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

**the JACT Greek Summer School at Bryanston School 28 July - 10 August 2024**

The 56th Greek Summer School (the 38th at Bryanston) was both successful and enjoyable.

**Students:**

There were 318 students, 60 of whom had attended the Greek summer school in a previous year. 112 were attending or had attended maintained schools in the UK. There were 22 university students. Seven were teachers, who were developing their knowledge of Greek in order to teach it in their schools, in some cases by introducing the subject to the curriculum for the first time. These students were taught in 42 groups by tutors employed in schools and universities across the UK or retired from such posts. We were all further supported by two matrons and three directors’ assistants.

**Financial assistance:**

The summer school awarded bursaries to 73 students amounting to £51,172; the average award was just under 70% of the course fee. In addition, all 88 Beginners were again given copies of *Reading Greek* at a cost of £5,809. About two-thirds of the total cost of this assistance was met from grants from our sponsors and one-third from the summer school’s own resources.

A further 14 students received grants of £13,155 from the University of Cambridge.

**Greek classes:**

There were 88 Beginners in 11 tutor groups, 93 Intermediates (i.e. pre-GCSE) in 13 groups, and 130 Advanced students (from immediately post-GCSE to university level) in 14 groups.

No group had more than 11 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*. The Intermediates used either *Reading Greek* or the John Taylor course, depending on the students’ level and previous experience with some of the Higher Intermediate groups reading unadapted Greek from various *JACT Readers* (Greek Anthology, World of Hero etc.). Advanced groups all read three texts: some Homer, some prose, and some drama.

Of Homer, the *Odyssey* was more popular this year with 9 groups reading a selection of books from it, while 5 groups read books from the *Iliad*.Of the prose authors, Plato and Xenophon tied in first place for most popular, followed by Lysias and Demosthenes as joined second; in all, 12 different prose texts were read across the 14 groups. Of the dramatists, Sophocles was read by 4 groups (his *Electra* by 3 of those), Aeschylus was read by 1 group; Aristophanes by 1 group and, once again, Euripides was most popular – read by 8 groups. In addition to the 32 hours of formal lesson time, afternoon grammar clinics were scheduled in order to offer additional 1-on-1 support and to allow students to ask further questions about specific areas of the language.

There were 4 additional tutor groups for the week-long teacher courses at Beginners, Intermediate, GCSE, and, for the first time, Advanced level. The Beginners and Intermediate teacher groups used Taylor’s *Greek to GCSE*, since that is the textbook that the teachers are most likely to use in their schools. The GCSE-level group revised the key GCSE constructions, discussed the teaching of these and other language topics, and read the two most widely-chosen GCSE set text options (Homer and Herodotus). The Advanced groups discussed the transition from GCSE to A-Level and also read the Homer and Herodotus options from the syllabus.

**Tutors and staff:**

There were 42 tutors, including 19 from universities (Cambridge, Glasgow, Kent, Manchester, Oxford, Reading, Swansea, and Warwick). Four were teaching at the summer school for the first time, three of these coming at very short notice. One tutorship was again generously supported by Trinity College, Cambridge. Charlotte Banyard and Carol Wells, in their second year as our matrons, provided virtually round-the-clock cover, and were wonderfully supportive and reassuring to students and tutors alike. Lily Isaac, Caspar Laven, and Katie Mewawalla were wonderfully efficient and energetic Director’s Assistants.

**Beyond the classes:**

The evening lectures were given by a mixture of visitors and members of the home team: we were joined during the fortnight by Adrian Kelly (on Odysseus and Achilles), Armand D’Angour (on Socrates and Aspasia), Guy Westwood (on oratory and performance), and Judith Mossman (on Sophocles’ *Electra* compared to other tellings of the Electra story). Other lectures were delivered by tutors: John Taylor (on Pausanias’ guide to Greece), Christopher Burden-Strevens (on Augustus in the Greek historians), Costas Panayotakis at short notice (on Aristophanes’ *Wasps*), David Langslow (on Proto-Indo-European), and Sarah Smart (on ancient medicine). The early-afternoon seminar programme again offered an extraordinary variety of topics, from: Indo-European laryngeal theory, accentuation, scansion, the verb ἵημι, advanced prose composition, writing a Greek dictionary, Sappho and her reception, Persia and Herodotus, Thucydides and Plataea, and Athenian vase-painting, to: the history of learning Greek, the Greek novel, Graeco-Roman mime, Ptolemy’s map of the world, Greek mathematics, colloquial ancient Greek, New Testament Greek, and Modern Greek for classicist beginners. On the Saturday evening, virtually the whole summer school enjoyed the ever-popular Greek and general knowledge Quiz, masterminded by Rob Machado and Krishnan Ram-Prasad.

The hours of formal tuition were supplemented not only by committed further study and the programme of lectures and seminars, but by a wide range of extra-curricular activity, made possible by the wonderful facilities at Bryanston School. Our many-sided Entertainments programme included tennis and squash tournaments, House rounders matches after the evening lectures, karaoke sessions, and an Olympiad of school sports-day events. There was a walk to, and an expertly guided tour of the Iron Age and Roman site of Hod Hill. Music flourished, with a course orchestra and a course choir: these groups performed, alongside talented soloists, in the concert on the second Thursday, which was beautiful and in places deeply moving. On the middle Sunday there was an accomplished, thoroughly Aristophanic, and very funny production in English of Aristophanes’ *Wasps*. On the final evening, we sat in the Greek theatre – the rain having cleared just in time – to watch a visually riveting production of Sophocles’ *Electra*. The play, sympathetically cut, was notable for the clarity and precision of the spoken Greek and for the beautiful singing of all the lyrics to music specially composed (one stasimon by a student). Even those of the audience who had been beginners at the start of the course were able to identify sections of the Greek. For both plays, spectacular costumes and props had been designed and made during the fortnight.

**Students’ feedback:**

161 students (50.1%) returned the online questionnaire which was circulated at the end of the course. Almost all students (93%) felt that they had made as much (29%) or indeed more (64%) progress with their Greek than they had expected prior to arrival. It was a typically industrious cohort: 71.5% of the students spend more than three hours per day on independent study: most students (38.5%) had devoted at least 3-4 hours each day to independent study outside the tutor sessions (learning new material and completing homework), while a further 33% had spent over 4 hours on their Greek outside class.

As always, the students found the pace challenging but rewarding, the teaching clear and the atmosphere supportive. The students felt comfortable asking questions in class, thought their teachers were approachable and the explanations clear. They thoroughly enjoyed the evening lectures (many students attended every single one) and afternoon seminars, and many had also found time to participate in the musical, dramatic or sporting activities on offer. Again, many students commented on the impact the summer school had not only in helping them make great progress in the language, but also in becoming more confident, and added how much they cherished the opportunity to spend two weeks focusing on Greek as part of such a great and supportive community.

**Our thanks:**

The Summer School continues to benefit from the generosity of a number of institutional and individual benefactors. We are extremely grateful for the ongoing support of the Cambridge Classics Faculty, the Classical Association, the JACT Greek Project, Trinity College Cambridge, the Oxford Faculty Board of Classics, the Jowett Copyright Trust, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the Gilbert Murray/Cromer Trust, and Classics for All, and to the Craven Committee (Oxford), who generously increased its grant this year. These donations enable us above all to offer bursaries to any students whose circumstances would otherwise prevent them from attending the Summer School.

The Summer School is as always deeply grateful to Bryanston School, whose staff always do everything possible to be helpful, 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, and to our new Assistant Director of Studies, Andy Mylne, who managed the teachers’ groups and the seminar programme. As ever, and especially this year, we owe particularly large debts of gratitude to the Course Secretaries – in this transitional year we had two: Cathy Bothwell until the end of March, and Emma Woolerton from the start of April. Every year, from autumn to late summer, the Secretary arranges virtually 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 Cathy’s and Emma’s combined efforts were as clear-headed, far-sighted and effective as ever, and we especially congratulate Emma on her very successful first year in the role.

David Langslow, Director

Maria Elpiniki Oikonomou, Director of Studies