated with the state system, and that the number of academically elite schools in the whole country can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The statistics quoted in this article are based on a survey carried out in secondary schools at the end of 1985.

Secondary Schools: the Lower Forms

First, as they say, the bad news. Numbers in Latin are declining, there is no Greek, there is no Classical Studies at this level. More precisely, Latin is now taught in one secondary school in six, numbers in third form Latin have fallen by about thirty per cent since 1973, and numbers of candidates for School Certificate Latin (taken in the fifth form) have fallen by fifty per cent in the same period. This is in spite of the widespread adoption of modern course books (the *Cambridge Latin Course* and *Ecce Romani* are used between them in sixty per cent of Latin schools) and in spite of modifications to School Certificate Latin, including a 'pilot scheme' alternative Latin Studies syllabus. Another piece of bad news is that only one Latin teacher in eleven of those now in service graduated during the last decade; and the teacher training colleges show no great enthusiasm for training more Latin teachers unless they have good qualifications in one of the 'major' subjects.

All this may sound rather familiar to British readers. And the good news promised in the previous paragraph has to be qualified. New Zealand does not have ministers of education who publicly pronounce in favour of Latin in the inner city schools (*The Times* 5 January 1987). But there has been a positive response by the educational authorities (in this case the School Certificate Board) to the decline of Latin in the lower school. At the end of the Latin Studies pilot scheme the Board sent a working party, composed largely of non-classicists, round a selection of Latin and Latin Studies schools, and its members came back impressed (in some cases in spite of themselves) with the attitudes of principals, teachers, and pupils, and with the positive benefits which Latin was perceived to offer. The Board was convinced that Latin should be 'saved' before numbers declined any further, and it set up a revision committee to produce with some urgency a

syllabus which should combine the best features of the Latin and Latin Studies prescriptions and offer an attractive and realistic course for a wide range of pupils.

The result is a syllabus (due to be first examined in 1988) which looks very different from any of its predecessors. Three features are worthy of comment here. One is that set books in the old sense are abandoned as being an unrealistic target after at most three years of Latin (even the bright pupils, it seems, were learning up translations of their Caesar or Pliny). They are replaced by Reading Topics, including both Latin passages and passages in translation, designed to illustrate interesting aspects of Roman society (e.g. women), significant figures of Roman history (e.g. Augustus), and important myths transmitted by the Romans to western culture (e.g. Orpheus and Eurydice). The second is that the old hit-or-miss Life and Customs section is replaced with a choice of specified aspects of Roman society for study, which will be examined by open ended questions designed to allow pupils to express what they know rather than reveal what they don't. The third is the twenty per cent internally assessed section on the Contribution of the Romans to Western Civilisation (a topic more often quoted as a justification for learning Latin than actually examined in a prescription). Teachers and their pupils are free within broad guidelines to choose virtually any aspect and to submit any kind of work (not necessarily essay-type projects). In addition to the obvious topics (in literature, architecture, and so on), the guidelines specifically include languages as a possibility. This is intended to encourage coherent studies in all types of language awareness based on Latin, including not only English structures and derivations but (for those so inclined) Italian numerals or Spanish verbs or even medieval Latin. It will also do something to counter the feeling that the linguistic side of Latin is being underplayed in modern prescriptions, when many outsiders still see it as the prime justification for studying the subject.

It would be pleasant to think that this bold and innovative prescription will in fact 'save' Latin. But it remains to be seen whether a new syllabus, however attractive, will be able to counteract the negative factors which in the present climate discourage third formers from taking up Latin or fifth-formers from continuing it to School Certificate. This is where the good news has to be qualified.

Secondary Schools: the Upper Forms

Latin in the sixth and seventh (i.e. upper sixth) forms is in a critical state. Numbers in the seventh form have declined steadily since 1973, and, though the rate of decline has been arrested (and some years even show an increase), it is still running at some five per cent per annum over the last five years. Nor does there seem much prospect of signifi-

cantly reversing the trend, whatever new syllabuses are devised in the wake of the School Certificate revision. Only one secondary school in seventeen now teaches Latin in the sixth form, and one in twenty-six in the seventh. Classes are almost uniformly small, with twos and ones the commonest size, and the subject survives at all only by the grace of principals and the dedication of teachers, many of whom supplement from free time the three hours a week of teaching time that they are commonly offered. An increasing number of schools have given up the struggle and entrusted their Latin pupils to the national Correspondence School in Wellington, which offers postal tuition, but this is to sell their pupils rather short. The creation of sixth form colleges on the English pattern, which might have produced more viable class sizes for Latin and other minority subjects, has unfortunately been rejected in a recent governmental review.

Against the plight of Latin (Greek has been taught at this level but never to more than a tiny number of pupils) must be set the success story of the decade, the establishment of Classical Studies as a thriving sixth and seventh form subject. Classical Studies was introduced in 1980 amid some general scepticism (and indeed opposition from some teachers who saw it as hastening the demise of Latin), with prescriptions offering a choice of twenty Greek and Roman topics over the two years, covering history, literature, drama, art, science, religion, and philosophy. The subject immediately took off beyond any reasonable expectations. Within five years numbers had doubled in both sixth and seventh forms; and in 1985 there were twelve or thirteen Classical Studies students at these levels for every student of Latin. Many of the students have had no previous experience of the classical world, and over thirty per cent of the teachers involved are not classics graduates. This has some negative implications for academic standards, and the production of teachers' guides and study materials has been a major industry among university classicists over several years. But freshness has certainly bred enthusiasm among both teachers and taught, and there is much to be gained from the involvement of teachers from other disciplines.

It has to be said that the growth of Classical Studies has been favoured by the New Zealand system, in which students commonly study five subjects in their sixth and seventh form years, often including both arts and sciences. There was thus room for an extra arts subject for students on both sides of the curriculum. The result has been an immense extension of knowledge of the classical world in the upper secondary school, and indeed a boost for Latin teachers, who have found themselves with an extra string to their bows and the opportunity for fruitful cooperation with their non-classical colleagues. In an ideal world both Latin and Classical Studies (not to mention Greek) would be flourishing at this level; but, with the decline of Latin seemingly inevitable, the success of Classical Studies has been a considerable compensation.

The Universities

The two major developments in the universities over the past dozen years have been the expansion of Classical Studies, which in fact led to the introduction of Classical

Studies in schools, and the introduction of beginners Latin, which is a reaction to the decline of school Latin.

The result has been that the four classics departments have more students on their books than ever before, and cuts and closures are not a real threat. The four chairs of classics are in no immediate danger; the number of tenured staff in the four departments is twenty-six, which is exactly the same number as in 1973; and a fifth university which has no classics department now has two classicists on its English staff instead of one. This is not to say that positions which fall vacant do not have to be strenuously defended, or that the existing staff are under no pressure; the increase in the student roll has been largely achieved by offering a wider range of courses with the same number of staff. Even so the situation will seem a relatively happy one to our more beleaguered colleagues in this country.

There are aspects of the New Zealand university system which are favourable to classics. As far as numbers are concerned, the 'open entry' policy means that departments are free to admit as many students as they can attract, with no artificial quotas or restrictions. The regulations permit students to spread their degrees over a number of years, which encourages part-time and mature students, of which classics seems to attract rather more than its fair share. The flexibility of the three-year general B.A. degree, in which most students are enrolled, means that students who come to the university with no major commitment to classics can nevertheless include one or even several classical courses in their degrees. The degree structure is also favourable to the standing of classics within the arts faculty and the university as a whole; it means that classics departments can offer from their own programme courses which positively contribute to the degrees of students majoring in a host of subjects (such as English, modern languages, drama, history, political studies, philosophy, anthropology, religious studies, art history), so that classics can be seen to be an integral part of the work of the faculty rather than a separate limb which could be amputated in a time of emergency. As far as standards are concerned, the fact that the honours degree is a four-year degree means that honours Latin or Greek from scratch is a respectable proposition, parallel to honours Russian or Italian. Classical Studies can reasonably be taught for the general B.A. as a non-language subject with a huge range of possibilities in history, politics, society, literature, drama, art, and philosophy; and there is space in a four-year honours degree in Classical Studies to build in a realistic base of Greek and/or Latin, though the purpose of that base needs to be properly defined.

So the way is certainly open for constructive development, and the first steps have been firmly taken. It would be wrong to suggest that all is plain sailing or that the process of development is in any way complete. Beginners Latin and Classical Studies honours are both recent innovations, and the problems of devising appropriate courses and establishing acceptable standards are still being worked through. It would also be misleading to imply that the four New Zealand classics departments are proceeding

in a uniform way (one has developed Ancient History rather than Classical Studies) or that they have all gone the same distance down the same road. Nor is it the case that traditional courses in Greek and Latin have disappeared; the supply of well qualified Latinists from school has not entirely dried up, and Greek is still being taught (from scratch) to the same handful of students. But what does emerge fairly clearly is that the New Zealand classics departments have a role to play in the foreseeable future; it will not be the same role that they played twenty years ago, but it may not be any less worthwhile.

In the end, whether these developments are regarded as desirable, deplorable, or simply inevitable is a subjective business. I can only repeat what I said in *Didaskalos* in

1975. A classics department can scarcely devote itself solely, or even primarily, to the pursuit of scholarship and the training of academics. We are also concerned with the maintenance in our society of an awareness of the importance and fascination of the Greek and Roman civilisations. The students of today are the parents, the teachers, and the administrators of tomorrow; and the more widely the intelligent study of the classical world can be spread now, the better the climate is going to be for the study of the subject in the future. And that includes the languages.

J. A. BARSBY
University of Otago

Sandwell Revival

J. M. Walker

In 1978 Classics in Sandwell was at a low ebb. To the North in West Bromwich it was represented in three 11-18 Comprehensives but the Southern section, Warley, had one teacher only in one of the two open-access Sixth Form Colleges. Classics had never been strong and in fact had been removed from the curriculum of one of the Grammar Schools because it was too difficult. Local traditions opposed academicism, Sandwell stood low in the table of O and A level passes and Smethwick by then had a high proportion of ethnic minority families. Yet in 1986, through a Summer School system, children in all but three of the twenty four Comprehensive Schools have had the opportunity to study Latin and Classical Civilisation for external examination, Latin, Greek and Ancient History continue to be offered at Rowley Regis College even for Oxbridge entry, and in neighbouring Birmingham 16+ courses have been revived in three schools.

Classics does not rest solely on the Summer School system in Sandwell. Oldbury Grammar School, when it became a Comprehensive School, continued to offer Latin but as an alternative to German; five was the highest number to take O level and the school is so situated that potential A level Latinists sometimes found their way to the wrong Sixth Form College. Second to Oldbury (now Langley High School) Perryfields High School is the greatest source of A level Latin students but Latin is taught in lunch-hours and after school here on a course lasting three years and half a term. As most of the Latin in these schools is taught by Rowley College teachers the amount of instruction has to be limited but the pupils, who have studied the subject for a year, have an opportunity to make fast progress at the Summer School, where they also find a revival of enthusiasm. The drop-out rate from a course outside lesson time can be depressing but, since the

removal of Latin from the main option system at Langley High School in 1982, Grace Walker, the Head of Modern Languages, has been teaching the third-form group after school, allowing only keen pupils to attend the Summer School on the understanding that they will have Latin instead of Games, Careers, Social Guidance or P.E. in the fourth and fifth years. Latin is now more flourishing there than when the school was a Grammar School.

The problem of motivating young adolescents of the '80s may seem more complicated for a teacher in a Sixth Form College. In fact at fourteen, at the end of their third year, many pupils welcome the adventure of attending college for seven days, abandoning school uniform and trying out a new language. With the lead from the Director of Education most headteachers give their support but the Modern Language teacher, or whichever teacher undertakes the liaison in each school, probably has more influence. This teacher needs to be a real friend to take on extra work of encouraging suitable pupils throughout the course, sending letters to parents, filling in the application form, finding replacements, collecting money, distributing reports and organising classrooms. After eight years a good supply of pupils can be relied on from most schools but numbers fluctuate and a visit from a college Classics teacher to present slides illustrating Classical life and mythology can enlighten more. At a second visit to make the acquaintance of those coming on the course the advantages of continuing further can be mentioned: after all this may turn out to be a subject for which the pupil finds a special penchant. At present the pupils are only committed to seven days Latin; it is fair that they should have the choice of continuing at the end of that time when they have completed a test.

The Sandwell Latin Summer School was devised in

1978 to introduce some of the riches of Classics to children who otherwise would have been unacquainted with them. A convenient opportunity arose as Rowley Regis College was starting its Summer holiday a fortnight before the High Schools; nine school days fitted in well for the first year but now, because of increased numbers, two seven-day sessions are held, overlapping the time when the college is still operating. It may be unique as a non-residential course run by a L.E.A. for third-formers and above, but the Principal of Rowley College, whose influence with the Education Office and his fellow head-teachers first promoted the enterprise, felt that Latin was a subject which should be offered centrally by the Borough. Fortunately Rowley is well enough served by buses for children to be able to reach it from most parts of Sandwell within an hour. The prominence of "Latin" in the name makes it clear that challenging language work is the main objective, but experience of the Classical World in as many aspects as practicable has always been an essential component. In 1980 Greek was first taught and now a small Greek class has been established. Thus, after completing Stage 1 as third form beginners, students who work hard during the year in their own school groups may return at Stage 4, take the 16+ exam in Latin or Latin and Roman Civilisation along with their other subjects, come back again to begin Greek and, as sixth-formers, choose from a full range of Classics courses at Rowley College. In addition there are Stages 2,3 and 5, which, though primarily for Perryfields and Langley High School pupils, are usually supplemented by students, occasionally adults, from other backgrounds.

The style of the Latin teaching must be crucial in convincing pupils to proceed beyond the Summer School. Perhaps Sandwell has been especially lucky because, when more than a hundred children showed interest in the first Summer School, Edward Chitham, Lecturer in Education at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, not only undertook teaching himself but also began finding what was to be a succession of effective teachers. Martin Tennick, Robert Tibbott and Stanley Owen of King Edward's School, Birmingham, have been equally helpful. Sandwell itself has provided teachers who were not employed primarily to teach Classics and former A level pupils have been a major source. Many were not proven teachers, some had insignificant Latin qualifications and yet others were of the highest academic standard. All of them have been enthusiastic, however, and pleased to be part of a new enterprise promoting a subject which they value. Nevertheless, it is not just the pupil who faces a difficult challenge: a book of *Ecce Romani* is to be completed in seven morning sessions of two 1½ hour lessons. Both editions of the book of course employ improved pedagogical techniques but the monotony of constant translation and assimilation of vocabulary in lessons is not adequately broken by the book's accounts of Roman life. Advice and encouragement from the experienced teachers is available and the composition of the class is favourable: normally not more than twelve able linguists from two schools. Some individual tuition therefore is possible. However pupils usually enjoy the fast pace of the work in so unique a group and try to achieve high

standards in the test. The youth of some of the teachers, along with their efforts to prepare interesting lessons, itself draws pupils to continue with the subject they represent.

Much of the pleasure in making the first plans in 1978 came from the freedom to present enjoyable and impressive features of Classics unimpeded by small numbers and school time-tables. It was the programme of afternoon activities which spurred recruitment initially but we have attempted to make improvements and innovations every year. Feature films ("Spartacus", "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum"), visits to Wroxeter Roman Town, The Lunt Fort and Leicester Museum, and performances in English of Plautus's comedies have often been very popular but Italian cheese and wine tastings, treasure hunts and slide shows not so successful. Answering questions in competition has drawn greater attentiveness to the slides and competition has proved helpful for the investigation of archaeological exhibits from museums. Nevertheless a large number of varied stalls are required to provide for everyone's interest; we have been able to offer experience with a *groma*, spinning, wearing a toga, ten-minute slide or video shows, information on posters, stalls of coins, pottery, building materials and books, and, this year, a mini-lecture by Dr Martin Goodman on "The Private Lives of the Emperors". Ancient History therefore and mythology are approached competitively and some pupils happily spend ten minutes reading to find an answer. Most do not however and questions have to be carefully balanced. One important aim of the afternoon programme is to enable a less successful Latinist to find fulfilment in other things. Yet it is also desirable to complement the Latin lessons by visual awareness of the world which the Latin is about. Most of our children are unfamiliar with oxen and yokes, let alone frescoes and Roman villas. Latin teaching is further aided by the Reading Competition, as reading can easily be squeezed out by the pressure to reach the target in the book. Ignorance of Latin quantities is shown up – perhaps only to the judges – but everyone overcomes inhibitions about performing in public and feeling for the meaning of the Latin can be expected. The depth and subtlety of Classical literature cannot be illustrated fully to our inexperienced pupils but the sixth-formers at the Classics Festival at least held their interest in readings and sketches from Homer, Aristophanes, Plautus and Catullus. Perhaps they were more interested in the people, but what better focus should a Humanities subject have?

The euphoria of the Summer School, certificate-styled reports indicating their successes in the examination and competitions, the attraction of an extra O level, awareness that a term's Latin has been completed, and encouragement from their own school all contribute to the motivation of Sandwell Latinists. That approaching two hundred have persevered through all the difficulties of the 16+ course in lessons at unorthodox times is mainly due to their own desire to meet a challenge and avail themselves of a special educational opportunity. The teaching is far from ideal: in two 35 minute lessons weekly before school or one hour after they are rushed through Latin grammar, given a taste of "The Millionaire's Dinner Party", and

directed in their reading of Classical Studies and tackling of past papers. Yet there are advantages: greater concentration and awareness of weaknesses are to be expected in small groups, there are opportunities of representing the school on Classical excursions, Classical Civilisation, if well monitored, will stimulate private reading and the knowledge that there is little teaching time perhaps induces self-help. The slower pace of the term's work is complemented by the fast progress at the Summer Schools, where pupils can compare standards without losing the confidence that they are the best or nearly so in their own school. Naturally some schools have found a place for the subject within the timetable and, as it has become known as an extra option, pupil numbers have grown. Since two college teachers are able to cater, sometimes by combining groups, for thirteen schools, small numbers in one school are often compensated for elsewhere. Inevitably some children drop out but the main decision is made after encountering Latin at the Summer School and the functioning of the Latin class often attracts additional beginners. Forecasting problems from excess numbers even after the Summer School questionnaires have been scrutinised is rather optimistic.

As many as four O levels at grade A (from thirty six candidates) were gained this year but it is often a greater achievement for a weaker child to battle through on such a course to a C.S.E. grade. In both cases a pupil has found at fourteen a new subject which has caught the imagination sufficiently for him or her to exert a considerable effort over two years. Nevertheless so much of the course is rushed that there is never time to diversify and explore the information, reactions and arguments which are involved in so valuable a subject. Headteachers have been convinced that their pupils will improve their language awareness, while many pupils say they appreciate the opportunity to learn a new language. The social contact of students with each other and with interesting teachers in the whole variety of Classical activities must be for the good. Furthermore, even if 60% give up after seven days of Latin, the favourable impression they gain may spread enlightenment to the next generation. Such popularisation has been an aim of many of the Summer School activities, such as the film, the disco and the ice-cream stop, when children's basic enjoyment has been paramount.

Through the influence of the Classical Association, and Robert Tibbott in particular, our system has become known in Birmingham, where economic difficulties have obliterated Classics in many schools. Rather than a fresh Summer School being established pupils from five schools have been ferried the nine miles to Rowley Regis, where they have been involved at various levels, and tuition has been continued centrally in Birmingham at the King Edward's Schools for those without Latin teachers. Latin has been revived at two Comprehensive Schools in this way and there are high hopes for a third school where the Head of English, being a Classics graduate, is willing to fit in the tutoring. As in Sandwell there is an economic use of teachers: small groups take about an hour of a teacher's time weekly but come together in the Summer for seven mornings of Latin in larger groups taught by about fifteen

CLASSICAL DRAMA



ARISTOPHANES

Birds, edited by Alan H. Sommerstein

cloth 0 85668 287 X, limp 0 85668 288 8
(Mid 1987)

EURIPIDES

Trojan Women, edited by Shirley Barlow

cloth 0 85668 228 4, limp 0 85668 229 2
(1986)

Orestes, edited by M.L. West

cloth 0 85668 310 8, limp 0 85668 311 6
(Summer 1987)

Alcestis, edited by D. Conacher

cloth 0 85668 234 9, limp 0 85668 235 7
(Late 1987)

Phoenician Women, edited by Elizabeth Craik

cloth 0 85668 230 6, limp 0 85668 231 4
(Late 1987)

SOPHOCLES

Antigone, edited by A.L. Brown

cloth 0 85668 266 7, limp 0 85668 267 5
(January 1987)

TERENCE

Brothers, edited by A.S. Gratwick

cloth 0 85668 315 9, limp 0 85668 316 7
(Mid 1987)

The Self-Tormentor, edited by A.J. Brothers

cloth 0 85668 302 7, limp 0 85668 303 5
(Late 1987)

Uniform A5 edition, cloth £18.75, limp £8.25

ARIS & PHILLIPS Ltd,
Teddington House, Warminster, BA12 8PQ

Please ORDER from:

LA HAULE BOOKS Ltd, West Lodge, La
Haule, Jersey, Channel Islands

teachers. Even fewer than fifteen are needed in the afternoons.

That 15% of our 1200 beginners have proceeded to take the 16+ exam may seem adequate compensation for the hard work involved. A greater reward however would have been increased numbers of those exploring the attainments of Latin literature at A level. Of these there have only been six, two now with degrees in Latin, but the activities and the popularity of the Summer School have increased both the involvement and the morale of our other A level Latin and Ancient History students. As for the work, the organisation of a Summer School is a rewarding experience and, though a successful Summer School leads to a heavy timetable of repeated lessons, the teaching relationship with small, often intelligent, groups

of volunteers is likely to be good. Furthermore, what better form of liaison could there be between Sixth Form College and High Schools? Perhaps this was in the mind of those administrators who reduced the number of Classics teachers but appointed one to a Sixth Form College. Nevertheless it is pleasing that the demand for teaching has exceeded their expectations. There is hardly a school in the borough where children have not accepted tuition in Classics. To judge from Sandwell, given a fair trial, young people will continue to choose to study Latin for its own sake, because they like it and see a value in it.

MYLES WALKER

is on the staff of Rowley Regis College.

Causidicus: a parent's plea

Jessica Yates

As the parent of young children, having myself studied classics (Latin to A level, Greek to O level), and recognising the value of my studies, both for my degree in English and as a skill for life, I am saddened by the decline of classics in state education.

The same point was made by John Godwin, Head of Classics at Shrewsbury School, in the *T.E.S.* of 24th January 1986, in an article entitled 'Goodbye Mr. Chips'. Another article, in the *Educational Guardian* of 31st December 1985, indicates one reason for this decline. The author, Bernard Barker, writes of his education in an early comprehensive school:

"Eltham Green was two or three schools in one. The curriculum varied so that clever children could study Latin and the less able devote their time to woodwork and pottery. It was a mobile, meritocratic world." Now however, as a headmaster in Peterborough, he writes: "Competitive examinations based on narrowly-defined knowledge and marked on the normal distribution curve continued to divide the population into sheep and goats ... Dividing pupils into sets and bands created disaffection... The effort to create an academic ethos to support the ambitions of a bright few proved counter-productive." Now Mr Barker advocates mixed-ability teaching, distributing the bright and the less able throughout their year group. In the comprehensive school where I worked, one could estimate the proportions of able, average and academically below average as approximately one-third in each class; but in the inner-city comprehensive where there has been under-achievement in the primary school, the number of bright, well-motivated children is likely to be rather less than one third per class.

In this system "A common curriculum is now common-

place; decisions on grouping by ability are postponed as long as possible". It seems to me that in such a school, it would be impossible to continue teaching Latin in the traditional way, as so many pupils would lack motivation or ability, that one would be returning to those Victorian days recorded in so many novels and autobiographies, which have given Latin teaching the bad name it has today. Nor would I wish to see most children end up hating the classics.

As a school librarian in an ILEA comprehensive, I regretted the fact that the classics were not taught in my school, but I didn't go as far as to investigate the development of classical studies as a mixed-ability subject for 11-13-year-olds, though I knew it was encouraged in a nearby school, Crown Woods. Now that I am a parent and anxious that my own children should receive a proper grounding in the humanities, I am rather more motivated to begin a campaign directed at my (left-wing) local authority, where Latin has recently been dropped from the co-educational C of E school, and is only retained at the girls' school. None of the 10 schools offers classical studies, although it is possible that Greek mythology and ancient history are part of first-year English and humanities courses. Because of the large number of ethnic minority children, modern language teaching here is taking on a bias towards 'language awareness' which I understand is favourable to aspects of Latin teaching. Except for the two schools above-mentioned, there is mixed-ability teaching in all subjects, with a little 'setting' as pupils move up the school. The C of E and the girls' school both make a virtue of 'setting'.

I now intend, through reading back issues of *JACT Review*, to become more knowledgeable about the scope of