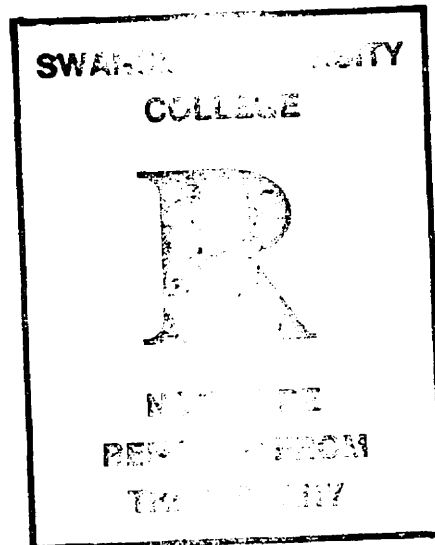


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Classics For Girls

Classics in independent schools 1902 - 1960
with special reference to the differing
experiences of boys and girls.

Penelope Hasler

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed *Penelope Hader*

Date *6th October 1999*

Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Summary

At the end of the nineteenth century independent education was largely classical, knowledge of arcane tongues a shibboleth for privileged classes. During the twentieth century demarcation of the class structure became less pronounced and education compulsory for children across the social spectrum. One aspect that distinguished independent schools from state schooling was the classical nature of their curriculum; in 1900 Greek and Latin was taught to almost all boys in these schools.

In the nineteenth century upper and middle class girls were groomed for the marriage market. Education was considered an unhealthy and unladylike pursuit which did not benefit their status. Social attitudes changed and education became more acceptable to parents and available to all. Due to a lack of tradition teachers in girls' schools were willing to try new methods and often offered a fresh approach. Difficulties such as a shorter working day, a broad curriculum and late start made it hard to achieve the same standard as boys in classics.

By 1920 supporters of sciences and modern languages had claimed a greater share of the timetable. Those who could not cope with classics were channelled into the modern side streams, an option initially seen as second class. Gradually as career opportunities opened up these alternatives to classics gained in respectability and the vocational value of classics was questioned. Emphasis in their teaching moved from composition and grammar to the literature and its context. Despite attempts to modernise the teaching of classics, change was slow. Whilst private schools were independent of state control, the focus of examinations caused a uniformity of purpose and stifled opportunities for innovation. As the academic route became an acceptable one for girls so their experience drew closer to that of boys.

In 1919/20 Oxford and Cambridge withdrew Greek as an entry requirement and it became a specialist subject. Regulations of the new 'O' and 'A' levels in 1951 resulted in Latin losing its status as an entrance qualification. The 1960 decision by Oxford and Cambridge to drop it as a requirement for all removed the only justification for learning Latin for many, although it still retained a more secure place in independent schools than in state schools.

The character of the independent schooling system, with the reactionary preparatory schools at the bottom of the chain, did not foster change. Each element of the system focused on entry to the next, classics playing a crucial role in the transition, although other subjects took an increasing proportion of the curriculum. For girls classics was not an integral part of the system, but one that gained a place as academic results became crucial to careers.

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Chronology

- 1848 Queen's College, to train teachers and governesses, founded
- 1849 Bedford College, to train teachers and governesses founded
- 1850 North London Collegiate School founded, Miss Buss became its headmistress
- 1853 Cheltenham Ladies College founded
- 1858 Miss Beale became headmistress of Cheltenham
- 1861 Clarendon Commission established to investigate the great public schools
- 1864 Taunton Commission established to investigate the state of education in schools which served the middle and upper middle classes
- 1864 Clarendon Commission reported
- 1865/6 Cambridge, Edinburgh and Durham local examinations opened to girls
- 1868 Examinations for women started at the University of London
- 1868 Schools' Inquiry Commission reported
- 1869 Examinations for women started at Cambridge
- 1869 Girton College founded
- 1870 Oxford local examinations opened to girls
- 1871 Newnham College founded
- 1872 Girton College moved to Cambridge
- 1872 Girls Public Day School Company founded
- 1877 Examinations for women started at Oxford
- 1878 Admission for women to University of London
- 1879 Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville Hall opened at Oxford
- 1885 Roedean school for girls founded
- 1892 Conference on Greek held
- 1893 Bryce Commission appointed
- 1895 Report of the Bryce Commission
- 1896 Wycombe Abbey founded
- 1902 Education Act, emphasis on scientific content of the curriculum
- 1903 Details of the first Common Entrance examination published
- 1903 Classical Association founded
- 1904 Regulations for Secondary schools : Curriculum to include English, Mathematics, Science, Modern Languages, Geography, History and Latin, but Latin is not compulsory if the school can claim that the omission of Latin is to the advantage of the school
- 1904 St Paul's Girls School founded
- 1907 H.M.C. decided that Greek should no longer be compulsory for entrance to public schools
- 1907 Classical Association report of the curricula committee on the teaching of Latin in secondary schools
- 1909 I.A.P.S. Special Committee reported on the methods of classical teaching in preparatory schools

- 1911 Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching founded
- 1911 First of the Summer Schools at Bangor
- 1916 Prime Minister's Committee to investigate the position of Modern Languages
- 1916 Committee on the neglect of Science; Prime Minister's Committee on Natural Sciences appointed
- 1916 Final vote of Headmasters' conference not to have Greek as a compulsory subject for entrance to Oxford and Cambridge
- 1918 Women over 30 were allowed to vote
- 1918 Prime Minister's Committee on Natural Sciences reported
- 1919 Prime Minister's Classics and English committees appointed
- 1919 Compulsory Greek abolished at Cambridge
- 1920 Compulsory Greek abolished at Oxford
- 1920 Women admitted to Oxford on equal terms
- 1921 Prime Minister's Report into the position of Classics in Education
- 1923 Benenden founded
- 1923 Report of the consultative committee on the differentiation of the curriculum for boys and girls respectively in secondary schools published
- 1926 Hadow Report
- 1928 Women over 21 could vote
Westonbirt school founded
- 1931 *Greece and Rome* launched by the Classical Association
- 1932 Informal conference on the teaching of Latin and History held at Oxford
- 1934 *Latin For Today* published
- 1936 Joint Committee of English and Classical Associations set up to discuss the decline in Greek
- 1937 Classical Association report : The Position of the Classics in the Schools
- 1938 Spens report : Latin omitted from core curriculum for first years of grammar school education
- 1939 Board Of Education produced *Suggestions For The Teaching of The Classics*
- 1939 *The Value Of Latin* and *The Value Of Greek* sent to schools by the Classical Association
- 1943 Norwood report, in defence of tradition
- 1943 Symposium held on *The Classics in Education and the Professions*
- 1944 Education Act
- 1944 Fleming Report on public schools
- 1948 Women admitted to Cambridge on equal terms
- 1951 Classical Association produced *Why Latin? A Parent's Questions Answered*
- 1951 'O' and 'A' levels replace School Certificate and Higher Certificate
- 1956 Classical Association produced *Why Choose Greek and Latin*
- 1959 Board Of Education produced *Suggestions for The Teaching of Classics*

- 1959 Classical Association publish *Greek In The Twentieth Century*
- 1959 *Foundations* published as a result of the I.A.P.S. being advised to examine their curriculum by Lord Hailsham
- 1960 In May the classical languages were removed as a requirement for admission to Oxford or Cambridge
- 1962 Joint Association Of Classical Teachers founded
Reappraisal published by Classical Association
- 1970 *Cambridge Latin Course* published
- 1971 *Ecce Romani* published in Scotland
- 1979 *Reading Greek* published

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Introduction

The word classicist suggests a certain status today as it did 100 years ago and yet that status is a very different one and in many ways elicits a different response. In the late twentieth century it is unusual for students to choose to specialise in classics and when they do there can be a reaction of surprise followed by the question 'but what are you going to do with it?' As the twentieth century dawned, however, sons of the privileged classes were expected to receive a predominantly classical education at a private school. It was those who did not follow the classical route who were met with a surprised, perhaps pitying reaction. Those diversifying into other areas of the curriculum were the exception to the rule and had to be content with reaching for less glittering prizes. In just over half a century the curriculum had not only become wider, but there was a certain respectability and even compulsion attached to subjects, particularly science and modern languages, which had once been the second class option. As a result the position and status of classics changed. By 1960 Greek was a specialist subject and Latinists were becoming increasingly rare. Towards the end of the last century academic training was not usually considered appropriate for girls from upper class families, but as the role and status of women altered this attitude changed gradually and girls began to enter the academic field. They encountered classics, but given the less intense character of their teaching day they struggled to achieve similar standards to those achieved by the boys. In the course of sixty years education for girls developed and matured, all the time drawing closer and growing in parity with the experience of boys.

The classical tradition is an important element in the history of education. It shaped the minds of many of the great, the wise and influential of the twentieth century. My own experience of a preparatory school, working as a class teacher, began to intrigue me as to the nature and history of classics in independent education. In the seventies I had studied Latin, using the Cambridge Latin Course, at a grammar/comprehensive school, where we classicists were very much in the minority. Yet here in the nineties was a school teaching younger pupils, boys, Latin for four years before they went on to public school: it was part of the status quo. This survival of Latin interested me and prompted questions which eventually led to this study. The character of classical education, particularly

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during the late nineteenth century, has been explored by C.A. Stray¹, Martin Forrest has researched the fortunes of classics since the Cambridge School Classics Project of the 1970's² and there have been studies of state school classics³. Apart from scattered original material, however, there is no analysis of classical education as found in independent schools, a void which this study aims to fill, comparing the experience of boys with that of girls.

Independent schools by their very nature were not necessarily affected by the changing educational climate of the day; they were independent of the state and in many ways independent of each other. Yet they were answerable to their customers; the parents who exerted an increasing influence on boys' schools throughout the period and were interested in the character of education for their daughter from the start. Independent schools were, in addition, inexorably connected to each other by the strong links of entrance examinations, preparatory schools linked to public schools by the Common Entrance examination and public schools linked to universities by entrance requirements, in both of which Latin featured as a key qualification. The independent schooling system was one of separate units, connected and yet autonomous, which meant that change was slow and stilted. At one end of the system were the preparatory schools, institutions which differed according to which public schools they aspired to supply with pupils, thus creating a sort of informal league table. Those who achieved greatest success in gaining scholarships to the more prestigious public schools strove to keep their position at the top of the table. For all preparatory schools there was the realisation that they were at the bottom of the pile, doing a job that the more serious academics eschewed. As will be seen in chapter 2 with regard to the teaching of Greek, the public schools readily criticised the quality of preparatory school teaching and yet were reluctant to take on such elementary teaching. Preparatory school masters were either those who used the post as a stepping stone position after university, having little sense of vocation or experience, or those teachers who lacked ambition and became stuck in a rut. There was little in the way

¹ Dr. Stray has also completed studies of more recent developments in classics and education, including his M.Sc investigating the position of classical teachers in South Wales in the 1970's *Classics in Crisis : The changing forms and current decline of classics as exemplary curricular knowledge, with special reference to the experience of classics teachers in South Wales* and *Classics Transformed* 1998, which covers the period 1830 to 1960.

² M. Forrest *Modernising The Classics* 1996.

³ F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 and P.E. Winter *Investigation into Attitudes towards Latin of Girls at State Grammar Schools, at the end of two years study of Latin* MA Institute of Education in London 1950/1.

Introduction

of exchanging ideas with neighbouring, rival schools. The focus was on the next link in the system, the public school. A lack of response to change was often due to their perceiving that for their pupils to achieve places in the highest sets at public school a continuation of the status quo was necessary. Headmasters of public schools tended to vote for change at their annual conferences and yet were slow to put this into practice in their own establishments, or adopted ideas in part. Given their lengthy discussions and patchy response to their own resolutions it is not surprising that the preparatory schools were slow or reluctant to respond to change. Public schools were large, respected establishments that tried to exert influence over both preparatory schools and universities.

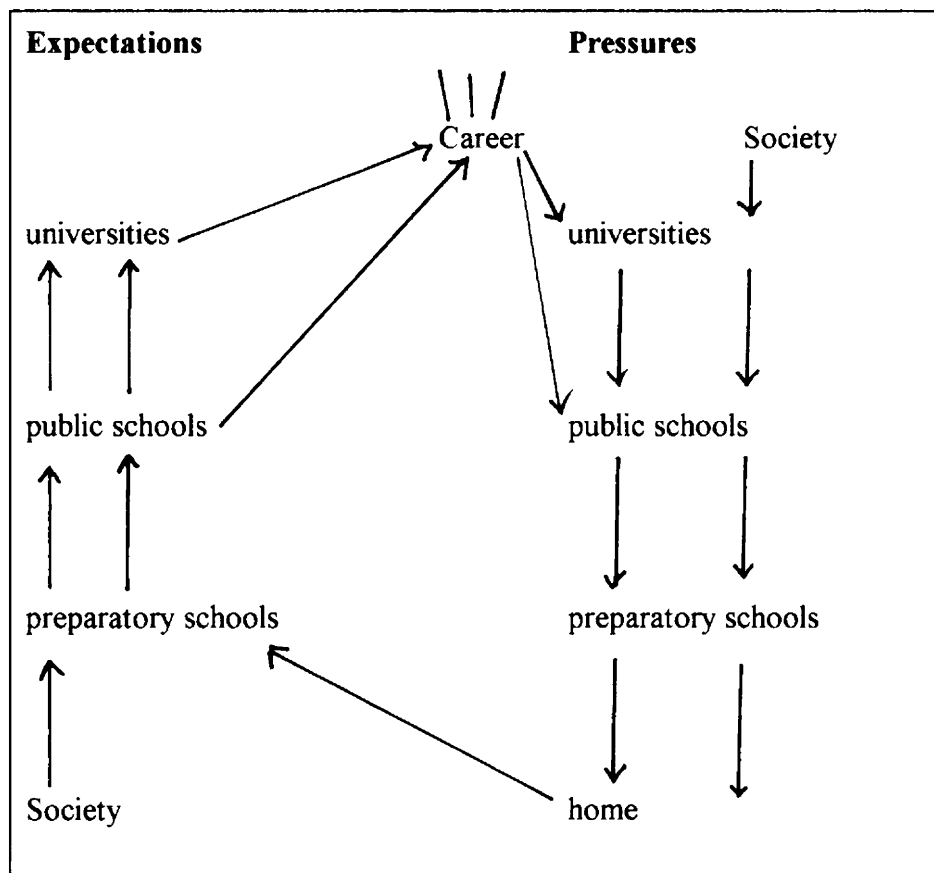
Although as the twentieth century progressed and the class structure became increasingly blurred it continued to exist and support the independence of the public school system. Those who patronised independent schooling did so because they believed it offered an education superior to that of the state system, because they wanted their children to be educated as they themselves had been and because it conferred a label that would smooth the way in later life. An important characteristic of this education was the classical content of the curriculum. During the twentieth century the numbers attending public schools who could no longer rely on financial security from the family, but would have to work, increased. Parents became more interested in the nature of the education for which they were paying, an interest which was not always welcome as we shall see in chapter 3. Attempts to broaden the curriculum by the inclusion of science and modern languages threatened to squeeze classics out completely, but their position as a crucial exam qualification ensured their survival. We will not only look at the changing essence of public school education, but explore the extent to which classical education has been appropriate, necessary and possible for girls during an era when gender roles were changing and the face of femininity being reshaped.

Throughout this study we shall chart the decline and fall of classics in independent education from the education act of 1902 until the safety net of Latin as a university entrance requirement was removed by Oxford and Cambridge in 1960. We shall assess whether the fall was as meteoric as some feared and to what extent its shock waves were felt in the schools themselves. The extent to which the classical diet for girls differed and the degree to which constant attempts to marginalise Latin and Greek affected their curriculum will be explored.

Linked Progression

Throughout the study there are changes which are shaped by various factors relating to the passage of time. Influences and expectations on and for education were constantly reshaping to a greater or lesser degree the nature of education and ultimately the nature of classics in schools. The best way of visualising this progression is by comparing the following diagrams.

Boys, 1902

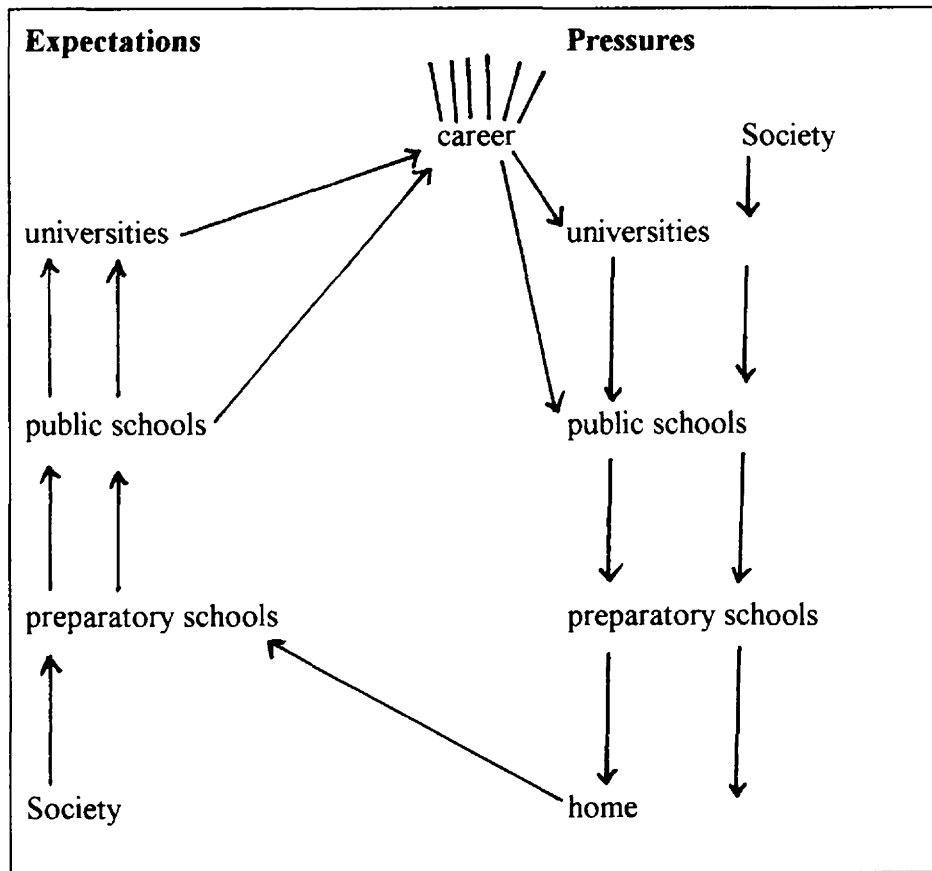


Here we see that each component of the education system put pressure on the next in the chain. This pressure was in the form of qualifications demanded to access the

Introduction

next level. Social expectations and public perception also put pressure on the system to fulfil its role in society. Each element of the system also had expectations of the next in the chain, expectations of the character of education conferred and expectations of attaining access to the next stage. If we compare this network of links with that of 1960 we see that there has been little in the way of change; the most obvious difference being wider career choice.

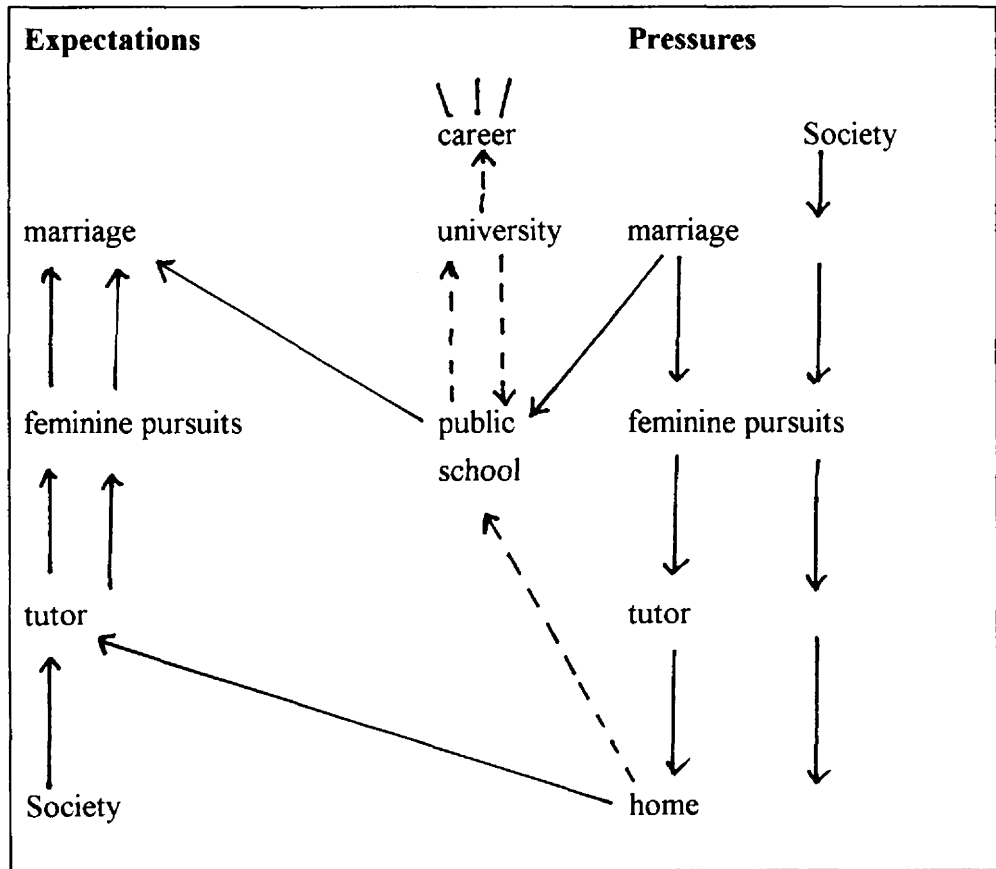
Boys, 1960



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A similar picture of girls' education shows a very different progression.

Girls, 1902

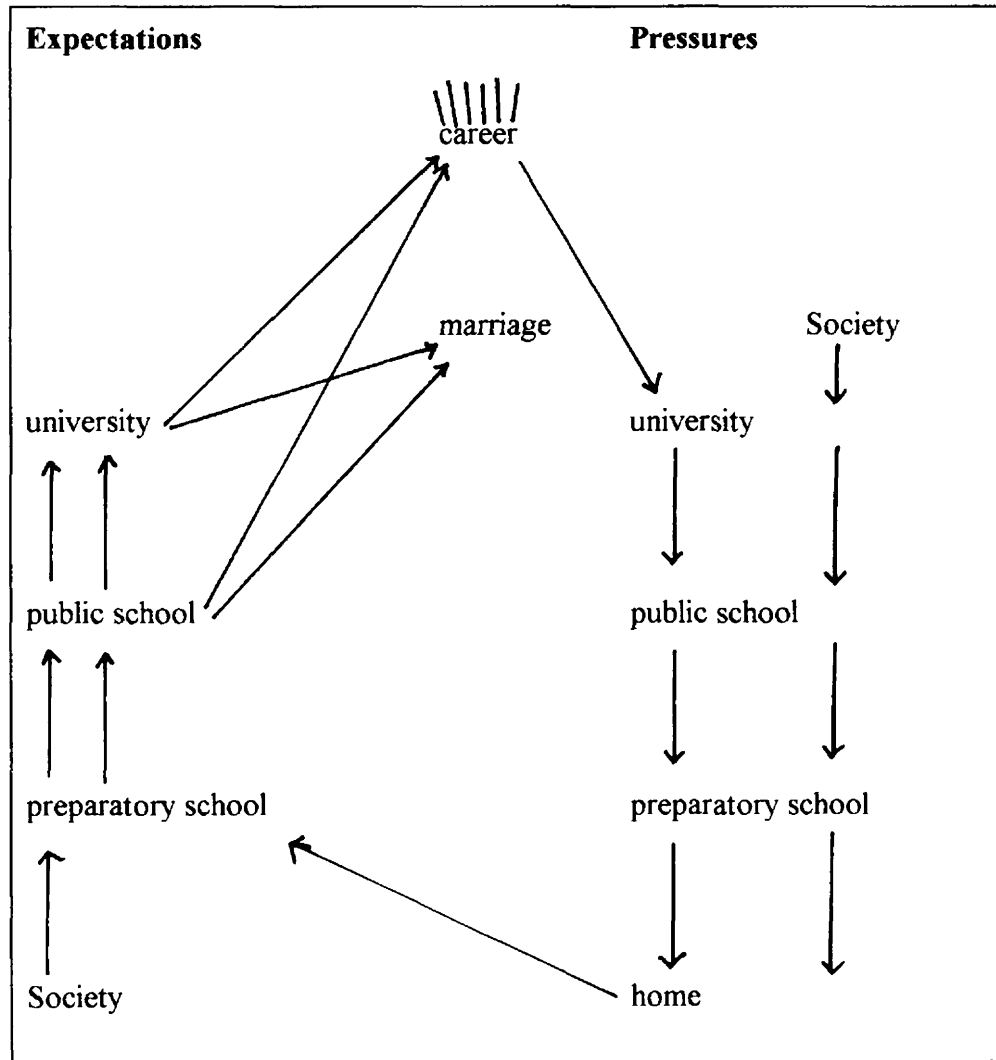


Here both pressures and expectations are different from those experienced by the boys. Marriage put pressure on the accomplishment of feminine pursuits suitable for shaping a woman for her role in marriage. This training depended on a sound grounding from a tutor or governess which the home was beholden to provide. There was pressure from society to conform to this pattern. Thus the home and society expected each link of the chain to prepare their daughters for the next.

The relatively recent rise of education for girls provided an alternative route: public schools and university. The nature of schooling was influenced by expectations of marriage, whilst its links with university and career were rather weak. By 1960 the picture had changed considerably.

Introduction

Girls, 1960



Public school is now no longer an alternative route, but part of the main chain. Links with marriage remain, but are weak compared to those with careers and university. The picture of expectations and pressures is far closer to that of boys' education.

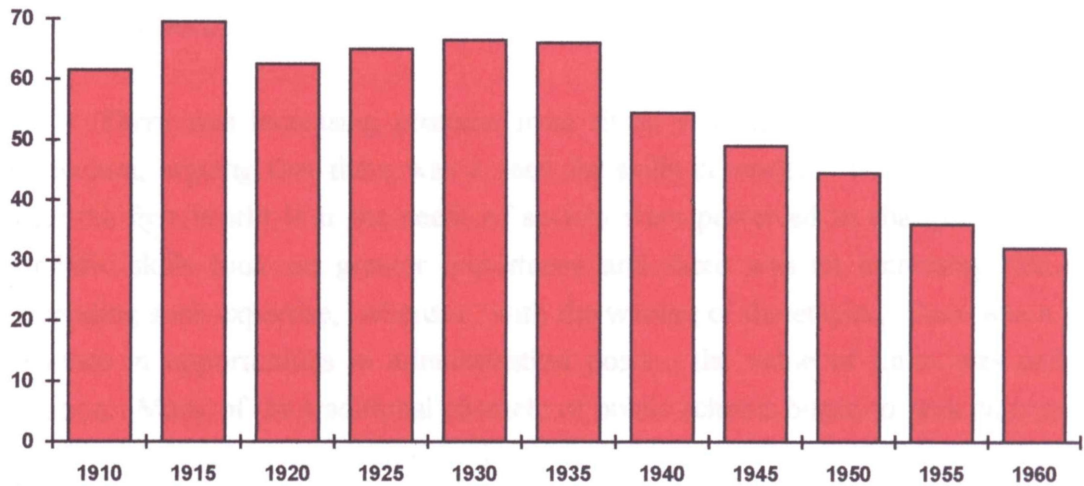
Over sixty years the role of education changed, more radically for girls than for boys. The nature of that education also changed and with it the place and character of classics teaching. The following graphs⁴ show at a glance the decline in the percentage taking Latin and Greek to School Certificate/'O' level over a period of fifty years.

⁴ The graphs can be seen in Appendix III, page 414 where more detail is recorded.

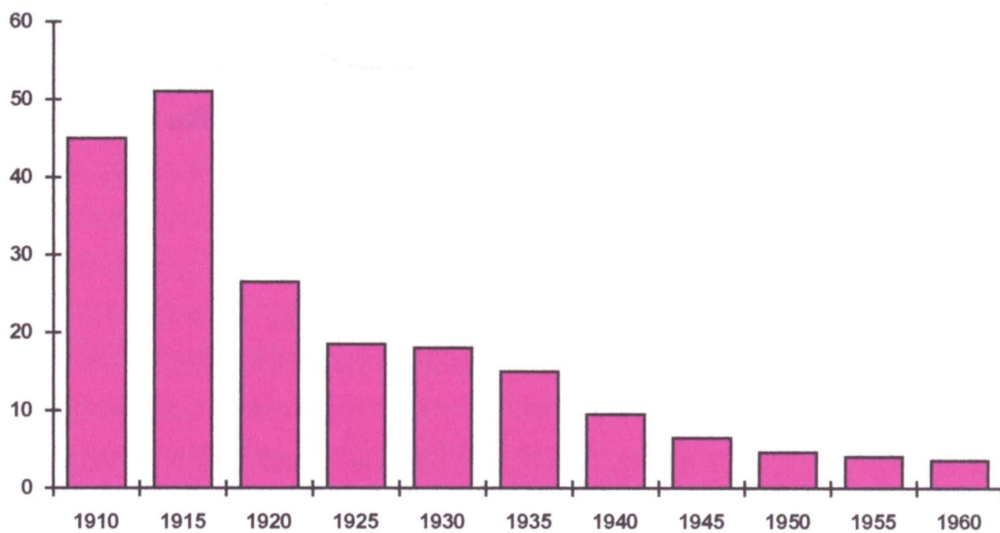
Introduction

Although the data includes state schools, it is indicative of general trends in the independent system too.

**Graph to show the percentage of candidates taking School Certificate Latin
1910 - 1960**



**Graph to show the percentage of candidates taking School Certificate Greek
1910 - 1960**



Introduction

The decline in numbers taking Latin is slow, a gradual falling away showing in the last twenty years, whereas the picture for Greek is far more sudden and dramatic. Between 1915 and 1920 something obviously happened to cause a significant drop in numbers: Cambridge, in 1919 and Oxford, in 1920 removed Greek as a requirement for those studying non classical degrees. Their continued demand for a Latin qualification supported the position of Latin throughout. As the number of candidates overall increased, so the numbers taking classics increased. This led to a false sense of security as when one looks at the percentage of those candidates taking classics, as in the above graphs, the decline is obvious.

There was increasing pressure from those who called for diversification in the curriculum, arguing that there was a need for skills in modern languages and sciences. After the first World War the needs of society were perceived to change, technical and scientific skills took on greater importance and there was an increasing rise in jobs demanding such expertise, whereas, with the waning of the empire, there was a gradual decrease in opportunities in administration posts: the value of Latin was called into question. Many of the traditional clientele of public schools began to seek careers for the first time as family estates were sold and inheritance tax began to cream off their nest eggs. Seen at first as a second-class alternative to classics, vocational education became an inherent part of the pressure/expectation chain.

As modern language teaching gained a place in the curriculum teachers were encouraged by the Classical Association to make classics similarly appealing. The nature of Latin taught did change, moving from a technical, analytical treatment of the subject, that had concentrated on composition in the eighteenth century and then on grammar in the early twentieth century, to one that considered the content and context of the language. Treatment of Greek followed suit, although as we will see some found it difficult, or refused, to follow such advice.

Themes

The changing of the face of classics is found to be slow and almost imperceptible, decisions were made and ignored, concerns aired, forgotten and aired again years later. This is a history in which recurrent themes become familiar.

- Although the state system was directly affected by government policy and so responsive to change independent schools were a closed system in which each element was dependent on the next, creating a rather curious uniformity within which separate units could be independent and individual whilst supporting and perpetuating the system. As we have seen preparatory schools, whilst providing a key link with public schools, were at the tail end of the chain, the lowest position, attracting the more staid and traditional teachers. These factors resulted in reactionary bodies which focused their teaching on the Common Entrance examination and scholarships. The doggedly independent preparatory schools were firmly linked to public schools which in turn responded to the demands of universities. Initially girls' schools had weaker academic links, so that the character of their academic teaching was less prescribed. In the course of time stronger links with universities and careers meant that their academic freedom was restricted.
- Some accepted inevitable change and endeavoured to make it as palatable as possible, while others denied the need to depart from time honoured traditions. The Classical Association provided a forum for ideas for the way forward. Those at the chalk face tended to be slow or reluctant to embrace change. The quality of staff affected the quality of teaching and the extent to which they were responsive to new ideas and willing to experiment. Preparatory school masters were paid less than their public school counterparts and the job probably involved more in the way of extra duties. It is likely that neither the truly ambitious, nor the serious academic were attracted to such posts, leaving them to the more complacent who were content to continue in a familiar groove, giving boys a traditional grounding. Few masters at preparatory or public schools would have had any form of training to teach, but relied on their own competence in the subject and expense. There was a greater tendency for women teachers to be trained, but in the early years many lacked sufficient competence to be

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sound teachers. Masters at public schools had often come into the profession straight from university and so had a rather narrow field of experience. It will be seen that initially it was often the women who were most responsive to change.

- The content of the syllabus was determined by examinations set in order to progress to the next stage, Common Entrance for public school entry and School Certificate/'O' level for university. Although not all pupils were bound for university these examinations exerted pressure and created expectations for schools. They ultimately determined what was taught and to a great degree how it was taught.
- The value of Latin was questioned by those who were champions of other subjects wanting a greater share of the timetable, by parents who became increasingly interested in career prospects and by those who queried its appropriateness for girls and by educationalists trying to develop a rounded curriculum.
- There was pressure from other subjects in the curriculum, notably science and modern languages for classics to yield a greater share of the timetable. Overcrowding of the curriculum was a constant problem for boys and girls.
- Boys made an early start, often at about the age of 8, whereas girls rarely met Latin until aged 12 at least. Recommendations were made more than once to delay the start, but on the whole they were ignored.
- Constant pressure did lead to a gradual change in emphasis from a grammar based curriculum to a literature oriented one.
- The opinion that classics was not suited to all was discussed, but there was a reluctance to accept it due to the fear that this would erode the place of Latin further.

The issue of gender stereotyping is a theme that is prominent in Part One, but fades gradually as equality between the sexes becomes more acceptable. Likewise the theme of the role of the public school boy being shaped to run the empire changes as the empire declined and heroic models seemed out of place amid modern technology. Some of the above themes recur, but it is obvious that progression has taken place; whereas others recur without evidence of progression.

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The recurrence of these themes suggests that teachers did not or would not respond to change. In some cases discussion took place at annual conferences of teachers or head teachers' associations which were represented by a small percentage of the mass of ordinary staff. Sometimes outside events, such as war, pushed classroom issues to the background and they were forgotten until the next generation rediscovered them. The most senior member of the department was probably the oldest and the most experienced. It is possible that new members of staff found they had to accept the status quo within the school, being given little space for real innovation. The schools themselves had the independence to mould their own curriculum. There were several reasons for eschewing change, some were financial, some were because change was not perceived to be in the interest of the school, for instance it would not ensure scholarships to top public schools, some were due to complacency and some due to ignorance. Thus, whilst the goal: passing entrance examinations remain the same, the above themes reappear time and time again.

Structure

To set the scene the first chapter charts the tradition of a predominantly classical education in public schools towards the end of the last century. For boys classics was not just part of an academic training, but more of a rite of passage that marked the ruling classes out from the hoi polloi. Education was a man's world which would be threatened by the intrusion of learned women. It was not considered necessary for girls from similar backgrounds to receive an academic education, indeed there was something of a stigma attached to the pioneers of female education, a taint of impropriety. The fairer sex were expected to be refining skills that would enable them to attract a suitable husband and then run an efficient household. However, the founding of North London Collegiate School in 1850 and Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1853 began the move away from home tuition and governesses to schools and to an academic experience closer to that encountered by boys. The curriculum of the first girls' schools was like a clean slate waiting to be filled. We shall explore the role played by the classics in filling that void and the problems met by

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the pioneer school mistresses as compared with their experienced and perhaps complacent male counterparts.

The main part of this study falls into two chronological sections; from 1902 to the early 1930's and from the early 1930's to 1960. Whilst both sections are naturally intertwined, a series of factors suggested this as a natural division. After the first world war there was much questioning and examining of the status quo, committees on the Position of Natural Science, 1918, and the Position of Modern Studies, 1919, published their findings and the Prime Minister's committee report on the Position of Classics was published in 1921. Sir Eric Campbell Geddes' work for the postwar coalition government in cutting departmental expenditure dashed hopes of economic revival in the early twenties. This and the following Depression led to a lull before new initiatives and discussion were opened in the 1930's, during which decade the preparatory schools started to debate and question the content of the curriculum. As the graphs on page 8 show the percentage of candidates taking Latin began to fall way in the late thirties and the rumblings of change influenced renewed endeavours. The Classical Association published a report on *The Position Of Classics In Schools*, 1937, and an important new text book *Latin For Today*, 1934, was published. The recommendations of the Hadow Report, 1926, which advocated learning through doing and was intended to appeal to a wide range of abilities, were beginning to be realised by state schools in the thirties and the Spens Report of 1938 challenged the role of School Certificate and its influence over the content of the syllabus. Distributing and organising the questionnaire data (see 'Sources' below) also suggested this as a practical break point. Those who responded to the questionnaires would have been in their eighties if they went to school in the twenties and whilst I have been in touch with some of such an age most felt that their infirmities and age prevented them from replying adequately. Thus it seemed appropriate to keep the questionnaire material all in one section. The time span was too long to consider as one period and the midway point made a convenient break for the above reasons. Time not being static, one can not make a clean break so the change takes place at the most natural time in each chapter. Each section is similarly organised containing chapters on the same subjects: the preparatory school experience, the public school experience, classics for girls and life at the chalk face; what actually went on in the classroom.

Part One: 1902 - Early 1930's

The Preparatory School

If a boy had been taught by a governess or tutor at home the preparatory school was a boy's first experience of formal education and even if he had been to a nursery or infant school the move to a preparatory school at the age of seven or eight marked the true start up the academic ladder. This chapter explores the role of classics within that education.

During the first decade of the century the role of Greek was frequently questioned. Latin was expected to be studied by all, but Greek was fast becoming a touchstone of excellence, beyond the grasp of many. There were complaints from the preparatory schools that it took up too much time in an overcrowded timetable. Public schools, however, were reluctant to relieve preparatory schools of the responsibility of covering the ground work. By the end of the period Greek was confined to the scholarship exams at the top of preparatory schools. There was much discussion as to the optimum time to start Latin and where this fitted in with the timetable for starting modern languages. Although the curriculum was tending to become broader, including some science and practical subjects, it will be seen that these newcomers, together with English were marginalised. Those who favoured the modern side were decidedly second class whilst prowess in classics led towards the ultimate goal of a classical scholarship to one of the more prestigious public schools.

Within the classroom methods to ensure pupils attained such goals, or at least made a good showing at Common Entrance were employed. Thus the emphasis was on grammar and rote learning. Moves were afoot to attempt a change of emphasis in teaching and 1911 saw the first of a short series of summer schools held at Bangor to promote the Direct Method; teaching Latin as a spoken tongue. The advent of the first world war put a stop to such initiatives and weakened the calibre of the teaching profession. Thus by 1920 previous ideas and initiatives had lost their impetus.

The preparatory schools' aim was to prepare boys for their public schools, to get them through the hoop of Common Entrance. Their survival and status depended ultimately on this condition, thus they kept, for the most part, to the well worn tracks of the past.

The Public School

Public schools were also working towards a goal and for them the ultimate goal was university, for which classics were an important passport. Not all pupils were bound for university, but the reputation of each school relied to a large degree on its examination results. At the start of the century teachers of classics carried a higher status and received a higher salary than those teaching other subjects, reinforcing the importance and status of classics and it was in this direction that the most able pupils were steered. However, champions of other subjects began to make claims for a share of the timetable, hoping to wrest time from classics.

In 1916 committees investigated the position of modern studies and natural science whilst a private one reported on the neglect of science, both subjects wanting a greater share of the timetable. The war had resulted in a revaluation of education and stimulated thoughts of practical and vocational training. Thus the supremacy of classics within the curriculum was being threatened on several fronts, whilst the archaic image of classical teaching was beginning to take on millstone-like properties. A series of defences appeared to counter such threats. Books were published promoting the value of Latin and efforts made to make it more accessible. There were renewed attempts to encourage all schools to use the same scheme of pronunciation, the 'reformed' pronunciation. A streamlined grammatical terminology was also attempted. A change in emphasis promoted the reading of texts for their content, rather than using them as a vehicle for testing grammar. Visual aids, the Direct Method and drama were all encouraged in an attempt to modernise the image of classics and make the subject more attractive.

As the preparatory schools had been unhappy about the standard of Greek demanded by them from public schools, so the public schools questioned the need for Greek as an entrance qualification for those entering Oxford or Cambridge to read non-classical degrees. Greek was seen as a hurdle and a hindrance and was finally removed as a requirement by 1920. This led to the expected decline in numbers, although it continued to thrive in the classical stream.

By the early 1930's Latin still retained a key place within the curriculum. Meetings of the Headmasters' Conference often represented a fraction of public school headmasters,

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who by their very nature were independent and often did not feel the need to contribute or respond to such discussions. Thus many of the school masters themselves were unaware of the melting pot of opinion, or at least felt that it would not affect their status quo.

Classical Girls

Academic training for girls developed amid the atmosphere of training and grooming girls for the marriage market. Thus there was tension between continuing in feminine pursuits and meeting academic challenges. On the one hand parents and social expectations demanded refining accomplishments and on the other examinations demanded academic excellence. The virtues of Latin (good discipline for the mind and an invaluable foundation for the romance languages) were therefore stressed.

However, the diversity of the girls' curriculum, together with a shorter working day resulted in girls starting Latin later and devoting fewer lessons to it. So there were difficulties in attaining the same standard as boys. In addition to this rival subjects vied for the girls' time and attention; science was becoming increasingly popular and modern languages were particularly attractive, as was English. Thus Latin failed to achieve the supremacy seen in boys' public schools and Greek was a rarity. Competent teachers were hard to find at first and in some cases men were employed because there were not sufficient qualified women. As education became the norm for girls and more progressed with Latin this situation improved resulting in a body of teachers who had an enthusiastic and fresh approach. Not being bound by tradition they were more willing to experiment with new methods. Teaching tended to concentrate on reading and literature, rather than relying on the grammar rut in which many schoolmasters sat. There was also a fusion of disciplines as teachers exploited the links between classics and drama or elocution.

Although it never enjoyed the secure position of Latin in boys' schools Latin was gaining a foothold in girls schools.

At The Chalk Face

Having considered the fortunes of Latin in independent education this chapter turns to the reality of what went on in the classroom and the content of the curriculum.

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There was a realisation that the teaching of grammar helped foster the old fashioned image of Latin. Grammar tended to be taught almost as a science, working through the primer from beginning to end, teaching rare forms and irregularities as a matter of course. Knowledge of these was then tested in specific grammar papers. The existence of an entrenched pedestrian approach reflects a poor quality of teaching where teachers only felt safe going by the book. The futility of this approach brought about a drive to teach grammar with a logical progression and in context of literature. The same criticisms and solutions were applied to Greek. As a result of the general approach to grammar there was a tendency to use literature as a vehicle for the teaching of grammar. Progressing to authentic Latin was a problem due to a lack of suitable text books. Advances in technology meant that literature could be brought to life by the use of visual aids, although few took time to attempt to set texts in context. Composition had been of prime importance, but given the time it required together with a perceived lack of value it gradually became the preserve of scholars.

The Direct Method, teaching Latin as a spoken language, was a radical approach to teaching classics championed by WHD Rouse. It was enthusiastically embraced by some, but later modified as teachers realised that it was difficult to teach and not designed to prepare a candidate for examinations. Thus traditional elements of teaching crept back in to schools where they had been used in the early years.

Part Two: Early 1930's -1960

The Preparatory School

For the preparatory schools the 1930's were a decade of confusion and self-examination as the question of the tyranny of Latin was debated. Recommendations made regarding the approach to Latin had not been implemented and once again the delaying the start of Latin until the age of 11 or 12 and concentrating on English in the earlier years was advised. Such proposals were met with hostility from the school masters themselves.

An unwillingness to change was due in part to the stranglehold of Common Entrance and then university demands. It was clear that some boys gained little from struggling with Latin, but suggestions to give it optional status were met with a lukewarm response. The cause of this crisis of confidence was a complex series of by now familiar criticisms and problems. The curriculum was overcrowded, and this put pressure on teachers to cram their pupils in order to pass exams. This in turn led to reliance of outmoded and dull teaching methods and unwillingness to experiment. Such teaching methods suited the pedestrian teacher who felt safe working through the grammar. Despite the fact that the role of composition was becoming less significant it was seen as a hurdle affecting progress for many boys. Pleas for the use of good, attractive text books also suggests moribund teaching. The direct method was seen as flawed and not popular. By the end of the turbulent 30's the Common Entrance paper had been redesigned to cater for both the scholar and the average boy. The onset of war meant that curriculum issues were buried beneath more practical concerns. Latin continued to hold an important position within the curriculum and tried and tested teaching methods thrived.

Greek was restricted to the brightest boys towards the end of their preparatory school career. Latin had succeeded in surviving, in many ways unchanged. Recommendations made in 1959 - starting Latin at a later age, concentrating on translation rather than grammar and allowing the slowest boys to opt out - reflect the lack of response to previous discussions. The preparatory schools, due to uninterest, their introverted attitude and status within the system and the demands of the Common Entrance examination were intransigent, thus the extent of the change was minimal.

The Public School

Following the Hadow Report of 1926 Education became more diverse with a rise in vocational subjects. There was now a need to justify the teaching of Latin to the average candidate. The value of Latin and its use in the job market were highlighted by the Classical Association in a symposium entitled *The Classics and Education for the Professions* held in 1943 and the publication of pamphlets promoting the worth of Latin at regular intervals.

The publication of a new text book, *Latin For Today*, (1934), was an important step in attempts to modernise teaching methods and shake off the archaic image. Although some found basic flaws with this new book it was very popular as it provided a new approach that was still in harmony with the existing exams; the motivation that held public schools in its grasp as much as the Common Entrance examination had a hold over preparatory schools.

There was little opportunity and incentive to learn Greek. Public schools were unwilling to take on beginners and put the onus on preparatory schools to make a start. The number of preparatory schools who offered a serious Greek course had dwindled as had the number of boys taking up Greek. As with Latin the emphasis in teaching moved from grammar and composition to reading literature. The Classical Association produced pamphlets promoting the value of Greek in attempts at justification.

There were those who endeavoured to imbue the teaching of Latin with excitement and interest, but in general masters, many of whom were intimidating characters, persisted with the methods by which they had been taught, thus perpetuating the dull, fusty image of Latin. As soon as Oxford and Cambridge removed the requirement of an 'O' level in Latin for admittance to non-classical degrees in 1960 the popularity of Latin fell away.

Girls' Schools

Whilst boys continued to start Latin aged eight or nine it was more common for girls to start when they entered public school at the age of 12 or 13. As it became more acceptable for girls to hope for a career as opposed to homemaking, so the need to have Latin as a qualification became more pressing. Although Latin was usually compulsory for

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the first year or so, it tended to become optional and girls who didn't plan to continue to higher education were often attracted to Domestic Science rather than Latin.

The Latin option certainly was not an easy one. The relatively late start combined with fewer lessons resulted in cramming methods being employed in order to achieve the same standard as boys. The syllabus was exam-oriented and to achieve results the teaching tended to be pedestrian and safe. Thus whilst the quantity and quality of results grew in parity with those of boys, so the teaching of some took on the characteristics the school masters were being exhorted to change. However, classics continued to create a stimulus for drama, elocution and dancing, providing some girls with a taste of the classics that was a forerunner of the popular classical studies courses that were launched in the 1970's. The classical school mistress probably had a more lonely existence than her male counterpart as in many schools she would have been the only member of the department. In London a series of inter-school Classical Associations were created which provided important support and stimulus for teachers. Greek was rarely taught, as a result of which few girls were able to continue and become Greek teachers themselves. This lack of Greek teachers completed the vicious circle and led to few departments being able to offer Greek courses for girls.

Girls who took Latin were usually those destined for higher education. It was a specialist subject, which was not particularly popular, but due to university requirements, necessary for the serious academic.

At The Chalk Face

The syllabus was determined by the existing exams, which were tailored to the increasing few who were to continue Latin at a higher level. There were attempts to modify the exams so that they were more accessible to the average candidate, but these came to nothing. In 1939 and again in 1959 the Board of Education published guidelines on the teaching of classics, covering each aspect of the language.

As previous chapters have shown many still adopted a grammar-centred approach to teaching and there were renewed pleas that grammar be taught logically, tackling the basics first and side-stepping from irregularities. The publication of *Latin For Today* in 1934 offered a new approach, the word order method, which considered the sentence as

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a unit. This was important as it was the first significant departure from the traditional grammar-based approach to translation. Progressing from elementary Latin to authentic Latin was still a difficult step and opinion differed as to the best route. The most vehement discussions, however, resulted from the issue of set books in examinations. Opinion differed as to the value of set books, given that some could get away with poor Latin by learning them parrot fashion. The books and authors set were the subject of discussion. Composition was seen to play an increasingly subsidiary role and there was increasing pressure to teach it to the brightest boys only.

Given that Greek was being squeezed out of the timetable it was hoped that Greek could be taught in a short course, using existing knowledge of Latin as a starting block. There was no Greek equivalent to *Latin For Today* and many text books were old and tatty. The 1919/1920 collapse of compulsory Greek resulted in Greek becoming a minority subject, the numbers were too small to demand such an initiative and new books, containing Greek script, were expensive to print anyway. Thus Greek was fast becoming a specialised subject available to few.

The obvious way to enliven Latin was to teach it within the context of the country and people whose language it was. Background information should be an integral part of the course. Some teachers were adept at giving a rounded picture and using extra curricular activities to inspire, but for the vast majority this took up valuable time and as it was not related to the exams there was no room for it. School inspectors encouraged the use of spoken Latin, although the Direct Method was found to be an impractical option in leading schools where emphasis was on exam results.

Life at the chalk face was moulded by two main factors: The quality of teachers and the stranglehold of exams. The quality of the teachers was reflected in the quality of teaching: the more confident a classicist the more sure the teaching and the less likelihood of relying on ploughing through text books. The stranglehold of exams determined the content and in many respects the style of the teaching. Ability of pupils, departmental funding and the general philosophy of the school also contributed to progress and success.

The last chapter considers the position of Latin after it was no longer required as an entry qualification for Oxford and Cambridge in 1960. This decision acted as the

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stimulus for a variety of initiatives. Examinations were reformed, 'O' level being redesigned so that it was an end in itself and not purely a precursor to 'A' level. It was questioned whether composition still had a place in the exam. The Common Entrance examination also underwent a change in order to deflect the criticism that its prescriptive nature stifled the syllabus and teaching methods. Teachers themselves received support and consolidated their position. The publication of *Reappraisal* in 1962 addressed some of the problems met by teachers and in the same year The Joint Association of Classical Teachers was created from three existing associations.

The most significant development was that of the Cambridge School Classics Project which used an inductive rather than deductive approach to teaching. A new exam was created to meet the needs of the course. A classical civilisation course and 'O' level, requiring a lower standard of language were also developed, becoming more popular in state schools than independent schools.

Greek had continued to suffer from a dated image and inadequate provision of courses. In 1979 a new style course, *Reading Greek*, was produced with a view to teaching 'O' level Greek in two years.

Latin, whilst no longer compulsory, still remains an important subject at Common Entrance, particularly for boys entering the more prestigious public schools. Thus it retains a place within the preparatory school, despite the fact that it is not part of the National Curriculum. The necessity to take a Latin qualification at public school has gone and it vies for position with a host of other subjects. Although not as secure as it once was it does succeed in retaining a place.

Sources

Several distinct areas of source material have provided the basis for this study.

Organisations and Associations

When the warning lights for the future of classics first flashed in 1903 the Classical Association was established. The minutes and records of the Association, together with its official year book, *Proceedings*, provided an invaluable insight into the issues being discussed and attempts to meet the problem head on. The Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching was created in 1913, but it produced a narrower range of material. In 1962 the Joint Association of Classical Teachers grew out of the above two societies and the Orbilian Society (only open to grammar school teachers). *Didaskalos*, the annual publication of the newly formed association, was a useful source when putting the study in context of more recent developments.

Associations representing teachers gave an important insight into the problems at grass roots level and responses to solutions. Particularly enlightening were the archives of the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools and the Headmasters Conference as they were both specifically independent schools' associations.

Books and Periodicals

Some books, such as autobiographies, refer in passing to the teaching of classics, thus providing an important window through which we can view the past. Others were written with the aim of promoting particular teaching methods and approaches to classics. From this type of book we can see what the chief issues were and how different schools of thought battled to lay claim to the solutions. Periodicals and pamphlets provide specialised articles which likewise give a flavour of the battle scene. School histories often contributed little, but did provide important snapshots of teachers and lessons. Archives from schools themselves were examined, but given that they produced very little material the search was restricted to schools in my locality.

Official Documents

Government documents threw light on the general status quo and were useful in providing statistics and highlighting problem areas. The 1921 Prime Minister's committee report on classics is a particularly important document because it not only provides data, but also gives an overview of the position of classics at the time, whilst making specific references to independent education.

Statistics which helped to chart the decline of classics were created using data from the Oxford and Cambridge Examinations Board at Oxford.

Inspection reports of schools, held at the Public Records Office, provided useful data regarding the size of classics departments and distribution of subjects within the curriculum as well as revealing information about the calibre of teachers and quality of lessons.

Personal Reminiscences and Surveys

Personal experience and reminiscences provided an important source of information, yet one that had to be treated with care. As a result of a request for information published in the Classical Association News I was contacted by several who were willing to help. Those I spoke to or who wrote of their experiences were remembering a time long past, thus inaccuracies and distortions were bound to have crept in. The same margin of error existed for all, so creating a consistency of sorts. The same caveat has to be sounded in connection with the two questionnaire surveys. After receiving permission from the relevant Old Girls'/Boys' associations I sent a questionnaire to a sample of former pupils from Westonbirt and Sherborne following similar criteria. These surveys provided useful information about the status of Latin. Possibly even more valuable were the comments and letters written by some respondents, which provided a first hand witness of classics from the pupil's point of view. In order to encourage respondents to write freely I promised confidentiality, thus the text gives the school and the years they attended, but names are not mentioned. Detailed findings of the surveys can be found in appendices I and II on pages 375 and 396.

The variety of sources has led to an in-depth study that relies not only on official records and data, but includes the personal touch, the latter an important source that,

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without recording, would soon be lost for ever. From the scholar to the dunce, from the traditional schoolmaster to the headmistress organizing her curriculum, the quality and quantity of a classical education were important, often having a great bearing on personal careers. It is now time to explore just how the supreme position of classics in independent education became eroded, but not entirely lost amid changes that have altered the face of education beyond recognition.

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Parents and friends for their support.

Setting The Scene

*I have worked harder than ever this week : I have translated 120 Latin Hexameters, 50 lines of Latin essay, 19 Latin stanzas, 30 lines out of Juvenal and learnt by heart 120 lines of Latin prose as well.*¹

'It isn't only about today being rainy that I mind' the elder little sister went on, 'It's all our life ! I do think it is dull. One day after another much the same. Breakfast, dinner and tea - history, geography, French, writing sums; going to bed and getting up, and then all beginning just the same.'

*'There's dancing twice a week' said Viva, rather timidly ...'and there's holidays sometimes.*²

*A woman so educated [at university] would, we are assured, make a very poor wife or mother. Much learning would make her mad, and would wholly unfit her for those quiet domestic offices for which providence intended her. She would lose the gentleness, the grace and the sweet vivacity which are now her chief adornment and would become cold, calculating, masculine, fast, strong minded, and in a word, generally unpleasing*³

Looking back from the end of the twentieth century to its beginning, from a time when men and women are considered equal physically, mentally and spiritually to a time when they occupied different spheres of existence, we must peer yet further into the past if we are fully to appreciate the developments in classical education and the social changes in which they are embedded.

Throughout the twentieth century the class structure, whilst continuing to exist has become rather blurred and indistinct. In the nineteenth century, particularly the earlier years it was more defined, education being one characteristic that set the classes apart. Sons of the upper or upper middle classes were sent away to preparatory school at the age of eight and thence to public school. These fee paying establishments themselves fell into categories, depending on cost and academic standards, thus creating an informal league table. The educational emphasis lay almost

¹ Charles Wordsworth writing to his brother from Eton in 1824. Quoted in A. B. Badger *The Public School and the Nation* 1944, pg 65.

² Sisters discussing the dreary routine at home compared to their brother who looks forward to going away to school. Molesworth *Greyling Towers* 1898, pg. 3.

³ Emily Davies written in 1863, *Questions Relating to Women* 1910, pg.48.

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entirely on the classics, as boys were trained to continue to the next stage of their academic career; reading Greats at Oxford or the Classical Tripos at Cambridge.

Let it be said at once that Shrewsbury's claim to outstanding scholarship has always been confined to one subject only, the classics. In that the school's success, judged by university examination results has been staggering.⁴

The proportion of time spent on classics was of concern to some, particularly as the less able were sentenced to a life of misery and many teachers did little to accommodate their needs:

I wish the best years of his life were not spent in forgetting French, making bad Latin verses and acquiring nothing that will fit him to be a prominent or useful member of society. I have long been of the opinion that our public schools do not keep pace with the requirements of the age; indeed they seem to ignore or be indifferent to them; and altho' of late years some reformation has been forced on them by public opinion, yet it is always unwillingly adopted by the masters who seem to be as much attached to routine as they are to dead languages.⁵

The quantity of teaching was not always reflected in the quality of results. A major emphasis was on the ability to turn out prodigious quantities of Latin verse. Translation and original authors received scanty attention:

...they are in the habit of reading Latin and Greek books without understanding their meaning. And if this were not enough....no attention is given to the nicety of translation.⁶

The boys were expected to learn several hundred lines of Greek and Latin each week, although, because they were always asked to recite in the same order, they could alleviate this burden by only preparing a few lines.⁷ Grammar was poorly comprehended, partly due to the shortcoming of the primers in use. Eton used the Eton Grammar which was criticised for being particularly obtruse and the Clarendon Commission instigated the creation of standard grammars which B. Kennedy undertook in 1863. The subsequent publication led to indignant response and criticism from teachers and tutors.⁸

⁴ J.B. Oldham. *A History of Shrewsbury School 1552 - 1952* 1952, pg.192.

⁵ Letter from Clarendon to Sir George Lewis about his son, 1859, quoted in Maxwell *Fourth Earl of Clarendon* pg.196 in Shrobbree *Public Schools and Private Education* pg.83.

⁶ W.P. Atkinson quoting Walford, Clarendon Commission. *Classical and Scientific Studies and the Great Schools of England* 1865 pg.46.

⁷ *ibid.* pg.47.

⁸ The publication of the new grammar and the ensuing correspondence is explored in C. Stray *Grinders and Grammars* 1995.

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This mediocre standard had two causes, one the boys and the other the staff. All boys were expected to succeed on the same diet although it was plainly obvious that many did not have the ability to cope with the classics. The staff were often the product of the school at which they had taught, maintaining a self-perpetuating circle that allowed no room for fresh blood. At Eton sixteen out of twenty one classical masters came from the sister foundation, Kings College, Cambridge:

Having themselves learnt at Eton and Cambridge nothing but Latin and Greek, they could teach nothing else; and they consequently despised and decried all other branches of learning. In due course of time, other collegers, as carelessly educated by such teachers, became in their turn assistant masters at Eton themselves, whilst their immediate predecessors undertook, as provost and fellows, the government of the college; and thus the vicious circle has been perpetuated from age to age.⁹

The masters were a strong force in the maintaining of their existence, comfortable in their sheer power and number. During the nineteenth century the insistent clamour of voices claiming a greater proportion of the curriculum that is heard in the early years of the twentieth century was less threatening to the status quo. After all, boys were being prepared for university entrance and that entailed classical training, so there was no point in entertaining the thought that perhaps the curriculum was too heavily weighted towards the classics. From the very beginning of this study we see that entrance examinations and the continuous loop of staff ensured security for the subject and those who taught it. Other elements of the curriculum were the poor relations. Physical science was not taught at all at Eton, there being no apparatus suitable for experiments. One must remember that the exploration of science was relatively limited and society had little comprehension of the exponential curve in knowledge that would transform the lives of their descendants. The weight of importance it was to carry was as yet unknown:

...even at Rugby, it holds a very inferior place, counting little or nothing in the scale by which rank is determined and therefore not really looked upon as a part of the serious work of the school.¹⁰

Modern languages received decidedly patchy and always inferior treatment:

Here then we find the study of modern languages ranging through different degrees of imperfection; from absolute and almost ludicrous failure at Eton, up to something like a proper estimation at Rugby, but everywhere subordinate and everywhere with

⁹ article in the *Edinburgh Review* Vol.113 April 13 pg.417 1861 Quoted in W.P. Atkinson *Classical and Scientific Studies and the Great Schools of England* 1865

¹⁰ *ibid.* pg.17.

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imperfect results; and one headmaster declaring that, if he could have his way they should not be studied at all.¹¹

Drawing and Music were taken by very few, only being offered as extras at Harrow and not at all at Winchester.¹² Given this unbalanced curriculum it was not surprising that the Clarendon Commission found that twenty four out of the thirty five masters at Eton were classical, eight taught mathematics and only three taught all the modern languages, physical science, natural history, English, drawing and music.¹³ This superiority in numbers naturally led to a superiority in status and vice versa. Masters who did not teach the classics wore different clothes from those who did and had less power over the boys, thus 'in every way the boys are taught to look down upon the study of mathematics as of quite inferior importance. It is no great wonder, therefore, that the results are reported as far from satisfactory.'¹⁴ Once at school one's ability at Latin was a deciding factor in determining kudos and ranking. Christine Heward in her case study of St. Oswald's College some 70 years later notes that social class, age and Latin marks were the three elements that determined rank, if boys were of the same age, the Latin mark as the deciding factor.¹⁵

A classical education not only embodied the very essence of learning, but was an important part of the rite of passage for a boy. He was taught by those who had experienced a similar training and would enter an adult world where familiarity with the classics was a common bond. As Shrosbree points out, classical education was an essential criterion for the English gentleman:

A knowledge of the classics was an ideal qualification for elite membership because it was virtually impossible to obtain this knowledge outside an institution dominated by elite members and elitist ideas. A good classical education took a long time to acquire and was available, in general, only to members of the leisured class that had risen above the necessity of work....What a good classical education did was to confer or confirm the status of a man as an English gentleman.¹⁶

Atkinson suggested that the real studies of the curriculum were 'first and foremost cricket; second and hardly less important, rowing; and as subordinate elementary

11 *ibid.* pg.20.

12 *ibid.* pg.22.

13 *ibid.* pg.23.

14 *ibid.* pg.35.

15 C. Heward. *Parents, Sons and Their Careers : A Case Study of a Public School 1930 - 1950* in G. Walford Ed. *British Public Schools : Policy and Practice* 1984, pg.139.

16 C. Shrosbree. *Public Schools and Private Education* 1988, pg.59.

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studies, racket, hare and hounds.¹⁷ For those who paid for education, it was not about educating the mind, but about progression:

The real advantage derived from Eton...is less intellectual than social education. Eton is expected to make a boy a gentleman, and this expectation it fulfils. It may be added that many boys are sent to Eton, not to learn, but to form connections.¹⁸

The nine great schools¹⁹, investigated by Lord Clarendon, were classical in their very essence, however, there were those that were less traditional. When the Godolphin School for Boys opened on a new site in 1862 the following prologue hinted at a more avant-garde approach:

But where's the use of making others hammer,
Week after week at Greek and Latin Grammar?

You laugh at classics, Sir, but I maintain,
There's nothing like them to improve the brain,
To give a youth refinement and to teach,
Closeness of thought and accuracy of speech.
However, as I am told, you need not fear,
That other things will be neglected here-
The object being to do the best they can,
To teach the boy what's useful to man.²⁰

A master reporting to the Clarendon Commission from Marlborough emphasised how successful their modern side was, making real progress with boys who were 'rapidly sinking into a state of hopelessness or reckless duncedom.' in the classical side.²¹ The problem was that only certain schools had the right cachet if one was to progress in society and those schools were the ones that offered a traditionally classical curriculum.

So from the age of eight boys were educated away from the home and received a predominately classical diet. What of their sisters? Girls of families in the same

¹⁷ W.P. Atkinson *Classical and Scientific Studies and the Great Schools of England* 1865 pg.50.

¹⁸ Sandford, Senior censor of Christ Church quoted in Atkinson *Classical and Scientific Studies and the Great Schools of England* 1865 pg.51.

¹⁹ Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylor's, Harrow, Rugby and Shrewsbury.

²⁰ *The Godolphin and Latymer School 1905-1955* Published by the school in Hammersmith 1955.

²¹ Bright quoted in W.P. Atkinson *Classical and Scientific Studies and the Great Schools of England* 1865 pg.72.

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social classes experienced a very different childhood. They were not considered to have an intellect similar to that of men and if they did have inclinations towards academic study they were warned against the dangers of making this public:

..be ever cautious in displaying your good sense. It will be thought you assume a superiority over the rest of the company. But if you happen to have any learning, keep it a secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts and a cultural understanding.²²

A century later, when education for women was beginning to develop, the same sentiments were being voiced:

Borrow came and I said something about the imperfect education of women, and he said it was *right* they should be ignorant, and that no man could endure a clever wife.²³

Girls were to be groomed for marriage, homemaking and motherhood and it was a parent's duty to see that this was so:

My Father's slogan was that boys should go everywhere and know everything, and that a girl should stay at home and know nothing.²⁴

To be educated or have academic leanings was a distinct disadvantage in fulfilling the role of a lady. Education was considered by some to be detrimental to the health of a woman:

I believe that to compel girls to attempt both mathematics and classics even to the moderate amount required.....would be seriously injurious to their minds.²⁵

She is at every spare moment busy with Latin and Greek and I can not think that to keep pace with a boy of Norman's age and ability can be desirable for her...She may not feel any ill effects at present, but you may depend upon it, it will tell on her by and by...I consider needlework far more important than accomplishments.²⁶

An educated woman was thought to be less attractive to men, lacking in the qualities appropriate to her class and thus less desirable on the marriage market. Mark Pattison in his report to the Schools' Inquiry Commission saw this a result of an inferior calibre of man and his need to maintain his accustomed superior position in the family:

22 Dr. Gregory *A Father's Legacy to His Daughter* 1774, quoted in F. C.Pritchard *Methodist Secondary Education. A History of the Contribution of Methodism to Secondary Education in the United Kingdom.* 1949, pg.270.

23 F.P. Cobbe *Life of Frances Power Cobbe* 1904, pg.120.

24 M.V. Hughes *A London Family 1870 - 1900* O.U.P 1946, pg.33.

25 T. Markby quoted in J. Kamm *Hope Deferred* 1965, pg255.

26 C.M. Yonge *The Daisy Chain* 1856 (1988) pg. 177.

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An average man of the middle classes prefers a woman who is less educated to one who is more. The preference of men for a less cultivated woman arises from his own want of culture. Culture has not kept pace with wealth.²⁷

Those girls who did betray academic leanings were almost considered to be handicapped.

...a scholar - but that can't be helped and is more her misfortune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar...²⁸

Ethel, one of a large family in Charlotte Yonge's novel *The Daisy Chain*, followed her brother's lessons and tried hard to keep up with him, she pursued her studies in secret, hiding her Greek New Testament within an English version. She was an able pupil, but eventually had to yield to pressure that because she would never be able to reach the goals available to him she would be better pursuing more womanly duties.²⁹ Parents feared that education and becoming a lady were mutually exclusive, Miss Young's³⁰ mother voiced these fears by telling her " I wish you would not become a schools mistress, but if you insist upon doing so I hope you will continue to be a lady."³¹ Some parents took rather more action than issuing a warning:

The Headmistress of a good and fashionable school told me that she had just received notice for one of her most intelligent pupils, a girl not yet 17, because she was too much interested in her lessons, and showed signs of 'getting blue'³², another girl was pointed out to me in the same school as being most anxious to proceed to Newnham, but this was not to be allowed because it would certainly lead to blueness....both mothers had explained 'that young men nowadays do not seem to like girls to be blue.' Another mother, congratulated on a daughter with considerable mathematical ability, said 'Yes, tiresome child.' A good many headmistresses complained that fashionable mothers were afraid lest their daughters should become 'blue', and that Latin and Maths were considered to have special dangers in this relation.³³

Girls had no need of qualifications or university degrees which were thought to hinder their social development. In a private school in Manchester one teacher was keen to

27 Quoted in M. Tylecote *The Education of Women at Manchester University 1883 - 1933* 1941, pg.2.

28 Description of cousin Phillis in E.C. Gaskell *Cousin Phillis* 1963, pg.200.

29 C.M. Yonge *The Daisy Chain* pg.181.

30 Headmistress at Edgebaston High School early 20th century.

31 J. Whitcut *Edgebaston High School 1876 - 1976* Published by the governing body 1976, pg.78.

32 This refers to a fear of women becoming 'blue-stockings', a term applied to studious women after a Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet who was renowned for wearing blue stockings. He was a prominent member of a society of learned men and women founded by Mrs. Montagu in c.1750. Thus the term suggests a certain eccentricity and masculinity.

33 Bryce Commission *Royal Commission on Secondary Education* Vol. 6, 1894, pg.694.

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teach Latin in order to give a better foundation in English, but 'every possible objection is raised against that, the parents would have time spent upon fancy work.'³⁴

So girls were receiving some education, but the intensity, length and content of it was the nub of the matter. In the Taunton Report of 1868 R.J. Bryce advised that:

I would educate boys and girls precisely on the same plan, I speak of the upper and middle classes, up to a point at which the boys would part off for their professional studies, and at that point the girls should part off for the studies which are to fit them for their profession, which is to be wives and mothers.³⁵

However, there was a growing body of rebellion against this truncated education and against the notion that the classics were only suitable for boys.

Latin For A Girl?

Now that sister of yours, if I don't rescue her, is destined to the dreadful career of stopping at home and helping mother - dusting the drawing room, arranging the flowers and other horrors.... Why did the Lord create Messrs Huntley and Palmer to make cakes for us, if not to give our clever girls a chance to do something better.³⁶

It is as absurd to try to keep a woman feminine in mind by making her learn French because a man learns Latin, as it would be to try to keep her so in person by making her eat mutton because a man eats beef.³⁷

Education for a girl was one thing, but Latin, the very embodiment of a boy's education? Maggie, the heroine of George Eliot's *Mill On The Floss* was fascinated by her brother's Latin books in spite of being told that 'Girls never learn such things, they are too silly.'³⁸ Boys were thought to achieve different aims studying Latin from girls who studied a language which they hoped to be able to speak.

When a boy learns Latin or Greek, it is not as so much fact, nor with a view to make use of its words and phrases, but solely that by it his attention may be drawn to words as instruments of thought and to those general laws or principles which underlie all technical grammar. The language is learned not as an end in itself, but as a means towards a higher end...classical study bequeaths to the student a legacy in the form of

³⁴ *Taunton Report* 5, 16, pg.219.

³⁵ *Taunton Report* 5 pg.869.

³⁶ M.V. Hughes *A London Family* pg.225.

³⁷ F.P. Cobbe *Female Education and how it would be Affected by University Examinations* A paper read at The Social Science Congress, London 1862 pg.10.

³⁸ G. Eliot *The Mill on the Floss* First published 1860 1991 Edition, pg.135.

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the increased power over words, a truer sense of their meaning and significance and greater exactness in expression and therefore in thought.

Now to all this there is nothing analogous to the training which girls generally receive. If they learn a language it is as an 'accomplishment', as something to be spoken, not as a thing to be understood.³⁹

Besides which, not only was Latin not an accomplishment, it was also wholly unsuitable for the young female mind. As Joan Burstyn writes 'Women might be enough like men to succumb to the temptations described in the literature they read. Greek and Latin literature would introduce women to a knowledge of sexual licentiousness and thereby ruin their purity.'⁴⁰

However, an interest in the suitability of Latin did exist and its benefits for girls were noted as being positive:

With regard to Classics, Greek is so little taught that it need not be noticed, nor is it likely that it will ever be recommended as an ordinary part of female education. But there is much interesting evidence as to the suitability to girls of learning Latin in its elements, as a means of mental culture and strengthening of the intellect, and of mastery of grammar and language; of its successful introduction by the right methods; and of perceptible ill effects of its absence.⁴¹

Greek was dismissed as being found so rarely in connection with the education of girls that it was not worth discussing. However, there were those who, passionate about the value of a good Latin education for boys, could see no reason why the subject was not equally suited to girls. D'Arcy Thompson had a rather avant garde view of teaching classics and felt that with an adaptation of attitude and technique Latin would be both palatable and suitable for girls.

Are there genders in educational systems, like as in Latin or French nouns? Is there anything in the Latin grammar particularly male?.....Heaven forbid that our girls should be taught Latin with the grammars now in use....I would undertake to teach Latin to a class of girls twelve years of age, without the use of pedantic and expensive books, or of pedantic and meaningless grammar rules. My pronunciation would be Italian, as nearly Tuscan as I could make it. I would never forget that I was teaching children, not to be school mistresses, but gentle ladies in a drawing room and gentler mothers in a nursery.⁴²

³⁹ J.G. Fitch in *Victoria Magazine* Vol.2, March 1864, pg.434.

⁴⁰ J.V. Burstyn *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* Croom Helm 1980, pg.45.

⁴¹ D.Beale *Reports Issued by the Schools Inquiry Commission in the Education of Girls* David Nutt, 1869, pg.4.

⁴² D'Arcy W. Thompson *Day Dreams of a School Master* nd Harrap & Co. pg.124f.

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Some schools offered Latin because their pupils took up the traditional and safe posts of governesses and so were required to teach it to small boys.⁴³ Schools wanted to attract pupils and so had to present a curriculum that was worthy in the eyes of society. Although some, such as North London Collegiate School, embraced the classics wholeheartedly, others and probably the majority of smaller schools began to offer Latin as an option, thus hoping to attract the new academics whilst not deterring those who desired a more 'traditional' education for their daughters. The curriculum at Berkhamsted School in its first year, 1887, was presented as follows:

Religious instruction in accordance with the principles of the Christian faith shall be given in the school under such regulations as shall be made from time to time by the governors of the school.

Instruction shall also be given in the following subjects -

Reading, Writing and Arithmetic,

History,

English Grammar and Composition

Geography, Political and Physical

Some Modern and Foreign European Language, as the governors of the school may direct

Some one branch of Natural Science

Elements of Geometry

Domestic Economy and the Laws of Health

Needlework

Drawing, Drill and Vocal Music

Latin and a second Modern Foreign European Language or either of them, may be taught at an additional fee of no less than £3.00 a year for each girl.⁴⁴

Here the range of subjects is broad, but Latin is not part of the staple diet. Possibly the extra fee is to cover the cost of employing a part time tutor to teach Latin as there were no female members of staff qualified to do so; a problem encountered in many early girl's schools as we shall see later.

Education At Home

Whilst boys received a fairly uniform and standard education girls' experiences differed considerably. Many girls were educated at home, thus the content and quality of their lessons depended on the calibre of the governess and whether they shared lessons with their brothers. For those who expected a serious and full curriculum to be taught there could be problems in finding a suitably qualified teacher:

⁴³ This was the case at the Chantry School, Frome. Taunton Report, 5, 15, pg.715.

⁴⁴ *Berkhamsted School for Girls 1888 - 1938* Published by the school in 1938, pg.52.

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The real difficulties in education arose for us when Latin and Mathematics were required. Resident governesses were difficult to get and few were either well educated or in any sense cultivated.⁴⁵

Before the blossoming of education for girls governesses' skills tended to be rather limited, but there were occasions when a competent governess gave lessons to all the children and girls were drawn into classics because of their brothers. Gwen Raverat recalls how her brother taught her the Greek alphabet backwards and how 'we objected very strongly to being reft away from proper lessons, such as sums or Latin grammar, to make weak and waggly baskets, which nobody wanted.'⁴⁶ One would suspect that sibling rivalry added a spur to this academic enthusiasm. This exposure to Latin was to 'scandalise' some French children who were visiting as they thought it 'most unfeminine and really indecent'.⁴⁷

For some their parents were the source of education and they taught them what they knew; classics. In 1885 Cecily Steadman began Latin and Greek aged about ten under her father's tuition because the governess had left. He would set the children, two girls and a boy, a large block of work to do before he left for work. The children spent between two and three hours tackling this and a similar amount of time practising music. On his return from work their father would test what had been completed and set some more. Thus when Cecily sat the Cheltenham entrance exam in 1889 she was unable to do the French paper and asked for the Greek one instead.⁴⁸ Dorothy Sayers was another who received a classical education at the hands of her father.

I was rising seven [1899] when he appeared one morning in the nursery, holding in his hand a shabby, black book, which had already seen some service, and addressed to me the following memorable words: 'I think, my dear, that you are now old enough to begin to learn Latin'....In the absence of little boys [my father] seized upon such infant material as was at hand, and went to work...I was by no means unwilling because it seemed to me that it would be very fine thing to learn Latin, and would place me in a position of superiority to my mother, my aunt and my nurse.⁴⁹

One would suspect that the text book dated from her father's own school days. It is interesting to note that although only six she was aware that Latin was not a common bond shared by the female members of the household and lessons would thus confer on her some special quality. Mary Hughes was probably most unusual in that her mother,

⁴⁵ L.M. Faithfull *In the House of my Pilgrimage* Chatto & Windus, 1925, pg.39.

⁴⁶ G. Raverat *Period Piece* 1952, pg.41.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* pg.48.

⁴⁸ F.C. Steadman *In the Days of Miss Beale* 1931, pgs.27ff.

⁴⁹ D.L.Sayers *Ignorance and Dissatisfaction* in *Latin Teaching* October 1952, pg.70.

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who had done Latin at a finishing school in Bath in the eighteen thirties, started to teach her Latin 'at a very tender age. I can remember dancing round a small table chanting " 'mo, 'mas, 'mat, 'mamus, 'matis, 'mant." '50 These simple beginnings were obviously taken a good deal further as when she went to the North London Collegiate School she found that she was the only girl to have done any Latin, having already read 'a good deal of Caesar, two or three books of the Aeneid and some Livy.' The headmistress, Miss Buss, called for her and asked her which school had taught her this. On hearing it was as a result of home tuition she asked how long she had been learning; 'I can't remember. Mother began me when I was six and I have been doing it on and off ever since, chiefly with my brother...Not much at school.'⁵¹ It may well be that after the first stages Mary shared a tutor with her brother. As a result of this initial training she was promoted to the next form at North London Collegiate School.

Girls who were taught or encouraged to be academics by their parents were rare and for many their education was a by product of a governess's attempts to prepare their brothers for school or a tutor's efforts to keep them on track during the holidays. For those who were interested the outcome could be a sorry one. Cynthia Asquith had private and secret Greek lessons, which were not long enough to know any Greek, but enough 'to be branded with having wanted to learn Greek.'⁵² In the eyes of the world there was something faintly improper about a girl wanting to be an academic.

And So To School

As pressure increased to allow women to enter the universities, schools preparing girls for this were founded. The schools had no tradition of teaching or curriculum either to guide or restrain them. There were those who felt that schools should embody the skills and ethos of finishing schools in turning out young ladies who were ready to hold their own in society and those who felt that the emphasis should be more on academic lines. Cheltenham Ladies' College was the first boarding school for girls that followed the pattern set by boys public schools and the North London Collegiate School was the first truly academic day school. Soon other schools with a view to preparing girls for university were established. In 1872 the day schools formed a union, the Girls Public Day School Company (later to become Trust). Thus differentiation between the

⁵⁰ M.V. Hughes *A London Family* pg.44.

⁵¹ *ibid.* pg. 196.

⁵² B.B.C. broadcast, 30. 6. 66.

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schools became more clearly marked. The standard varied considerably, depending from which social class the clientele came, whether it was a day or boarding school and whether it was a member of the Girls Public Day School Company or a small private school. In 1868 the Taunton Commission recommended that there should be three grades of school: The first grade would be up to 18 or 19 with Latin and Greek being taught, the second grade would be up to 16 or 17 with Latin as an important subject and two modern languages being taught and the third grade would be up to 14 or 15 with the basics of French and Latin taught.

Perhaps the greatest pioneers in this field were Miss Beale who nurtured Cheltenham Ladies' College, founded 1853, from 1858 and Miss Buss who opened the North London Collegiate School in 1850. Miss Beale was keen that the curriculum should not become staightjacketed or crowded.

I should like to introduce Latin too, but I think it is a great evil to try to teach too many things....We teach Greek in a few instances; but no one has a right to demand it. It is only given to those whom I know to be industrious and who have time for it and who are no longer taking all the subjects of the first class.....I should be sorry to see them take up Classics at all exclusively, because I do not think as regards education it has been most desirable to limit it thus.⁵³

In his contribution to her book *Work and Play in Girls Schools* W.H.D. Rouse, who taught her sixth form class at Cheltenham Ladies' College⁵⁴, reinforces the view point that Latin can not make great progress in girls schools due to other pressures.

It were idle to expect that Classics can be studied with the same thoroughness in Girls' schools as in boys. Girls' schools have grown up with other traditions; music and drawing and modern languages have so long been the staple diet of a girl's education, that it is perhaps too late now to make any radical change. Nor is it clear that even if possible, it would be well to substitute classics for these subjects. If the object of girls education be, as many think, not so much to turn out finished scholars as to give an intelligent and sympathetic interest in life, this can be better achieved by grafting classics upon the existing curriculum, than by ousting other studies for the sake of these.⁵⁵

Miss Buss included Latin in her curriculum from the first 'to the exclusion of all instrumental music'. Some benefited from inspired teachers; 'There was a wealth of intellectual interest and an atmosphere, a steady endeavour, which drew the best from

⁵³ Taunton Report *Report of Royal Commission on Endowed Schools* Vol.5, 1868 pg. 734.

⁵⁴ Note that D. Beale had to employ a man to write the chapter on Latin in her book. He also worked at her school, filling a gap caused by the lack of women who were sufficiently qualified to teach classics

⁵⁵ W.H.D. Rouse in D. Beale Ed. *Work and Play in Girls' Schools* 1898, pg. 67.

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each of us.⁵⁶ Miss Buss herself felt that the girls were unable to enjoy Latin authors because insufficient attention had been paid to the subject.⁵⁷ When the school was inspected in 1876 the report reflected her fears:

A comparison of the classical and mathematical attainments of the upper classes of this school with boys of a like age would be somewhat to a disadvantage to the girls, although the girls would be found superior to the boys in many of the essentials of general culture.⁵⁸

Schools that did offer Latin did not always achieve encouraging results. An inspection report on the fifth and sixth forms at Norwich High school in 1901 noted that:

' there was only one satisfactory version [of a Latin to English translation] and ten absolute failures.... Thus a girl positively translates 'si forte Romani subire collem conarentur' ' they knew the anger of the Romans was so strong', another 'So much did they dread to be under the yoke of the Romans.' Most of the girls seem to have no vocabulary at all.⁵⁹

Some were encouraged by the inclusion of Latin in the curriculum: in 1892 Fletcher noted that 'Latin, at any rate, is becoming an important item in the education of girls.'⁶⁰ However, others were not quite so positive:

I have had a good deal of local examination work lately and have been struck by the lamentable neglect of Latin by girls. Out of 19 candidates only 5 take it. The rest scatter themselves over German, Zoology, Botany and other trumpery.⁶¹

So, whilst girls were beginning to sit exams, Latin was not a popular option and only a necessity for a small minority. Higher education for girls was still relatively new and girls who had their sights set on university were the exception to the rule.

Girls were at a distinct disadvantage in achieving high standards because, even if they attended a school where Latin was taught, they often made an extremely late start in the subject compared to the early prep school start made by boys:

⁵⁶ E.M. Odell, left N.L.C.S. in 1897. Quoted in R.M. Scrimgeour *North London Collegiate School 1850 - 1950* 1950, pg.69.

⁵⁷ Taunton Report *Royal Commission on Endowed Schools* 1868, Vol. 5, pg.256.

⁵⁸ R.M. Scrimgeour *The North London Collegiate School 1850 - 1950* 1950, pg.213.

⁵⁹ *Norwich High School 1875 - 1950* preface by P.R. Bodington 1950, pg.35.

⁶⁰ A.E. Fletcher *Cyclopaedia of Education* 1892, pg.61.

⁶¹ Emily Davies quoted in B. Stephen *Emily Davies and Girton College* 1927, pg.307.

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I should very much regret to see Latin forced on all girls, and Maths too, before they are ready for them. I think the abstractions of grammar presented to a young girl's mind in teaching classical Latin are unintelligible.⁶²

Rouse felt that thirteen or fourteen was early enough to begin; the girls would then make good progress because their minds were already trained.⁶³ Others held the opinion that the younger the child, the better chance there was of laying sound foundations.

Apart from the training in accuracy which the study of foreign or dead language affords and which can hardly be begun at too early an age, there is an immense saving in respect of mental fatigue, if the memory work, necessarily involved in learning grammatical rules and inflections, is mastered when children are young and the memory is fresh and vigorous, instead of being deferred to a later age when such learning is felt to be a drudgery.⁶⁴

It is interesting to note that the suggested scheme of work concentrated on grammar and composition, with no mention being made of tackling original authors. W.H.D. Rouse thought that girls tended to be 'shaky in grammar' so advocated the thorough learning of it. He advised several books for the classroom, grammars and composition books, his list taking a page and a half of Beale's book *Work And Play In Girls Schools*, but his suggestions for readers are few and only cover a quarter of a page. No mention at all is made of tackling original material, even in a simplified form.⁶⁵ This reflects the content of the syllabus met in boys' schools: Rouse was referring to what was familiar to him.

Coeducation at home was fairly common, but at schools the sexes were segregated. However, a few coeducational establishments did exist and here the sexes received the same academic diet. At Lady Barn House, a day preparatory school near Manchester, Latin was taught together with German because they were 'the constituents of our own tongue.' It was treated as 'a lively and living language.'⁶⁶ The passage below reveals an inspired and rather avant-garde approach to the subject by Caroline Herford who took over from her father as head in 1886 and herself retired in 1907.

⁶² D. Beale in Bryce Commission *Royal Commission on Secondary Education* 1895 Vol.3, 1894 pg.160.

⁶³ W.H.D. Rouse in Beale *Work and Play in Girls' Schools* 1901, pg.69.

⁶⁴ C.L.Kennedy Bryce Commission *Royal Commission on Secondary Education* 1894 Vol.7, 1894 pg.317.

⁶⁵ W.J.D. Rouse in Beale *Work and Play in Girl's Schools* 1901, pg.91.

⁶⁶ W.C.R. Hicks *Lady Barn House and the Work of W.H. Herford.* 1936, pg.32.

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...the ten year olds were given to me to introduce to the Romans and their language. The oral method was used and this led to a suggestion from the headmistress that the Latin class should act a Latin play at the next Open Afternoon....What a delight to mouth the sonorous vowels and the hard c's from the hall platform and [be]clad in toga perhaps, or wearing a horn - tailed helmet. But where to find the play within the ability of such young scholars! Clearly there was none in existence so one had to be made. It turned out to be a knockabout affair making less demand on the actors knowledge of Latin than on their muscular agility.....They once did the episode of the geese saving the Capitol. The part of the geese required no Latin, but only an Italic hissing....It was a memorable year when, having some unusually gifted scholars in the class, we aspired to dramatise a passage from the Aeneid, Book II.⁶⁷

So girls were exposed to a variety of attitudes regarding the timing and viability of a traditional education. The increasingly acceptable goal for the few able ones was a university education.

The teaching of Latin given to girls is often very poor. It does not seem to be realised, either by parents or Headmistresses, that some knowledge of Latin is desirable for any girl who is coming up to the university, whether she intends to take up classical study or not....[Maths] is taught much more generally throughout the schools than Latin is - much more time seems to be devoted to it. No doubt this is due largely to the requirements in this subject of Cambridge and London and to the number of teachers sent out from each place. It is to be hoped that the language requirements of Oxford may in time tell in the same way.⁶⁸

Here we see evidence that girls' schools were not yet caught up in the whirlpool that forced pupils to take subjects that were the key to the next stage by way of entrance examinations. This perceived failure was still causing problems thirty years later (see chapter 4 page 135). Emily Davies faced tremendous opposition in her fight for the admission of women to universities: not least from those who claimed that women would not cope and were not sufficiently prepared to take the preliminary exams.⁶⁹ Some of the women themselves felt that they were inferior and not up to the challenge of classics at university:

Miss Lumsdon, the tutor [at Girton], a very dear creature and very kind to me, is trying to persuade me to read for the Classical Tripos, which takes a *man* two and a half years hard reading. I told her that even premising that I had sufficient mental capacity for it, I was sure my physical strength was not equal to such Herculean labour.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *ibid.* pg.42.

⁶⁸ A.C. Maitland, Principal of Somerville in Bryce Commission *Royal Commission on Secondary Education* Vol.5, 1895 pg.193.

⁶⁹ M.A. Hamilton *Newnham, An Informal Biography* 1936, pg.79.

⁷⁰ R. Crawford *Victorian Red Brick Early Days at Girton* T.E.S. 29.1.1960 pg.170.

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The problem many faced was that there was an insufficient basis of experienced female teachers to provide a consistent grounding. The pioneers were extremely able women who were finding their own way. Until education became more uniform there was a cyclical situation of poor teachers providing poor teaching which thus created more poor teachers, or even a lack of classically trained women all together.

Teachers: Chicken or Egg?

Although school mistresses were 'fresh, enthusiastic and comparatively untrammelled in contrast to the school masters who were "weighed down by tradition, cast like iron into the rigid mould of the past,"⁷¹ such inexperience could result in substandard teaching. Mary Hughes was sent to a private school in Highbury when she was eleven and here the teacher pronounced 'miles' as if it were a measure of length. In poetry lessons she pronounced Horatius Cocles as a shellfish.⁷² Two colleges had been established, Queens in 1848 and Bedford in 1849 to train teachers and governesses. These were the first attempts to provide further education for women. However, progress was slow and the first woman's university college was not available until the opening of Girton in 1869. Thus the Taunton report found that the heads of boarding schools 'have rarely, and their assistant teachers almost never, any acquaintance with Latin, still less with Mathematics or Natural Science'⁷³ In 1879 the report of the Education Conference of the Society of Friends noted that:

Until parents... are willing to spend as much money on the education of their girls as their boys, to give them facilities for going to University College or to Girton or Newnham, we shall find that we shall have a difficulty in obtaining female teachers.⁷⁴

So, how did those early schools cope at all? Some employed men to teach classics. Miss Beale confessed that 'Some of our best classical teaching is done by men.'⁷⁵ At Bedford College the first female head of the Greek department was Dorothy Tarrant in 1936, men having held the post since 1860. The first female head of the Latin

⁷¹ Thring in M. E. Bryant *The London Secondary School Experience* quoting special conferences, 1890 - 1894 pg.348.

⁷² M.V. Hughes *A London Family* 1946, pg.62.

⁷³ J. Bryce quoted in J. Kamm *Hope Deferred. Girls' Education in English History* 1965, pg.208.

⁷⁴ 1879 *Report of the Education Conference of the Society of Friends* Quoted in C. Stewart pg.236.

⁷⁵ Note earlier reference to W.H.D. Rouse's position at Cheltenham Ladies' College and D. Beale's recourse to asking him to contribute the section on Latin in her book *Work and Play in Girls' Schools* 1898.

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department was Margaret Alford in 1904, men having held that post since 1849.⁷⁶ In the early days the classical mistress was a rare and lonely woman who did not benefit from the sense of belonging that made school masters so comfortable:

Masters in schools are mainly university men who hang together, but the school mistress often has to teach herself and scarcely knows anyone in the world.⁷⁷

She certainly did not belong to the self-perpetuating circle of teachers at some public schools and would have lacked the sense of security this engendered.

As the first graduates capable of teaching Latin emerged from the universities they were in great demand and sometimes returned to their old school to teach. The better schools attracted the more able women, being unwilling to loose themselves in a turgid academic atmosphere. The headmaster of Roan School for girls complained that he had 'not had many teachers from the universities. They do not care to work with us because we do not take classics far enough.'⁷⁸ Thus in many schools Latin was a second class subject producing second class results:

Mr. Fearon reports unfavourably on the Latin that he examined, but this does not appear to be inconsistent with the evidence of its utility, for the fault was plainly due to want of teaching.⁷⁹

Gradually changes were being wrought and by the early eighteen nineties there was a more optimistic view. Mrs. Kitchener wrote:

The whole race of assistant mistresses is so changed that it is difficult to believe that many are sisters and daughters of the ignorant and oppressed woman on whom so much slightly contemptuous pity was bestowed less than thirty years ago.⁸⁰

A Bright New Dawn?

The development of education for girls had not been without its difficulties and as the nineteenth century came to a close it was still an elastic and changing concept. Although it was perhaps less of a disgrace for a woman to be associated with academia, the old prejudices were still being fought against. However, as it became

⁷⁶ M.J. Tuke *A History of Bedford College* 1939, pg.343.

⁷⁷ F.W.H. Myers in *Macmillan's Magazine* Vol. 19, 1868, pg.160.

⁷⁸ Bryce Commission *Royal Commission on Secondary Education* 1895 Vol.2, Pg.355.

⁷⁹ D. Beale *Reports Issued by the Schools Inquiry Commission on the Education of Girls* David Nutt, 1869, pg.4.

⁸⁰ Bryce Commission *Royal Commission on Secondary Education* 1895 Vol.6, Pg.269.

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obvious that education and womanhood were not mutually exclusive, education for women blossomed steadily. Emily Davies herself wrote positively about the progress made:

There is an increasing neglect of the Greek and Latin Classics in ordinary education.....That which in the case of boys seems drawing near to death, is, in the case of girls, just beginning to live; and the classic languages in girls' schools and colleges have to force their way to general acceptance through many difficulties and prejudices.⁸¹

The Board of Education report on the curriculum of girls' schools published at the end of the century remarked on the happy marriage between old learning and new methods.⁸² Boys continued to receive their traditional education delivered in the time-honoured way. That this was not perhaps the most effective teaching technique was recognised by some:

...the melancholy fact stands, that the classics are taught in such a way as to benefit only those who, by superior talents or an inordinately long continuance at school, eventually emerge from the darkness overhanging their elementary training.⁸³

Many a child would have found Latin easy and interesting, had we not been at such pains to make it difficult and dull.⁸⁴

The emphasis of the curriculum was changing from original composition to translation. Composition was no longer required in the Tripos or Oxford Honour Schools, although still necessary for University Scholarships and competitions still existed.⁸⁵ However, whilst the emphasis may have shifted slightly, the content did not and original composition lived on well into this century. The Public Schools Commission, Clarendon, set up to examine the nine old 'great schools', Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, Harrow, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylors, Rugby and Shrewsbury, noted that the classics dominated the curriculum. In 1863 classical masters outnumbered all the others by 75:35 in these schools. The commission realised the need for a broader curriculum, but were keen to keep classics as its kingpin, there should be

⁸¹ E. Davies *Questions Relating to Women* 1910 pg.56.

⁸² Board Of Education S. Bryant *The Curriculum of a Girls School. Special Reports* Vol. 2. 1898, H.M.S.O. pg.99.

⁸³ D'Arcy Thompson *Day-Dreams of a Schoolmaster* 1912, pg.53.

⁸⁴ *ibid.* pg.116.

⁸⁵ M.L. Clarke *Classical Education in Britain 1500 - 1900* Cambridge University Press, 1959, pg.92.

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some one branch of study, invested with a recognised, and, if possible, a traditional importance, to which the principle weight should be assigned.⁸⁶

The classics provided the best model for the study of language, the key to modern languages, as well as poetry, history and philosophy. This, together with their existing sound position made the commission 'hesitate to advise the dethronement of it.'⁸⁷

The Schools Inquiry Commission, under the chairmanship of Lord Taunton, was established to investigate education in schools, apart from the elite nine great schools. This too discovered that Latin was the soundest subject in the curriculum and 'it would plainly be in the highest degree inexpedient to dislodge it from its place till we are sure of getting something better.'⁸⁸ However, they felt that Greek should only be taught in first-grade schools. Patrons of the classically strong first-grade schools were suspicious of placing trust in other areas of the curriculum, partly because of the close relationship between classics and social status.

In fact they are often timid; and while very desirous that experiments should be tried, not ready to let their own children be the subjects on which the trial should be made...it seems often to be difficult to prevent these modern departments from being a refuge for boys whose inferior ability or diligence has prevented success in classical studies.

They [the majority of the upper and upper middle classes] would, no doubt, in most instances be glad to secure something more than classics and mathematics. But they value these highly for their own sake, and perhaps even more for the value at present assigned to them in English society. They have nothing to look to but education to keep their sons on a high social level. And they would not wish to have what might be more readily converted into money, if in any degree it tended to let their children sink in the social scale.⁸⁹

Science and modern languages, particularly the former, were keen to offer themselves as a 'better' alternative to classics.

...the use of physical sciences is to train a class of mental faculties which are ignored, so to speak, by a purely classical or a purely mathematical training.⁹⁰

We see, however, that parents were not so concerned with the educational attributes of the various subjects, but rather they were paying for their sons to be set on the right

86 Public Schools Commission Report Vol.1, pg.28.

87 *ibid.*

88 Schools Inquiry Commission Report Vol.1 pg.25.

89 Schools Inquiry Commission Vol.1, chpt. 4 pg. 15f.

90 Public Schools Commission Vol. 4 pg.364.

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road for a successful future, and from their own experience they knew that classics played a vital role in this respect.

The face of education was changing. For girls the issue had been one of academic education versus social grooming. The goal of university began to have a realistic chance beside that of marriage. The traditional rite of passage experience for girls, training to become a lady and a mother was being widened. The case that 'the inferiority of girls' training [was] due to the despotism of fashion, or in other words the despotism of parents and guardians'⁹¹ was becoming a rarer one. Education for girls began to flood a void and the character of this new education was examined by customers, the parents, as to whether it offered wholesome and complete training for the young girl. The relative value of different aspects of the curriculum were debated, Latin having to win respect and a place for itself. In the early days the Latin option was not always easy to offer due to a lack of qualified female teachers and schools often had to rely on the skills of men. For boys education itself was the rite of passage experience. The vocation of boys, to become an English gentleman was fulfilled by the classical education at public schools and so the dilution of its exclusivity was feared. There were the rumblings of discontent, but the traditional schools felt safe. School masters were set in their ways and although the new century was to bring change, as yet the sword of Damocles was perceived as remote and far from threatening to the stability of their existence. Science and modern languages posed an insubstantial threat, from their position of weakness they could not be considered as serious contenders to change the balance of the curriculum. Although the Public Schools' Commission and the Schools' Enquiry Commission accepted boys received a classics heavy diet they could see no better alternative. Education for girls was stretching forward, whilst that for boys tended to look back wearing rose tinted spectacles.

⁹¹ E. Davies *Questions Relating to Women* [written in 1868] 1910, pg.128.

The Preparatory School 1902 - Early 1930's

'You have never done any Latin before, have you?' he said.

'No Sir.'

'This is a Latin grammar.' He opened it at a well thumbed page. 'You must learn this,' he said, pointing to a number of words in a frame of lines. 'I will come back in half an hour and see what you know.'

Behold me, then, on a gloomy evening, with an aching heart, seated in front of the First Declension.

<i>mensa</i>	<i>a table</i>	<i>mensae</i>	<i>of a table</i>
<i>mensa</i>	<i>O table</i>	<i>mensae</i>	<i>to or for a table</i>
<i>mensam</i>	<i>a table</i>	<i>mensa</i>	<i>by, with or from a table</i>

What on earth did it mean? Where was the sense in it? It seems an absolute rigmarole to me. However, there was one thing I could always do, I could learn by heart. And I thereupon proceeded, as far as my private sorrows would allow, to memorise the acrostic-looking task which had been set me.

In due course the master returned. 'Have you learnt it?' he asked.

'I think I can say it, sir,' I replied and gabbled it off.....'What does it mean, sir?'

'It means what it says. Mensa, a table. Mensa is a noun of the First Declension. There are five declensions. You have learnt the singular of the First Declension.'

'But,' I repeated, 'What does it mean?'

'Mensa means a table.'

Then why does mensa also mean O table?' I enquired. 'And what does O table mean?'

'Mensa, O table, is the vocative case.'

'But why O table?' I persisted, in genuine curiosity.

'O table - you would use that in addressing a table, in invoking a table.' And then seeing he was not carrying me with him, 'You would use it in speaking to a table.'

'But I never do,' I blurted out, in honest amazement.¹

¹ W. Churchill *My Early Life* 1930 pg.16.

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A boy destined to be educated at public school would have begun his preparation many years earlier, first with a tutor at home, or attending a small private school and then by transition at the age of eight to a preparatory school, often boarding away from home. It was usually here that he met classics for the first time and it was here he came to realise that progression to public school depended largely on his mastery of these ancient languages. For the eight year old the mysterious, obscure tongue was part of the alien environment in which he now found himself.

When I first started learning Latin at the age of eight, I did not have the faintest idea - and I don't suppose many of us did - whether this was a language actually spoken by people or whether it had been especially invented at Summer Fields for our delectation.²

However, unlike his father, the average preparatory school boy would only meet one ancient language at first: Latin, although there was a probability that he would start Greek before entering public school. The question of how much Greek should be taught and when had been discussed in length at the start of the century.

A Battle Drawn

In 1893 the Oxford and Cambridge Secondary Education conference proposed that it was undesirable to teach all boys Greek. Throughout the next decade this was discussed at the preparatory schools' annual conference and it would seem that ten years later there were many who had been persuaded of the validity of this proposal:

It is noticeable that four members of the committee of AHMSP who spoke in favour of the resolution remarked that a few years ago their votes would have been given in the opposite way, but that they had gradually and in most cases reluctantly come to the conclusion that Greek should no longer form a necessary part of the school curriculum.³

The reality was that the scholarship demands of the public schools had a stranglehold on the curriculum of preparatory schools:

...a boy barely twelve years old will discontinue all but a modicum of mathematics and other subjects and be pressed on in Latin verses and Greek sentences and the construing of difficult classical authors, till, by the time he is thirteen and a half, he is able to produce remarkably skilful bits of translation, but is contentedly ignorant of English and other history and has no knowledge whatever of the shape, size and quality of the countries of the habitable globe, and perhaps more injurious still, does

² Prof. I. Morris in *A Century of Summer Fields* Ed. Usborne pg.257.

³ *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.3, No.23. 1902, pg.165.

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not know whether the Reform Bill came before the Magna Carta, or the sense of either.⁴

Entrance examinations, round which curricula were shaped, provide a key thread that runs throughout this study. Even in the early years boys received an academic diet that was designed for passing examinations, in particular the highly sought after scholarships.

By 1899 the preparatory schools committee put four proposals to a subcommittee appointed to liaise with a subcommittee of headmasters:

1. The curriculum should be wide rather than specialised.
2. The curriculum should be designed for the average, rather than the brightest boys.
3. Latin (translation, grammar, prose - sentences and continuous), French (translation, grammar, sentences), English, Divinity, English history, Geography (Physical and political) and Arithmetic were to be obligatory subjects. Greek (translation and grammar), Algebra and Euclid and drawing were to be optional.
4. Scholarship examinations should follow the lines of the entrance examinations, with the addition of Latin verses and Greek sentences.⁵

This last point was to prove significant in the development of discussions on the future of Greek.

⁴ E. Lyttelton *Entrance Scholarships at Public Schools and Their Influence on Preparatory Schools* in *Special Reports on Educational Subjects* 1906 Vol.6 pg.100.

⁵ *ibid.* no.32 Vol. 4 1905, pg.272.

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In 1904 the Common Entrance examination to public schools was established, papers being set in the following subjects: ⁶

Latin

- 1) Unseen translation 45min.
- 2) Prose or sentences 45
- 3) Grammar 30

General

- 4) Scripture 30
- 5) History 30
- 6) Geography 30

French

- 7) Unseen translation 30
- 8) Composition 30
- 9) Grammar 30
- 19) Latin verse or Science 1 hour

English

- 10) Reproduction of story 20
- 11) Essay 20
- 12) Grammar 20

Mathematics

- 13) Arithmetic 40
- 14) Algebra 40
- 15) Geometry 40

Greek or German

- 16) Unseen translation 30
- 17) Composition 30
- 18) Grammar 30

Both Latin and mathematics are allocated more time than other subjects. It is interesting to note that science appears as an option against Latin verse, suggesting that those who were not up to tackling Latin verse took the supposed easier option of science. This reinforces later findings that science was a second class choice.

At the Headmasters' conference in 1906 Dr. Upcott of Christ's Hospital proposed that Greek should not be an element of any entrance examination, including scholarship exams, but should be commenced at public school. His first principle for this was that it was unwise to be studying the elementary stages of four languages at the same time. English, Latin, and French were enough to burden the young mind. Secondly concentration on classics resulted in boys being 'distressingly ignorant of the commonest facts of history, geography and simple "nature" subjects.' Thirdly insufficient time was allocated to the teaching of English; and finally 'the present system was highly uneconomical in days when economy of time was of paramount importance.'⁷ Greek was described as an 'incubus' which restricted schools from offering a broad education.

⁶ Report of Head Masters' Conference 21/22nd Dec 1905 pg.91.

⁷ Headmasters' Conference 20 Dec. 1906, pg.46-9.

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Whilst the crowded nature of the preparatory school timetable was readily admitted, the public schools were reluctant to take up entire responsibility for Greek, feeling, as one letter stated, that their time table was equally full.⁸ In 1902 Dr. Warre, headmaster of Eton, and Dr. James, Headmaster of Rugby, were opposed to the idea 'urging that Greek must be begun at an early age and that the dropping of Greek in preparatory schools would mean its almost total abolition from public schools'. They claimed that as it was of the thousand boys entering public school only half had any practical knowledge of Greek.⁹ The largest and more traditional public schools held much influence. It was said that three or four schools offering the most valuable scholarships 'could practically control the curriculum of the English Public and Preparatory School education'.¹⁰ Thus Dr. Warre and Dr. James, representing two of the more elite public schools, were powerful voices. The public schools were unfamiliar with teaching elementary work: one public school master voiced his fears when saying to W.H.D. Rouse 'How on earth are we to teach boys things they do not know?'¹¹

The proposal was not without its opponents. One wrote of three sources from which support came explaining their rather dishonourable reasons in favour of the plan:

- a. the utilitarian parent, who wishes to see a positive return in commercial value from every subject handled by his son.
- b. The preparatory schoolmaster, oppressed with an overloaded curriculum and desirous of throwing overboard one of its heaviest subjects.
- c. The average boy - mostly lazy - and terrified by the sight of the Greek character, later on by irregular verbs.¹²

However, in 1906 the Head Masters' Conference upheld Dr. Upcott's proposal and 'resolved by 26 votes to 4 that Greek ought no longer be required in entrance or scholarship exams at public schools'.¹³ So at the hands of such a small representation from the teaching profession the die was cast, with foreboding from some:

Relieve the prep. schools of Greek and in twenty years - possibly in ten years - Greek will have fallen to the position of Hebrew.¹⁴

⁸ Letter from A.C. Benson in *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.4, No.24, 1903, pg.2.

⁹ *Preparatory schools Review* Vol.4, No.25, 1903, pg.49.

¹⁰ Headmasters' Conference Dec 1906, pg.56.

¹¹ *ibid.* Dec. 1909, pg.54.

¹² *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.3, No.23, 1902, pg.183.

¹³ *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.5, No.36, 1907, pg.87.

¹⁴ Dr. James in *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.5, No.42. 1909, pg.297.

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However, the matter was far from closed. The vote at the Headmasters' Conference represented a fraction of schools and teachers and had little practical effect. The following year, 1907, the Conference discussed the proposal that 'undue pressure is put upon boys at preparatory schools by the requirements of Scholarship Examinations at the public schools and that in the interests of education the best remedy lies in lowering materially the standard of knowledge required in the Greek language.'¹⁵ Thus, in spite of the previous year's resolution Greek still formed part of the scholarship papers at least. Preparatory school boys were expected to excel in classics, mathematics, French, English, history and geography, putting tremendous pressure on them. In order to overcome this Dr. Burge, of Winchester, proposed that boys concentrated on basic grammar, rather than tackling difficult unseens in the scholarship papers, this groundwork being more suited to preparatory schools than public schools. Mr. Lyttelton, of Eton, seconded the proposal, claiming that they had already lowered the standard of Greek in the entrance examination, but because 'teaching in the Preparatory Schools was dominated by the requirements of the Scholarship Examination' this had done little to ease the congestion of the curriculum.¹⁶ He even saw that a firm grounding in Greek, with less time spent on translation would enable preparatory schools to teach more geography and history, enabling the public schools to omit these from their curriculum for the first two years, betraying a self interest to take pressure off the public school timetable, rather than concern for the needs of his preparatory school colleagues. This proposal sparked lively discussion. Dr. James denied that preparatory school boys were overburdened, especially not the scholars, it was the less able who tended to be subject to cramming techniques. The suggestion to concentrate on grammar was generally disapproved:

He could not imagine anything more likely to make a study of Greek in Preparatory schools a dull, forbidding and repulsive subject than to confine it absolutely to the elements of Greek.¹⁷

Mr. Wynne-Edwards (Leeds) was concerned that such a slow start would, in turn, reflect in the product of the public school, thus sully their name with the universities. This reflects the public schools' concern to maintain their own standards at university entrance level, the all important entrance exams being the driving force in everyone's mind. However, he did point out that the previous year's resolution had not been put into practice, suggesting that they beware of making insincere decisions. In the event the motion was voted against by 16 votes to 10.

¹⁵ Headmasters' Conference Dec.21st 1907, pg.44.

¹⁶ *ibid.* pg.48.

¹⁷ Mr. Moss, Shrewsbury *ibid.* pg.55.

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The following year Mr. Gilson (Birmingham) suggested that only two foreign languages be necessary for admission to public school, one of them being Latin. The ensuing discussion led to the proposal of a conference to explore the matter with preparatory schools with the aim of drawing up a suggested scheme of studies.¹⁸ The resultant curriculum committee made its proposals the following year. It set out the four main issues:

1. During the past thirty years the growth of preparatory schools had been such that they are the main feeders for public schools. (Thus the teaching would be of a more uniform standard than when the trend was to be tutored at home.)
2. The growth of the Entrance Scholarship system, 'which in the opinion of most Preparatory School masters determines directly or indirectly the whole preparatory school curriculum.'
3. The increase in the number of subjects considered important.
4. A feeling of uncertainty and dissatisfaction on the part of preparatory and public schoolmasters.¹⁹

The committee found that pressure was caused by the demands of the scholarship examinations and the fact that few public schools made any provision for boys who had no previous knowledge of Greek to enter their classical sides. In spite of this they thought it unwise to start a third language until firm foundations had been made in two, those two being French and Latin. English should have a place on the curriculum. So it was suggested that able boys began Greek two years before leaving preparatory school, above average boys started one year before leaving and the remainder either began at public school or did not tackle Greek at all. Under this system the curriculum might look something like this:

¹⁸ Headmasters' Conference Dec. 22nd 1908, pg.49.

¹⁹ *ibid.* 1909, pg.131.

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The Headmasters' Conference suggestion for time allocation within a curriculum where Greek is begun in the top years at preparatory school ²⁰

	Before Greek is begun	After Greek is begun
English	10 half hours	6 half hours
Latin	10 three quarter hours	7 three quarter hours
French	6 half hours	6 half hours
Mathematics	6 three quarter hours	6 three quarter hours
Scripture	4 three quarter hours - not including Sunday	4 three quarter hours - not including Sunday
History	" " " "	" " " "
Geography	3 three quarter hours	2 three quarter hours
	39 periods = 25 ¼ hours	31 periods = 20 ¼ hours (leaving 8 periods = 5 hours available for Greek)

The above timetable would also leave time for drawing and manual training.

The committee realised the weight of the scholarship examinations and issued the following warning:

No reform or system such as we have indicated is practicable unless the leading Public Schools agree to give practical encouragement to it by the conditions which they impose upon Preparatory Schools.²¹

They suggested the requirement of certain standards in English and French or a more favourable weighting of marks for English and French to overcome this hurdle.

In reality preparatory schools continued to follow their own course and taught at least some Greek. Independent schools were just that and followed the course of action they thought best. Preparatory schools were loathe to drop a subject which had been the essence of scholarship and looking to the demands of future examinations continued with their traditional approach. The Sandroyd magazine printed the following article in 1909 which sums up the situation well and is worth quoting in full.

At present some 35 boys out of 80 are learning Greek. Public Schools are beginning to object to so many boys joining them destined for Oxford or Cambridge and yet unacquainted with the rudiments of Greek. This of course means that a year or more before leaving their Public Schools, such boys have had to give up their regular work and begin the Greek alphabet. To avoid this, some of the Public Schools are placing our Modern Side Boys, who are intended for the universities, on the Classical Side, where, not having done any Greek, they are placed at great disadvantage to themselves in the lowest forms. It would be far better for the Public Schools, for

²⁰ *ibid* pg.135.

²¹ *ibid*. pg.137.

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Sandroyd, and for the boys themselves, if Parents of such boys would harden their hearts and let their sons do Greek here. By this they would be enabled to pass their Smalls or Little Go at 16, and then take a tearful farewell of that great language, and specialise in whatever other branch of learning they may take up. As matters are at present Greek is absolutely required at the Universities, the non-resident voters of which are apparently untainted by the prevalent craze for (so called) Reform.²²

In 1911 the Headmaster of Eton clarified his school's position: 'Greek will be an optional subject (in the Entrance Exam), but as a rule a boy will not be placed higher than middle IV unless he offers and reaches a fairly high standard in Greek.'²³ Here he is following the guidelines of the curricula committee whilst warning that Greek still is highly valued. In 1912 an article in *The Preparatory Schools Review* suggested that Greek was best suited to able boys who were well on their way to mastering Latin, echoing the advice of the curricula committee.²⁴ In view of the vacillations of the public schools, preparatory schools could be forgiven for adopting a 'head in the sand' approach. In 1913 the Headmasters' Conference decided to send copies of the curricula committee's suggestions to all head masters of preparatory schools in an attempt to 'make it clear that these principles must be carried out.'²⁵ Mr. Rendall, of Winchester, bemoaned the fact that the proposals had not been printed in *The Preparatory Schools Review*. On being advised that they had, he considered the lack of their application due to a lack of duty on the part of the preparatory school masters. As we shall see with regard to reformed pronunciation, and the age at which Latin should be, started the preparatory school masters were set in their ways and the majority were intransigent and disinterested when it came to change. A memorandum printed in the *Preparatory Schools Review* at the same time speaks of the change being only 'partially understood in many preparatory schools' and explains the situation clearly laying emphasis on the fact that:

We hope it will be soon generally known that weak Latin, English or French is not mended by weak Greek, and that marks given for Greek are not added to those for English, Latin and French, unless these latter would entitle the boy to a place in a form in which Greek is done.²⁶

Preparatory school masters were aware that public schools still wanted able boys to have a grounding in Greek: it was a matter of honour that as many as possible went into the highest sets at their public schools. Schools that prided themselves on feeding the elite public schools felt keenly about their academic reputation.

²² *Sandroydian* Aug.1909, pg.6.

²³ *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.6, No.48, 1911, pg.134.

²⁴ *ibid.* Vol.6, No.52, 1912, pg.257.

²⁵ Headmasters' Conference 23rd Dec 1913, pg.48.

²⁶ Memorandum in *The Preparatory Schools Review* no.56 Vol.6 1913, pg.409.

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Public schools were content with the compromise reached and in 1913 Winchester announced that it would model its scholarship and entrance examinations on the criteria suggested by the curricula committee.²⁷ Letters from Eton and Winchester sent to preparatory schools in 1917 show a sympathetic following of the committee's suggestions, although, whilst not specifically stated, the importance of Greek within each school is strongly suggested.²⁸ They had come to a conclusion which, as described in a reiteration of the report in 1916, was 'tentatively progressive.' It did not exclude Greek from the timetable, but left scope for the most able to pursue it. However, there is evidence that some preparatory schools resented the authority and influence of the public schools, thus refusing to comply with their ideas, revelling in their independence as Mr. Lionel Ford explained to the Headmasters' Conference:

..there is a small but important section of Preparatory School Masters who are utterly opposed to the idea which this report embodies, the idea, that is, of co-operation among the Schools themselves....they have made a fetish of individualism and are fighting for a freedom that would destroy any prospect of co-operation between school and school. They are contending for a principle which we have long since abandoned.²⁹

Thirteen schools had signed a manifesto rejecting the report, but their protest had come too late to make an effect. Thus it would seem that although the battle to reduce the influence of Greek was seemingly won, it was not in fact a clear-cut result. By the 1920's inspection reports refer to small classes of Greek in existence place at the top of preparatory schools, reflecting the agreements of the last few years. However, Greek had not lost its importance for the top scholarships and the status of a prep school depended to a large degree on the number of boys sent to the most prestigious public schools.

Only eight boys take this subject and two masters are required for them. So long as some of the public schools lay stress on the subject for scholarships, it has to be retained in preparatory schools, but its retention obviously involves a waste of power.³⁰

Here the perceived importance of scholarship examinations is seen not only to affect the syllabus, but also the staffing levels and therefore the budget of a preparatory school. However, in time the less ambitious preparatory schools were having to struggle to keep Greek 'alive'. An inspection report for Sherborne preparatory school

²⁷ Headmasters' Conference Dec.23rd 1913, pg.49.

²⁸ *The Preparatory Schools Review* No.68 Vol. 7 1917, pg.329.

²⁹ Headmasters' Conference 21st Dec 1916, pg.120.

³⁰ Inspection report for Sandroyd 1921 Ed 109/5573, pg.6.

in 1928 noted that only three boys were taking Greek and it was hoped that numbers would increase soon.³¹

Latin At First ?

There was much debate as to the optimum age for starting to learn a foreign language and what that language should be. At the turn of the century it was general practice for a boy to start Latin as soon as he entered preparatory school, aged 9.³² It was probable that he would begin French at the same time and possible that his skills in English would be weak. The report of the Classical Association Curricula Committee on the teaching of Latin in secondary schools stated that the emphasis in preparatory schools should be on mastering English skills, it was a mistake to begin two foreign languages at the same time and pupils should be fairly competent before starting a third language.³³ This was to avoid the sort of confusion such as that of the young pupil encountered by the Reverend Bull:

I once had a boy from another school a week before his eighth birthday. He had begun French, Latin and Greek simultaneously in the previous term. He declined *μωσα* with Latin endings, and, needless to say, he could neither read, write nor spell the most elementary English.³⁴

The Curricula Committee accepted that a popular choice for a first language was French, partly due to the colloquial nature of its teaching in some schools, but hoped that Latin would not be started later than the age of eleven. Greek should be postponed until 'the pupil is at least able to translate an easy piece of narrative Latin, and is so familiar with the commonest inflexions and constructions that he can use them correctly in composing Latin sentences of a simple character.'³⁵ Dr. Postgate (Trinity College, Cambridge, founder of the Classical Association.) felt that because Latin is more difficult than modern languages it should be started first, in order to give the pupil a head start.³⁶ *The Organisation and Curricula of Schools*, published in

³¹ Inspection report for Sherborne Preparatory school 1928 Ed109/1072, pg.6.

³² H. Frampton Stallard *The Timetable of Work in Preparatory Schools* in *Special Reports On Educational Subjects* Vol.6 1900, pg.59.

³³ *Report of the Curricula Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* in *Classical Association Proceedings* Vol. 5, 1907, pg.98.

³⁴ Rev. R. Bull in *Classical Association Proceedings* discussion on the teaching of Latin in secondary schools Vol. 5, 1907, pg.26.

³⁵ *Report of the Curricula Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* in *Classical Association Proceedings* Vol. 5, 1907, pg.100.

³⁶ Dr. Postgate, *Classical Association Proceedings* discussion on the teaching of Latin in secondary schools Vol.5, 1907, pg.22.

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1926³⁷, described a variety of curricula for state education in which the earliest Latin is begun is twelve and Greek fourteen. Such a course of action was adopted by Manchester Grammar School³⁸ which started French at the age of nine. The Perse School at Cambridge followed a similar pattern starting French at ten, Latin at twelve, Greek at fourteen and German at Sixteen (when French could be dropped).³⁹ The 1921 Prime Minister's report follows these general principles, but notes that; 'it is the practice of some preparatory schools to begin Latin first...it is urged that Latin, in its earliest stages, provides a more vigorous logical training than French, requires greater mental effort, which nevertheless is not too severe for young boys.⁴⁰ Sherborne Preparatory School was one of these schools, and was criticised for ignoring the advice of the Curricula Committee:

All boys begin Latin and French in form IV [the lowest form]. It is doubtful whether this is really the wisest plan. The study by boys under 10 of two foreign languages, both of which are probably new to most of them, must impose a severe strain and even tend to interfere with progress in other subjects.⁴¹

When Sherborne Preparatory School was inspected some fourteen years later the same criticisms held true:

An attempt is made to start boys in both French and Latin in form V. It is doubtful wisdom to begin either language until a better grounding in English has been given, while there is nothing to be said for beginning both simultaneously.⁴²

The fact that many preparatory schools did not act on the above recommendations can be seen in an article in *The Times* in 1934 which echoes the proposals of the 1907 curricula committee when reporting on a joint curricula committee of the Headmasters' Conference and the Preparatory Schools Association:

...boys should not be allowed to learn more than two languages, in addition to English, until the foundations of those two have been securely laid. Latin, in the committee's opinion, should be started before Greek, and German excluded altogether from the preparatory school.⁴³

³⁷ W.G. Sleight *The Organisation and Curricula of Schools* 1926.

³⁸ J.L. Paton 'A Plea for Reform in the Nation' in *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol. 5, no. 38, Dec 1907, pg.150.

³⁹ J.M. Gray *A History of the Perse School, Cambridge* 1921.

⁴⁰ *The Classics in Education* Prime Minister's Report 1921, pg.114.

⁴¹ Inspection report for Sherborne Preparatory School 1914 Ed 109/1071, pg.4.

⁴² Inspection report for Sherborne Preparatory School 1928 Ed 109/1072, pg.5.

⁴³ *The Times* 3rd Jan 1934, pg.12.

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This together with the comment made by the headmaster of The Hall School in 1930: ('I feel sure that in a few years' time no one will begin Latin until he is 9'⁴⁴) surely reflect that in reality preparatory schools followed their own programme, independent units in a system in which they felt pressurised to teach Latin to a high standard. In order to achieve success at exam level it was necessary to make an early start, the theory did not match up to the practicalities of getting boys to Common Entrance standard.

The Reality

Classics, of course, ruled supreme and the basis of Hayman's⁴⁵ classics teaching was the flawless memorisation of every possible tense and declension, Greek even more rigorously than Latin. The school hummed all day with the sound of incantation, like a Tibetan monastery, and when class was over the boys set to work memorising more for the next day. We took two or three grammars to bed with us for those precious moments before the light went out. We woke up early in the summer to memorise some more, until the bell went and we hurtled naked down the stairs to the cold plunge-bath. And at breakfast we were not merely permitted but encouraged to eat with our grammars propped open in front of us: *Aggo, ackso, eegaggon, eeka, eegmai, eechtheen - hurray!*⁴⁶

The classics were not only begun at an early age, but took on an importance and prestige that out shone other subjects. That Latin was the most important subject was left in little doubt:

I am more convinced every day of the value of the study of Classics for making good citizens who will stand up for duty in an age of ugliness, for real values in an age of superficialities and for the things of the spirit in an age of materialism.⁴⁷

A large percentage of the timetable was devoted to classics in most preparatory schools. A census taken of 43 schools in 1895 revealed that 45% of teaching time was spent on the classics and only 4% on teaching English.⁴⁸ As the new century started Greek was becoming marginalised, but the position of Latin remained strong. At St. Cyprians 9.5 hours out of a total of 28 teaching hours were spent on Latin and at Horris Hill it was more than 50%.⁴⁹ In 1910 the five hours a week spent on Latin verse

⁴⁴ P. Heazell Ed. *100 years in Hampstead : The Story of the Hall School* pg.59.

⁴⁵ This is C.H.T. Hayman who ran Winchester House School, giving it this name because he intended his pupils to win regular scholarships to Winchester College.

⁴⁶ G. Priestland *Something Understood* 1986, pg.29.

⁴⁷ Headmaster of Mill Hill. *Value of Classics in After Life* Newspaper cutting, C.A. archives, no date, no title.

⁴⁸ *Preparatory School Curricula in Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.7, 1915, pg.7.

⁴⁹ J.E. Austin *The English Boys' Boarding Preparatory School 1914 - 1940* 1995, pg.216.

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was not considered unreasonable.⁵⁰ In 1930 boys at the Dragon School started with nine periods of Latin aged eight and by the time they reached the top of the school they were devoting fifteen or sixteen periods a week to classics.⁵¹ Thus it is not surprising to read of Eustan More's sentiments that Latin was almost the *modus vivendi* of his prep. school.⁵² An old Sandroydian⁵³ recalls enjoying Latin, although he remembers a rather exclusive curriculum:

F.V. Selfe taught us Latin. He was an inspired teacher, which was just as well as we saw a lot of him. While other subjects counted as singles, Latin Prose, Latin Grammar and Latin Translation (and later Latin Verse!) all had their separate slots on the timetable and it was surprising that there was time for anything else - including, in the senior classes, Greek. Selfe would organise competitions with prizes such as a porcupine quill, which we treasured quite beyond belief.⁵⁴

At Temple Grove the list of books required by the top year consisted of 12 on Latin and Greek and only eight on all the other subjects.⁵⁵ This emphasis on Latin was then reflected at the end of term in reports and results. On the report forms of Sandroyd and Cottesmore Latin took pride of place at the top and was allotted a third of the space.⁵⁶ One's competence in mastering this work would usually be published in the school magazine in such a way that it reinforced the status of Latin right from the start. For instance, in the *Sandroydian* the end of term form places are listed in Latin for forms 7 up to the top form, 1, and in Greek for forms 3 up to 1. The Latin form orders head the lists, followed by Greek, then Mathematics, French and finally English. This practice can be found from 1907 and continues up to 1940.⁵⁷ Not only were the form placings made public, but as one moved nearer Common Entrance marks were also given in detail:

⁵⁰ *Preparatory Schools Review* No.46 Vol.6 1910, pg.46.

⁵¹ Inspection report for the Dragon School 1930 Ed109/4861 pg.4.

⁵² E. More *Oranges At Half-Time* 1967, pg.16.

⁵³ A Sandroydian is the term for a boy who attended the preparatory school Sandroyd, which was in Cobham, but moved to Rushmore Park on Cranbourne Chase in 1939.

⁵⁴ G. Matthews *Mainly on the Bright Side* pg.15.

⁵⁵ M. Batchelor *Cradle of Empire : A Preparatory School Through Five Reigns* 1981, pg.63.

⁵⁶ J.E. Austin *The English Boys' Boarding Preparatory School 1914 - 1940* pg.216.

⁵⁷ *Sandroyd School Magazines*. 1907 - 1940

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End of term results printed in the Sandroydian magazine, 1907⁵⁸

	150 Latin Prose	150 Latin Verse	150 Latin Gram.	150 Latin Trans.	150 Greek Trans.	150 Greek Gram.	150 French	150 Hist.	150 Geog.	200 Divi nity	600 Mathe matics	100 Gen. Paper	2250 Max. Total
A.T.M.Eve	100	112	122	105	106	101	84	83	85	64	527	49	1538
T.C.Eden	99	94	121	110	122	108	119	116	70	90	221	56	1326
M.C.McLeod	97	100	113	88	86	75	64	106	99	91	336	62	1317
M.J.Bethell	87	58	93	48	62	32	65	61	88	98	557	62	1311
D.B.King	84	101	111	89	86	97	66	37	76	12	338	50	1048
C.S.Eastwood	69	52	88	52	68	80	46	118	64	114	227	50	1028
R.A.Casson	55	38	75	41	19	47	56	69	105	68	368	59	1000
C.W.Beart	62	81	85	73	73	74	67	52	48	81	259	40	995
J.P.Causton	78	51	87	60	59	59	66	71	54	82	231	46	945
G.E.A.Grey	69	48	94	66	67	62	88	33	79	54	226	43	929
D.C.Stewart-Smith	71	70	86	43	70	58	36	75	84	51	153	64	861
L.E.Muir	76	6	80	58	44	26	33	60	87	82	237	62	848

Modern side boys receive an average mark for Greek and Latin Verse

Results table like this leave us in no doubt as to the status of classics. Latin and then Greek appear at the beginning of the list of subjects and are the only subjects to have been split into their various components. The total number of marks available for Latin add up to 600, the same as for Mathematics. There are 300 marks for Greek, which is the next highest total. Therefore, those boys who were good at classics were sure of attaining the highest overall totals and having their names at the top of the list. It is interesting to note that, although English skills were doubtless necessary for the general paper, English as a subject is not even mentioned. By 1914 the original Common Entrance schedule had been revised, English and French each having one fewer paper, but Latin still retained three, grammar, composition and translation, the latter two lasting fifty minutes (in French composition and translation had been combined into one 45 minute paper). Greek, German and Latin verse were very much optional.⁵⁹ In 1921 Sandroyd was criticised by inspectors for its rather haphazard approach to the teaching of English: History and geography were taught in the English lesson and the time allowed for different aspects of English depended on the individual master, thus in 'certain of the forms these necessary subjects are neglected,' whilst Latin was 'treated as the most important subject.'⁶⁰ The masters themselves were doubtless products of a classical education and not only perpetuated the system, but also put the greatest effort in where the results were of greatest importance.

⁵⁸ *Sandroyd School Magazine*. Jan. 1907 pg 13.

⁵⁹ *Headmasters' Conference Bulletin* no.4 1914 pg.135.

⁶⁰ *Inspection report for Sandroyd* Ed 109/5573 1921, pg.5.

Within The Classroom

Given this emphasis on the importance of classics, especially Latin, how did the boys spend their lessons? There were many with a real love of the language who wished to impart their knowledge to the next generation and were willing to devise and use ingenious techniques to do so. However, the reverse was also true. Somerville of Eton spoke of the pitfalls of uninspired teaching at the preparatory schools' annual conference in 1906:

It may be said that, although these boys can not write the simplest Latin Prose and have acquired little or no appreciation of Latin literature, yet their minds have been disciplined by Latin grammar and constructions. The fact is that most of them have been deadened intellectually by the sense that they are not getting a firm grasp of the subjects at which they have been working for so many years.⁶¹

In 1907 the Curricula Committee of the Classical Association published a report on the teaching of Latin, the first section of which was devoted to Latin in preparatory schools.⁶² In 1909 a special committee of the Independent Preparatory Schools Association produced their own report on the Methods of Classical Teaching in Preparatory Schools. They made recommendations on Grammar, Latin Composition and Translation.⁶³ For many, learning the niceties of grammar was of prime importance, and this came handy and prepacked in the form of Kennedy's *Revised Latin Primer*. This was a necessary experience and considered by some to be enjoyed:

There is no evidence that the boys of those days disliked learning Latin or felt that they were having Latin force-fed into them; they may some times have wondered about the practical value of learning the Latin gender of *bidens*, a fork, or *clunis*, a hind-leg, but they enjoyed learning the gender rhymes by heart and used to sing them with gusto during journeys to and from cricket and football matches with other schools. Similarly they approved of the practice of having their knowledge of Latin grammar tested by questions answered orally round the form or 'on the benches'; educationalists disapproved, but the boys found it fun - and the method certainly worked.⁶⁴

⁶¹ A.A. Somerville *A Basis of Education* Address at annual conference, in *Preparatory Schools' Review* Vol.5., No.33, 1906, pg.19.

⁶² Classical Association *Report of the Curricular Committee on the Teaching of Latin In Secondary Schools* In *Proceedings* Vol.5 1907 pg.98ff.

⁶³ *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol. 5, No.42, 1909, pg.317 These recommendations are considered in detail in chapter 5.

⁶⁴ J. Stow *Horris Hill* 1992, pg56/7.

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I remember in particular some half hours of Latin grammar before breakfast at Borva, sometimes in the garden, when doubtless we paid attention to the outrageously irregular behaviour of *jecur* and *supellex*. It does not sound appetising but it was, in fact a thrilling experience; it was romance, it was excitement, it was in short a treat, and we got up early and went to it joyously.⁶⁵

However, many remember being paralysed with fear of masters who ruled their classes with a violence that was relatively common place then:

Mr. Easterfield was a keen cricketer and I believe a good teacher, though I was much too scared of him to learn anything and remember only too well how when teaching Latin he would line the whole class up in a row and make us decline a Latin verb. He would walk down the line and if any boy made a mistake he would punch him on the arm and go on to the next boy until he got the correct answer, very often reducing practically the whole line of boys to tears!⁶⁶

At St. Martin's School those who made glaring errors in the weekly grammar test were 'soundly beaten'.⁶⁷

This emphasis on grammar was criticised by those who saw it being taught, not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. An anonymous article in *The Preparatory Schools Review* calls the grammar exam papers futile and writes:

I can conceive nothing more futile than the verbal knowledge of grammar for its own sake. If you know it, and can use it, it is valuable. If you know it and can *not* use it, it is worse than useless. It is poisonous and harmful.⁶⁸

Grammar was the building material with which translation and composition were to be mastered. Boys who were poorly grounded in grammar were a cause for complaint from public schools some of which were kept busy 'endeavouring to counteract the pernicious effect of the abolition of grammar teaching in preparatory schools'.⁶⁹ Some failed to achieve a fusion in their teaching, thus creating several unconnected elements and a feeling by many boys that Latin and grammar were synonymous.

Grammar and syntax tended to be taught as a subject by themselves, detached from their natural basis; the Latin sentence.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ B. Barwin in *A Century of Summer Fields* Ed Usborne, 1964, pg.19.

⁶⁶ P.J. Broomhall in *A Century at Monkton Combe Junior School* Ed. Symons c.1988, pg.37.

⁶⁷ C. Powell-Williams *With All Thy Might* 1992, pg.62.

⁶⁸ *The Futility of Grammar Papers* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.9, No.98, 1927, pg.389.

⁶⁹ Classical Association Council minutes 4th Nov. 1909.

⁷⁰ Inspection Report for the Dragon School. 1930 Ed109/4861 pg.10.

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There was debate as to the most suitable material for the young Latinist to translate, some thinking that traditional texts were inappropriate:

He must have Latin - plenty of Latin - not merely a grounding of grammar, indeed a minimum of that, but Latin which shall make him use as well as store his mind.and if we can not find a sufficient number of classical authors who wrote for boys of twelve (Caesar certainly did not) then we must go to our Latinists and get them to write books such as our boys can read with interest, speed and even a certain degree of comfort.⁷¹

The Classical Association Curricula Committee of 1907 suggested that simple sentences or narrative were most suitable for translation and composition.⁷² However, there was no substitute for genuine Latin and, as soon as skills allowed, classical authors were tackled. Many approached translation with the same attitude as they approached grammar, learning texts by rote. As late as 1945 Ollerenshaw explained that at the Prebendal School he made twelve year olds learn 'large chunks of Virgil' by heart.⁷³

Success had to be wrung from the pupils by means fair or foul and there were those who were able to sustain interest and enthusiasm such as Mr. Selfe who set up the competitions at Sandroyd or the Greek Tea that would be held when the weather was too bad to go out to games at Elstree, the edible 'carrot' of a bun and tea being the reward for an afternoon's study.⁷⁴

Some preparatory school masters tried to bring teaching in line with progressive thought on teaching classics and promoted the use of the direct method. W.M. Harvey writing in the *Preparatory Schools Review* in 1914 suggested that use of the direct method will:

1. Give the boys practice in self expression
2. Enable boys to regard the dead language as a potentially living instrument
3. Allow for assimilation of vocabulary and syntax
4. Give opportunity for search and employment of material

⁷¹ Rev. A.A. David *Product from the Preparatory School and the Direction of Possible Co-operation from the Side of the Home* in *Preparatory Schools Review* No. 37, 1907, pg.126.

⁷² *Report of the Curricula Committee* in *Classical Association Proceedings* Vol.5, 1907, pg.101.

⁷³ N. Ollerenshaw. *A History of the Prebendal School* 1984, pg.31.

⁷⁴ I.C.M. Sanderson *A History of Elstree School* 1978, pg.48.

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5. Stimulate interest, attention and alertness.⁷⁵

Summer schools at Bangor, which were the brain child of W.H.D. Rouse who organised the first one in 1911, provided an opportunity to convert teachers, or at least arouse an interest in the direct method. Teachers were invited to listen to lectures, watch demonstration lessons and practice the art of the direct method. One of these meetings was discussed in the Preparatory Schools Review in 1911 with a report on the use of the Latin play demonstrated at the Summer School. This was obviously a new experience for participants and audience alike; the former treating it rather light-heartedly as 'The first rehearsal was a scene of wild confusion.' and the latter remaining unconvinced as to its true value: 'At the end of the experiment it was still possible to feel doubts whether it would be possible to map out a whole year's course on the same method'.⁷⁶ However, preparatory schools tended to keep to their time-honoured methods, as the plea for a livelier approach and use of oral methods in an inspection report for Winton House in 1931 suggests.⁷⁷ There were occasions where oral methods were used to good effect, but not all found it easy to adopt them.

Various methods of oral work were appreciated and skilfully used in some quarters; in others the written work tended to be excessive.⁷⁸

Forays to find stimulating teaching methods appear to be rare within the preparatory school world due to a variety of factors; the demands of the Common Entrance examination (which will be discussed more fully later), the strong feeling of tradition and the calibre of staff. Preparatory school masters were not only products of the classical educational system themselves, but also had to adhere to the policy of the department and school. The head of department was probably an experienced teacher who was set in his ways and rather sceptical and disapproving of approaches that made a departure from the traditional and time-honoured methods that had ensured success at exam level in the past. Thus a reactionary atmosphere surrounded the teaching of classics which helped to create an out of date image of the subject.

The First World War deprived schools of able men, leaving them to 'make do', a situation that was far from satisfactory:

⁷⁵ W.M. Harvey *Conversation in the Early Stages of Latin in The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.7, No.58, 1914, pg.51.

⁷⁶ Prof. E. Arnold *The Summer School of Latin at Bangor in The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.6., No.50, 1911, pg.179.

⁷⁷ Inspection report for Winton House Ed 109/1961, pg.5.

⁷⁸ Inspection report for The Dragon 1930 ED109/4861 pg.10.

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I arrived to find a well established staff of the highest qualifications, of no considerable age, and all of them male. Within about eighteen months most of these were on active service, and had been replaced by older men or by others who were medically unfit.⁷⁹

At the end of the war and in the early post war years the quality of the staff left a good deal to be desired. I remember particularly a dreadful young cleric who suffered from acne. He pushed at me on a day at the beginning of term, a volume of the complete works of Virgil. Opening it at page one he said 'learn that!' to which I replied weakly: 'Please Sir, What does it mean?' to which he replied 'Don't argue! Learn it!' I succeeded in learning four lines in one term without, however, finding out what it meant. I still remember line 1: 'Tityre tu....' et cetera. I was about ten at the time. Things improved when demobilisation released some school masters of a better calibre.⁸⁰

The Prime Minister's 1921 committee report on the Classics found that:

The Assistant Masters in most of them [preparatory schools] are poorly paid, and it almost inevitably follows that many of them are inadequately equipped for the work of teaching...they are not often men of highly scholarly attainments or strong intellectual interests.⁸¹

For some teaching was a stepping stone or a stop gap and thus tackled with little enthusiasm. Evelyn Waugh describes ' finding a positive relish in making their lessons as tedious as the subject (very easily) allowed.'⁸² Thus there were the apathetic, the inept, the violent and sadistic who contributed little to the popularity of Latin amongst the boys, as well as those who could instil a genuine love of the language. Admittedly, enjoyment was linked to success and ability:

Had I any capacity for learning Greek irregular verbs or turning arid English sentences into correct Latin I might have enjoyed myself. But as I was totally unable to master Greek or Latin syntax, which seemed to me as dull as they were difficult, I was nothing, but a problem....No doubt Summer Fields at Oxford meant well, but in those days it regarded grammatical competence as the be-all and end all of education, and if you could not construe Caesar and Xenophon - two of the dullest world authors - you could not hope for salvation.⁸³

In spite of the mixed quality of staff and the sheer difficulty of the subject Latin continued to reign in the curriculum. This was partly due to the weight of tradition and partly due to the demands of Common Entrance and scholarship exams which had in turn helped to create that tradition and ensured its survival. However its position was not totally unopposed.

⁷⁹ Rev. R.G. Wickham *Shades of the Prison House* 1986, pg.107.

⁸⁰ C. Richmond *A History of Ashdown House* 1991, pg.20.

⁸¹ *The Classics in Education* Prime Minister's Committee Report 1921, pg.129.

⁸² M. Gilbert *Prep School* 1991, pg.42.

⁸³ G. Boas *A Teacher's Story* 1963, pgs.11/13.

Holding The Fort

The time spent on classics was not only coveted by those who desired to see a broader curriculum, but also a cause for concern that other existing elements of the curriculum were being marginalised and allotted insufficient time. Skills in English were of secondary importance. Lumley Dodsworth, a pupil at Bramcote at the turn of the century recalled:

The teaching of English - particularly the appreciation and proper use of our mother tongue - was in those days a neglected subject. On the other hand Classics and Mathematics were very well taught indeed...So thoroughly did he (Mr. Ling) ground me in Greek grammar that by the time left I was not easily defeated.⁸⁴

At West Downs the main subjects other than Latin were maths and French, 'English subjects were treated lightly and Science not at all'.⁸⁵ The absence of English as a subject in the results chart for Sandroyd was noted on page 61. In an article in the *Preparatory Schools Review* in 1923 Kenneth Tindall, in line with the 1921 Prime Minister's committee's proposal that the second foreign language (French usually being the first) be started at 10,⁸⁶ suggested that Latin should be restricted to the second part of a boy's time at preparatory school and that more time be devoted to English, history and geography in the earlier years. He was at pains to point out that he was not aiming to harm the welfare of classics, as older boys will be more receptive. He also recognised the key factor: that Common Entrance requirements would have to be altered before his proposals were viable.⁸⁷ However there is little evidence that his proposals were accepted. In 1931 the *Preparatory Schools Review* notes that in a scholarship form at the top of a school the timetable was as follows:

Latin	11	hours per week
Greek (or German)	5	"
Mathematics	6	"
French	3	"
History	1	"
Geography	1	"
Scripture	1 ³ / ₄	"
Writing & Dictation	³ / ₄	"
English Literature etc.	0	
Preparation (Classics or Maths)	9	"

⁸⁴ L. Dodsworth in *Bramcote School* by P. Land. 1993, pg.12.

⁸⁵ M. Hitchens *West Downs : A Portrait of an English Prep. School* 1992, pg.31.

⁸⁶ Prime Minister's Committee *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.114.

⁸⁷ K. Tindall *The Neglect of English in The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.8, No.84, 1923, pg.391/392.

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'The demand for Latin, Greek, French and Mathematics is so high in Scholarship examinations that English is crowded out. There is no time for it. The Public Schools require none - practically.'⁸⁸ The content of the scholarship paper is reflected in the curriculum and leaves us in no doubt that the weighting remains classical.

Nor did the public schools require science or music, art or handicraft skills. However some preparatory schools did offer these to those who had the time, but one feels that they were certainly classed as non-subjects:

Music and drawing were extras, to be fitted with difficulty into the day's routine. 'Music' was confined exclusively to those who 'learned the piano' tending to involve a chilly half hour's practice at some rather soulless early morning hour.⁸⁹

We had virtually no outings and there was no swimming or tennis and hardly any music, the only instrument learned being the piano.⁹⁰

In 1933 there was an attempt to introduce science into the curriculum at Felsted Preparatory School, but as the equipment had to be brought from the senior school at the start of each lesson and then returned, this was a short lived experiment.⁹¹ In 1910 there was a plea for the inclusion of British Empire history in the curriculum, but the time taken by classics made this an impossibility.

Time for such teaching could be found without difficulty if the hours now practically wasted on 'fifth form composition', the dreary verse grinding, the hopeless efforts to acquire a sense of style in Latin Prose,...could be devoted to more fruitful studies.⁹²

In some schools it would seem that the less able were encouraged to concentrate on modern languages rather than classics. The note at the bottom of the results chart for Sandroyd on page 61 would suggest that boys not considered bright enough to cope with the difficulties of verse composition attended French lessons instead. To be labelled a 'Modern Side' boy was a stigma as the term pinpointed one's inferiority in an area that was the nub of one's education.

In my day at Summer Fields there was a group of boys, known as the 'Modern Side' and excused Greek. They were faintly despised (and knew they were) because they did not conform to the usual pattern.⁹³

⁸⁸ Mr. Cotterill, reported in *The Preparatory Schools Review* March, 1931, pg.205.

⁸⁹ M. Hitchens *West Downs: Portrait of an English Prep School* 1992, pg.76.

⁹⁰ M. Beckett Ed. *All Our Yesterdays A Hundred Years at St. Anselm's* 1988, pg.37.

⁹¹ D.J. Armour *Felsted Prep School* 1995, pg.31.

⁹² *Preparatory Schools Review* Pg.74 Vol.7, No.47, 1910, pg.74.

⁹³ A.E. Alington, Assistant Master 1922, Partner 1927-1937 in *A Century of Summer Fields* Ed. Osborne. 1964, pg.190.

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T.G. Usborne, who was a pupil at Summer Fields in the same era, also recalls the phrase 'Modern Sider' as being 'a term of abuse'.⁹⁴

Preparatory schools were entrenched in tradition from which they were loath to depart. As J.E. Austin notes "When the new head of Summer Fields announced he had "modern" ideas on education he was forced to resign and the old head wrote that the school "is improving now that they have got rid of the youngest Alington (Bobs) with his modernside ideas and hatred of Classics."⁹⁵ In 1915 E.G. North caused a flood of correspondence in the *Preparatory Schools Review* after writing an article called 'Latin For The Average Boy' (following Vassall's article in the *T.E.S.* in 1912) in which he wrote that studying Latin was a waste of time for any pupil who was not bright enough to continue to sixth form at public school and therefore would not need Latin in order to gain entry to university:

We watch the shades of the prison-house close about the growing boy, and not only do we not recognise our mistake, but we pat ourselves on the back and talk about 'mental gymnastics'. Those of us who have been public school masters see the later stages - intellectual atrophy and apathy, no apparent interest in anything but games, a loathing for literature, an inconceivable ignorance brazened out with contempt for learning. And this is largely due to the study of Latin and the consequent deification of games.⁹⁶

This prompted a defence from those who agreed that the cause of Latin was not served well when taught badly, but were swift to defend its position. W.H.D. Rouse replied that the use of the Direct Method would remove 'half the master's drudgery' making Latin a pleasure to all.⁹⁷ E.H. Parry wrote a long defensive reply in which his closing words reinforce the concept of the classics as being part of the very ethos of the elite society to which most preparatory school boys (and their parents) aspired:

The *profanum vulgus* will always be with us; let us at least try to initiate as many of our own class and of all classes as we can.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ T.G. Usborne 1916-1921 in *ibid.* pg.322.

⁹⁵ J.E. Austin *The English Boys' Boarding Preparatory School* pg.221 1995 Quoting Aldridge *Time To Spare : A History of Summer Fields* pg.121.

⁹⁶ E.G. North *Latin for the Average Boy* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.7, No.61, 1915, pg.135.

⁹⁷ W.H.D. Rouse letter in *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.7, No. 62, 1915, pg.164.

⁹⁸ E.H. Parry, letter in *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.7, No.62, 1915, pg.165.

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Whilst there were correspondents who agreed with North, it was unlikely that the ship would be rocked too far due to the basic *raison d'etre* of preparatory school education: to prepare a boy to pass the Common Entrance examination and thus enable him to enter the public school of his parents' choice. As a result of this, '...It is only the occasional school which would be bold as to claim: "Classics are not taught until a fair standard of proficiency is obtained in general subjects..it is primarily endeavoured to make boys express their ideas correctly in their own words."'⁹⁹

Holding The High Ground

In 1903 the first Common Entrance Examination, designed to streamline progress from preparatory schools to public schools was detailed in the *Preparatory Schools Review*.¹⁰⁰ The new exam was to select the most suitable boys for each school, the most prestigious schools demanding the highest standards. In the same year the marks for the Naval cadetship exam were proposed and again the emphasis was on Latin:¹⁰¹

English, writing from dictation etc.	500	marks
History	250	"
Geography	250	"
French (or German)	600	"
Arithmetic	400	"
Algebra	300	"
Geometry	300	"
Latin	800	"
Second language	600	"

Thus there was a sound reason why Latin was so important, it was the key to the next stage of life. The Reverend Wickham summed it up by saying 'The most powerful argument in favour of classics was their importance in achieving the central goal of prep school education: entry to public school. The fact was pass in classics and you'd get in.'¹⁰² The Common Entrance Examination was the goal, or perhaps the yoke under which preparatory schools worked:

⁹⁹ J.E. Austin. *The English Boys' Boarding Preparatory School 1914-1940* quoting Beachborough Park prospectus, 1930's, pg.252.

¹⁰⁰ *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.4, No.25, 1903 for details see page 50 of this chapter.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* Vol.4, No.24, 1903, pg.20.

¹⁰² Re. R.G. Wickham (Headmaster of Twyford '37 - '63) talking of Marlborough, quoted in J. E. Austin *The English Boys' Boarding Preparatory School 1914-1940* pg.218.

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I am sure that the preparatory schools which are not in the happy position of being able to exclude all but the best boys, are at present too much under the spell of the common entrance examination.¹⁰³

Of course in turn the public schools were motivated by the demands of universities.

Although Latin held pride of place in the Common Entrance examination, public schools were keen to show a more equal weighting throughout the curriculum. In 1916 a chart showing the public school policy on marking and setting their candidates was published.

Chart showing the marking policy applied to Common Entrance Exam papers by various public schools in 1916.¹⁰⁴

	Latin	English	French	Maths	Remarks
Charterhouse	100	100	100	100	
Cheltenham	200	120, 125	120	120	Boys on Classical and Modern sides placed by combined total with special reference to Latin: on Military side by Mathematics
Clifton : No numerical marks					
Eton : No marks History and Geography only tell where Latin and Greek work does not allow a very clear decision.					
Haileybury	100	150	100	100	Placed by aggregate excluding Maths
Harrow	300	350	200	300	Placed by aggregate
Marlborough	130	100	100	100	Placed by aggregate excluding Maths
Repton	140	180	80	100	Placed (usually) by aggregate
Rugby	150	180	150	-	Placed partly by aggregate in these three subjects and partly by impression of work formed & noted by examiners, especially in English subjects.
Sherborne	250	250	150	200	For placing English and Latin go hand in hand, but Latin has the greater weight
Shrewsbury No fixed marks					
Tonbridge Same maximum for each paper. Placed by general impression					
Wellington	150	200	150	175	Placed by aggregate
Winchester No fixed marks Placed by aggregate impression					

This chart would suggest that Latin, whilst important, did not overshadow the other subjects to the extent preparatory schools thought. The public schools qualified the above by adding certain comments. Charterhouse declared that 'A very poor performance in Latin tells strongly, of course, for it implies that a boy is not good enough to float in this or that form. *But high Latin marks and a low aggregate will*

¹⁰³ A. Rannie *The Preparatory School* in J. Dover Wilson Ed. *The Schools of England* 1928, pg.71.

¹⁰⁴ *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.7, No.63, 1916, pg.181.

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not get him a high form.' At Sherborne 'English and Latin go hand in hand [for placing a boy] ...Latin is bound to have greater weight in placing, because it is impossible for a boy who is very weak or backward in Latin to work with a form of which the Latin is beyond him; whereas a boy whose English is very weak, though handicapped, is able to do the same English work as boys who do much better.' Thus the influence of one's ability in Latin was already at work on one's position in the next school. It also depended on the public school in question and the most coveted prize of an Eton scholarship obviously did rely on classics in spite of their unwillingness to quantify this. Winchester initiated its own entrance examination and this too relied on classical success. At Horris Hill two boys failed for Winchester, one for Harrow and one for Wellington in the 1920's. 'A pass in Latin would almost guarantee acceptance at Winchester, Eton or any of the well known Public schools and failures in History or Geography would probably be ignored provided a pass in Latin had been gained¹⁰⁵; but the converse was not true. Common-sense therefore, if nothing else, demanded a concentration in Latin.'¹⁰⁶ The headmaster of St. Piran's, Maidenhead, was unusual in wishing to offer a broader curriculum than most and was aware of the dangers involved:

A preparatory school head master, running on these reformed lines, must be content to forgo the kudos and advertisement of a classical scholarship to Eton or Winchester, but he will have the satisfaction of knowing that in abolishing the process of 'hot-housing' the few, he thereby avoids the sacrifice of the many.¹⁰⁷

Even so, his proposed curriculum still included 16.5% Latin in the penultimate year and 19% Latin in the final year, almost a fifth of the timetable, so he did not abandon tradition completely.

Thus boys were being trained to excel in those subjects which were held in high esteem in public schools and those who were able won the greatest accolade, a scholarship to one of the main public schools:

Wigham has covered himself and his school with glory. "1st Rugby Scholar, with distinctions in Latin and Greek" is good reading for us who feared that our interruptions might have lowered our standard of work. "Proximus huic - minimo sed proximus intervallo" comes Hal Elliott.....¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Winchester did not even have a Geography department until 1975.

¹⁰⁶ J. Stow *A History of Horris Hill* 1992, pg.56.

¹⁰⁷ Seymour Bryant *St. Piran's* 1925, pg.27.

¹⁰⁸ *Sandroydian School Magazine* Aug.1919 pg.6.

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Preparatory schools who fed major public schools with first-class classics scholars benefited from reflected glory and were considered to belong to the cream of the preparatory schools. Sir James Montagu Butler, pupil at Summer Fields 1901-1902, remarked that "Certainly the Classical teaching was most efficient and very effective in securing Eton scholarships."¹⁰⁹ When other subjects began to force classics from their pinnacle, resulting in decreased time allotted to them there was the fear that such reputations would be lost:

I found myself with several fewer forty minute periods for taking Fifth Form than I had previously had of hour periods.....We did get 1st scholarship at Eton that year, but he was an exceptional boy. Other results were moderately good, but only one boy in college at Eton! Next year we had none. Measles can fairly be blamed for we had one certainty, but our reputation at Eton must have gone down with a bang.¹¹⁰

The pressure of public school scholarships was criticised in the report of the joint committee of the Preparatory Schools Association and then in *The Times* in 1934; bright boys had little chance of studying English or science due to the demands of the classical element of the exams.¹¹¹ A problem tackled with regard to Greek at the beginning of this chapter, now raises its head again. The void caused by lightening the load of Greek has been filled by Latin which has ensured continued emphasis and pressure on classics. Even those who were not coached for scholarship work were so advanced that the Headmaster of Charterhouse explained 'We have had gradually to convince the prep. schools that we do not want finished Greek and Latin scholars at the age of 13½, but simply boys who have been properly grounded.'¹¹² A comparison of Winchester scholarship papers of 1899 and 1930 published in *The Preparatory Schools Review* in 1931 makes interesting reading:

¹⁰⁹ Sir James Montague Butler in *A Century of Summer Fields* Ed. Usborne pg.53.

¹¹⁰ Geoffrey Bolton in *A Century at Summer Fields* Ed Usborne pg. 218.

¹¹¹ *The Times*, 3rd Jan 1934, pg.12.

¹¹² Classical Association *Proceedings* Headmaster of Charterhouse in the debate on the Education Report Vol.15, 1918, pg.113.

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A comparison of Winchester scholarship papers of 1899 and 1930. ¹¹³

Winchester 1899	Winchester 1930
<u>Greek</u>	<u>Greek</u>
1. Translation. Prose and easy verse	1. Prose only. Grammar and sentences from English into Greek 1½ hours
2. Greek and Latin Grammar and Latin sentences	
<u>Latin</u>	<u>Latin</u>
1. Translation. Two prose, one verse	1. Translation. Prose and verse. 1½ hours
2. Latin verse.	2. Latin prose. Grammar and sentences 1½ hours
3. Grammar and sentences set in (2) Greek.	3. Latin verse with scansion
4. Latin verse (Elegiacs)	a) and questions on rules (Elegiacs) b) as an alternative to the questions and the verses an English poem may be done on a subject set 1¾ hours
<u>French</u>	
One paper. (Translation, Sentences, Short essay)	The same, 1 hour
<u>English</u>	
1. History and Geography	1. History ¾ hour
2. Scripture	2. Geography ¾ hour
	3. Scripture 1¼ hours
	4. General (literature, General knowledge, Essay) 1¼ hours
<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>
1. Arithmetic	1. Elementary. All three subjects (Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry)
2. Algebra and Euclid	2. Advanced Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry. 1¼ hours for each paper

As expected there was more time given to the humanities in 1930, but there is no doubt as to the importance of Latin. The papers had been reduced from four to three but, all other subjects apart from Mathematics only had one paper each. Despite the discussions and agreements concerning Greek it was still part of the examination. The classics remained a weighty element of the scholarship examination.

This chapter reveals a reluctance to depart from the status quo. Preparatory schools were staffed with those who themselves had experienced a sound classical training and were comfortable perpetuating the system they knew:

¹¹³ *The Preparatory Schools Review* March 1931, pg.206.

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It is the subject most beloved by most preparatory school masters, and ipso facto, it is the subject best taught in their schools.¹¹⁴

They tended to be the most intransigent of all when faced with change as the attempts to revise the position of Greek reflect. Due to the cachet success in Greek carried, moves to lighten the load of the curriculum were slow. Masters knew that public schools still looked to preparatory schools to provide them with Greek scholars. In order to maintain standards at exam and scholarship level an early start had to be made. Thus whilst suggestions that the youngest boys were not burdened with too many new subjects at once might have sounded sensible, they were not practical. Latin continued to be a major subject, whilst English and science had a distinctly subsidiary position. This pecking order first moulded and then determined the shape of the Common Entrance examination, thus perpetuating the situation. One's showing in Common Entrance not only determined which school one went to, but also one's academic setting on arrival. In order to pass Common Entrance one's grasp of the building blocks of the language, grammar, had to be sound, so teaching reflected that need. Although there were those who taught with flair there were masters who taught Latin as a code which was drummed in to small boys through a regime of fear. When the more able bodied masters left to go to war their place was often taken by an older generation who taught using methods they were familiar with, but which probably dated from their rather distant youth. The report of a school inspection at Cothill in 1930 reflects many points discussed in this chapter and shows that, apart from the change in Greek, little had troubled the waters in the preparatory school world in the first thirty or so years of the century:

In Latin inspectors found that good results were achieved on traditional lines, but because the boys read no consecutive matter, 'a vast deal of accumulated mental stock lies unrelated to anything but paradigms.' Masters were advised to be more severe with themselves over the 'restored pronunciation',¹¹⁵ so that they can with good conscience insist on the boys using properly the guides to quantity and pronunciation provided in their tests. It was clearly felt that rather too much of the curriculum was devoted to Latin and it was suggested that the first year should be spent on a 'modern' or English course, teaching the boys grammar 'common to the languages they are likely to learn'... It was thought most undesirable to begin Latin and French in the same year.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ F. Pritchard *The History and Development of Boys' Preparatory Schools in England* M.A. Thesis 1938, pg.312 quoted in J.E. Austin *The English Boys' Boarding Preparatory School 1914-1940* pg.217.

¹¹⁵ The saga of trying to reform punctuation is explored in chapter 3.

¹¹⁶ G.Pike *The Cothill Story* 1991, pg.71.

The Public School 1902 - Early 1930's

*An English Public School is called English because it teaches Latin and Greek, public because it is private, and a school because it is mainly concerned with games.*¹

A cynical view, perhaps, but none the less there is more than a grain of truth that this was the general conception of public schools at the turn of the century. Steeped in a longstanding tradition public schools were predominately places of classical scholarship, but the heyday of the supremacy of classics was soon to be over and the curriculum of public schools undergo fundamental change. Just as the preparatory school curriculum was shaped by the demands of the public school, so the public school curriculum was shaped by requirements for entry to university, army and naval college. In the 1904 Secondary Regulations Latin was no longer a requirement for every child, provided the 'omission of Latin is to the advantage of the school', thus the pressure to teach it to all had gone. Whilst independent schools had a common aim, namely to prepare pupils for university, and discussed issues affecting them all at the Head Masters' Conference, they remained independent units. Thus by their very nature, change was slow.

[RHS]Crossman recalls that at Winchester [during the twenties and early thirties] "scholarship meant the mastery of two dead Languages; History ended with the fall of Rome; English had to be assimilated outside the classroom; French was taught by the classics masters, proudly 'using' the English pronunciation; and Science (two hours a week for most of us) was despised as the occupation of the lab boys."²

Thus twenty years after the regulations concerning Latin were made little had changed at one of the more prestigious independent schools. At some schools concessions had been made to new subjects, but the spirit and ethos of the school remained the same. At Rugby in 1915 the new physics school was completed and

the Scientists began an almost autonomous existence. The school was, however, still predominantly classical in character, and David [A.A. David, the headmaster] at his first Speech Day, declared publicly his hope that it would continue always to be so.³

¹ Quoted in *The Public Schools and the Nation* A.B. Badger 1944 pg. 19.

² V. Ogilvie *The English Public School* pg. 206.

³ J.B. Hope Simpson *Rugby Since Arnold* 1967 pg. 164.

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The modern side subjects, when introduced, were often used to enhance the status of classics by their unfavourable comparison:

The 'moderns' are some times placed under the care of a class of teachers of inferior academic rank. It is understood that the work is rather easier, and that boys of inferior abilities gravitate to it. So it comes to be regarded as less credible to belong to it; and those who keep in the ancient traditional groove, in which all the former triumphs of the school have been won, consider themselves, not only intellectually, but socially superior to those who avail themselves of the locus poenitentiae provided by the modern department. What is worse, the masters themselves often encourage this feeling.⁴

Were the reasons for maintaining the classical tradition just a head in the sand reaction, or were schools aware of the pressures and, if so, what apology did they make for their approach? One first has to consider that parents who sent their sons to public schools were not just buying an education, but ensuring inclusion in a certain stratum of society, the benefits of which should last a lifetime. The chief feature of the academic side of that education was its predominately classical content. Therefore, change would threaten the ethos, not only of individual schools, but of the elite classes who could afford to patronise them. The long association of classics with the privileged classes had conferred them with more than just educational qualities:

Subtly through centuries of infusion 'the classics have got into the blood' of many families. The honour boards in some public schools and at the honours lists in the two ancient universities tell an eloquent tale of hereditary transmission....It is hardly therefore a matter for wonder if there has been a reluctance, and in some quarters an inherited horror, against using a revolutionary axe to lop the classical branch, even where it may seem to bear no fruit.⁵

Those in state education would be able to adapt more easily, but for the elite knowledge of the classics was one of the very aspects that set them apart from the lower classes.

The only thing that distinguishes this particular type of boy [*public school boy*] from a carpenter or clerk is his devotion to games and clothing and social conduct and his extensive unilluminated knowledge of Latin and Greek.⁶

Thus those who opted a for a modern studies ('regarded at first as a refuge for the destitute'⁷) or science oriented curriculum were considered second class citizens,

⁴ J. Fitch *Lectures on Teaching* 1898 pg.52.

⁵ H.B. Gray *The Public Schools and the Empire* 1913 pg.96/7.

⁶ H.G. Wells *An Englishman looks at the World*.

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as were their counterparts in preparatory schools. This trend was frowned upon by schools who were expanding in these areas:

There is now no room for the man who would say 'Pooh, he's on the modern side,' or 'He's only a classical slacker.' Nowadays we comprise one homogenous whole and we specialise in what ever pleases us most.⁸

The influence of social pressures were felt by those who wanted to raise the profile of other subjects. E.R. Lankester thought that 'such [scientific] genius will emerge if we only get rid of our stupid social barriers and get somewhat nearer to the ideal of an open career for talent.'⁹ The fact that the classics were associated with a certain class was an embarrassment to those who wanted to promote classics for all. J.W.Mackail referred to such thinking as 'the vice in national education,' considering, in keeping with his socialist beliefs, that such class/subject connection was a thing of the past.¹⁰ However, there were those who clung to this belief as late as the 1930's:

Looking back, it seems that the only positive aspect of doing classics was being a member of an elite minority, seeking knowledge in the groves of Academe, in preference to something that would be useful in later life. We were the (sons of) gentlemen, the rest were hoi polloi.¹¹

In spite of this intrinsic distrust of the threat from other subjects, the threat was real and as W.H.S. Jones wrote in his preface to *Via Nova* 'they [classics teachers] must remember that their subject has lost the almost superstitious respect in which it was once held and that now it stands on its own merits.'¹² It was realised that any ground lost would be lost for ever, the retreat was final:

For if these studies fall, they fall like Lucifer. We can assuredly hope for no second Renaissance.¹³

The Opponents

Public schools were an important part of the battle field where the fortunes of the classical curriculum would be played out. They provided a stronghold amidst an

⁷ H.B. Gray *Public Schools and the Empire* 1913 pg.136.

⁸ *Shirburnian* March 1910 pg.222.

⁹ R. Lankester *Natural Science and the Classical System* 1918 pg.9.

¹⁰ J.W. Mackail *The Case for Latin in Secondary Schools* 1922 pg.20.

¹¹ Sherborne respondent 1928-1933.

¹² W.H.S. Jones *Via Nova* 1915 preface.

¹³ J.Postgate *Are The Classics To Go?* in *Fortnightly Review* Nov. 1902 Vol.72 pg.866.

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atmosphere of increasing apathy and even hostility towards the classics. 'All those who were interested in Classical studies must look with some alarm upon the attitude of a very large number of persons towards Classical Studies - persons who were interested in the development of education in this country.' Such were the chairman's words to the Classical Association (created in 1903 to provide a supporting body for classics and classicists) at its inaugural meeting.¹⁴ Thus the Association strove to find weaknesses within the present system and encourage a more 'modern' approach as well as justifying the position of classics. They assessed the significance of the challengers and began to prepare the ground accordingly:

Classics are now being pressed on the one side by the advance of Science, on the other by that of modern languages. The latter are its more dangerous opponents. They promise to a certain point the same advantages as the Classics: their methods are up to date and their teachers are alert and enterprising.¹⁵

Before we consider the various strategies employed to maintain interest in the classics we must first examine the claims of these 'opponents'. It would seem that they, starting from a position of relative weakness, used a 'softly, softly' approach hoping for co-operation rather than outright hostility. This tactic did not deceive:

The teachers of modern languages have not been slow to urge the claims of their favourite studies, timidly at first, but gaining in boldness at every concession granted by the Classicists, until at last many of them would fain see Latin and Greek eliminated altogether from school curricula.¹⁶

In 1916 a committee, appointed by the Prime Minister, to investigate the position of modern studies in schools was set up and this document reflects these sentiments together with a rather patronising attitude to the place of classics. The following extracts illustrate this rather well:

There should be no jealousy, but a healthy emulation between Classical and Modern Studies. That jealousy exists on both sides it would be futile to deny; but the jealousy comes largely because the provision for opportunities and encouragement is not adequate both for Modern and Classical Studies.¹⁷

We anticipate that Latin will ultimately find its chief place among the subsidiary subjects, where it will be most valuable, not only as affording direct access to the

¹⁴ Report of the C.A. of meeting held 19th Dec. 1903 *Classical Review* Vol 18. no.1 Feb 1904 pg 64.

¹⁵ J.B. Postgate "Some Friends of the Classics" *Classical Review* Vol. 17 no. 1 1903 pg.2.

¹⁶ W.H.S. Jones *The Teaching of Latin* 1905 pg 10.

¹⁷ H.M.S.O. *Modern Studies* 1918 pg.51.

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records of the ancient civilisation on which modern culture is based, but also as a key to medieval history.¹⁸

The committee accepted the argument that classics were of some value:

We are not inclined to underrate the value of Latin, which provides an admirable discipline in the logic of language, is the key to a whole group of European tongues, and is a great help in the study of English.¹⁹

It was rather a bugbear that studying classics was not only of value, but a necessity for entrance to universities, thus overshadowing the importance of Modern Studies. The existence of examinations not only determined the content of the curriculum, but also provided the ultimate reason for ensuring that classics took the lion's share of the timetable, whilst those subjects not necessary for university entrance could justifiably be assigned a lower status:

Compulsory Latin and compulsory Greek at the universities tend to impede the thorough study of any language in schools, and are a special impediment to the study of modern languages and to further studies based on these.²⁰

Therefore it was the practice for public schools to direct the brightest boys towards the classics in the hope of winning scholarships and prizes, thus 'the general education that public schools desire is distorted because of their intelligible, but conflicting craving for an annual tribute of brilliant specialists in Latin and Greek, with some concession to mathematics.'²¹ The same situation as we saw in preparatory schools continued into public schools: to ensure success with classical scholarships, the ultimate prizes, the *crème de la crème* of boys and staff were expected to work towards them. The modern side was certainly considered to be the easier option as the fictitious lazy boy writing a letter to his mother suggests:

I shall work on to the end, but if the strain gets too much it might be a sound plan for me to go on to the Modern Side next term. You might mention this casually to Pater.²²

An inspection report for Westminster suggests that this strategy was not unknown, noting that transfers from the classical side to the modern were fairly common, whereas the reverse manoeuvre was rare.²³ In some schools the modern side was still very much a second class option. At King's School, Bruton, French, German and

¹⁸ *ibid.* pg.101.

¹⁹ *ibid.* pg.91.

²⁰ *ibid.* pg.209.

²¹ *ibid.* pg.122.

²² I. Hay *The Lighter Side of School Life* 1914 pg.200.

²³ Inspection report for Westminster 1930 Ed109/4103 pg.6.

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mathematics were taught, 'but mainly as sidelines for what was called the 'Army Class' and a good classical scholar could be excused attendance.' The curriculum was 'based on the belief that a knowledge of the classics is the beginning of wisdom.'²⁴ Those who supported the Modern Studies cause desired equality with classics:

We do not wish to diminish the rewards and facilities for Classical study, but we claim for Modern Studies equal rewards and facilities and a full proportion of the best brains.²⁵

In order to achieve this the committee recommended that Latin or Greek was no longer compulsory for those studying for an Arts degree at university, thus removing for many the *raison d'être* for classics.²⁶ It was then suggested that a modern language was the first foreign language learnt, followed only by a second if the child had made satisfactory progress. Although 'in general, Latin appears to us to be best suited to supplement French.'²⁷ the final recommendations stated that 'If a second language be taken it should not necessarily be Latin.'²⁸

So whilst the publication of this report could be seen as being accommodating towards the classics, the ramifications of the recommendations and conclusions threatened substantial undermining of the position and status of classics within public schools. Their demands that classics be removed as a compulsory subject for university entrance had highlighted the kingpin that ensured a place within the curriculum for classics at public schools and then, by a sort of domino effect, at preparatory schools.

Some modern side departments never really shook off their second-class image and certain schools were beginning to witness a decline in their popularity. At Westminster in 1920 the school had been fairly equally split between the two sides. Ten years later, however, the classical side had ten forms totalling two hundred and fifteen boys, whereas the modern side had declined to five forms of seventy six boys.²⁹ However, the opposite was true at Harrow where the modern side was so popular that the distinction was abolished in 1918 in an attempt to save the classics whose

²⁴ B. Wright *Kings School Bruton Remembered* no date c1985 pg.29.

²⁵ H.M.S.O. *Modern Studies* 1918 pg.209.

²⁶ *ibid.* pg.217.

²⁷ *ibid.* pg.225.

²⁸ *ibid.* pg.211.

²⁹ Inspection report for Westminster 1930 Ed109/4103 pg.6.

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precarious position was causing 'serious anxiety'.³⁰ Latin was offered as an alternative to French or science. By 1931 a new headmaster had been appointed to 'rehabilitate the classics' and as a result of this and the timetable changes the position of the classics had been 'very materially improved'.³¹

The other main opponent was science, as W.H.S. Jones notes in *The Teaching of Latin*:

The extremists in fact maintain that the Classics are out of touch with modern life, that the culture they afford is out of date and purchased at far too high a price in time and labour. These criticisms are the inevitable outcome of the enormous strides made by natural science in recent years.³²

The growth in scientific knowledge was gathering momentum all the time and there were increasing opportunities in scientific careers. The demands of the scientists were not very different from those in the modern studies camp. They desired 'a position of no less importance...than that which is now held by the teaching of languages and history'.³³ This would require a fair share of the timetable, which would, in turn adversely affect classics:

That, although they make no proposal to displace these subjects from the curriculum of public schools, they recognise that for the attainment of their object it is necessary that time now spent on the study of Latin and Greek grammar and composition and of Roman and Greek history must be greatly diminished.³⁴

So, this opponent too was trying to wrest time from the classics which would help to topple them from their position of strength. This was precisely what the scientists wanted, to remove the status conferred to classicists and to enhance their own and so they requested

That it is necessary that the position of a boy on entering the school and in later years, should no longer be determined mainly, as it is now, by his proficiency in "Classics".³⁵

Thus equality in entrance exams to public schools and scholarships, as in the modern studies recommendations, would help bring about equality in the curriculum. The lure of classical awards was a tangible obstacle to increasing popularity of other subjects:

³⁰ Inspection report for Harrow 1920 Ed109/4197 pg.7.

³¹ Inspection report for Harrow 1931 Ed109/4198 pg.10.

³² W.H.S. Jones *The Teaching of Latin* 1905.

³³ *Report of the Committee on the Neglect of Science* 1st Dec. 1916.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *ibid.*

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Even a beast of burden is tempted to go in the direction where a carrot is temptingly thrust before its esurient mouth: and as long as the public schools and the universities offer the majority of their prizes to those who are highly trained in classical subjects, so long will there be a tendency for promising boys urged on by the demands of their schools and by the need or ambitions of their parents, to travel along the lines of the classical curriculum.³⁶

In 1908 scholarships for the modern side boys had been introduced at Wellington.³⁷ Wellington had been founded having strong links with the army, thus the majority of pupils hoped to enter the army rather than university and would not need to cross the hurdle of university entrance examinations. Entrance to the army also required proficiency in Latin and so generally the main prizes were earmarked for the classicists. In 1909 the Headmasters' Conference had requested of the Oxford and Cambridge joint examination board the standardising of the exam results as it was easier to obtain a distinction in the science subjects than in languages. The average numbers who had achieved distinctions were:

3.4%	Latin
3.9%	Greek
3.1%	French
13.4%	Chemistry
15.6%	Mathematics
17.8%	Physics

So the weighting was already in favour of the sciences.³⁸ These figures would have reinforced the opinion that sciences were an easier option and therefore those who excelled in them perhaps attracted less respect than those who excelled in the more difficult subjects: Latin and Greek.

The report also suggests that it was not only the crème of the pupils who were encouraged to study classics in preference to sciences, but that the most effective teachers were also tempted towards classics by status, a higher salary and possibly even superior accommodation provided by the school:

the classical teacher should not be more numerous nor more highly remunerated than those engaged in teaching natural sciences; in fact a good form master should be able to teach boys both natural sciences and literary subjects.³⁹

³⁶ H.B. Gray *Public Schools and the Empire* 1913 pg.98.

³⁷ D. Newsome *A History of Wellington* 1959 pg.246.

³⁸ Headmasters' Conference Dec.1909 pg.216.

³⁹ *Report of the Committee on the Neglect of Science* 1st Dec. 1916.

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That there should be more classics teachers at this stage is not surprising, as they would have been the product of the strongly classical tradition at the turn of the century supplying a real need. Up to now the most able had studied classics, therefore, the most able teachers were classicists. The fact that they were paid more which would have conferred on them a higher status than teachers of other subjects would have reinforced the elite place of the classics and those who taught them within public schools. This inequality was the subject of a particularly vitriolic attack by H.G. Wells:

This ineffective classical teaching sticks like a cancer in the timetable, blocking it up, compressing and distorting all other teaching. It not only takes time, it takes other resources. It means you must staff your school with men with a highly specialised knowledge of Greek, and the expensive item of a Greek scholar too often means a cheap science master.⁴⁰

The 1916 report from the scientists was just as demanding as that of the Modern Studies Committee and perhaps rather less tactful. The council of the Classical Association agreed that 'more time should be devoted to natural science in many schools of the older type.' However, they were not willing to accept the proposed timetable set out by the committee in which the time allotted to classics was 'manifestly too little' and the time allotted to natural science 'largely in excess of that contemplated in the specimen curriculum put forward by the association of public school Science Masters'.⁴¹ They described the timetable as 'unscientific', surely intended as a snub towards the scientists. There was also the claim that science could fulfil the role in moulding the character as classics had been seen to do:

The influence of the Old Classics, their refinement, their ideas, their language all tend to the development in the direction of goodly speech and manners - in fact tend to turn out gentlemen. But has natural science any less tendency?...Parents are seeking more and more a school where their boys will not only be taught to be gentleman and athletes, but also will obtain a start in their future avocation.⁴²

Here we also see claims that the classics were not directly vocational and thus not as useful. For many the traditional classical diet was an integral part of the initiation process fitting for their class.

The point now insisted on is, that the retention of such studies in the more aristocratic places of education is still demanded in certain sections of society by reason of an inherent vis inertiae, and by the more or less unconscious feeling that 'directly useful'

⁴⁰ H.G. Wells *A Modern Education* pg.201.

⁴¹ Classical Association council minutes 10th Feb. 1917.

⁴² *Shirburnian* July 1909 pg.138.

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subjects are more suitable for those who have to work for their living than for those whom a kind Providence has placed above the necessity of such a vulgar need....It would indeed appear ...as though *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* were the forbidding motto inscribed over the gateway of our ancient 'seminaries of useful and religious learning'.⁴³

While some parents wanted a traditional education for their sons, one that would confer the qualities and status of an English gentleman others were beginning to be rather more demanding, thinking of future careers. Their utilitarian view of education was thought to be partly the cause of the crisis at Harrow at the time of their 1920 inspection report, as they encourage sons to give up classics on entry to the school.⁴⁴ H.B. Gray considered that 'an increasing number of more enlightened parents decline to be seduced any longer by the scholarship bait.'⁴⁵ Career prospects were more diverse and some wanted to make the most of opportunities available:

...the parent. He has got quite out of hand lately. In days past things were different. Usually an old public school boy himself, and proudly conscious that Classics had made him 'what he was', the parent deferred entirely to the headmaster's judgement and entrusted his son to his care without question or stipulation. But a new race of parents has arisen...who demand... that their offspring shall be taught something up-to-date something which will be useful in an office.⁴⁶

The parent revolt is gathering force and one day soon it will kill the present method of public schools by starving them of boys.⁴⁷

As will be seen with regard to Greek, parent power was a new force with which to be reckoned. Of course there remained those who were not particularly interested in the results from the classroom, but wanted sons who would endow the family with glory won on the playing field.

...probably most of the blame is to be laid on the parent, who is very frequently far more proud of his son's athletic distinctions and of the notice which they receive in newspapers, than anxious for the growth of his mind.⁴⁸

Society was gradually changing and some families who had never needed to work were finding that their sons could not expect to live off the fat of the land, estates were being sold, or becoming smaller and employment had to be found. Public schools

43 H.B. Gray *The Public Schools and the Empire* 1913 pg.83/4.

44 Inspection report for Harrow 1920 Ed109/4197 pg.10.

45 H.B. Gray *Public Schools and the Empire* 1913 pg.149.

46 I. Hay *The Lighter Side of School Life* 1914 pg.16.

47 *Classics and the Average Boy* in *The Times* 1912 pg. 9.

48 A.W. Pickard-Cambridge *Education, Science and the Humanities, the Use and Abuse of Classical Studies* 1916 pg.30.

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were also attracting the sons of the upper middle classes who were earning sufficient money to afford public school education. There would be little in the way of inherited money for these boys, thus they were expected to follow a career. Parents were becoming aware that education could confer skills that would enable their sons to start in the work place and these skills were not always synonymous with the classics.

There was also a more subtle change afoot, Britain had an Empire on which the sun never set. That Empire had been fought for by soldiers who made heroic efforts to fulfil their duty and then governed with good judgement. Both the winning and the keeping of territory fell into the hands of the ruling classes, those who were educated at public schools:

It is on the public school boy that the Empire rests. With a mass of population inferior in numbers, in physique, in intelligence to the masses of some other countries, Great Britain owes it to the public school boy, by the standards which he sets, by the respect which he wins, by the work which he does, that she holds her grip in her place among the nations.⁴⁹

The Headmaster of Harrow defended classical education because it produced better men than modern education, men who were good at learning languages, especially Indian, important for the very many representing Britain there at that time.⁵⁰ (As the brightest boys were encouraged to take classics this is hardly surprising.) India was vaunted as displaying the work of public servants as 'fine example of the Roman tradition.'⁵¹ The very essence of public school teaching had been classical in character and this was thought to impart the necessary characteristics for an English Gentleman:

...the study of Latin and Greek is not a mental discipline only, but a moral training. The boy who comes away from school with little Latin and less Greek does nonetheless carry with him a certain acquaintance with the classical atmosphere: some visions of demi-gods and heroes: a certain high estimate of the stern and chivalrous virtues. This is a priceless acquisition.⁵²

However, just six years later these essentials were overshadowed by a need for practicality. The first world war had a profound effect on the values and attitude of society. It was a war which had shocked and provided food for thought for many.

49 'Old Westminster' contributor in *Classics and the Average Boy* a series of letters printed by *The Times* following an article written by Vasall in the *T.E.S.* and subsequent letters to *The Times* in 1912 pg.54.

50 Interview with the Headmaster of Harrow in *Pall Mall Gazette* 21 June 1901 quoted in J. Postgate *Are The Classics To Go ?* in *Fortnightly Review* Nov.1902 Vol.72 pg.867.

51 S.T. Irwin *Why We Learn Latin and Greek* Addresses to public school boys 1904 pg.9.

52 Interview with the Headmaster of Harrow in *Pall Mall Gazette* 21 June 1901 quoted in J. Postgate *Are The Classics To Go ?* in *Fortnightly Review* Nov.1902 Vol.72 pg.57.

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The carnage in the trenches had been great and more crucially it had been impersonal. There had been something rather glorious to go off and fight for one's country, meet the enemy face to face and often attempt to win a bit more of the world for the empire. The heroes of the ancients provided role models for Britain's soldiers. Ogilvie quotes the following poem written 'when war was still grim and heroic, but not crude and horrific.'

I saw a man this morning
Who did not wish to die;
I ask and can not answer
If otherwise wish I.

.....

Achilles came to Troyland
And I to Chersonese:
He turned from wrath to battle
And I from three days' peace.

Was it hard Achilles,
So very hard to die?
Thou knowest and I know not-
So much the happier I.

I will go back this morning
From Imbros over the sea;
Stand in the trench, Achilles,
Flame-capped and shout for me.⁵³

The impersonality of war in the twentieth century was less easy to associate with the classical hero and so there was a subtle move away from the ethos that the classics embodied the very essence of an English gentleman. Both officers and soldiers were killed in their thousands, war had no respect for class, the quality and sophistication of weapons was of greater importance. As Ogilvie writes:

The heroes of the Iliad did not survive the Great War. Their hours were numbered, as it was, because there is no place for heroism in a Welfare Society. The heroic ideal entails inequality, distinction, success and the desire to shine, virtues (or vices) which a socialist society is committed to repressing.⁵⁴

⁵³ R.M. Ogilvie *Latin and Greek. A History of the Influence of the Classics on English Life from 1600 to 1918* 1957 pg.154 *I Saw A Man This Morning* poem written in 1915 by Patrick Shaw-Stewart. Found on a blank page of his copy of Houseman's *A Shropshire Lad*. Full text of poem can be found in *Poetry of the Great War* Ed. D. Hibberd and J. Onions St. Martin's Press 1986.

⁵⁴ *ibid.* pg.176.

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The significance of practical skills was being recognised. If England were to retain her place as the leading world power perhaps the time had come to look beyond the classics:

So again and again she [Oxford] has sent out men to shape the destinies of the British Empire who really know little about the Empire geographically and historically, even less about its mineral, vegetable and animal products and nothing about trade and industrial question...But, unfortunately, the classical education received by so many of them...causes the bad influence of Oxford to paralyse the intellectual development of England.⁵⁵

H. Johnston considered Britain to be ill-equipped to cope with her responsibilities, as the authorities were 'hamstringing the people with an utterly rotten type of education.' The Classical Association was aware that the demands for science and technical skills would seem more persuasive now and published a letter in *The Times* in 1917 to answer its critics:

Under the shock and stress of war, the aims and methods of education have to be considered anew. This reconsideration, in the special conditions of the time, brings with it a risk that we may ignore the elements in education vital in the formation and maintenance of national character. A great war, in which material means and technical skill are the most obvious factors in deciding the issue, inclines a nation to prize these to the exclusion of forces finally even more important.⁵⁶

The letter accepted the need for scientific method and knowledge in education, but warned against the dangers of becoming too narrow. The roots of history and models of thought found in the classics are invaluable to modern education. 'Nor can we afford to neglect the noble precepts and shining examples of patriotism with which their history abounds.'⁵⁷ The letter did not attempt to claim any special privilege for classics, making the point that the teaching of classics had changed and was part of the modern education system, of which science was also a part.

The war also produced practical problems for the classics. At the Headmasters' Conference in 1916 the problem of classics for ordinands was considered. The Bishops had decided that they required a Latin qualification from ordinands who had been in the war. The conference felt that this was an unrealistic request, as many would have to work hard to revise their faded knowledge of Latin and so decided to

⁵⁵ H. Johnston *Reforms in Education II The Public Service and Education* 1916 pg.116.

⁵⁶ Classical Association *Proceedings* Debate on Education Report Vol.14 Jan 1917 pg.40.

⁵⁷ *ibid.* pg.42.

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put pressure on the Bishops to drop this requirement.⁵⁸ The Headmasters' Conference tried to exert influence over a variety of august bodies and held tremendous power within the education system. The other obvious practical problem of losing good staff to fight did not help the efforts to give the teaching of classics a new heart.

Classical education was not only under threat from these outside forces, but from weaknesses within, weaknesses which became more apparent from the threatened position and which would have to be addressed as part of the defence. These problem areas were a result of teaching methods which were out of date, dull and narrow in their aims, resulting in a lack of enthusiasm for the subject and an archaic image of it. The classics were perhaps considered to belong to another age, one which had passed and held no relevance for the present:

The whole scale of educational values must be revised with no regard whatever to traditional insincerities - "Scripture" (in inverted commas), Latin, "fagging", the birch and all the rest of our so-called punishments.⁵⁹

The fact that Latin was beginning to be considered a dinosaur was reinforced by observations of those who had experienced the traditional classical education. The rigidity of the grammar grind had dulled enthusiasm and created indifference, if not outright resentment:

...the upper classes of this country are deficient in literary enthusiasm; they will be enthusiastic about sports of all kind, racing and shooting and hunting, but not about the beauty of a poet or the wisdom of an historian! May not this be partly due to the fact that the upper classes of this country have had their literary enthusiasm knocked out of them by too much learning of Latin Grammar in early years?⁶⁰

As in preparatory schools there were masters who used fear to achieve results and these bullies did nothing to foster a positive image of the subject:

...one day when it was my turn to stand up and repeat the Latin sentences, with a flick of the stick after each word. 'The horse and the dog are friends to man' - Equus (swipe), et (swipe), canis (swipe). Allowable for one or two sentences, perhaps, but it would continue until the inevitable happened, and he grabbed the back of your Eton collar and started to shake you, still using the stick after each word.....I've seen Kelly

⁵⁸ Headmasters' Conference 1916 pg.124.

⁵⁹ J.Russell in *Advance in Co-education* Ed. Woods 1919 pg.154.

⁶⁰ Classical Association *Proceedings* Debate on Education Report, quoting page 26 of *Falernian Grapes* by J.R. Mozley Vol. 14 14th Jan 1917 pg.67.

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shake 'Brab' [a classmate] until he had burst his collar from the studs and then hurl him out of the room.⁶¹

Doubtless such methods were employed throughout by some, but there are those who remember Latin being taught with violence right into the 1940's: as one Old Shirburnian, at Sherborne between 1939 and 1943 writes, 'Latin was taught with a cane'. The ability to modernise, change and consider new methods, such as the direct method, required an energy among teachers that was lacking in the majority of cases.

...the real root of the difficulty is probably the need of many more inspiring teachers: and it is fairly certain that this is, partly at least, due to the low stipends offered for teaching.⁶²

The emphasis on the classics was criticised for being a waste of time for those who could not cope and too restricting for those who could.

Even when Latin and Greek comprised nearly the whole timetable, the results were most ludicrous. A few fine scholars were produced, whose duty it was to perpetuate the system, and that was all.⁶³

The classics did not offer a variety of mental challenges and so stunted the academic development of the able:

There is, at any rate, a general dissatisfaction with the results of a classical education. It is said that those who achieve success are often narrow in mind and mechanical in their modes of thought, and what is worse, the number of failures, who learn practically nothing and cordially detest the little that they do know.⁶⁴

In 1912 there was a series of letters to *The Times* prompted by an article in the *T.E.S.*, *Classics And The Average Boy*, written by Archer Vassall, a Harrow mathematics master. He questioned the ethics of demanding that every boy took Latin, blaming the delay in reform on 'the existence of endowments at school and college for a special knowledge of classics and philosophical mathematics'.⁶⁵ Here we see reference to the relatively hidden support for classics in the form of money. The well established schools had been set up when classics ruled supreme and money had been earmarked specifically for prizes and scholarships for those who excelled. There was no such

⁶¹ T. Hinde *Highgate School: A History* 1993 pg.94.

⁶² A.W. Pickard-Cambridge *Education, Science and the Humanities The Use and Abuse of Classical Studies* 1916 pg.31.

⁶³ Headmasters' Conference 1907 pg.69.

⁶⁴ W.H.S. Jones *Via Nova* 1915 pg.5.

⁶⁵ *Classics and the Average Boy* booklet produced by *The Times* following Vassall's 1912 article in *T.E.S.* and subsequent letters to *The Times* pg.9.

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provision for other subjects and so there was a reluctance to develop them. There was a gathering body of criticism that the education of the average boy was sacrificed for the few who were to be scholars. The staff perpetuated a system which was familiar to them, in fact as they usually went straight from university to teach there was a probability that they were less competent at their job than those in state schools who had received specialised training. The blinkered world mentioned by Atkinson fifty years ago still existed. Writing in 1913 H.B. Gray criticised those who went from school to university and back to school with 'little opportunity for imbibing ideas from the outer world.'⁶⁶ This sheltered existence resulted in little reaction in the face of recent provocation, suggesting a certain indifference or confidence that they would not be affected:

Those who believe in them [classics] are in no hurry to declare their belief upon the housetops; and if schoolmasters themselves are generally silent, it is no reason why their opinion should go for nothing.⁶⁷

In 1917 H.E. Browne noted that other subjects were reforming their teaching techniques whilst classicists lagged behind keeping 'aloof'⁶⁸, he warned that 'if we are not mended we shall certainly be ended.'⁶⁹

The doubts about the validity of learning Latin and Greek needed to be quelled, the threatened incursions from science and modern studies contained and the teachers had to be encouraged actively to promote their subject as viable within the modern curriculum. The very existence of what had been the backbone of education was being questioned and classicists accordingly prepared their defence.

The Defence

In 1903 the Classical Association was founded with a view to:

- a) Impressing upon public opinion the claim of such studies to an eminent place in the national scheme of education.
- b) Improving the practice of classical teaching by free discussion of its scope and methods.

⁶⁶ H.B. Gray *The Public Schools and the Empire* 1913 pg.90.

⁶⁷ C.E. Robinson *The Future of Education : Education in our Public Schools* in *Nineteenth Century* June 1917 pg.1323.

⁶⁸ H. Browne *Our Renaissance* in *Essays on the Reform and Revival of Classical Studies* 1917 pg.182.

⁶⁹ *ibid.* pg.122.

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- c) Encouraging investigation and call attention to new discoveries.
- d) Creating opportunities for friendly discourse and co-operation between all lovers of classical learning in this country.⁷⁰

After the 1904 regulation some saw that other subjects would now try to oust Greek from the curriculum and maybe even endanger Latin and so were keen to respond to the positive influence of the newly formed association. The association held annual meetings and published in its *Proceedings* the papers read and business conducted at those meetings. They responded to specific criticisms and as we shall see established committees to explore specific areas such as the curriculum and pronunciation. Some were critical, however, that they were not providing a clear and supportive lead:

Let the truth be told, the Classical Association had been losing the confidence of the party and of reform and of action. Now they have (thanks to Mr. H.G. Wells and others like him) been stung into action. They have at last taken a line which is certainly bold and have taken it with dignity and with apparently already a remarkable measure of success.⁷¹

The development of the Modern Languages and Science reports gave renewed incentive and need for defence. The first form of counter attack was to justify the reason for learning Latin and maintaining its position within the curriculum. Books were published whose very titles blazoned its claim, such as Valentine's *Latin, Its Place and Value in Education*, 1935, or Livingstone's *A Defence of Classical Education*, 1916. (Livingstone's book was thoroughly slated by H.G. Wells in an article in *The Fortnightly Review*).⁷² Such publications not only gave their defence, but also advice on how to teach classics in a contemporary manner. They accepted the fact that to sustain status the teaching must develop as society had developed and what had taken place in the past was no longer appropriate for the twentieth century; it was neither productive or a positive influence on their cause. In his introduction Valentine noted that:

The present Bishop of Liverpool, formerly headmaster of Rugby and Clifton (Rt. Rev. A.A. David) writes: "What are the association of the word 'Classics' to most public school men? Are they not marred for good by reminiscences of early struggles which led nowhere?"⁷³

⁷⁰ Classical Association council minutes 1903.

⁷¹ H. Browne *Our Renaissance* in *Essays on the Reform and Revival of Classical Studies* 1917 pg.171.

⁷² H.G. Wells *The Case Against the Classical Languages* in *The Fortnightly Review* 1917 pg567-574.

⁷³ C.W. Valentine *Latin: Its Place and Value in Education* 1935 pg. 88.

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He argued that classics had to be taught with reason and understanding for it was a necessary element of education. Until the eighteenth century Latin had been the password language for educated people, now it had to offer skills that were worth acquiring for themselves, no longer was the content of the subject vital, but the processes of training involved in studying:

...the claim of any subject, be it Science or Mathematics or Latin or what you will, to a substantial place in a school curriculum must depend on the training that it gives and its value in the making, not a chemist or an engineer or a priest or a lawyer, but a man and a citizen.⁷⁴

Latin did have a place within education for a variety of reasons, not least being the mental training it afforded:

The acquisition of a language is educationally of no importance; what is important is the process of acquiring it....The one great merit is its tremendous difficulty.⁷⁵

Latin must be kept in schools, because it is the greatest training that the boy can go through. The average boy's mind is a pigsty; he has got to be taught what connected thinking is and Latin is the only instrument that will do that.⁷⁶

Every language it is true, has a disciplinary value, but Latin in this respect stands pre-eminent among languages.⁷⁷

These quotes illustrate how disciplined thought was highly considered and that it was deemed possible to instil such through the correct training. The disciplined mind led to the disciplined man who would then make disciplined decisions in government or war. Classics was the best vehicle to convey this to the school boy. 'Experience has show in the past that a classical education (i.e. one that encompasses a variety of subjects, but the emphasis is on classical languages) is an excellent discipline of character.'⁷⁸

Although such training would appear to be the main advantage of learning Latin, there were other benefits to be had. The language itself was almost considered a blueprint for all languages, with a style and beauty that was not to be found in native

⁷⁴ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on teaching Latin* 1919 pg. 13.

⁷⁵ Observation of parent in 1897 quoted in F.W.Garforth *Background Studies in the teaching of Latin in Greece and Rome* no. 64 Feb. 1953 pg.18.

⁷⁶ Classical Association *Proceedings* Professor Harrower in the discussion on the best method of strengthening the position of classics in English and American Education 1921 pg. 47.

⁷⁷ W. Edwards in introduction to L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on Teaching Latin*. 1919 pg.14.

⁷⁸ *The Classics in British Education* Reconstruction Problems pamphlet no. 21 1919 pg.9.

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tongues and literature that was universally recognised to be some of the best. The study of English was still almost surpassed by the study of classics because they offered a superior virtue.

The Classics are strong where English is weak. Their beauty is simple, statuesque, severe and easily appreciated and understood by the young.⁷⁹

Learning Latin one was at an advantage when one came to tackle Greek and some held that it would help with mastering a modern foreign language later.⁸⁰

Latin, then, is to be studied primarily for its linguistic value and secondarily for the content of its best literature. Greek on the other hand, will be reserved for those few boys who have distinctive literary tastes, and the linguistic training afforded by Latin should be employed in securing a rapid and easy mastery of the other language.⁸¹

Professor Gilbert Murray even felt that the common appreciation of classical literature in Austria and Germany would help to reunite nations, 'some building up of international friendship'⁸²would occur as a result of classical education. The content of a classical education was also defended as being applicable to modern life. The political and social patterns found in Greece and Rome were reproduced to a certain extent in present society and so histories could be read and lessons learnt. Sir Frederic Kenyon, chairman of the council of the Classical Association in 1917, said:

We believe that Greek and Latin provide, in a large proportion of cases, not only the best intellectual training, but also the best foundation for the comprehension of history, of politics, of many social questions and of moral and metaphysical philosophy.⁸³

The classics were only 'dead' in respect that they were not in current usage, but the literatures and histories were 'living' their claim being 'heightened, not lessened, by the times in which we live.'⁸⁴ For these aims to be realised the subject had to be approached as something more than just linguistic puzzles, the classical world as a whole had to be studied and understood and then the educational value becomes wider. The president of the Classical Association in 1917, Viscount Bryce, noted four benefits from studying the ancient world:

⁷⁹ W.H.S. Jones *The Teaching of Latin* 1905 pg. 17.

⁸⁰ C.W. Valentine *Latin: Its Place and Value in Education* 1935 pg.48.

⁸¹ W.H.S. Jones. *Via Nova* 1905 pg. 6.

⁸² Classical Association *Proceedings* Gilbert Murray in the debate on the Education Report 1917 Vol. 14 pg.57.

⁸³ *ibid.* pg. 51.

⁸⁴ *ibid.* pg.53.

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1. 'Greece and Rome are the well-springs of the intellectual life of all civilised modern peoples.' The world of the Classics offered poetry, philosophy, art, oratory and history.
2. Ancient Classical literature is a ground on which all nations meet. 'It is therefore a living tie between the great nations.'
3. Ancient History is the key to all history, not to political history only, but to the record also of the changing thoughts and beliefs of all races and peoples.'
4. One could compare civilised societies, ancient and modern, and perhaps gain answers to present problems.⁸⁵

Although not specifically mentioned the classics continued to offer role models for the English school boy. He read about soldiers and commanders who were brave, fighting and dying for their country, he read about legendary heroes such as 'pius Aeneas', who fulfilled their duty, no matter how unpleasant the experience might be and he read about the consequences of those who only had their own interests at heart. Classics were the training for the whole character of the English gentleman and embodied the very values that were the hallmark of the same. This rather intangible line of defence was not openly vaunted, probably because it would highlight the fact that a classical education was a mark of class within society and classicists were trying to promote education for all.

So, once the lines of defence had been explained, what practical steps to alter the image and sustain interest in the classics were suggested?

The Classical Association realised that dogged determination to cling to the past would produce negative results, so they offered an olive branch to their opponents and adopted a spirit of co-operation. In 1917 they joined forces with the English, Geographical, Historical and Modern Language Associations so that they could work together and have some influence from within the enemy camp. The five associations passed the following resolutions:

1. It is essential that any reorganisation of our educational system should make adequate provision for both humanistic and scientific studies.
2. Premature specialisation on any one particular group, whether humanistic or scientific, to the exclusion of all others is a serious danger, not only to education generally but to the studies concerned.
3. Humanistic education implies the adequate study of language and literature, geography and history, which in each case should at the appropriate stage of education, go beyond the pupil's own language and country.

⁸⁵ *ibid.* pgs.21 to 25.

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4. The representatives of humanistic studies would welcome from representatives of the mathematical and natural sciences a statement with regard to those studies similar to that contained in (3).
5. In all reform of education it must never be forgotten that the first object is the training of human beings in mind and character, as citizens of a free country, and that any technical preparation of boys and girls for a particular profession, occupation or work must be consistent with this principle.
6. Subject to the above principles the Associations concerned would welcome a comprehensive revision of national education from the point of view of present needs.⁸⁶

The Classical Association was willing to accept the place of science and modern studies in education, but continued to assert that classical studies claim 'an eminent place in national education.' It resolved that 'the study of classics, as essential to any full appreciation of literature and insight into history, should be placed within the reach of all who have the capacity to pursue it,' and that 'the just claims of other studies may be met without detriment to the study of classics.'⁸⁷ In 1923 J.W. Mackail presented a paper to the Leeds and District branch of the Classical Association in which he stressed the links between Latin and English. To appreciate either one has to have a knowledge of both:

...study of Latin that is not to risk landing itself in pedantry and sterility or at least to be narrowed into a mere intellectual exercise, requires from the first and throughout, to be organically connected with the study of English. Knowledge is needed of the links and fibres which connect Latin vitally with our own language and thought, our own history and civilisation.⁸⁸

By maintaining an active and sympathetic interest classicists could monitor and answer criticism, keeping the status of classics stable.

One weighty argument against the classicists was that not all pupils both in state and independent education were suited to learning classics and those who were started at an unreasonably early age, particularly in the independent sector, when they should be concentrating on basic skills. Initially this argument was rebutted with the claim that because of its very difficulty Latin should have a head start and should certainly be the first foreign language learnt.⁸⁹ However, this stance became less sure over the next few years as discussions took place on when Latin should be started, as we saw in Chapter Two the effects of such discussions hardly reached the independent

⁸⁶ Classical Association *Proceedings* Vol. 14 1917 pg.45.

⁸⁷ Classical Association *Proceedings* Resolution for General Meeting Vol.14 1917 pg.48.

⁸⁸ J.W. Mackail *The Coordination of Latin and English in Education* a paper read to the Leeds and District branch of the Classical Association Feb. 1923.

⁸⁹ Dr. Postgate quoted in Classical Association Council Minutes Oct. 11th. 1907.

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sector as the Latin requirement at Common Entrance was the guiding force. However, public schools were making classics increasingly exclusive, as they filtered off the less able to science or modern studies, making sure of greater success in classics and veering away from the accusation that those who struggled had wasted their time.

If a pupil after eight years cannot enjoy reading for himself, or by himself, a Latin or a Greek author, then all those years have been wasted, and he had far better have spent them on shorthand or on typewriting.⁹⁰

At the opening meeting of the Classical Association in 1904 Arthur Sidgwick, himself an experienced author of Greek text books, claimed that it was a negative step to force all to learn classics, stating that the 'right people to teach Latin to were those to whom it could be taught without waste'.⁹¹ The public schools did not meet with complete success with Latin results. In 1924 only 36% of candidates for School Certificate achieved a credit. At Marlborough College the blame for this was put on the preparatory schools:

the main problem of the Latin course is to correct the defects of preliminary training and to establish sound foundations. These defects, despite in most cases a prolonged course of instruction in Latin in Preparatory Schools, are sufficiently serious.⁹²

The option to give up classics became increasingly available to the less able who did not intend to pursue education to university, but it was feared this would open the flood gates and a balance had to be struck.

It is desired to call attention to a serious danger at the present time that the classics, and in particular Greek, may lose the position in national education and the influence on national life which we believe they ought to have. In the past they may have been taught to too many boys; it would be an ill compensation if in the future they were taught to too few.⁹³

The approach to Latin was streamlined with the introduction of reformed pronunciation. In 1904 a letter was published in the *Preparatory Schools Review* in which the problem of not having a standardised system of pronunciation was raised:

⁹⁰ E. Sharwood Smith *The Faith of a Schoolmaster* 1935 pg. 137.

⁹¹ Classical association *Proceedings* Report of the Meeting of 27th May 1904, 1904 pg.44.

⁹² Inspection report for Marlborough College 1924 Ed 109/6596.

⁹³ Classical Association *Proceedings* Memorandum to the Board of Education vol. 15 1918 pg. 33.

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for boys changing schools or even masters within a school, coming across different pronunciation was like meeting a new language.⁹⁴

I think that I have been called upon to change my pronunciation of Latin seven times...to those who find Latin, in any case, a difficult subject, there is abundant evidence of the confusion which results.⁹⁵

The following year the Classical Association set up a committee to solve the problem, which had been recognised as early as 1871, but the response was so patchy as to 'make matters worse than before.'⁹⁶ The ensuing proposal was to adopt the reformed pronunciation throughout. This advice was received happily by G.T. Atkinson who hoped that the Headmasters' Conference would agree too. They did and gave the desired lead to the preparatory schools who voted to adopt it in 1908, the Board of Education having agreed upon it the previous year. However, the preparatory schools were not completely co-operative. Their attitude was a hindrance to public schools who had adopted the scheme:

...its adoption had caused little or no difficulty. In a few cases it was stated that the failure of preparatory schools to adopt the new pronunciation hindered its introduction to public schools.⁹⁷

In spite of pressure from all around the results of a questionnaire taken in 1912 show that the reactionary characteristics of the preparatory schools were again evident:

1. Have you used the reformed pronunciation of Latin in your school?
yes = 201, no = 99
2. Do you use it now?
yes = 165, no = 134
3. Do you approve of it?
yes = 122, no = 173

The accompanying comment, 'The figures throw a flood of light upon the existing muddle'⁹⁸ would suggest a chaotic approach to new ideas at preparatory schools. As with the question of teaching Greek at preparatory schools here too we see their independence and traditional character resulting in their ignoring, or perhaps genuine ignorance, of a proposed stance. The public schools were frustrated by this lack of

⁹⁴ Preparatory Schools Review letter by G.T. Atkinson No.29. Vol. IV Dec. 1904
pg.194.

⁹⁵ C.A. Alington *The Pronunciation of Latin in Greece and Rome* No.4 Oct.1931
pg.2.

⁹⁶ Classical Association *Proceedings* S.H. Butcher in the debate on the pronunciation of Latin 1905 pg.7.

⁹⁷ Classical Association Council Minutes July 20th 1912.

⁹⁸ Preparatory Schools Review No.53 Vol. 6 Dec.1912 pg.302.

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co-operation, but were also aware that they had not set a good example as there were public schools still not using it. In 1913 they agreed, again, to adopt the reformed pronunciation. When asked a year later 101 schools agreed to use it, only 9 refused. Thus a joint committee of H.M.C. and I.A.P.S declared 'it is desirable that all boys should have been taught the reformed pronunciation before they leave their prep. schools.'⁹⁹ The matter gradually settled, although there was still the occasional letter in the *Preparatory Schools Review* which fought the case for the use of the former pronunciation and reopened the debate briefly. In many public schools there was greater uniformity than in the preparatory schools, although not all sustained a consistent approach. An inspection report for Winchester in 1920 found that the new pronunciation was adopted in theory, but in some forms 'there is a lack of unity and precision.'¹⁰⁰ Westminster was similarly criticised in 1921.¹⁰¹ The preparatory schools' unwillingness to conform continued and some were still not using the new pronunciation by the 1930's. An inspection report for Winton House preparatory school in 1931 noted that 'the old pronunciation is in use. (But is not consistently followed)'.¹⁰²

A similar scheme to streamline grammatical terminology was even less successful. In 1911 a letter was sent to examining boards outlining the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology, which represented the Classical Association, the Modern Language Association, the English Association, the Head Masters' Association, the Head Mistresses' Association, the Assistant Masters' Association and the Preparatory Schools' Association. That immediate and complete reform was not possible was acknowledged, but the letter hoped that 'the board will render us assistance in getting the reformed terminology into general use by providing that pupils who use the new terminology shall be at no disadvantage in examinations which deal with languages and involve terms of grammar.' They did not require the terminology to be used exclusively, but suggested dual use to help introduce new terms. It is noted that 'Hitherto the wrs [writers] of school grammars, impressed by the differences rather than the similarities of the languages taught in schools, have assumed in order to understand properly the usage of a particular language they were under the necessity of reclassifying these usages from a point of view supposed to be specially suitable for the language under

⁹⁹ Headmasters' Conference 1914 pg.128.

¹⁰⁰ Inspection Report for Winchester College 1920 Ed 109/1958.

¹⁰¹ Inspection Report for Westminster 1921 Ed/109 pg.9.

¹⁰² Inspection report for Winton House School 1931 Ed 109/1961 pg.4.

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consideration. But this method of procedure confuses the minds of the pupils.¹⁰³ Although it was proposed as being of 'conservative character' this recommendation was not put into practice. In a letter written in May the following year Professor Sonnenschein wrote that the Oxford and Cambridge local examining boards 'will not pledge themselves to adopt reformed grammatical terminology, but will not penalise any one who uses it.'¹⁰⁴ So one would assume that boys met different grammatical and syntactical points at different times and in different ways in some schools, depending on the co-operation of departments. Such co-operation was not always forthcoming as some teachers remained obstinately insular:

Common essentials should be carefully studied before any foreign language is attempted, but because it is nobody's business to teach them they are very rarely taught....The reply generally given is: 'We do not need this knowledge for English teaching; if you want it for Latin, teach it yourself.'¹⁰⁵

The actual content of lessons came under discussion. Some were of the opinion that contemporary Latin would have greater interest for the pupil and suggested the use of such material:

Is it not quite possible in the teaching of Latin to take incidents from the life with which the boys themselves are perfectly familiar - from their own school life, or from the scenes going on around them either at school or in the holidays and let them turn these into simple Latin?...I have myself found that this lightens a good deal of the labour and of the time occupied in teaching small boys Latin.¹⁰⁶

Some wrote books about familiar topics in the hope that this would grab the attention of pupils, Professor Sonnenschein's *Ora Maritima* about a boy's holiday at the seaside being one example. However, this deviance from authentic Latin was frowned on by others who felt that as soon as possible the pupil should experience classical authors. L.W.P. Lewis wrote:

Hence I eschew all books which are so diligently written with a view to making a boy's work interesting to him - all books which contain an account of football matches done into Latin, 'Fables of Orbilius', et hoc genus omne. All these books are on the wrong linesin their hearts the boys despise them.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Draft of letter to examining boards, Classical Association archives.

¹⁰⁴ Classical Association Council Minutes May 1912.

¹⁰⁵ W.H.S. Jones *Via Nova* 1915 pg.37.

¹⁰⁶ Mr. F.J. Terry in Classical Association *Proceedings* in discussion on the teaching of classics 1905 pg. 32.

¹⁰⁷ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.14.

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The 1921 Prime Minister's committee report urged caution concerning the use of such texts, particularly with those who would not carry Latin beyond the age of 16 and so time was short:

...We deprecate too much use of the numerous ingenious school books containing little scenes or stories of modern life cast into Latin or similar scenes of ancient life.¹⁰⁸

There was great discussion as to which authors were most suited to study. In 1907 the curricula committee of the Classical Association suggested that classical authors should be considered as a literary whole and books, the Aeneid in particular, be read in consecutive order.¹⁰⁹ The suggested progress in a secondary school is a reader for the first year, simplified narrative passages for the second, easy Caesar and Cicero in the third and finally whole books of Cicero, Livy, Tacitus (Agricola), Vergil, Pliny letters or Horace's Odes. The public schools were exhorted to aim for 'intelligent reading of more important Latin authors.' This would also fulfil the aims of learning from the ancients mentioned earlier. Once one moved away from original sources this line of defence was no longer valid. Fourteen years later the Prime Minister's committee report of 1921 advocated judicious selections of texts, in particular; Catullus, Tibullus and Livy as well as the tried and tested Caesar, Ovid and selected Odes of Horace. Narrative or descriptive work was to be preferred to more nebulous philosophical writings.¹¹⁰ However, it was noted that because the children were reading selections of text these sections must be put into context and their place within the literary work as a whole understood,¹¹¹ a requirement that would take up more time. As with the preparatory schools there was criticism for those who failed to treat the language as a whole, but concentrated on the essence rather than the content:

...the old tradition still has too strong an effect on the general character of the teaching and not enough attention is paid to the literary aspect and the subject matter of the authors read.¹¹²

Likewise Greek texts were to be studied with emphasis on their content, not just used as a vehicle for grammar work, as one schoolmaster when questioned illustrated:

108 *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.152.

109 *Classical Association Proceedings* Professor Sonnenschein in the discussion on the teaching of Latin following the report of the Curricula Committee 1907 Vol 5 pg. 20.

110 *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.153.

111 *ibid.*

112 *Inspection report for Westminster* 1921 Ed109/4102 pg.9.



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'I suppose you suggest to these boys sometimes that this is some of the finest literature in the world?'

He replied 'Oh! literature - Yes - I suppose it is; but it is splendid material for teaching grammar.'¹¹³

A tendency to concentrate on grammar almost to the exclusion of any other aspects of the language was common. H.B. Gray considered the root cause of this to be the existence of Kennedy's *Latin Primer* which 'encouraged the classical master to revel in the intricacies of the oblique compliment, the double interrogative, and the prolative infinitive, the nominative pendens, et hoc genus omne.'¹¹⁴

Lucian was a popular author, but it was not considered that his writings gave a good insight into Greek life. Thucydides or Plato's dialogues were more suitable, or, if difficulties caused by different dialects were ignored, Homer and Herodotus. 'To hurry on young pupils prematurely to the reading of Greek plays' was not approved of although some of Euripedes' poetry could be tackled. Once one was teaching the accomplished classicist Greek and Latin authors could be read concurrently and quickly so that a complete picture of the classical world was built up. Books were to be selected to 'relate to each other by way of similarity or contrast'.¹¹⁵ The main object in all these recommendations is that the texts are enjoyed for the literature they embodied and studied in the context of the societies which produced them, echoing the memorandum sent to public schools by the Classical Association in 1906 which stated that:

in the lower and middle forms of boys' public schools Greek should be taught only with a view to the intelligent reading of Greek authors.¹¹⁶

This approach, concentrating on literature rather than on grammar was not shared by all as Mr. Houghton of Rossall School writes in his complaint to Professor Sonnenschein in October 1909

I am entirely out of sympathy with its policy of abolishing Greek grammar...I am more persuaded as time goes on that a sound knowledge of grammar is an absolute essential to the teaching of Greek literature.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Mr. Pickard-Cambridge in *Classical Association Proceedings* in the debate on the Education Report Vol.14 1917 pg.72.

¹¹⁴ H.B. Gray *Public Schools and the Empire* 1913 pg.154.

¹¹⁵ *The Classics in Education* pg.155.

¹¹⁶ *Classical Association Proceedings Report of Council*, 1906 pg.39.

¹¹⁷ *Classical Association council minutes* Oct 28th 1909.

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The committee replied that they were not abolishing grammar, only 'modifying the manner in which it should be taught'.¹¹⁸ There was bound to be a reactionary element who would question and ignore any change of traditional methods, after all grammar papers existed in the exams which provided justification enough for some to treat grammar almost as a separate subject.

One important attempt to make the classics come alive was the use of the direct method. Those who advocated this method treated Latin as a living tongue and actually spoke the language and expected their pupils to respond in Latin. Probably the greatest champion of this was W.H.D. Rouse at the Perse Grammar School in Cambridge. He started developing this method there 1902 and in 1906 he gave his reasons for promoting it to the Curricula Committee of the Classical Association:

1. It is the natural way of communicating.
2. It is alive so it demands attention.
3. It is far faster than writing and mistakes can be spotted immediately.
4. It has meaning and is relevant to those who are involved.¹¹⁹

W.H.S. Jones [a member of staff at the Perse School] wrote *Via Nova*, a book which explains the method and theory of the direct method. He recognised that the reality has its problems, not least being the lack of enthusiasm or spirit of adventure from the teacher.

The direct method demands brightness and vivacity... His [the teacher's] most deadly sin and his greatest danger lie in being dull.¹²⁰

The reformed method never became really popular and reservations were held about its efficacy. It failed to provide appropriate training to pass exams, which Rouse had abolished at his school, and therefore was not a serious option in the exam oriented atmosphere of both preparatory and public schools.

Whatever method one used the pupil should not only learn the language, but have an understanding of the people who spoke it. This required learning and enthusiasm on the part of the teacher:

¹¹⁸ *ibid.* Nov 1st 1909.

¹¹⁹ Quoted in C.A. Stray *The Living Word* 1992 pg.20.

¹²⁰ W.H.S. Jones *Via Nova* 1915 pg.158.

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...no classical professor is doing his duty unless he aims at infusing a human and living interest into his whole task and into every part of it.¹²¹

To make classics more attractive and to fulfil the aim of putting work into context teachers were urged to make more use of visual aids. The most obvious, and perhaps accessible, example of these was illustrated books. One such book, Hill's *Illustrations of School Classics*, reviewed in 1903 in the *Classical Review*, was described as making 'the study of the classics human'.¹²² In 1913 the Classical Association formed a committee to consider setting up a collection of archaeological materials for use by schools, this was extended the following year to include lantern slides of sites, maps, diagrams, models weapons etc. The 1921 Prime Minister's Committee Report proposed that each school should have its own collection of slides, but the following recommendation would suggest that this had been restricted by financial restraint;

With regard to many we would urge that, as every school which teaches science is expected to provide funds for the erection and equipment of laboratories, so every school which teaches classics should be expected to make at least some provision for the formation of a classical collection.¹²³

With the cut backs in public spending of the early 1920's and the depression later in the decade it would have been improbable that state schools had cash to spare for such projects. Some independent schools were sufficiently endowed to survive such financial crises with ease, but whether they were open to such suggestions was another matter. As we shall see in Chapter Five some already had fine collections which they chose to ignore as a teaching aid. It was hoped that study of art, archaeology etc. would be an integral part of every classics course, slides and illustrations being used where relevant. In 1926 the Classical Association abandoned an attempt to create a central schools' library list which would collect a comprehensive list of books on classical subjects to be 'of service even to the best classical schools.' However, the different requirements of different schools proved to be too much of an obstacle and it was suggested that a reputed scholar was invited to undertake the task.¹²⁴ It is hard to assess to what extent schools of this period made use of material other than the main text books. Some did invite visiting speakers to give lantern slide lectures. Mr. Kinchin Smith, from the Institute of Education, who offered a variety

121 H. Browne *Our Renaissance* in *Essays on the Reform and Revival of Classical Studies* 1917 pg.125.

122 *Classical Review* vol 17 no. 8 1903 pg.396.

123 *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.165.

124 *Report of the school libraries committee* Classical Association archives.

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of lectures quotes a testimonial from the Head Master of Eton, Mr. Alington, in which he says:

Mr. Kinchin Smith gave an excellent lecture at Eton on Ancient Greece. He has many admirable slides and his wide knowledge of the subject enabled him to interest greatly an audience by no means entirely composed of classical scholars.¹²⁵

In promoting his services Mr. Kinchin Smith explains that 'few can visit Greece itself, the camera today reveals that something of the ancient spirit still lives in the monuments and countryside.'¹²⁶ Public schools invited a variety of speakers and so such an experience would have been a rare occurrence for the pupils. Unfortunately the very threat of a diminished timetable meant that there was less time in which to squash the syllabus and so these peripheral, more interesting aspects were not going to be given a high profile.

One peripheral activity which did claim time in some schools was drama, particularly the production of Greek plays. Play acting was particularly important when using the direct method, where quick improvised plays were suggested:

Children love to act and this natural instinct must not be neglected by the teacher of languages.....No scenery and no dresses are necessary: a few properties may be available, or a chair may be used as a throne, a ruler a sword. But plays which prove popular may well be practised more thoroughly, with dress and properties for occasions like speech day.¹²⁷

The following comment from the 1921 report suggests that plays tended to be highly polished performances produced as a showpiece for the school whereas a less professional in-house production would be equally beneficial:

We especially welcome the occasional acting of a Greek or Latin play, not only in the rather oppressive atmosphere of 'speech day', but as a domestic performance offered to the school.¹²⁸

The best known classical play productions were the annual performances enjoyed by visiting schools at Bradfield, which had constructed its own Greek theatre in the grounds. Sherborne School magazine records sending a party in 1904 which

125 Written 16.7.'32 Found in Classical Association archives.

126 Classical Association archives 1938.

127 W.H.S. Jones *Via Nova* 1915 pgs. 78,79.

128 *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.165.

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appreciated their outing, coming back 'full of admiration and even with envy.'¹²⁹ Sherborne itself performed Greek plays, put on at Commemoration day and made intelligible to those who did not understand the language by the skill of the actors, or so the reviewer would have us believe:

A word must now be said of the acting. There was one Greek scene from the Frogs of Aristophanes, for which the Head master seemed to apologise to the audience, 'there must' he said 'be Greek.' But no apology was due. Greek verse can be made entrancing and, we suppose, convulsing also, even to those who understand no Greek by skilful acting and perfect intonation.¹³⁰

However, there is no mention of another performance until 1919 so one would assume that this was either not news worthy enough to be included in the magazine, or that the performances of plays were few and far between.

The Question Of Greek

In 1902 Dr. Gray, of Bradfield, put before the headmasters' conference a proposal that was to open the debate on the position of Greek for the first time since a conference in 1890 defeated the motion to have only one compulsory language for university entrance by a tiny majority. He moved that:

1. In the opinion of this conference the retention of two ancient languages as compulsory subjects for entrance into the universities of Oxford and Cambridge is detrimental to the cause of education in England, and that instead thereof
2. The following subjects should be obligatory:
 - a) One ancient and one modern language, no set books in either being prescribed.
 - b) Algebra and Geometry up to the standards of the higher certificates.
 - c) A fair knowledge of one branch of Natural Science.
 - d) English composition and English History.¹³¹

In Germany 30,000 men attended university, 0.06%, whereas in Britain 5,000 men attended, 0.016%. Dr. Gray felt that the requirement of Greek was the hurdle over which many failed to jump:

How many intellectual careers had been dwarfed and checked by this seemingly impassable stumbling block; and how many intellectual crimes had been committed in the name of Greek?¹³²

¹²⁹ *Shirburnian* July 1904 pg. 254.

¹³⁰ *ibid.* July 1904 pg. 257.

¹³¹ Headmasters' Conference 23rd Dec. 1902 pg.42.

¹³² *ibid.* pg.44.

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The following reference to those who were not able to afford to attend an independent school, and so did not have the same opportunity to attend university shows an interesting reflection of changing social attitudes and conscience

They recognised now, even more than they did in 1890 that if these two ancient universities were to be the centres of intellectual light and leading there must be no objection urged against them of being the pleasure ground of an exclusive class, but that they must be the free domain of all classes who were satisfied to submit to some severer intellectual test...Our universities only touched an ornamental fringe of society and were not woven into the fabric of English life.¹³³

However, the Conference feared such sentiments would be thought too bold by the universities who would resent a seemingly undue interest into their matters. Anxieties were voiced that if Greek was no longer compulsory, Latin would follow suit. In view of these areas of opposition it was decided to wait until there was some feed back from schools and a crystallising of thoughts.

In the 1903 conference Dr. M.J. Rendall, from Charterhouse, raised the issue of the removal of compulsory Greek at universities again. He had broached the matter with the universities who had agreed to discuss the matter, 'with assurances that any clear lead passed by a substantial majority of the conference would be certain at the present juncture to carry very great weight and might be expected to lead to positive practical change in the university regulations.'¹³⁴ With the possibility of Greek becoming marginalised in preparatory schools the public schools had to make preparations for boys who were not able to complete a Greek course at their schools. Thus representatives were given the following instructions to discuss with the universities:

1. The requirement of Greek as a compulsory subject from all candidates seeking entrance into the universities was untenable and educationally indefensible.
2. Any schemes involving or resulting in the elimination of Greek from secondary schools would be disastrous.
3. The multiplication of pass subjects is mischievous and leads to the lowering of standards and superficiality of type.
4. Reform must proceed upon the lines of introducing options, restricting the number of subjects that may be offered and demanding a reasonably high standard in those presented.¹³⁵

¹³³ *ibid.* pg.44.

¹³⁴ Headmasters' conference 1903 pg.3.

¹³⁵ *ibid.* pg.3.

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These proposals had sound support from the public schools. A questionnaire asking two questions had been circulated. To the first question 'Do you consider some relaxation of the present compulsory requirements of Greek desirable or not?' 53 schools had voted in favour and only 6 against, as 'the time for education was far too restricted for any one subject to continue to hold a monopoly in the field of education.' In response to the second question 48 to 8 agreed that such 'relief should be limited to candidates for honours, in the non classical fields of study.'¹³⁶ The discussion was not totally without its opponents: Dr. James of Rugby thought that the real benefits would be monetary and culture would be the victim. He thought that Greek would be lost from the curriculum within twenty years:

The twentieth century would be marked as a period when the English nation turned its back on the poetry and philosophy and the art of Greece, and set before it as its ideal Carthage with its harbours and its merchantmen, and even Chicago with its dollars and its sausages.¹³⁷

The opinions of parents was a consideration to be remembered. Parents were asking that their sons follow the modern rather than the classical side, Mr. James of Malvern College thought that 'the average British parent had become hostile to Greek, and indeed to any study which had not in his view a direct bearing on his sons future calling.'¹³⁸ It is interesting to note that at this early stage some parents were willing to forego the cachet of a classical education in favour of something they saw as being a practical use to their sons. For those who would only achieve mediocre results this was a more attractive choice. In the event the motion to waive the necessity of Greek for those not intent on a classics degree was passed by 33 votes to 6.

In 1905 the Headmasters' Conference was made aware of work being done by the Classical Association to consider the future treatment of Greek in public schools. As time and opportunity for exploring Greek were becoming narrower, there were plans afoot to concentrate on the literature and make 'Latin the vehicle for linguistic discipline'.¹³⁹ The reasoning was that the 'average boy', who was not going to continue his study of Greek to university, might enjoy the subject more and therefore study it because he wanted to know that the obligation to study it was removed. At this stage the matter received no further discussion, in view of the fact that the

¹³⁶ *ibid.* pg.4.

¹³⁷ *ibid.* pg.10.

¹³⁸ *ibid.* pg.13.

¹³⁹ Headmasters' Conference 1905 pg.32.

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Classical Association report was not yet public. However, the mention of it was a sowing of the seed, giving the conference time to mull it over and consider its attributes.

The practice of the Headmasters' Conference to vote on and discuss the same issues more than once, as they did concerning the requirement of Greek at Common Entrance and scholarship, was in evidence again as they discussed the issue of the requirement of Greek for entry to some, but not all, university degrees in 1910. The aim of making education classless was again promoted:

We do not want to impose a system which would in anyway handicap boys coming from what are called the working classes.¹⁴⁰

For parents whose sons had failed to gain a place to Grammar school and who could afford to pay public schools offered a respectable solution. Thus public schools were attracting boys from a wider class of clientele, as every boy ensured greater financial security the less stable schools were loathe to turn them away although they came without the traditional preparatory school grounding.

The trend that a classical education was no longer so highly sought after by parents was again made apparent by W.H.D. Rouse:

The only thing which the English parent cares about is: What will be useful to my son in his future career? and if there is one thing which above all he hates it is Greek - I only speak of my experience.¹⁴¹

It was a dangerous move for parents to be allowed the chance to opt out, they were beginning to show an unwelcome interest in their son's education. Due to the tremendous unpopularity of Greek, Rouse feared that if the motion were to be passed Greek would disappear entirely. The cause of Greek had received few favours from the treatment it had received at the hands of some schoolmasters. E. Sharwood-Smith recalls one master who used to set the writing out of *τυπτω* in the active, middle and passive voice as a punishment, a task taking at least three hours. (However, he would only throw the 'lines' away, so that the culprit could retrieve them from the bin and save them for another occasion.)¹⁴² Boys who had seen Greek regarded in such a way were unlikely to foster any positive feelings as to the value of it for their sons.

¹⁴⁰ Headmasters' Conference 1910 pg.12.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.* pg.19.

¹⁴² E. Sharwood-Smith *The Faith of a Schoolmaster* 1935 pg.94.

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However, in spite of Rouse's protestations the motion was carried by 29 votes to 14, reinforcing their previous decision. The matter was discussed again in 1913, some of those who had voted for it in 1906, now deciding to vote against it, and yet again in 1916. By this final vote the motion that 'Greek ought not to be retained as a compulsory subject for the entrance examinations to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge' was carried 43 to 4, almost a unanimous decision.¹⁴³

The result of these constant discussions and votes was that the universities did change their entrance requirements, Cambridge in 1919 and Oxford in 1920, which, in turn, effected the position of Greek in public schools:

...the position regarding Greek in the majority of public schools has not only changed a great deal in the course of the last few years, but is likely in the immediate future to change very rapidly, perhaps even violently...the abolition of compulsory Greek already carried into effect at Cambridge and likely to be carried into effect here [Oxford] before long...will unless we are prepared to meet it, lead to a great falling off in the number of boys who will take up Greek at all.¹⁴⁴

Greek was becoming a specialised subject, only available to the brighter boys and this is noted by the 1921 report:

The position of Greek is much less favourable and is indeed critical. Its hold on the preparatory schools is, as we shall see later, precarious; it is not taught to an increasing proportion of boys in Public schools.¹⁴⁵

The report claimed that it was the duty of public schools to provide beginners Greek due to the pruning of Greek from some preparatory schools' curricula. However, now the option of not doing Greek was available, it was being refused by those who were capable of mastering it.

In all public schools Greek has ceased to be a compulsory subject for the average boy, and we have no desire to quarrel with the fact, but it seems to us clear that many boys are now ceasing to learn it or are given no opportunity of beginning it who are eminently fitted to profit by the study.¹⁴⁶

This probably referred to only certain schools, as just three years earlier the President of the Board of Education had said in reply to a deputation from the Classical Association:

¹⁴³ Headmasters' Conference 1916 pg.71.

¹⁴⁴ Sir Arthur Hort Classical Association *Proceedings* Debate on the Greek curriculum Vol. 16 1919 pg.35.

¹⁴⁵ *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.58.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.* pg.121.

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Your point, as I understand it, is this, that in our ancient public schools, classical studies are forced upon many boys who are quite unfit to profit by them.¹⁴⁷

So there was obviously a rather patchy approach to the selection process. As with the defence gathered for Latin, attempts were made to publish the case for Greek. In 1923 J.W. Mackail gave a lecture in Melbourne, Australia, in which he noted that 'there has been a lamentable falling-off both in the provision for teaching Greek and in the number of pupils learning it.'¹⁴⁸ His speech was entitled 'What Is The Good Of Greek?' and emphasised the importance of learning Greek. He was particularly sceptical of the value of approaching Greek through translation due to the nature of the language that can not be carried over in a translation. This falling-off in the provision of Greek in schools was particularly true in the schools which had a strong and well established modern side and were not in the highest rank of public schools. Marlborough College fell into this category and in 1924 the first Greek class was only offered when a boy had been at the school for at least two years. Then one class of twenty five boys out of four classes took Greek and continued it to the Classical Vth and VIth. There appears to be no junior Greek at all. Thus those who had studied it at preparatory school were left to forget it for two years.¹⁴⁹ As predicted by some the inevitable marginalisation of Greek was beginning. Greek had lost its safety net: the university entrance examination. Now there would be little reason for non classicists to take it in public schools. This in turn filtered down to preparatory schools, the perceived pressure for good Greek pupils by public schools was waning and as we saw in Chapter Two by the 1930's schools which did not aspire to feed the top public schools had let Greek slip almost entirely from the curriculum. Without the exams the subject had lost its grip on the syllabus.

The Reality

So, to what extent had the retreat from the territory that had been 'too large'¹⁵⁰ for the classicists been achieved? Was it 'in order and without panic' or were the worst fears of those conducting the defence realised? In 1905 the Curricula Committee of the Classical Association reported on its brief 'to consider in what respects the present

¹⁴⁷ Classical Association *Proceedings* Report of the Deputation to the Board of Education Vol.15 1918 pg.31.

¹⁴⁸ J.W. Mackail *What is the Good of Greek?* 1924 pg.10.

¹⁴⁹ Inspection Report for Marlborough College 1924 Ed 109/6596.

¹⁵⁰ Professor Murray in *Report of the Proceedings at the Imperial conference of the Teachers' Associations* July 15th 1912.

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school curriculum could be lightened and means of instruction improved.' They had investigated a variety of schools, the first group of which were the larger boys' schools. Some of these were the same as those who gave a detailed breakdown of use of time for the 1921 report. So in the chart below we can compare the time devoted to classics after a space of sixteen years and calculate the rate of erosion:

Chart showing the hours certain schools gave to classics compared with a, other subjects in 1921 and b, the position in 1905.¹⁵¹

	Average number of hours given to Classics	Average number of hours given to other subjects.
1905		
Lowest form in which Greek and Latin both studied ; 13+ yrs.	12 hours 46%	14 hours 53.5%
Highest form ; 16 yrs.	15 hours 57.5%	11 hours 42.3%
1921		
<i>Winchester</i>		
Lowest form	8 hours Latin (Greek not started until 'middle part')33%	16 hours 66.6%
Highest form	18 hours 72%	7 hours 28%
<i>Eton</i>		
Lowest form	10 hours 41.6%	14 hours 58.3%
Highest form	13 hours 59%	9 hours 40.9%
<i>Harrow</i>		
Lowest form	6 hours Latin (Greek not started until 'remove')20.6%	23 hours 79.3%
No detail given for highest forms.		
<i>Charterhouse</i>		
Lowest Form	7 hours Latin (Greek not started until later) 24%	22 hours 75.8%
Highest form	16/17 hours 55%	12/13 hours 44.8%
<i>Cheltenham</i>		
Lowest form	13 hours 46.4%	15 hours 53.5%
Highest form	17 hours 60.7%	11 hours 39%
<i>Marlborough</i>		
Lowest form	6 hours (Greek not started until 'Middle school) 19.3%	25 hours 80.6%
Highest form	22 hours 70.9%	9 hours 29%
<i>Average for these 6 schools</i>		
Lowest form	8.3 hours 29.6%	19.16 hours 70.9%
Highest form	17.2 hours 63.7%	9.6 hours 35.5%

¹⁵¹ Information from *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.293-5.

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The schools specifically mentioned were those that had also been investigated in 1905. The 1921 Report is not an entirely accurate source of comparative information here because the schools replied with details of time, or of periods per week which may well have been less than an hour long.

The first observation is that Greek is no longer necessarily part of the curriculum in the first years at public school, reflecting the removal of Greek as a university entrance qualification. The average amount of time lost from the timetable is 29.6%. However, if we look at those schools which have maintained Greek in the junior forms they have retained a similar amount of time. In the higher forms the classics have continued a strong hold over other subjects, and in fact there is an increase of 6.7% in time. These figures are not hard and fast due to the imponderables mentioned above, but they do give an indication that in public schools Latin had conceded little ground in its retreat. The 1921 Report reinforces this:

Latin so far occupies a fairly secure position. It is taught in all preparatory schools and in the middle and lower forms of most secondary and public schools. It is, however, threatened by a movement to make compulsory in the earlier stages the attainment of a definite standard in Science and by the strong support given in some quarters to the theory that only one modern language should generally be taken before the age of sixteen.¹⁵²

However, there were those who felt that the state of health of the classics was not quite so rosy as the Prime Minister's committee thought.

You gentlemen hold the last citadels of classical learning. Practically speaking it has died out in a large number of our secondary schools... Today those who support and advocate the claims of the classics as the finest instrument of education are not in the dominant position of former days, but rather that of supplicants.¹⁵³

What ground had the interlopers gained during this time? The 1921 report does include the number of advanced courses being taken in classics, science and mathematics and modern studies since their establishment in 1917:¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.57.

¹⁵³ Bailey discussing the 1921 report *Headmasters' Conference* 1922 pg.37.

¹⁵⁴ *The Classics in Education* 1921 Appendix B pg.284

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	1917-1918	1918-1919	1919-1920	1920-1921
science and maths	82	155	186	208
classics	20	27	29	35
modern studies	25	78	118	142

There is a faster rate of growth in advanced courses in science and maths and modern studies than in classics. However it must be remembered that this table reflects the advanced courses throughout the education system and classics had a far less sure foothold in the state system of schooling than in the independent sector. Examination statistics overleaf reveal the numbers taking Lower and School Certificate remaining constant, but do reflect the above trends concerning those taking the Higher Certificate. They also show a decline in numbers of students taking Greek.

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Charts showing the percentage of public school candidates who took Latin and Greek at exam level, Oxford and Cambridge Board ¹⁵⁵

Higher Certificate

	1902	1906	1909	1912	1916	1928
Total No. of candidates	2,296	2,044	2,361	2,062	1,607	2,247
No. offering Latin	777	1,084	1,097	977	685	527
% offering Latin	33.8%	53%	46.5%	47.3%	42.6%	23.5%
No. offering Greek	476	882	685	865	529	527
% offering Greek	20.7%	43.1%	37.5%	41.9%	32.9%	23.5%

Lower Certificate

	1902	1906	1909	1912	1916	1928
Total No. of candidates	1,090	1,046	1,084	1,168	2,062	1,637
No. offering Latin	746	668	755	673	597	1,169
% offering Latin	68.4%	63.0%	68.4%	57.6%	56.2%	71.4%
No. offering Greek	402	393	431	304	746	308
% offering Greek	36.9%	37.6%	39.7%	26%	23.2%	18.8%

School Certificate

	1906	1909	1912	1916	1928
Total No. of candidates	314	431	630	685	6,490
No. offering Latin	43	295	502	483	4,350
% offering Latin	13.7%	65.4%	39.7%	69.5%	67%
No. offering Greek	3	203	403	365	1,241
% offering Greek	0.95%	45%	63.9%	52.5%	19.1%

¹⁵⁵ Charts made using data provided by the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board and included in A.G. Geen *The Teaching of Classics* M.Ed Thesis 1974 pgs 230,237.

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The rise in those taking Lower Certificate Latin by 1928 suggests that those boys who could not cope were being allowed to set their sights lower than School Certificate. These figures possibly reflect a greater number of girls taking exams, girls who would not have had the time to reach the standard required by School Certificate. The low figures for School and Higher Certificate in 1902 are due to the recent creation of the exams in 1917. Between 1906 and 1928 those taking Higher Certificate Latin has dropped by 19.6% and the number taking Greek has dropped by 25.5%.

Latin was under a steady barrage of attack and threats to its position. Modern studies and science both claimed a greater share of the timetable, but were held in check by the fact that they were not required in entrance examinations to the same extent as classics. Proficiency in classics had, to a large extent, been related to one's status at school and had a bearing on one's future being considered to equip a man with the qualities necessary to administer the empire. The First World War highlighted the a need for technological and scientific skills, thus creating a diversion to the classical ethos of public schools. Classicists defended their position, usually with a spirit of reconciliation rather than hostility. From the relatively secure position created by entrance requirements it was safe to accept that other subjects had some grounds for complaint. The singular benefits of classics were explained and more practical moves were made to sharpen their image:

- Streamlining the system of pronunciation was encouraged and on the whole successful.
- Teachers were exhorted to select texts carefully and to ensure that they appealed to boys as literature, rather than as isolated pieces of Latin.
- The use of visual aids and drama were suggested as means by which lessons could be enlivened and work set in context.
- Some advocated the Direct Method, treating Latin as a living tongue.

A concession was made in the case of Greek, after much debate it was removed as a university entrance qualification. Although some feared that this was signing its death warrant, an inevitable step given the pressure being put upon Latin.

As in preparatory schools, the real changes had to take place in the classroom and that depended on the staff. The Classical Association took a variety of initiatives and was influenced by some perspicacious men. The Headmasters' Conference was an influential body, which attempted to sway both preparatory schools and universities. However, each school was an individual unit and whilst some welcomed reform others

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ignored it. The London branch of the Classical Association held a series of lectures each year and yet often the attendance was embarrassingly poor.¹⁵⁶ It was hard to generate a spirit of revival in such traditional institutions as public schools, although they showed more interest than the preparatory schools, the desire to safeguard their future being an important aspect. Classics, having lost its monopoly, remained an important player in the curriculum. On entering Marlborough College in 1924 every boy spent 25.8% of the time studying Latin, only when he got to the middle school could he opt for geography instead.¹⁵⁷ After all Latin was still required by all university candidates so whilst some disgruntled voices were heard the practical necessity remained.

¹⁵⁶ Classical Association London branch, A.G.M. minutes 1920.

¹⁵⁷ Inspection report for Marlborough College 1924 Ed 109/6596.

Classical Girls 1902 - Early 1930's

We want our girls to grow up into sensible, methodical, practical women, able to direct intelligently and sympathetically the manifold activities of the home - ready themselves to lend a hand if the call came - and imbued with a deep sense of the worth and dignity of all true work, whether it be scrubbing a floor or construing a crabbed Greek chorus.¹

...girls taught on the same lines, and women who can enter into the subjects of study and thought which occupy the minds of their fathers, husbands, sons, have more understanding, more sympathy, more power to make the home what it should be; the only healthy companionship is communion between active minds, and the highest purposes of marriage are unfulfilled, if either husband or wife lives in a region of thought which the other can not enter.²

As the twentieth century dawned education for girls was an issue still in its infancy and the question of how it should be shaped still being explored. The training of girls had been so far apart from that of boys for so long and expectations of what that training entailed and with what purpose had been so different that pressure and prejudice as to the form of girls' education was varied and demanding. Whilst the boys had the weight of a long tradition of education behind them, the girls of the same class were born into a world where expectations of women and therefore, the education necessary to fulfil them, were changing rapidly and, it became increasingly unlikely that daughters copied the experiences of their mothers and grandmothers. Fifty years before education for the daughters of the upper classes, whilst lacking in a basic structure and concrete goals such as exams had one distinct purpose and that was to mould a socially acceptable woman who would attract a suitable husband and then be a good mother and run her household efficiently. The feeling that academic education was inappropriate for women was still abroad. Professor Armstrong, having been invited, one assumes, to speak at the Assistant Mistresses' Association meeting in 1903, gave his opinion, one which considering his audience was brusque and rude:

Female educators are so obstinate and difficult to persuade, so limited in their conception...The very fact that women have only asked that they should be allowed to

¹ M.A. Gilland *Home Arts* 1911 quoted in J. Gardiner *The New Woman* 1993 pg. 93.

² D. Beale, L. Soulsby & J. Dove *Work and Play in Girls' Schools* 1901 pg.5.

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do as men do, to have what men have, is a proof that they have failed to understand the position that they hold. We can not all be alike, we must share the work of the world between us.³

The 1923 report of the Consultative Committee on the Differentiation of the Curriculum for Boys and Girls found that:

There is much evidence to show that the old idea that the highest aim for a girl was to be a married woman of leisure and means still survives in many middle class families...Many of them [parents] are disinclined to spend so much on the education of their girls as on that of their boys.⁴

In spite of this slow change in attitudes by the start of the century opportunities for a more intellectual education had opened up, but to what extent was it wise to follow the pattern offered by the traditional boys education or was it preferable to follow a new and different road, designed for the supposedly separate needs of girls?

A Wholesome Education

In reality it would seem that a compromise was attempted, a compromise that rested uneasily in the minds of many. The aspirations were admirable:

Every school day must be planned with the clear and single view of giving such a training to the whole being of each girl that her physical, mental and spiritual growth may be natural, strong and healthy. We must strive to train her body that it may be strong, alert and controlled; we must strive to train her mind that it may be alive and expanding; we must strive to train her will and affections that they may be well placed.⁵

Sara Burstall and Mary Alice Douglas highlighted the problem of the demands that these ideals placed upon girls and in fact seem to be contradictory in their own aims and solutions. Douglas wrote:

She should have ideals of home life clearly in view, ideals as to family life, ideals as to hospitality, ideals as to manners, ideals as to everything which makes for the truest and best form of home.⁶

³ Professor Armstrong Assistant Mistresses' Association 1903 pg.20 59/4/1/3/.

⁴ Board Of Education Report of the Consultative Committee *Differentiation of Curriculum for Boys and Girls respectively in Secondary Schools* 1923 pg.115.

⁵ Paper read by M.A. Douglas at the conference of the Association of Headmistresses, June 1910 *Aims and Ideals in Education, and Suggestions as to Possible Reforms* in S.A. Burstall & M.A. Douglas Ed. *Public Schools for Girls* 1911 pg.270.

⁶ *ibid.* M.A. Douglas *Aims and Ideals in Education, and Suggestions as to Possible Reforms* Paper read at conference of Association of Head Mistresses June 1909 pg.263 in S.A. Burstall and M.A. Douglas Ed. *Public Schools for Girls*.

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However, she also pleaded for 'deeper, better scholarship than ever..', but did realise that 'there is a danger in our filling the school days too full' and so suggested fewer subjects were studied.⁷ In attempting to combine academic and social training, the time table was crowded and there was a danger of the academic becoming shallow and scanty in knowledge. There was a great fear that girls could not cope with a full day's academic learning and too intensive a period of study could be detrimental to health.

...these examinations have become as much tests of endurance and of physical fitness and health as of intellectual merit and efficiency; and, though there will always be the few who may be inspired to great effort and brilliant performance by the difficulty of the goal which lies before them, yet even *they* often run the risk of serious injury to brain and body which shows its lamentable results in later days.⁸

Boys were expected to play hard and work hard. Boys schools provided a harsh regime in which the hardships suffered were considered to make boys into men. This contrasts starkly with the dilemma facing female educators: how to provide education and follow traditional feminine pursuits without pressing too heavily. In 1905 the Assistant Mistresses' Association had sent a memorial to the Board of Education which had summed up the problem:

Girls have many claims on their time which need not be allowed for in the case of boys. They study special subjects such as music. It is desirable that time should be allowed them to take some part in home life and its duties.

Experience has shown that in many cases it is injurious to the health of a growing girl to spend most of the hours of daylight in a classroom.⁹

In order to avoid this M.A. Douglas told the conference of the Association of Head Mistresses in 1910 that 'there must be more time and less time-table.' She explained that:

- a. There was an imperative need for quiet school days.
- b. There was an urgent need for more time for certain areas of the curriculum, i.e. fostering a love of beauty, enhancing the powers of expression and home arts and duties towards the state.
- c. There was a need to find time for character forming activities such as reading, music, art, philanthropic work etc.
- d. There was too much anxiety about exams.
- e. There were too many subjects to do many of them thoroughly.¹⁰

⁷ *ibid.* pg. 260.

⁸ F. Gadesden in Burstall & Douglas *Public Schools for Girls* 1911 pg.246.

⁹ Assistant Mistresses Association 1905 MSS 59/4/1/3, pg.11.

¹⁰ M.A. Douglas *Paper read at conference of the Association of Head Mistresses* June 1910 in Burstall & Douglas *Public Schools for Girls* 1911 pg.277.

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When Miss Hare took over the headship of Walthamstow Hall in 1902 she took action to remedy the problem of too busy a day:

'My first task' she writes 'was to tackle the time table which was overcrowded and the hours of study and school too long. After various experiments we succeeded in arranging for morning school only, with walks and games in the afternoon and classes or study after that.'¹¹

In 1906 the girls' school started at Christ's Hospital with a curriculum comprising: two languages (English and French), mathematics, science, drill, music, art and domestic science. Such a combination was thought to provide the perfect balance:

The girls are instructed in all such work as becomes their sex and may fit them for good wives, mistresses and to be a blessing to their generation.¹²

Parents still exerted pressure as to what they wanted for their daughters and in 1906 Miss Lewis blamed their influence for what she considered to be a backward swing in education:

I am sure that I am not exaggerating when I say that there is a growing tendency on the part of many parents to look askance at any subject which they do not consider bears directly on their daughter's future occupations in life. They demand that cooking, dressmaking and other technical subjects shall take a very prominent place in the school curriculum....I most strongly deprecate the possibility of the girls of the future suffering from a one-sided and too utilitarian curriculum.¹³

The other influencing factor and the one that would prove to be vital was that of entrance examinations. Due to the fact that public examinations and the standard for university entrance examinations had been set with boys in mind, the ultimate demands of future examinations put tremendous pressure on girls who set their hopes high and yet lacked the intensity and length of academic experience of the boys:

Many of the examinations which admit to places of higher education or qualify for occupations which some girls must of necessity enter are primarily based on the curricula of boys' schools and the danger of overpressure in the preparation for these examinations is extreme.¹⁴

As the First World War had called for a revaluation of ideas it also posed practical problems regarding man power and opened opportunities for women. The

¹¹ E. Pike & C. Curryer *The Story of Walthamstow Hall 1838 - 1938* 1938 pg. 77.

¹² G.A.T. Allan *Christ's Hospital* 1937 pg.23.

¹³ Assistant Mistresses' Association A.G.M. Jan. 1906 59/4/1/3, pg.54.

¹⁴ Head Mistresses' Association Report 1914 MSS 188/ TBN 47, pg.112.

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majority of able bodied young men were away fighting so women had to step into their shoes and those from the leisured classes often had their first experience of work. With this came feelings of independence and a wish to be accepted as capable human beings, thus helping to soften the stigma attached to the woman who wanted to better herself.

The Head Mistresses were pioneers, trying to find solutions for themselves and thought the government regulations made at the beginning of the century to be intrusive:

The head mistresses feel... that the amount of freedom hitherto allowed them as a vital condition of the introduction and fostering of the many improvements in organisation and methods which they have successfully carried out in their schools and they would, therefore, deplore the issue of rigid rules and regulations which would hamper their initiative, lessen their sense of responsibility, and force uniformity upon them.¹⁵

However, they had not created a stable or decisive policy, but rather embraced many ideals, all jostling for position in the real world. So how were the classics represented in this melting pot of conflicting aims?

Latin : An Accomplishment?

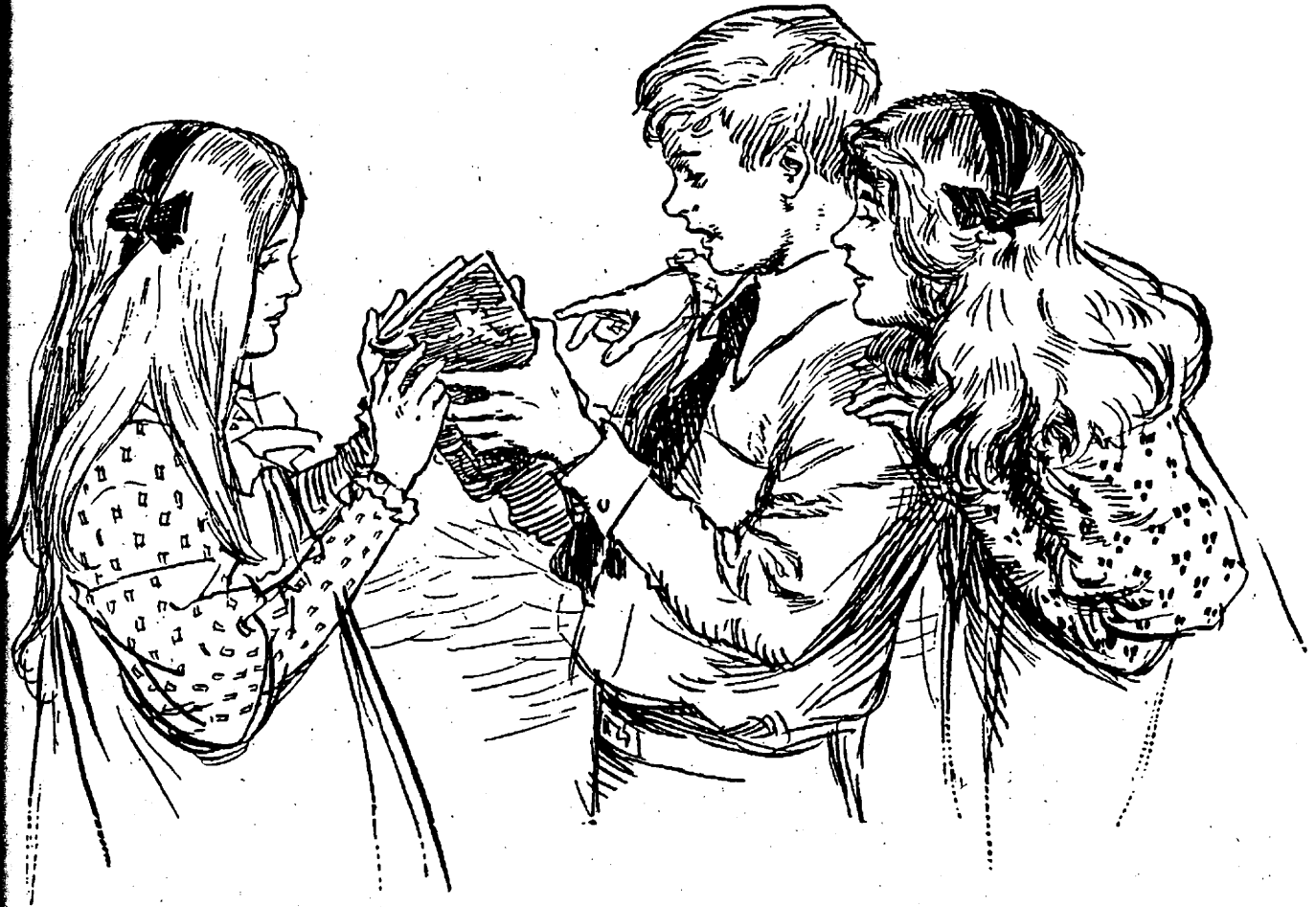
The way in which classics were presented to girls and their parents was crucial. To win respect in a curriculum that was already torn between concentrating on accomplishments and treating academic subjects seriously the classics had to be seen to be a worthwhile and useful experience for a young girl, one that would help her to be an accomplished young lady. The classics were sometimes presented as a secret code, the clues to which were to be shown to boys, but closed to girls. The cartoon below from E. Nesbit's *The Wonderful Garden* appeared in the *Strand Magazine* in 1911. The young boy has obviously been given a Latin book and is showing to his admiring sisters. The girls are of a similar age, one possibly older and from the boy's explanation it is obvious that they do not even recognise the language, it is a 'closed book' to them, whilst for the boy it holds the promise of things to come.¹⁶

¹⁵ Memorandum of the Educational Administration committee of Head Mistresses' Association Dec. 1904 quoted in Price & Glenday *Reluctant Revolutionaries* 1974 pg. 66.

¹⁶ E. Nesbit *The Wonderful Garden* serialisation of story (chpt 3) printed in *The Strand Magazine* Feb. 1911 pg. 241

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Fig. 1



'IT'S LATIN,' HE SAID. 'I COULD READ IT IF I KNEW A LITTLE MORE LATIN'

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The question of the use of Latin in such a girl's life is a theme in a short story *Other Kingdom* written by E.M. Forster in 1909. Miss Beaumont has decided to join in the holiday coaching in Latin that a young boy in her fiancé's house is receiving. She is presented as a rather silly young lady and the fiancé's mother obviously disapproves of her taking the lessons, although the tutor says there is some reason in it. Note that for the boy's mother Latin has no value at all apart from being the key to an entrance examination, probably Common Entrance. She perceives its purpose as being restricted to that one aim, a perception that was very real at the chalk face, but one that was too narrow if classics were to retain respect as a worthwhile subject, even for boys.

'It's all right for Jack,' said Mrs. Worters. 'Jack has to pass his entrance examination. But what's the good of it for Evelyn? None at all.'

No, Mrs. Worters,' I persisted....'I can not agree. Miss Beaumont is - in a sense - new to our civilisation. She is entering it, and Latin is one of the subjects of her entrance examination also. No one can grasp modern life without some knowledge of its origins.'

Mrs. Worters disagrees with this, seeing that there is no need to grasp modern life. Later in the story the tutor reiterates his view that the classics will help as a passport into her fiancé's family, but her fiancé is sceptical as to their use to her:

'The only question is - this Latin and Greek - what will she do with it? Can she make anything of it? Can she - well, it's not as if she will ever have to teach it to others.'

.....'You feel,' I said, 'that for Miss Beaumont the classics are something of a luxury.'
'A luxury. That's the exact word, Mr. Inskip. A luxury. A whim. It is all very well for Jack Ford [Mr. Inskip's tutee].'¹⁷

After deciding that Miss Beaumont might keep Jack back it is announced that her lessons shall cease. Here the only reason for studying Latin is that it is part of the entrance ticket to a specific class of society, but it is not thought to be a necessary requirement for the female members of that class by those within the class itself. One would suppose that the tutor, an employee and overruled, is from a different social background and he appears to see little difficulty with a woman learning Latin. The family, however, can only see the point of a woman learning Latin if she is going to teach, employment is something that Miss Beaumont will never have to consider, academic education is not necessary.

¹⁷ E.M. Forster *Other Kingdom* first published in *English Review* July 1909. This edition in *New Collected Short Stories* 1985 pg.63ff.

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The study of ancient civilisations exposed the pupil to a suitable example for her own life. This civilisation was 'simpler and more beautiful than our own, and in many, though not all, respects nobler and more sensitive.' Thus it was an eminently suitable subject for young ladies to study. It was also felt that a background of Latin helped with the study of modern civilisation, the sentiments of the tutor in the above story. These reasons are familiar as they were those applied to boys as well. The question of mental training also arises. Girls were thought to be in even greater need of disciplined study:

Girls had perhaps more need of training than boys in precision and conciseness - the fault common to most examination papers, or to reports, essays, lectures, or books written by girls or women was a certain diffuseness of thought and looseness of expression.¹⁸

So Latin was good training for the mind and spirit, important basic education, a necessary discipline for the female mind and offered beautiful literature that was appreciated by girls more than boys.¹⁹ It was also an important qualification as it opened the way to a future career of teaching²⁰ and, as we shall see, there was a need for good female classics teachers. Dr. Westaway (member of the Classical Association who wrote books on various educational matters, including the pronunciation of Latin) had been told 'that a classical education had produced the very best wife and mother.'²¹ Although there is no explanation as to why this should be so, it suggests that the classics are the correct road for providing the ultimate goal for a girl. The frontispiece of the Bournemouth High School magazine shows a young lady with the elements of a good education. Here classics is portrayed as being a key part together with the basics, English literature and mathematics. Art and music are also featured. These five topics suggest a rounded education and there is no doubt that here classics was portrayed as an important accomplishment.

¹⁸ *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report on informal conference 1932 pg.14.

¹⁹ *ibid.* pg14.

²⁰ *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.70.

²¹ *ibid.* pg.16.

Fig.2



W & S, Printers, Bournemouth

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W.H.D. Rouse explained that Latin is a useful foundation subject for the study of French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese as well as Medicine and Law. He summed up its worth:

It is not only valuable as a thorough training of the mind; in close reasoning and unremitting attention; nor only as opening to the student a literature of great interest; it is actually useful in a practical way.²²

However, the academic subjects were not so attractive to parents because they were not as tangible and success not so easy to watch and boast about as the more traditional feminine pursuits (rather in the same way that many parents revelled in reflected glory gained from their sons' prowesses on the games field):

We are bound to make a practical protest against that view of a girl's education which prevails so widely among ignorant parents. They often care more for accomplishments by which admiration is to be gained in early years, than for those qualities by which it is to be permanently retained and the work of life to be done.²³

This attitude is one that lingered on, favouring accomplishments rather than academic achievement. Rumer Godden's father, perhaps out of touch in India, thought that girls need not learn Latin. When the time came to send his daughters to be educated in England he was surprised to hear from an aunt, who had been examining prospectuses of schools in England, that this was no longer the case.²⁴

The Right Time ? Enough Time ?

If girls' schools had adhered to their objective, 'to supply for the girls the best possible education, corresponding with the education given to boys in the great public schools of the country,'²⁵ one would suppose that the classics initially held a high profile within the curriculum, however, whilst being represented their position could not be said to correspond with that found in boys' education.

Compared with their male counterparts, many of whom had studied Latin since the age of eight or nine and started learning Greek a couple of years later, girls were not encouraged to start to learn Latin until they were twelve.

²² Beale, Soulsby and Dove *Work and Play in Girls' Schools* 1901 pg.68.

²³ J. Fitch *Lectures on Teaching* 1898 pg. 56.

²⁴ J. & R. Godden *Two Under the Indian Sun* 1966 pg.177.

²⁵ Official statement of the Girls' Public Day Schools Trust, quoted in S.A. Burstall *English High Schools for Girls* 1907 pg.10.

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The reasoning powers develop late; hence geometry, algebra and Latin should not be introduced until twelve years of age.²⁶

In 1903 the Assistant Mistresses' Association passed a resolution in which it 'deplored the encouragement given to premature devotion to classics by public school entrance and scholarship examinations.' and advised that Latin should be started when aged 12.²⁷ This opinion was generally shared and at an informal conference held in Oxford in 1932 schools were in accordance with starting between the age of 11 and 12.²⁸ The entrance examination to Cheltenham Ladies College did not require Latin to be examined until the entrant was 12 years old and then it was optional, from 13 years 6 months old they were examined in a second subject and there is no mention of Latin being required after 1927.²⁹ So we see that initially girls' schools were aware of the hold the inclusion of Latin in the Common Entrance Exam had over preparatory school curricula and conscious attempts were made to avoid creating the same situation in girls' schools. The demands of public examinations, however, did not alter and this late start could prove a problem when preparing girls for School Certificate as one headmistress reported to the 1923 committee on the differentiation of curriculum for boys and girls.³⁰ Thus boys had a four-year head start and girls would have to work intensively to catch up. In starting Greek the gap was much the same and this late beginning was seen to be a stumbling block to achieving results on a par with those gained by boys.

History and Latin were two of the most difficult subjects to undertake...Latin with its rigorous logic and precision. In regard to Latin she herself wondered whether the real root of the difficulty did not lie in the late beginning of the language. Quite frankly, they were seriously troubled by the failure to translate even tolerably simple Latin unseens of a standard which was necessary for candidates taking Pass Moderations in this subject six months after they came up.³¹

However, in contrast to boys' schools and due to the restraints of time it seems to have been widely accepted that the classics were most profitably taught to those who had ability and inclination and thus made good progress.

²⁶ S.A. Burstall *English High Schools for Girls* 1907 pg.104.

²⁷ Assistant Mistresses' Association, Report on education at the British Association meeting 1903, 59/4/1/3, pg.19.

²⁸ *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report of informal conference 1932 pg.18/19.

²⁹ Cheltenham Ladies' College Prospectus 1925 pg.12.

³⁰ Board Of Education Report of the Consultative Committee *Differentiation of the Curriculum for Boys and Girls Respectively in Secondary Schools* 1923 pg.57.

³¹ Miss Jamison (Vice Principle and fellow of Lady Margaret Hall) speaking at an informal conference on *The Teaching of Latin and History* 1932 pg.11.

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It is customary to begin the language (Latin) at twelve plus; with careful teaching and the elimination of the unfit, the forms make progress which surprises the master in a boys' school; in the end, girls who care for classics (and these are some of the ablest in our schools) do very well. They begin Greek at fifteen and often excel in it.³²

In spite of this more accelerated progress it would appear that girls failed to catch up with boys and struggled to achieve the high standard necessary for university, a difficulty mentioned by Miss Jamison above and by Miss Rogers twenty five years earlier whose words sum up the problem and how it was approached:

I would hardly ever dream of expecting a girl to begin Greek before she is sixteen....we should hardly in any case presume to put our girls on a level with scholars of that class (boys with scholarships from public schools).

Girls get a real education out of classics, though it has a large number of gaps... I strongly believe myself in a special ability for classics and accordingly I should be sorry to require any boy or girl - certainly any girl - to spend much time on the subject if he or she had no taste for it.

I believe that there are many people who would readily agree with me in thinking that a boy at a public school who has a normal taste for Greek can begin it at sixteen and attain a thoroughly good standard in the course of some 3 or 4 years - a higher one than can be attained by girls. Girls have to do the work greatly upon their wits and we must leave much to be done after their university course.³³

Girls, even the more able, were at a distinct disadvantage compared to boys. They would have had to work intensively in order to reach a satisfactory examination standard and would have had to be well motivated and encouraged by parents as the alternatives were not only easier, but also represented a more feminine training.

In practice most schools provided alternatives for those who could not cope with Latin. At Sherborne School for Girls Latin was a regular subject in the curriculum, but the less able were exempt as they neared the top of the school and took two musical instruments instead.³⁴ At Huyton College it was possible, from 1913, for girls over 16 to drop Latin and mathematics and take a two year course in housewifery, needlework, cookery and laundry.³⁵ At the Merchant Taylors' School For Girls when Latin was added to the curriculum in 1891, cookery and needlework were also added as the master felt that:

³² S.A. Burstall *English High Schools for Girls* 1907 pg.110.

³³ Classical Association discussion in *Proceedings* 1905 pg.81.

³⁴ Inspection report for Sherborne Girls' School 1926 Ed 109/8741, pg.9.

³⁵ E.M. Rees *A History of Huyton College* 1985 pg.42.

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All ladies should be accomplished in needlework and until they were they should not think of matrimony. It was also important that young ladies should know something of cookery.³⁶

It would seem that it was a relatively common practice to set domestic science against Latin: this happened at the turn of the century at Northgate Grammar school for Girls,³⁷ and thirty years later at Rugby High School.³⁸ This system offered the practical necessities to fulfil one's womanly role and the more academic option. It is to be noted that to become an academic one had to forgo one's womanly training. Sherborne School For Girls was criticised by the inspectors in 1905 for the omission of needlework from the timetable.³⁹ (However they were encouraging about the standard of Latin.) These options contrast starkly with the timetables of boys' schools where lessons involving manual skills were few and far between and music barely touched upon. For boys such pursuits were superfluous, whereas for girls they had only recently comprised almost their entire secondary training.

So already we find that classics was not part of the fundamental training and thus in a disadvantaged position in girls' schools. Not only did girls start learning classics later than boys, but when they did start less time was allocated to studying them than in boys' schools. This was due to the crowding of the timetable to cover the aims in girls' education mentioned above and the fact that less time was spent in the classroom. Speaking at a Classical Association meeting in 1905 Miss Gavin said that:

...the five minutes allotted to speakers at the end of the discussion would be quite insufficient to set out the problem for girls' schools, which owing to the number of subjects included in the curriculum, was quite different from that in boys' schools.⁴⁰

The 1923 consultative committee on the differentiation of curricula for boys and girls found that there were ill effects from trying to teach girls too many languages and over pressure in preparing them for exams.⁴¹ The question of the perfect curriculum for girls had no tried and tested tradition to which to refer and so it was like an empty vessel waiting to be filled, in the event it would seem that constant overflowing was

³⁶ S. Harrop Crosby *The Merchant Taylors School for Girls 100 Years of Achievement 1888 - 1988* 1988 pg.27.

³⁷ E.J. Atkinson *A School Remembered 1886 - 1977* 1981 pg.16.

³⁸ G.F. Randall Ed. *Rugby High School Golden Jubilee 1919 - 1969* 1969, pg.16.

³⁹ Inspection report for Sherborne School For Girls 1905 Ed 109/8741, pg.7.

⁴⁰ Classical Association discussion in *Proceedings* 1905 pg.50.

⁴¹ Board of Education Report of the Consultative committee *Differentiation of the Curriculum for Boys and Girls Respectively in Secondary Schools* 1923 pg48/9.

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the main problem. Professor L.C. Miall⁴² in Burstall's *English High Schools for Girls* wrote:

No one can write on education without insisting on new subjects; and yet the old claims are not relaxed. we must have Science in several branches, modern languages (more efficient than heretofore), drawing and gymnastics, but Classics and Mathematics and Divinity must be kept up and improved.⁴³

An embarrassment of riches was a growing problem as more and more subjects were offered. In 1906 the Cheltenham Ladies' College prospectus puts Latin and Greek at the top of the list of subjects, allotting two hours a week to their study, by 1910 the list of subject read as follows:

Holy Scripture and the Liturgy
History and Geography
English literature and English language
Arithmetic and Mathematics
Physics
Chemistry
Botany
French
German
Latin
Greek
Callisthenics
Class singing

In only four years it would seem that the status of Classics had dropped. In 1922 the list was extended by the introduction of:

Hygiene
Zoology
Phonetics
Logic
Nature Study
Handiwork
Needlework
Drawing
Carpentry
Drill⁴⁴

⁴² Note that as Miss Beale had to rely on a man, WHD Rouse, to contribute the section on classics in her book (see chapter 1 page 38) here too a man is called upon to write....there being a lack of experienced female educators at this stage.

⁴³ S.A. Burstall *English High Schools for Girls* 1907 pg.23.

⁴⁴ Cheltenham Ladies' College *Prospectus 1906, 1910, 1922.*

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It is interesting to note that Latin and Greek rose to fifth and sixth on the list by 1934 where they remained throughout the period. However the range of competition is clear. A report record sheet from Westonbirt from 1929 shows a similar selection of subjects, starting with the four humanities; scripture, English, history and geography, the subjects are then grouped into languages, mathematics, natural sciences, domestic sciences, art, music, dancing and games. Whilst there are comments about all the girls on French, only four, out of twenty, receive comments for Latin and one for Greek. The dancing category does include a section on Greek dancing, a popular activity at that time as we shall see later. At the Godolphin School Latin, Greek and German were optional in 1905; the headmistress's aims were admirable:

..to send out the girls who have been through this school fresh in mind and body for the battle of life, and with keen interest in something, no matter what. Short hours of work, full opportunities for healthy out-of-door interests thus become an essential part of the school system.⁴⁵

However, she was aware that there was insufficient time for everything to be covered properly. Those who did opt for Latin were taught in their own desks in the classroom while the other girls sat in their desks doing prep. This arrangement, together with the time allowance of three forty minute lessons a week, was considered quite 'inadequate for reasonable progress'.⁴⁶

The Curricula Committee reported to the Classical Association in 1906 that girls in first-grade boarding schools spent between five and seven hours a week on classics, twice that spent by their contemporaries in day schools, but this obviously varied depending on the school and the range of activities it offered.⁴⁷ When this is compared to the data on the chart showing the time devoted to classics in boys' schools in chapter three, page 112, we see that the time allocation is comparable with the lower forms at Charterhouse, Harrow and Marlborough. Eton, however, allotted ten hours each week to Latin in the lowest form and Winchester eight hours, the time allowance growing as boys progressed through the school. Whilst it would seem that the disparity was not as great as some thought, it must be remembered that the boys had already spent up to five years studying Latin before girls even started. Girls could achieve good results, but where they benefited from a fresh approach they suffered from a lack of time:

⁴⁵ Inspection report for Godolphin School 1905 Ed 109/6610, pg.7.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* pg.18.

⁴⁷ Classical Association *Council minutes* Jan 1905.

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The work, though considerably behind that of a first-grade boys' school as regards the pupils' special knowledge and facility in the use of the language shows ample evidence of freshness and interest without any sacrifice of soundness in fundamentals and must provide a most stimulating introduction to university specialisation.⁴⁸

Professor Miall suggested that more effective teaching time could be gained by sending children to school earlier, by streamlining what was taught, by working for shorter hours so that the children were more alert and the teaching could be more intensive and by employing better methods of teaching so as to economise on time.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the classics were not core subjects and were easily crowded out.

Latin was a subsidiary subject, and often had to be dropped by the senior girls, for lack of space on their time-table, just when they were approaching the interesting stage. Boys enter their Public Schools better grounded, and thus are ready to start Latin Composition on their own, and can construe the great authors with appreciation. Not so girls, alas!⁵⁰

In some schools Latin was offered as an extra and therefore not included in the end of term marks. At the Ladies' College Goudhurst the list of extras in the 1926 prospectus was as follows:⁵¹

Elocution	25/- a term
Gym and Dancing	1 guinea a term
Latin or German	1 guinea a term
Violin	2 guineas a term
Music - piano and singing	2 guineas a term
Games fee	2/6d a term
seat in church	2/6 a term

Here Latin was only an extra and Greek was not offered at all. The report form for 1916, printed overleaf, shows a space for Latin, but explains that unless in the upper forms the marks do not count. This is an interesting contrast to the list of marks printed in the Sandroyd magazine (see page 61).

48 Inspection report for North London Collegiate School 1910 Ed109/3982 pg.11.

49 S.A. Burstall *English High Schools for Girls* 1907 pg. 23.

50 R. Laws *I Taught Classics 1916 - 1929* in A. Baird *I Was There* 1956 pg. 247.

51 M. Kendon *Ladies' College Goudhurst* 1963.

EXAMINATION REPORT.

Date Easter Term 1916

LADIES' COLLEGE,

(In Union with the College of Preceptors,)

GOUDHURST, KENT.

CONDUCTED BY THE MISSES KENDON.

UPPER FORMS.		Marks gained.	Remarks.	MIDDLE FORMS.		Marks gained.	Remarks.
Compulsory and Optional Subjects required for the Cambridge Local and College of Preceptors Examinations.	English Subjects.	Book-keeping		General Subjects.	Arithmetic.....		
		Dictation			Book-keeping		
		Grammar			Botany		
		Geography			Dictation		
		History			Geography		
		Literature			Grammar		
		Political Economy			Nature Study		
		Domestic Economy			History		
		Reading			Reading		
		Writing			Scripture		
	Religious Knowledge	Scripture, Old Testament		General Subjects.	Writing		
		" New Testament			Drawing (Freehand)		
		" Epistle			LOWER FORMS.		90
	Languages.	French			Arithmetic.....	50	
		German			Botany	75	
Latin			Dictation		90		
Author <u>Shakespeare</u>		80		
		Object Lesson <u>Composition</u>		50		
		Geography		40		
Mathematics.	Arithmetic.....		Grammar		75		
	Algebra		History	75			
	Euclid		Reading	70			
Science.	Botany		Scripture	70			
	Chemistry		Writing	55			
	Physiology		Drawing (<u>Freehand</u>)	75			
Drawing.	Freehand .....		..... <u>Tracing</u>	60	
	Model .....		..... <u>Copying</u>	75	
	Geometrical .....		..... <u>Theoretical</u>	75	
	Perspective .....		..... <u>Practical</u>	75	
TOTAL.....			..... <u>Vocal</u>	80		
			..... <u>German</u>			
			..... <u>French</u>			
			..... <u>Latin</u>			
			..... <u>Plain</u>			
			..... <u>Fancy</u>			
			..... <u>Calisthenics</u>			
			TOTAL.....	1085			

Moral Character Good.

The Papers set in this Examination are each worth 100 Marks. The questions embrace only the extent of the instruction given during the preceding term. Pupils obtaining 75 per cent. are classed in Honours; 60 per cent. in the 1st Division; 50 per cent. in the 2nd Division, and all below in the 3rd Division.

Extra Subjects.—These marks are not counted in the total (except in Upper Forms) but are recorded to show progress.

Miss Flora Isaac of the III A Form has passed in the 1st Division.

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The pressure of time tended to lead to substandard results, details being lost as the necessary pace was swift. This problem was highlighted in the 1926 inspection report of Sherborne School for Girls:

The mistresses have not entirely solved the problem, common to girls' schools generally, of setting a brisk pace without loss of accuracy.⁵²

The lack of time was an obstacle to good progress, the inspectors predicting 'very credible results' if the girls at Winchester House were allowed to drop certain subjects.⁵³ It was also an obstacle to the success of the subject as a whole. An inspection report for North London Collegiate School in 1926 remarked on the decline in numbers taking Latin, noting that numbers would need to be built up from the bottom of the school, but being a school with a morning session only to increase the number of lessons and therefore the standing of Latin would be difficult.⁵⁴

Girls who wished to offer Latin together with other subjects for university entrance did not undertake a very intensive course of study at school as an informal conference on Latin and History teaching held in Oxford in 1932 discovered. 63 schools were sent a questionnaire which revealed the following information:

Number of periods per week in the 2 years prior to the exam	Number of schools
5+	3
5	2
4	29
3	10
5	4

Thus the majority were only receiving four lessons per week in a subject they hoped would lead them to university. After the exam some schools reduced even this amount.⁵⁵ These figures compare even less favourably with the time allotted to Latin at boys' schools. Girls who had given up Latin at an early stage and then later wished to enter university were faced with a problem.

When I returned to school the following September, I found no fewer than three girls, including my best friend, who were restarting Latin for their university entrance, having dropped it some years ago. Now, after matriculation, it was discovered that it

⁵² Inspection report for Sherborne Girls' School 1926 Ed 109/8741, pg.10.

⁵³ Inspection report for Winchester House 1928 Ed 109/6113, pg.8.

⁵⁴ Inspection report for North London Collegiate School 1926 Ed 109/3984, pg.12.

⁵⁵ *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report on informal conference 1932 pg.8.

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was wanted for university entrance. This hectic muddle over Latin occurred frequently at this top public school.⁵⁶

This is an example of the ultimate influence examinations held over the curriculum and how where, in cases where it had failed to shape that curriculum, pupils were placed at a distinct disadvantage.

The Rivals

Academic study time was precious and subjects had to be chosen carefully. So, what were the main rivals of Latin and Greek? Whilst science was a growing area of study and schools wrote proudly about their new science laboratories, it was not considered to be the threat that it was in boys' schools, it was given its own space and did not elbow traditional subjects out of the way, partly because there was no tradition. It was also dismissed as being too different from the classics to be a serious challenger; it did 'not call out the creativeness which composition and translation into a language must call out'.⁵⁷ However, it did occupy a proportion of the time-table and grew in status. The reports on exam results for 1930 noted that 'the standard attained in girls' schools (for chemistry) was notably higher than in previous years.'⁵⁸ As some subjects increased their importance, others must see a decrease: at this stage Greek already belonged to the latter group and but Latin was not yet on its way to joining it.

Languages did vie for a share of the time-table. To pass School Certificate a candidate had to choose at least one subject from group one which comprised; Latin, Greek, French and German. French was perhaps the traditional language for a girl to take as it was considered an 'accomplishment'. Miss Burstall speaking at the Classical Association in 1906 promoted the usefulness of French:

...although I do not wish unduly to press the claims of the French language, I do claim that there is real value in French linguistic training for girls. They know that it is a living language and it is very useful to them in many ways.⁵⁹

As she was speaking at the Classical Association Miss Burstall did go on to promote the learning of Latin because it gave girls 'linguistic discipline, intelligent interest,...a

⁵⁶ Y. Stevenson *The Hot House Plant* 1976 pg. 64 The name of the school is not given, but mentioned as being on a par with Cheltenham Ladies' College.

⁵⁷ *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report on informal conference 1932 pg.15.

⁵⁸ Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board records 1930 pg.20.

⁵⁹ Classical Association *Proceedings* Debate on classical and modern languages Oct.1906 pg.25.

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valuable key to much in modern literature and history' and threw light 'on that which would otherwise remain obscure'. In her book *Public Schools for Girls* she wrote that:

The study of French is not only necessary, but most educational to the ordinary English mind on account of its precision, daintiness and elegance.⁶⁰

French was an attractive option because it would perhaps impart the very qualities that one wished to instil in a young lady. It was even felt that good French scholarship was in jeopardy due to pressure from Latin. Miss Watt, the senior history mistress at St. Paul's Girls' school complained that:

...this high standard of Latin was driving out a proper study of French. Modern civilisation since the eighteenth century owed much to a knowledge of the French language and French thought.⁶¹

German was almost considered as highly as a suitable language for a girl to learn. Miss Beale who felt that German and French should be started before Latin explained:

...besides there is much more literature suitable for women in German than in Latin. I do not underrate the ancient languages, but my experience convinces me that the order we have adopted is better for girls and many have been surprised at the ease at which our pupils acquire Latin when they already understand French and German.⁶²

However, it would seem that the fortunes of German were not stable: in 1907 Sara Burstall wrote 'Latin is at present elbowing German out of the girls' schools'⁶³ The First World War made German a less popular option as Miss Phillips noted at the 1932 conference:

Miss Phillips thought that there was more Latin taught in schools since the war than before. German dropped out and gave Latin its chance.⁶⁴

Schools varied the options presented, most started with French and then had the choice of picking up Latin or German, but there was no set pattern, each school following its own policy. The independence of girls' schools, each offering its own view of education, probably made them an even more disparate group than

⁶⁰ S.A. Burstall & M.A. Douglas *Public Schools for Girls* 1911 pg.103.

⁶¹ *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report on informal conference 1932 pg.17.

⁶² D. Beale *On the Organisation of the Cheltenham Ladies' College* 1895 pg.17.

⁶³ S.A. Burstall *English High Schools for Girls* 1907 pg.109.

⁶⁴ *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report on informal conference 1932 pg.17.

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independent boys' schools. Sherborne School for Girls taught Latin, but given that teaching only took place in the morning it was only allotted two hours a week. As most girls were not planning to go to university the value of these lessons was questioned and it was suggested that a modern language took its place.⁶⁵ Modern languages were perceived to be the domain of girls' schools while boys focused on the classics:

The curriculum in a normal girls' school included foreign languages, Classical and Modern: the latter often treated more seriously in the girls' schools than the boys' schools, and the former - so there is reason to believe gaining ground.⁶⁶

The 1921 Report felt that pressure from modern languages was having a detrimental effect on Latin. Without the prop of examination requirements Latin was falling by the wayside, there was a recognition that fundamentally examinations shape curricula and influence subject options:

In girls' schools Latin is at the present moment being killed by its exclusion from the Modern Studies Group; and even if Latin is restored as a group subject Greek will still be left without a chance of development or even of survival.⁶⁷

They felt that it was impracticable to consider combining Latin with the advanced modern studies course, especially as girls were generally 'less able at that age to stand the strain of severe application.' The counter-attack that modern languages could not take the place of Latin was that the training offered was not comparable and Latin was a prerequisite for study of modern languages. The modern languages 'lacked the precision and definiteness of Latin.'⁶⁸

The other attraction for girls was English, which Sara Burstall felt had a positive influence.

Much that is claimed for the effect of Classics on boys as a humanising influence is found by experience to be provided for girls through the humanities in English.⁶⁹

Doubtless due to more time being spent on English by girls, they were more familiar with it and felt more secure of success. With regard to advanced courses this was

⁶⁵ Inspection report for Sherborne School For Girls 1910 Ed 109/1078, pg.5.

⁶⁶ D. Brock *The Girls' School* in Dover Wilson *The Schools of England* 1928 pg.144.

⁶⁷ *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.65.

⁶⁸ *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report on informal conference 1932 pg.14.

⁶⁹ S.A. Burstall *English High Schools for Girls* 1907 pg.108.

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mentioned as a problem by the classics mistress at Durham High School for Girls, Miss Stafford-Smith:

We do keep Latin as a fundamental subject, but most of my big girls, although I can manage to keep them keen about Latin, have a very great love for English and often I lose them to the English mistress.⁷⁰

However, it was argued that English could not take the place of Latin as the syntax and grammar 'gave a more valuable training and a better background'.⁷¹

The conclusion that the 1921 committee came to was that Latin was being discouraged in girls' schools, if this were not so 'Classics might flourish... Latin is a popular subject with girls. Moreover, it has a vocational value for them which it often has not for boys.'⁷² This 'vocational value' probably refers to the need for female Latin teachers, echoes of the very reason why E.M. Forster's Miss Beaumont did not need to study Latin. As we will see the 1921 committee were even less optimistic about the fortunes of Greek.

Greek For Girls ?

Greek was considered more specialised than Latin: the 1932 conference did not concern themselves with it because 'They could not at present regard the study of Greek as a practical issue except for a minority.'⁷³ Frances Gray writing the chapter on classics in *Public Schools for Girls* explained that:

...at the present moment Greek is taught to a very few, and Latin is granted a good deal less than half the time allotted to it in the older public schools... it appears that Greek is taught in the upper forms only, and the teaching is generally individual teaching or coaching. Latin is indeed a form subject, beginning in many schools with girls of twelve or thirteen and going on throughout the rest of the school life; but as it is very often an alternative with German, many girls have no opportunity of taking it.⁷⁴

Greek was often confined to sixth form studies and in some schools it thrived there. At Roedean only seven girls out of 240 took it in 1906, but 'a good deal of time' was

⁷⁰ Classical Association *Proceedings* Debate on Advanced courses, April 1920 Vol.17 pg. 41.

⁷¹ *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report on informal conference 1932 pg.14.

⁷² *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.70.

⁷³ *ibid.* pg.12.

⁷⁴ F.R.Gray in S.A. Burstall & M.A. Douglas *Public Schools for Girls* 1911 pg.119.

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devoted to it.⁷⁵ Sherborne School for Girls was unusual in that it was not tackled until the sixth form, but then everybody took it.⁷⁶ More frequently one reads of cases such as the Godolphin School where only two girls were taking it in 1923.⁷⁷ Greek certainly seems to have been marginalised, a fact that the Classical Association were aware of and discussed with some concern. In 1912 Mrs. Adela Adam spoke about the attractiveness of Greek compared to the 'gravity and weight of both the language and literature' of Latin. However, her enthusiasm would have been dampened by Mr. Arundell Esdaile who had looked in eighty pages of a list of girls' schools published by a well known agency and not found one school that specifically offered to teach Greek to girls. He commented 'In the light of this fact, I can not help fearing that Mrs. Adam's hope that Greek may become an accomplishment for ladies is rather optimistic.'⁷⁸ Professor Gardner suggested that the Association should 'help in persuading the school master and the parent... especially of its (Greek's) suitability for girls' schools. Twelve years later there was a positive atmosphere surrounding Greek, it still tended to be restricted to the later years of schooling, but was mentioned as gaining ground as a middle school language. At the Classical Association meeting in 1924 it was noted that:

All the schools say that they hope to take the first school examination in Greek in either 1925 or 1926, so that I think we may fairly conclude that this renaissance of Greek in girls' schools is one of the fruits of the report of the Prime Minister's committee on the Classics.

I think we may fairly say that Greek is reviving in girls' schools; of course not to a large extent yet, but I think we can look forward with hope to the future.⁷⁹

These wishes proved to be rather optimistic. Statistics from fifty schools in 1924 showed that while only 4% did Greek, it was possible to take it in every school.⁸⁰ A case of a subject being offered, perhaps as a paid extra, giving the school the appearance of having a wide appeal, whereas in reality it was a rare and exclusive option. Those who took Greek were usually keen pupils who enjoyed the excitement of learning such a strange tongue. They were the chosen few and so lessons could have a special quality about them:

⁷⁵ Inspection report for Roedean 1906 Ed 109/5999, pg.12.

⁷⁶ Inspection report for Sherborne School for Girls 1910 Ed 109/1078, pg.7.

⁷⁷ Inspection report for the Godolphin 1923 Ed 109/6612, pg.11.

⁷⁸ Classical Association *Proceedings* Debate on the study of Greek Jan 1912 pgs.22, 25, 17.

⁷⁹ *ibid.* Jan 1924 pg 10.

⁸⁰ Classical Association *Proceedings* Miss Archibald in the discussion on the provision for Greek in girls' and boys' schools Vol.21 1924 pg.71.

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We did Greek down in a tiny hidden hole in the gorse that the head and we three used to seek out with care and rejoicing...I have forgotten all my Greek now. But I would not have spent that time in which I learnt it in any other way.⁸¹

The Pioneers

One of the keys to the success or failure in engendering a positive attitude towards classics was the skill and enthusiasm of the teaching staff in individual schools. We have noted that girls' schools tended to vary more than boys' schools and each subject had to make its own way, rather than rely on the security of tradition. At the turn of the century all school masters had been well versed in the classics and there was no shortage of those learned enough to train others. There were cases where schools attracted some of the first women graduates who brought their scholarship into the classroom, Ethel Fegon, in the late 1890's, being fortunate enough to be taught by two such mistresses 'straight from university.'⁸² A letter signed by the executive committee of the Headmistresses' Association and printed in the *Morning Post* in 1908 stated that 'there is no lack of mistresses with qualifications in classics equal to those of the masters who teach boys in schools of the same grade.'⁸³ However, due to the comparatively recent rise of the female student in reality this was wishful thinking and there were few who were capable of teaching effectively, a difficulty which was noted by the 1921 commission:

When they [girls' schools] were started, no woman teacher existed who had taken a degree in Classics and this defect necessarily took some time to remedy.⁸⁴

The commission went on to note that this inexperience could offer a fresh approach that was more willing to experiment with new ways of learning, although taking short cuts could lead to poor grounding. One example of this was Cheltenham Ladies' College which embraced the Direct Method of teaching and was praised for its fresh approach, even though the Direct Method was not considered to be wholly effective:

The chief classical mistress is a well-known scholar and an expert on the Direct Method. She is assisted by a staff of mistresses, most of whom are enthusiastic and competent teachers...As a whole they enjoy the work and escape the dull and disheartening monotony of 'gerund grinding' with which the grammatical method is too often associated. The inspectors have nothing but praise for the enthusiasm of the teachers...But they also feel that the teaching labours under certain disadvantages,

⁸¹ E. Watson & B. Curtis Brown Ed. *St. Felix School, Southwold 1897 - 1923* c.1923 pg.75.

⁸² E. Fegon in M.C. Malin & H.C. Escreet *The Book of Blackheath High School* 1927 pg. 61.

⁸³ Headmistresses' Association Report 1909 Mss188 TBN 44, pg.72.

⁸⁴ *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.125.

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some of them inherent in the Direct Method - as there are others inherent in the other method - which have not yet been successfully overcome.⁸⁵

Yvonne Stevenson, at school⁸⁶ during the 1920's was taught by someone who displayed the qualities mentioned by the 1921 committee admirably:

The teaching was alive. In Latin we did not start with mensa, but plunged into a story book about a little girl which started off 'Julia puella parva est.' During our first term in the subject we also acted a play in Latin.⁸⁷

However, sometimes these attempts and fresh approaches were not successful. In 1923 the Godolphin School had been using an oral method 'of doubtful thoroughness.' The basic grounding was poor and 'the general impression was that much which ought to be the most valuable part of an intellectual training through Latin is sacrificed in a desire to make lessons interesting.'⁸⁸ Not all schools had strong classics departments or inspired teachers. In 1921 St. Mary's, Wantage, had three mistresses who taught classics, although none of them was especially qualified in classics,⁸⁹ while at Micklefield the English mistress was sufficiently competent in the absence of qualified staff.⁹⁰ The principal suggested that the visiting Geography master who had taken a first class in the Classical Tripos might take the fifth form Latin. This was in line with measures taken by some schools who had no one on the staff capable and so used visiting teachers. At Winchester House the beginners' class was taken by the Mathematics mistress, but a graduate visiting mistress was employed for those preparing for exams.⁹¹ Micklefield's use of a man reflects the shortage of satisfactory women teachers. The problem of poor quality staff was a problem that continued, in turn producing poor quality students:

...the lower average standard of certain subjects, such as Classics, Mathematics and Physics, is in part due to a shortage of teachers equipped themselves with a sufficiently high standard of scholarship....The girls' schools have suffered from the teaching of those who did not know and who were ignorant of the fact that they did not know.⁹²

⁸⁵ Inspection report for Cheltenham Ladies' College 1919 Ed 109/1642, pg.15.

⁸⁶ The middle school of what Y. Stevenson describes as 'a Clergy Daughters' Boarding School'.

⁸⁷ Y. Stevenson *The Hot House Plant: Autobiography of a Young Girl* 1976, pg.25.

⁸⁸ Inspection report for Godolphin School 1923 Ed 109/6612, pg.11.

⁸⁹ Inspection report for St. Mary's Wantage 1921 Ed 109/171, pg.7.

⁹⁰ Inspection report for Micklefield 1926 Ed 109/6167, pg.6.

⁹¹ Inspection report for Winchester House 1923 Ed 109/6112, pg.5.

⁹² D. Block *The Girls' School* in Dover Wilson *The Schools of England* 1928 pg.154.

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In January 1922 Miss Broad noted 'We are faced with a tremendous shortage of competent teachers of Classics.'⁹³ The restricted opportunities for learning Greek at school made the problem of finding competent teachers of Greek even more critical. At the Classical Association meeting in 1912 Mr. Anderson made the point that:

(German) Is a very common alternative in modern times, especially in girls' schools. Greek is seldom a practicable alternative, for many classical mistresses are weaker in Greek than Latin or German.⁹⁴

The following story illustrates the scenario that may well have gone on many schools, where the staff were willing, but were lacking in good training themselves. In this case the outcome was successful, but it is hardly a reliable method.

She (Miss Bryant) told me that there was no one free to take two girls for Greek college entrance, so I would have to do it. I said I had forgotten the little I had ever known. 'Don't talk nonsense! You have from January to October.' 'I will do it on one condition' I said, 'that I tell the girls that I know no Greek and that we may take our difficulties to Miss Holding.' 'A very good plan,' she answered, 'but don't have too many difficulties as Miss Holding's time-table is over heavy.' I have never enjoyed lessons more and the two girls passed.⁹⁵

The 1921 commission reported that due to lack of supply 'the teaching is often in the hands of graduates with low honours in classics or of other graduates who know no Greek and have taken Latin only as one of the subjects for an Arts degree.'⁹⁶ The Classical Association in discussing the report recommended that Greek qualification should be made a condition of appointments for the teaching of Latin, it is interesting to note that here there is no mention of Greek teaching per se. The Assistant Mistresses' Association felt that this recommendation was 'hardly practicable', but thought that it should be possible to have one member of staff who had a knowledge of Greek.⁹⁷ The situation was little improved by 1929 when the Assistant Mistresses' Association discussed the recent Board Of Education pamphlet: *The Present Position of Latin and Greek in Grant Aided Schools in England*.⁹⁸

One matter which is stressed in the memorandum should be of general interest - the shortage of well qualified teachers of classics. The statistics are generally disquieting, but the belief is expressed that 'the marked increase in the number of candidates who

⁹³ Classical Association *Proceedings* Discussion on the Prime Ministers Committee Report on Classics Jan. 1922 pg.69.

⁹⁴ *ibid.* Jan 1912 pg.33.

⁹⁵ Scrimgeour Ed. *The North London Collegiate School* 1950 pg.180.

⁹⁶ *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.132.

⁹⁷ Assistant Mistresses' Association interim report 1922 59/4/1/3, pg.11.

⁹⁸ Board Of Education pamphlet no.71 *The Present Position of Latin and Greek in Grant Aided Schools in England*.

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are taking classics in Group I and Latin in Group II of the Higher Certificate Examination is likely to lead to an improvement in the supply of well qualified teachers in the schools.⁹⁹

This refers to education in general and those who were well qualified would be likely to be attracted to schools, such as Cheltenham Ladies' College, where Latin was taught in earnest. The evidence would lead us to believe that classics teachers in girls' schools were a relatively rare breed and as such would have encountered problems quite different from classics masters in public schools. The foundation of the Classical Association brought some comfort to the lonely existence of the classics mistress:

Miss Penrose urged the claims of the association on women who are engaged in the teaching of classics. To all teachers in any branch of learning or science who have few opportunities of intercourse with fellow workers in their own field, the formation of the association should appeal with special force...It would be hard to find a subject in which an Association of that kind would be more helpful as far as woman teachers are concerned, than in the teaching of classics. The classical masters in many public schools might be able to form something like a miniature Classical Association among themselves. But in girls' schools the proportion of classical teachers was a different one. Just because of their great isolation they would feel in a special degree the value of a common meeting ground.¹⁰⁰

In spite of the increase of advertisements reflecting greater interest in classics in girls' school remarked upon in the Classical Association *Proceedings* in 1924,¹⁰¹ the staff in a girls' school would have a varied educational history, many having little knowledge of the classics. Thus it could have been a rather lonely existence, with teachers feeling they were working in a vacuum. However, there does seem to have been considerable enthusiasm amongst women teachers and a thirst to explore their subject. The 1921 report noted that:

Those women teachers whose own classical education has not proceeded very far are nonetheless more interested in the classics than men teachers of corresponding attainments.¹⁰²

The reference here to the contrast between men and women teachers is interesting; women have been found to have a livelier interest than school masters who at this stage tended to be blinkered in outlook. Women teachers did feel isolated and as a result created the Inter-Schools Classical Association in South London in 1922. 23 girls' schools belonged and lectures were arranged 'with a view to widening and

⁹⁹ Assistant Mistresses' Association Report 1929 59/4/1/8, pg.5.

¹⁰⁰ *Classical Review* Vol.18 No.1 Feb 1904 pg.66.

¹⁰¹ Classical Association *Proceedings* Miss Gedge in the discussion on the provision for Greek in Girls' Schools Jan 1924 pg.79.

¹⁰² *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.132.

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stimulating the study of classics in these schools.¹⁰³ The following year a similar society was started in North London.

...because we realised that in a good many schools there was only one mistress in each school to teach the Classics and she had no one with whom to talk over her ideas; also in a good many schools a minimum of time was given to Latin and so we thought we would form a junior Classical association of our own, so that the girls may get there what we are getting when we come to the Classical Association meetings¹⁰⁴

This proved to be a popular move and after a year there were 26 schools who were members. In 1929 a third inter-schools Classical Association was started in East London. An inter-school magazine was started and their success was encouraging reflecting the fact that 'the Classics are not dead or dying in some of the girls schools in London'.¹⁰⁵ Of course this did not help those who worked away from the city, but as we shall see some schools did make the most of opportunities to link up with other classicists.

There were a number of women teachers who regarded the Classical Association as an important link and attended meetings in order to keep a finger on the pulse. Whilst much of the discussion centred round boys' schools the men were respectful in their attitude towards the 'ladies' and did not appear to resent their presence as an intrusion, rather they were encouraged to participate:

We should welcome, I think, any observations, especially from ladies, who are engaged in teaching and from whom we have as yet heard nothing today.¹⁰⁶

Gradually the ladies did play a more active role and took a lively interest in discussion, although, as noted before their problems were very different from those in boys' schools. The enthusiasm of the women was refreshing for the men who found their presence supportive, as Mr. Leighton noted at a Classical Association meeting on terminology and grammar:

...and what particularly interested me was to see how ladies, coming to these matters with fresh minds and under circumstances somewhat different from men arrive enthusiastically at the same opinion that have been driven home to us.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Classical Association, London Branch A.G.M. minutes 1923.

¹⁰⁴ Classical Association *Proceedings* Miss Leary, giving the report on the Schools' Associations Jan 1924 pg.67.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Chairman speaking. Classical Association *Proceedings* The debate on the lightening of the school curriculum 1905 pg.52.

¹⁰⁷ Classical Association *Proceedings* 1908 pg.84.

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It would seem that the men were ready to admit that they were working from a different view point from the ladies and did not expect them to be able to follow their example. Mr. Edwards expected that headmistresses 'will be less willing to sell their educational conscience for the thirty pieces of silver'.¹⁰⁸ The ladies were supported and their contributions appreciated, but the Association did not make many allowances for the situation in girls' schools.

I am speaking as to boys, but with less confidence as to girls, as I feel most strongly that the problem of girls' education is one which women must largely settle themselves.¹⁰⁹

Dorothy Brock, one of the two women amongst eighteen men on the Prime Minister's committee recalled:

At intervals....(the Committee) changed the word 'boys' in the report to 'pupils' and the committee made the most valiant efforts to remember that girls existed and to imagine what they might be like.¹¹⁰

The men respected good scholarship and women gave papers at Classical Association meetings, one of which obviously brought an unaccustomed feminine flavour to the occasion. Hilda Lorimer read a paper on 'Some notes on Dress in Homer and Archaic Greek Art'. The chairman's response was to admit that he was 'not sure that the male members of the Association are well qualified to discuss this paper'.¹¹¹ Perhaps they also felt that it was not an appropriate subject for them to research and talk about. In 1923 Mrs. Dobson read a paper on 'Prehistoric Remains of the Bristol District' which was received with much encouragement by Professor Rhys Roberts:

.... if we had to chose a motto for this successful gathering I think I might open at a venture Professor Conway's book and read 'Dux femina facti'
A women led and all went well,
A woman led and it was done.¹¹²

108 *ibid.* April 1920 pg.32.

109 *ibid.* Dr. Mackail speaking on starting Greek at the age of fifteen, pg.39.

110 R. Deem *Co-education Reconsidered* 1984 pg.13.

111 *Classical Association Proceedings* Jan 1912 pg.11.

112 *ibid.* April 1923.

Behind The Classroom Door

So far perhaps a rather gloomy picture has been painted, but the classics were taught in girls' schools and whilst not being part of the life blood as it had been in public schools, for those who were involved it was a serious matter. There is some disagreement as to whether girls had any aptitude for the classics or not. At the informal meeting at Oxford in 1932 it was said that:

Latin was not a natural thing; girls found it hard: they tackled it in their own peculiar way.¹¹³

Whereas Miss Limebeer speaking at the Classical Association felt that:

Some girls are born Latinists and at once make for a Classical degree with honours.¹¹⁴

As with any academic progress both intelligence and application played a part. In order to sustain enthusiasm interest must be sustained. How did the girls' schools blend interest with the traditional hard grammar grind that had been the back bone of teaching classics to boys? The Curricula Committee reporting to the Classical Association in 1905 felt that due to restraints of time the emphasis should be on reading classics and appreciating literature. They found that:

All the returns, but two agree in assigning to translation two thirds of the available time; composition, except of the simplest type, is not usually attempted till the sixth year, and the time allotted to grammar rarely exceeds a quarter of the total; when it does so, it seems to be due to the exigencies of an approaching examination. Verse is not attempted at all. Greek is taught on the same lines, but the proportion of time allotted to translation is even larger than in the case of Latin.¹¹⁵

The results of this approach are reflected in W.H.D.Rouse's writing on classics in *Work and Play in Girls' Schools*. Once again we see that then, 1901, a man had to be found to write the classics chapter, presumably because no women were sufficiently experienced. He stated that 'girls are apt to be shaky in grammar, and they seem to have less mental reliance than boys.'¹¹⁶ Grammar was the foundation and building stone and to stint on this basic work would lead to disarray:

The importance of grammar can hardly be overestimated. There are in this slipshod age, those who affect to despise precise knowledge, such as geographical names, old

113 *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report of informal conference 1932 pg.25.

114 *Classical Association Proceedings* Report of the deputation to the Board of Education Jan 1918 pg.25.

115 *Classical Association Council minutes* Jan 1905.

116 W.H.D. Rouse in D.Beale, L.Soulsby & J. Dove *Work and play in Girls' Schools* 1901 pg.86.

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facts, historical dates and the paradigms of grammar. 'Learn by reading' is their motto in language; a most false and pernicious principle, as I can testify from sad experience.¹¹⁷

Thus he suggested the use of Kennedy's *Revised Latin Primer* or Postgate's *New Latin Primer* together with readers with a view to moving on to classical authors as soon as possible. The 1932 conference found that poor grammatical and syntactical grounding were particularly noticeable in those who had not specialised in the classics resulting in about 80% of the unseen work offered for university entrance being spoiled by elementary mistakes. This was possibly the price to pay for attempts by women teachers to lighten and create interest in Latin teaching. As a result it was suggested that the girls took an intensive grammar course after School Certificate.¹¹⁸

The reading of classical authors could be taught in such a way that it sustained attention, although there was a difference of opinion as to what was thought interesting and what was in fact found to be interesting. Rouse suggested Eutropius, Nepos or Phaedrus for the beginner, followed by Caesar, Ovid, narratives of Cicero and Virgil. F.R.Gray also thought Caesar and Virgil suitable:

Girls are easily interested in Caesar and Virgil: only the more mature minds of our highest forms really enjoy Horace.¹¹⁹

However, the questionnaire sent out for the 1932 committee found that one of the outstanding difficulties of teaching Latin to girls was 'Dislike of Latin authors, especially Caesar.'¹²⁰ Due to the restraints of time some schools gave their pupils a very limited experience of Latin authors; at the Godolphin two thirds of the time was spent on grammar and the remaining third on literature, mostly prose authors, so that some girls did not meet Latin verse at all.¹²¹ Gray did suggest that 'maps and plans, pictures and models' made classical reading more interesting. Rouse too, in line with his own practice, felt that schools should have such teaching aids available and made a comment that would lead one to suppose that schools were not always very generous in providing these:

The school ought to provide these things for use; it is too much to expect that teachers should spend their sparings and savings in educational plant.¹²²

117 *ibid.* pg.69.

118 *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report of informal conference 1932 pg.24.

119 F.R.Gray in S. Burstall & M. Douglas *Public Schools for Girls* 1911 pg.121.

120 *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report of informal conference 1932 pg.9.

121 Inspection report for the Godolphin School 1905 Ed 109/6610, pg.17.

122 Rouse in Beale, Soulsby & Dove *Work and Play in Girls' Schools* 1901 pg.85.

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The 1921 committee found that girls' schools tended to be good at fostering such interest:

There is often a great deal of enthusiasm for the Classics, particularly on their literary and artistic sides.¹²³

The 1932 committee advised some very early knowledge of Greek myth and a year of Ancient History to put classics in context.¹²⁴ One also reads of girls having special lessons in the peripheral aspects of the classics such as the weekly treat of a Greek story lesson taken by a student teacher at Cheltenham Ladies' College when

...one glorious morning we stayed in 'till 12.55 like everyone else. For the last period the whole division gathered round the desk and Miss McCabe came to tell us Greek stories. This was the highlight of the week.¹²⁵

The girls at Cheltenham Ladies' College were taken to meetings of the Classical Association where they listened to lectures such as the paper given in 1904 on 'The Place of Latin and Greek in Human Life' [By J.W.Mackail, head of the secondary education branch of the Board of Education] which was followed by an address by J.W. Headlam on 'The Reform of Classical Teaching in Schools' in which he 'dwelt at some length on the importance of extending the pupils' reading of classical authors in the early stages.'¹²⁶

Rouse, himself being the main advocate of the direct method, suggested that this should be involved in the teaching of girls. He realised that one stumbling block to this was lack of qualified staff, but this was not an insurmountable problem:

But it will be asked where are the teachers to be found who can do this? The answer is, that it is perfectly easy to learn and only needs practice.¹²⁷

He suggested compiling lists of phrases to be learnt by heart. Although the direct method was not embraced wholeheartedly, girls schools were keen on drama which was 'an essential element of the direct method'.¹²⁸ The Greek plays at Bradfield were not just restricted to audiences from boys' schools. Such outings were popular and

123 *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.125.

124 *The Teaching of Latin and History* Report of informal conference 1932 pg.21.

125 *Recollections of College 1895-1904* in Cheltenham Ladies' College Magazine 1973/74.

126 Cheltenham Ladies' College magazine 1904 pg.230.

127 Rouse in Beale, Soulsby & Dove *Work and Play in Girls' Schools* 1901 pg. 74.

128 *Classical Association Proceedings* Discussion on the use of Drama in teaching Jan 1924 pg.83.

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sometimes gave stimulus to Greek lessons, although the majority could not cope with the language. Here is part of a typical report from a girls' school magazine:

From the moment that the watchman began the play with his beautiful soliloquy from the watch-tower, the whole audience remained spellbound. Although many of us did not understand the Greek, the plot did not seem hard to follow and even had it been, the beauty of the language alone would have satisfied us....The costumes and indeed the entire production of the play were magnificent....their 'Agamemnon' was unexpected in its beauty and dignity.¹²⁹

Some schools took the bold step of producing their own play, some more demanding than others. The following was probably more of a tableau than a Latin play as described in the magazine:

We were told that it would probably take under an hour to perform; but I think a record was achieved in getting the touching scene where the children were put in a cradle by the river, the adoption by the mother wolf..., the founding of Rome and the Rape of the Sabines in a quarter of an hour!¹³⁰

Bournemouth High School put on their own Greek plays which were a great success, but these plays were in translation and not performed by the classics students, but by members of the elocution class:

..these schoolgirls were all members of Miss Broad's admirable establishment¹³¹ at Bournemouth, and reflects the greatest credit on pupils and mistress alike.

It was a treat, and to many a surprise, to hear the beautiful, noble lines spoken so admirably as these girls, old and young, delivered them. the play was, of course, a translation....A pretty sight they (the chorus) were - these graceful girls in their white clinging draperies, and with their gold filleted hair and golden girdles and sandled feet. Touching, too, were the sweet young voices...

...Too few girls this day speak well, or know anything about the modulation of the voice, the graces of expression, or the extreme importance of a clearly-enunciated, well delivered sentence. Manner and voice delivery make even a plain woman more interesting. To a pretty one they add yet a greater and more gracious charm.¹³²

The photographs reproduced overleaf illustrate two such performances.¹³³

129 Westonbirt School Magazine 1934.

130 Godolphin School Magazine 1903.

131 One would suppose that this offered coaching in elocution and possibly deportment.

132 Newspaper cutting Aug.8th 1903 found in Talbot Heath School archives.

133 Bournemouth High School pupils in Alcestis, 1903. Fig.3

Bournemouth High School pupils in Alcestis, 1903. Fig.4.

Bournemouth High School pupils in Antigone, 1904. Fig.5





Alcathis 1903



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This is far removed from what Rouse had in mind, but an example of a classical theme connected with the training of a girl in suitable accomplishments for a young lady. For the girls the dressing up and make up was the memorable aspect:

Another highlight as I look back was our production of the Greek play, *Antigone*; it was well produced and our Greek dresses were copied from authentic sources. I was rouged and powdered that night for the first time in my life.¹³⁴

Some schools did attempt true classical drama, but not to a great degree. At a Classical Association meeting in 1924 Miss Avery Woodward [classics lecturer at Bedford College] confessed that she found it difficult to make girls speak up, the reason suggested being, 'A little mumbling may cover a multitude of sins.'¹³⁵ The classics being used to promote ladylike attributes is also evident in the existence of Greek dancing which became a popular form of suitable exercise. Westonbirt School had a Greek dancing club and were given a lecture demonstration on the Art of Greek Dancing.

First of all, she showed us some exercises; then she performed several dances, among which were a pyrrhic dance, a tragic ritual, a bacchanal and one called the Croas.¹³⁶

Again, this is far removed from the genuine background knowledge envisaged by the academics. However, classical societies were formed within schools and these attempted to pursue a serious and genuine interest in the classics. Cheltenham Ladies' College started a Classical Society in 1922, although reports only appear in the magazine occasionally. Typical activities were readings of plays such as *The Birds*, a discussion on Roman festivals and a visit to the Roman villa in the grounds of Sudely Castle in 1930.¹³⁷ This classical society did produce Greek plays, but even after a prose and verse reading of the *Alcestis* in 1932 'the meeting was concluded by a Greek garland dance'.¹³⁸ Again we see the blending of the academic and the lady-like accomplishment. The society was not a thriving one and mentioned as being 'small compared with the others'.¹³⁹ In the same year the Talbot Heath Classical society reported a decrease in numbers and no meeting, although they did survive and followed similar interests to the society at Cheltenham Ladies' College.

¹³⁴ O. Carter *A History of Gateshead High School and Central Newcastle High School* c1955, pg.15.

¹³⁵ Classical Association *Proceedings* Discussion on the use of Drama in Teaching Jan 1924 pg.88.

¹³⁶ Westonbirt School Magazine 1941.

¹³⁷ Cheltenham Ladies' College magazine 1930.

¹³⁸ *ibid.* 1932.

¹³⁹ *ibid.* 1933.

Classics in Girls' Schools : The Reality

There was a lively interest in the classics in girls' schools, but among the minority. Possibly due to the fact that female classicists had to prove the worth and status of their subject, there were some highly motivated and stimulating teachers. However, there were also those who were less able and their incompetence may have done more damage than good in promoting interest in the classics.

There was little incentive to progress far in classics and the 1921 report felt that the number of scholarships available to women was 'very meagre and that the supply available for classics is a fortiori quite inadequate.' Of those 24 who had won scholarships over the preceding five years only two were from Municipal and County day schools (including Grammar Schools) so by far the majority were from the independent sector¹⁴⁰.

The table below shows the percentage of the number of students reading for classical honours at colleges for women at Oxford and Cambridge over a sixteen year period.

Table displaying the decline in the number of students reading classics at womens' universities from 1904 to 1920 ¹⁴¹

Oxford	1904	1914	1919	1920
Lady Margaret Hall	13%	7%	11%	7.5%
Somerville	15%	11%	11%	11%
St. Hughs	10%	9%	5%	3.5%
St. Hilda's	18%	8%	8%	4.5%
Cambridge				
Girton	16%	16%	12.5%	6%
Newnham	16%	15.5%	8.5%	7%

This shows that the position of classics was not strong amongst women at university and it was becoming weaker at this level as over the sixteen-year period the number of students studying classics at some colleges had more than halved. As the report found that most of the women studying classics became teachers, this, in turn produced a more qualified staff who were prepared to work hard to teach their charges, given

¹⁴⁰ *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.110.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

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sufficient time in which to do it. Sara Burstall felt that fading enthusiasm and failure to achieve high standards was due to cramming too much into young minds, for whom it was a mistake to study intensely too early:

I think of some of miserable, starved specimens of girls I have known, fed upon an almost unmixed diet of either Classics or Mathematics; their physique had suffered, and they had no mental elasticity, their one idea being to win scholarships: they did this, but never flourished at the university, for want of all round culture...Mathematics relieves the strain of Classics; specialising may be comparatively harmless to the full-grown man, but the child specialist will grow up to be deformed.¹⁴²

In May 1932 a conference was held at Oxford (mentioned already in this chapter) which reflects the classical teaching of those girls who did aspire to university and highlights problems met by both teachers and pupils. In her opening remarks Miss Jamison, Vice-principal and Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, referred to criticisms that it was difficult for girls to enter Oxford colleges and 'impossible demands were made upon school girls in the scholarship and entrance examination'.¹⁴³ The conference hoped to examine the cause of such problems, which in Miss Jamison's view was the late start made by girls in Latin, and suggest solutions.

The basis of the discussion were responses to a questionnaire which had been received from 63 schools. If one reads a summary of the findings and ensuing discussion one finds it reflects much of what has been explored in this chapter:

- Difficulties mentioned by teachers were a lack of time, a late start, poor grounding in English grammar, examinations and a general dislike of Latin authors, particularly Caesar.
- Parents were not convinced that Latin was of value to their daughters. The majority who specialised in Latin became teachers.
- Latin was useful because it provided a link with a culture from which ours grew. It also fostered disciplined and logical thought.
- The use of competent teachers was important.
- Pupils who did succeed to win scholarships were worn out by the effort involved, often due to trying for three or four scholarships at a time. The pressure was unrealistic.

¹⁴² S.A. Burstall *English High Schools for Girls* 1907 pg.20.

¹⁴³ Report of informal conference held at Oxford *The Teaching of Latin and History* 1932 pg.11.

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The conference found that teaching Latin to girls was beset with problems if a high standard was to be achieved. Some, however, suggested a broadening of the syllabus by the inclusion of ancient history questions and set books. The number requesting a diminution of papers was not specified.

Coming at the end of this first period the conference throws light on both the growth of education for girls, in terms of demands made upon them, and on the place of Latin in schools where it was not traditionally a key subject.

Whilst it was becoming accepted for a girl to be educated, that education was to be full and varied, embodying the accomplishments that would help to create the whole woman and allowing time for physical, cultural and spiritual development as well. To excel in an academic subject some of these aspects had to be crowded out of the time-table, a decision which was still considered to be rather improper for a young lady. However, throughout the period the place of academic study had become more secure. Latin was optional at Godolphin School in 1905, but by 1923 the school followed a four year course, Westonbirt, starting up at the end of the twenties, made Latin compulsory and at Roedean the number of girls taking Latin had risen from 34% in 1906 to 49% in 1927.¹⁴⁴ It was now expected that Latin would be part of the curriculum and only those who could not cope could opt out. The comments from inspection reports for St. Mary's, Wantage throughout the period illustrate the rise of Latin:

1906, Latin is optional

The Latin of the school is for the most part rudimentary.....The teaching is painstaking, but unless the subject occupies a much more prominent position in the curriculum than it does at present, no great progress can be expected.¹⁴⁵

1911, Most girls take German, only those who have already started Latin continue.

The standard attained is low.¹⁴⁶

1921, German has declined, Latin is a form subject from fourth form.

...the time allotted in the first year of the course is barely adequate. In the beginners' class at least five periods should be devoted to Latin, beyond this four should suffice, if wisely used.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Inspection report for Roedean 1906 Ed109/5999, pg.12 and 1927 Ed 109/6001, pg.7.

¹⁴⁵ Inspection report for St. Mary's, Wantage 1906 Ed 109/169, pg.9.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid* 1911 Ed 109/170, pg.6.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.* 1921 Ed 109/171, pg.7.

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1932, Latin begun in fourth form, a four year course.

The mistresses concerned certainly deserve credit for the work they are doing.¹⁴⁸

The development of education for girls was an exciting time. Not being bound by the straight jacket of tradition one would suppose that headmistresses had a *carte blanche*. It was not easy, however, to strike the right balance between providing academic disciplines and continuing to groom a girl for her role in adult life. Spurred on by the necessities of war and the suffragette movement this role was changing and academic qualifications were not only becoming acceptable, but also necessary. Rarely starting Latin before the age of twelve and often having a shorter working day girls had a struggle to attain the same level as boys in Latin. The acceptance that it was a hard grind led to Latin being restricted to the brightest girls, sometimes only being available as an extra. Girls tended to find English and French more attractive, easier options so the advantages of Latin for girls were made clear. Lack of a tradition of classical education resulted in teachers who were willing to adopt a fresh and stimulating approach. Some took groups on outings while others ventured into the world of drama, using classics as a medium for elocution and deportment training. However, it also resulted in a dearth of well-qualified staff, which, in turn, led to few schools being able to offer a thorough classical course. The staffing situation, together with the overcrowded timetable, made the teaching of Greek a rarity. Classics mistresses would have experienced little support from like minded colleagues, and felt that the discussions at Classical Association meetings were so far removed from their own experiences that they could contribute little. Over the course of thirty years education for girls had made significant progress, it was no longer rather *avant-garde*, but the norm. Latin was part of that norm, but only for the most able. As it became more acceptable for girls to aspire to university Latin became a necessity in order that the right qualifications were gained. Some who decided late in their school career to try for university had to work hard to pick up Latin which they had not pursued to examination level. Its position was hindered by some patchy teaching, other, more attractive, subjects within the curriculum, the hard work necessary to master it in time for exams and the fact that many schools failed to provide sufficient staff or time for success to be a realistic goal. Although Latin was by no means an important aspect of the curriculum, it had created a corner for itself and gained respectability.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.* 1932 Ed 109/172, pg.8.

At The Chalk Face 1902 - Early 1930's

It is a truly pitiful sight to see a boy sit down to master a set of clumsy rules, of which he will never use the half and understand the quarter.¹

It is astonishing sometimes when one speaks to those who have left their classics behind them, to note how narrow has been the curriculum, how sparse and scanty has been the dip into a language which nevertheless has such abundant and copious sources of interest.²

Those who championed the cause of classics had been keen to exploit every strategy to enhance their popularity and emphasise that a traditional subject was not necessarily a worthless one. So to what extent did the ideas of the more adventurous and flexible find their way into the classroom? The curriculum was often highly structured and determined by the requirements of the Common Entrance examination and entrance exams to Oxford and Cambridge. In this chapter we shall explore the content of that curriculum and endeavour to assess what really went on in the classroom.

In 1909 a special committee of the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools proposed suggestions for teaching Latin, identifying three distinct components of the curriculum: Grammar, Composition or translation from English into Latin and Translation which was from Latin into English.³ Although this was directed specifically at preparatory schools it provides a suitable framework with which to structure this chapter. We shall consider the curriculum with reference to these three groups, keeping in mind, as the article noted, that all components are related to each other.

¹ E.E. Bowen *On Teaching by Means of Grammar*, 1867, in R. Lankester *Natural Science and the Classical System in Education* 1918 pg.96 It is worth noting that Bowen's writing, now fifty years old, was still thought relevant.

² Earl of Halsbury *Presidential address to the Classical Association of England and Wales* 1905, pg.4.

³ *Methods of Classical Teaching in Preparatory Schools* in *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.5, No.42 1909 pg.316.

Grammar

An understanding of grammar, the basic structure of language, is vital to understanding language. One can learn vocabulary, but unless one knows how it knits together to make sense, it is of little value. Considering the body of criticism against the grammar grind one must deduce that for many teachers it was of overriding importance, particularly in the early stages of learning Latin.

The first thing that a school master has to do in preparing for the examinations that are conducted by the universities is to teach the minutiae of grammar. Until we can pass our boys in the minutiae of grammar, there is very little chance of our succeeding in introducing them to the higher literature which we all value very much.⁴

I think that an altogether excessive proportion of time is devoted at our schools to the study of grammar.⁵

Grammar, the means to an end, was often taught with scientific progression. Sharwood Smith was criticised by his head master for adopting an approach which 'spells chaos and confusion' compared to a colleague who knows that 'it is his job to see that every boy in his form, before he leaves him, is sound on his declensions and on his regular verbs; that he has reached the eighty-fifth exercise in his composition book, and that he is fully acquainted with all the constructions that are dealt with up to paragraph 159b on page 79 of his syntax.'⁶ Traditional grammar teaching was criticised for its rather illogical progression and unnecessary mention of difficult and rare forms early on. It was becoming clear that the most frequently used forms were the ones to concentrate on at first and this knowledge would be added to gradually as experience in Latin grew wider.⁷ However, in practice this was impracticable due to the demands of the all-important entrance exams.

It may be worth while to point out that the principle of concentrating attention on what is common and essential is constantly violated in practice. If we study the grammar questions set in the scholarship examinations of some of the public schools or in University Matriculation Examinations, we find such forms asked for as the ablative plural of *filia*, the accusative singular of nouns like *tussis*, *amussis*, the genitive plural of *accipiter* or *panis*, the gender of *gryps*, *hydrops*, or *acer*....to say nothing of forms which, though they occur in classical authors, are no necessary part of the mental outfit of the beginner....An examination of the Public School Entrance Scholarship papers...will show that many of the sentences set in them are not well

⁴ J.B. Lee Classical Association discussion in *Proceedings* 1905, pg.42.

⁵ R.T. Elliot *ibid.* 1905, pg.74.

⁶ E. Sharwood Smith *The Faith of a Schoolmaster* 1935, pg.117.

⁷ *Report of the Curricula Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* Classical Association 1907, pg.100.

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suiting to test, as they should, whether the candidate possesses a practical knowledge of the common constructions and a good working vocabulary.⁸

The grammar books, primers, themselves compounded the tendency to teach irregularities and exceptions to the rule from the start. In 1905 the Reverend W. C. Compton noted that 'it is desirable that school grammars should be revised as to lighten the burdens of beginners by separating the indispensable from the more exceptional uses.'⁹ However, alternative primers, with a simplified approach were not welcomed. One such publication 'presented to an indifferent public was far from a success... not only was it badly shaped but it was at once too radical and too conservative, too long and too short, too modest and too bold....The British public would have none of it.'¹⁰ Attempts to entice teachers away from strict adherence to the primer and suggestions that would make it a more logical process for the pupil were not widely welcomed.

The suggestions published in March 1909 by the *Preparatory Schools Review* were based on the assumption that standards of scholarship and entrance examinations to public schools were to be maintained. After establishing that the grammatical terms and their use should be taught in English first, preferably before attending preparatory school, the following suggestions were made:

1. Grammar should be taught *pari passu* with composition and translation.
2. The learning of grammar should be at first limited entirely to forms in common use, leaving unusual forms and constructions to be picked up as they occur in Composition and Translation.
3. The verbs should be learnt first, as the essential element in the sentence, and should be combined as soon as possible with Substantives and Adjectives. It is advisable to teach the Indicative Mood, *Active and Passive*, thoroughly, before the rest of the verb is touched.
4. Syntax Rules should not be learnt by heart as a Grammar lesson, but should be taught systematically in connection with a scheme of Composition based on the

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Classical Association Council Minutes Jan. 6th 1905.

¹⁰ A Correspondent in *The Preparatory Schools Review* No.81 Vol.8 March 1922, pg.295 The grammar in question was one that the anonymous author had produced soon after the turn of the century.

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analysis of the sentence, supplemented by constant application in the course of Translation lessons. The analysis of the simple and compound sentence should be taught side by side in English and Latin throughout the school.¹¹

In 1880 Sir Joshua Fitch had delivered a series of lectures to prospective teachers at Cambridge University which foreshadowed the above sentiments.

[the]...notion of grounding consists in requiring a great deal of the grammar to be learnt by heart, before it is understood or seen in any practical application to the construction of sentences. It is for this reason that the study is felt to be so dry and repulsive to school-boys.¹²

He listed the basics that needed to be learnt as:

1. The five declensions including, of course, all adjectives and participles. Here, of course, you will not separate nouns from adjectives, and so go over the same forms twice. You will shew from the first the identity of the inflections in the two.
2. The rules for gender, with one or two of the notable exceptions.
3. The four conjugations of verbs active and passive, with the substantive verb *esse*.
4. The irregular verbs *volo, eo, nolo, malo* and *possum*.
5. Three or four of the leading rules of syntax, and these only, when the time comes for applying them.

In an attempt to demonstrate the connection between English and Latin pronouns he produced a comprehensive table, an example of which is printed overleaf and suggests that not all his attempts at logical simplification were successful.¹³

¹¹ The Preparatory Schools Review *Methods of Classical Teaching in Preparatory Schools* No.42, Vol.5 March 1909, pg.317.

¹² J. Fitch *Lectures On Teaching* 1898, pg.239.

¹³ J. Fitch *Lectures On Teaching* 1898, pg.238.

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	Singular				Plural			
	Masculine		Feminine		Neuter		All genders	
Nom.	HE	Is	Heo	Id	Hit	Id	Hi	Ii
Gen.	HIS	Ejus	HIR	Elus	His	Ejus	Heora	Eorum
Dat.	HIM	Ei	HIR	Ei	Him	Ei	Heom	Iis
Acc.	Hine	Eum	Hi	Eam	HIT	Id	Hi	Eos

Whilst the lectures were delivered in 1880 they were published for a wider audience in 1898 and so aimed at the teachers in harness at the beginning of the century. Again, as with Bowen (see footnote 1), we have an example of work that has been written some years ago being thought appropriate to later times, an indication that changes had either been minimal or had not taken place at all.

In 1919 L.W.P. Lewis published a book called *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin*. In the forward W. Edwards¹⁴ wrote:

Above all there must be serious systematic work done in grammar...The lumber which has cumbered progress in the past must be abandoned. But it does not mean that we can rest content with the hope that the grammar can be picked up casually and incidentally as the pupil goes along.¹⁵

Lewis echoed the advice given by the Preparatory Schools Review in that he insisted that the structure of a sentence is comprehended in English first. However, contrary to Fitch, he asserted that it is not practical to tackle grammar as it is met, but a foundation of grammar must be laid at the start.

The proper plan is to learn a certain number of the forms thoroughly first and apply them after - not learn and apply concurrently, which may sound easier and more reasonable in theory, but does not prove to be so in practice. Neither do boys find learning their Latin grammar dull...Nothing annoys me more than this accusation brought against Latin grammar, as it is so often nowadays, either by people who have never taught it and think it must be dull and laborious work, or by people who have taught it badly.¹⁶

He suggested that verbs are taught in toto rather than selected parts. As a means of getting this body of information to stick in pupils' minds he advocated chanting aloud.¹⁷ This method of reinforcement could be used in the next year of study also.

¹⁴ Headmaster of Bradford Grammar School where L.W.P. Lewis was a teacher himself.

¹⁵ W. Edwards in *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* by L.W.P. Lewis 1919, pg.xvi.

¹⁶ L.W.P. Lewis *ibid.* pg.18.

¹⁷ *ibid.* pg.19.

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Lewis' book was designed for a four year course and boys in the independent sector had the luxury of a far longer course of study which will go some way to explain the entrance papers requiring a tremendous depth of knowledge. By the fourth year Lewis considered that the emphasis should be on revision; 'it is sheer memory grind.'¹⁸

Many, Lewis apart, accepted that Grammar was unpalatable, but a necessary evil. Whilst there were those who, primer in hand, plodded on, some were inspired teachers with a real will to bring even the rudiments of grammar to life. E. Sharwood Smith fell into the latter category and decried the routine approach as a failure to educate.

Alas! even now the old routine goes on - first declension - exercises on the first declension - regular conjugations, one, two, three, four - eternal iteration of soul-deadening grammar rules and rhymes (the latter the most fatuous of all methods seeing how easy it is to substitute one word for another), weird constructions - and at the end a blank ignorance of the language and literature and the civilisation of two of the most enlightened peoples that the world has known.¹⁹

Thus he asserted that grammar should come, not first, but almost last.²⁰ It will be tackled as met in literature. This approach was the exception rather than the rule and only successful if the teacher had a particular flair for the language and for teaching. In 1918 Ray Lankester republished E.E. Bowen's article, originally published in 1867, promoting a more rational approach to grammar which supported Sharwood Smith's sentiments:

But the sooner he can begin to 'pick up' the language the better. Let him get familiar with the commonest words and know what they mean in English. Let him translate and retranslate the earliest possible sentences with no grammatical analysis in his head.²¹

The more pedestrian teachers were suspicious of such casual treatment. Teachers at Harrow were exhorted to 'modify their methods in some respects to meet changed conditions.'²² As noted in Chapter 3 the majority of teachers at public schools had not been trained as teachers and apart from their brief time at university remained at the schools at which they had been taught. Thus they perpetuated methods which

¹⁸ *ibid.* pg.151.

¹⁹ E. Sharwood Smith *The Faith of a School -Master* 1935 pg.136.

²⁰ *ibid.* pg.139.

²¹ E.E. Bowen *On Teaching by Means of Grammar* in R. Lankester *Natural Science and the Classical System in Education* 1918 pg.95.

²² Inspection report for Harrow 1920, Ed109/4197 pg.11.

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were familiar to them, remaining with the safe, and in their view necessary, route of mastering the contents of the primer.

The Headmaster himself is a good classical scholar and a practised teacher, but apart from his teaching and that of one other master, who has a long experience behind him and is thorough and competent, if not very inspiring, a good deal of the work is in inexpert hands.²³

Writing in the *Preparatory Schools Review* one correspondent confessed that 'the old methods of teaching Latin are no longer in vogue, and things may have changed in this respect far more than the writer knows, for he has been for some years *donatus rude* [retired]. He is not abreast of the times.'²⁴ The very existence of Grammar papers in public examinations led to a reluctance to embrace with open arms such a seemingly relaxed approach as Sharwood Smith advocated. These papers were criticised by an article in the *Preparatory Schools Review* in which it was argued that true comprehension of grammar could be tested by translation, making grammar a means to an end rather than the end itself. The author suggesting that grammar papers were 'no damn use whatever' felt that it would be wise to write anonymously, so was aware that the subject is something of an ants nest.²⁵ For those to whom the minutiae of the syntax was the very essence of teaching Latin his final comments would deliver quite a sting:

"Grammar Papers" in the scholarship examinations are getting thinner and thinner. Let us hasten their death and enjoy the funeral feast.²⁶

It becomes obvious that grammar, however taught, was the corner stone of the curriculum. Henry Browne [Professor of Classics, University College, Dublin] made the valid point that such emphasis dated from an age when little or no grammar was learnt in English and the classics provided the only formal instruction in grammar a boy was to meet.²⁷ Pupils learnt, through ability, desire or fear ['The Headmaster taught Latin with iron discipline - a ruler (sharp edge) being often brought smartly down on the knuckles!!' ²⁸] a series of verbs, cases, and all manner of irregularities. They knew them off pat, but whether they were understood is another matter. However, they

²³ Inspection report for Winton House 1931 Ed109/1961 pg3.

²⁴ 'A Correspondent' *The Teaching of Latin to Beginners* in *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol. 8, no.81 1922 pg.296.

²⁵ *The Futility of Grammar Papers* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* No. 98 Vol. 9 Pg.389 Dec. 1927.

²⁶ *ibid.* pg.390.

²⁷ H. Browne *Our Renaissance* in *Essays on the Reform and Revival of Classical Studies* 1917 pg.140.

²⁸ Sherborne Questionnaire correspondent writing of his prep. school, Gadebridge Park, in 1924 - 1928.

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were remembered, particularly the 'most fatuous of all methods', the mnemonic rhymes:

All I can remember of the school curriculum is gender rhymes and Euclid....

To nouns that can not be declined
The gender neuter is assigned
examples *fas* and *nefas* give
And the Verb Noun Infinitive
Est Summum Nefas Fallere
Deceit is gross impiety.

The gender rhymes also contain lists of words that no one with a feeling for the magic of language can resist....

Masculine are *fons* and *mons*
Chalybs, *hydrops*, *gryps* and *pons*
Rudens, *torrens*, *clens* and *cliens*
Fractions of the 'as' as *tiens*

...The very words they contained - *opifex* and *artifex*- were suggestive of arcane practices. All over the world children learn magic rhymes which they are told to take seriously and like the Latin Mass they should be largely incomprehensible.²⁹

In spite of advice to adopt a rational approach to grammar, the recognition that the grammar grind 'wearies, distresses, dissipates'³⁰ and an acceptance that the grammar oriented approach kept alive some of the fustiest images of classics, the rank and file of teachers clung to their tried, tested and familiar methods as the following inspection report observations illustrate.

Grammar and syntax tended to be taught as a subject by themselves, detached from their natural basis, the Latin sentence.³¹

Where it fails is in a certain rather rigid formality, and particularly in giving excessive prominence to the translation into Latin of detached short sentences illustrative of special points of grammar. Indeed in form III nothing whatever is done beyond this and the boys appear to read no Latin at all.³²

²⁹ K. Clark *Another Part of the Wood : A Self Portrait* Wixenford Preparatory School, early 1900's. 1974, pg.34.

³⁰ E.E. Bowen *On Teaching by Means of Grammar* in R. Lankester *Natural Science and the Classical System in Education* 1918 pg.99.

³¹ Inspection report for The Dragon School 1930 Ed109/4861 pg.10.

³² Inspection Report for Sherborne Preparatory School 1914 Ed109/1071 pg.6.

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The chief characteristic of the work is the very thorough and stimulating training which the girls receive in grammar and syntax...it would be wise to make the Latin texts read more distinctly the centre of all work.³³

Teachers' own experiences, constraints imposed by examination papers and a general fear to depart from the status quo led to little heed being taken of those who begged for a different approach in their quest to keep the classics alive.

But is it too much to hope that the classical teaching itself may some day cease to be the dull routine which it now so often is?³⁴

However, so entrenched were teachers and so restricted by the demands of examinations that a real opportunity for Browne's wishes, voiced in 1917, to be fulfilled did not come about for another fifty years.³⁵

While I do not think that lessons in grammar can entirely be dispensed with, I think they ought to be to a considerable extent deferred. I would begin with translation from an author (or of simple sentences) and would allow inklings of grammar to spring out of the matter for translation rather than regard it as a necessary preliminary...I would never make the students learn long lists of forms...which will never be required in practice.³⁶

Translation and Literature

One of the main reasons for such emphasis on grammar was to enable the pupil to read Latin, the goal being an understanding of classical authors. The steps to this goal were varied, each believing that his was the enlightened path. Professor Sonnenschein noted that 'the object of learning Latin is twofold: i. the intelligent reading of the more important Latin authors, ii. a linguistic and logical discipline.'³⁷ Some worked with these aims in mind, but failed to realise the weight of the phrase 'intelligent reading' and were criticised for becoming too involved with the actual language rather than the content of what was read.

³³ Inspection report for North London Collegiate School 1914 Ed109/3983 pg.11.

³⁴ E.E. Bowen *On Teaching by Means of Grammar* in R. Lankester *Natural Science and the Classical System in Education* pg.110.

³⁵ The Cambridge Latin Course, first used in schools in 1970, see chapter 10, was the most radical move away from treating Latin as a grammar orientated subject. *Latin For Today* published in 1934 also offered a departure from traditional teaching methods by introducing the word order method.

³⁶ H. Browne *Our Renaissance* in *Essays on the Reform and Revival of Classical Studies* 1917 pg.139.

³⁷ Classical Association *Proceedings* discussion on the teaching of Latin following the report of the Curricula Committee Vol. 5 1907 pg.18.

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It is too common even at the present day for teachers to set up a mechanical conception of Latin as a merely formal gymnastic, instead of regarding it as a literature capable of exerting a strong attraction upon the pupil and of becoming a powerful influence for the training of taste, the development of character, and the awakening of intellectual ambitions.³⁸

So how did teachers achieve the 'aim to make Latin and Greek, as literature, accessible to...pupils at the earliest age and with the least detriments as possible'?³⁹

The *Preparatory Schools Review* gave a series of guidelines for the school master:

1. Translation should begin with easy sentences. (To familiarise pupils with the commonest grammatical forms and constructions.)
2. The point at which continuous narrative should be begun must be left to the discretion of the teacher. Translation, however, should always be slightly in advance of Composition.
3. It is suggested that too abrupt an introduction of great variety of constructions and vocabulary tends to confuse and dishearten the pupil by depriving him of such sense of power as he may have gained. Prepared texts therefore, will be found most suitable as an introduction to original authors.
4. As soon as a boy is sufficiently advanced to read the complete text of an author, vocabularies should be discarded, and a dictionary or lexicon used. Scansion should be taught when a boy begins a Latin Verse author.
5. In modern text books there is a tendency to over annotation. In the selection of texts preference should be given to editions in which the notes are few, brief and suggestive. The aim of a note should be to stimulate thought rather than to save the pupil trouble.

³⁸ *Report of the Curricula Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* printed in *Classical Association Proceedings* Vol.5 1907 pg.102.

³⁹ Rev. W.C. Compton in *Classical Association Proceedings* debate on the improvement of school grammars 1905, pg.66.

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6. Care should be taken to arouse the interest of the pupil in the subject matter of his reading, by explaining the historical setting, and by use of maps, plans and diagrams.

7. It is assumed that throughout the Preparatory School course the ordinary Translation lessons will be supplemented by practice in translation at sight (written and oral) of passages of suitable difficulty.⁴⁰

Lewis' advice in *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* followed these guidelines as he advocated a very structured approach to tackling translation.

The words are not merely translated. The boys are made to repeat 'subject, verb, object; nominative, verb, accusative...Simple as it is, have every word parsed on paper in column; have the skeleton numbered 1, 2, 3, the subject parsed; noun, nominative singular with its Latin; the verb parsed merely as the verb with its Latin; the object as noun, accusative singular with its Latin... Make the boys say always: 'Verb at the end of the sentence.'⁴¹

J. Postgate noted a need for simple text books which confirms suspicions that suitable material for beginners was hard to come by:

Nothing is less easy to write than a good elementary book and many of those who are now tempted to compile them do not possess the requisite knowledge.⁴²

Once the elementary stages are passed the problem of how to make the leap to reading original material presents itself.

Our great difficulty is, of course, to find any original Latin author that is easy enough for this transitional stage and at the same time interesting and valuable in itself. We have tried Mr. Sleeman's 'Caesar in Britain and Belgium' and various books of simplified Livy, but hitherto all have been defaced with English notes and vocabulary.⁴³

Various suggestions were offered as to the nature of these initial stepping stones. For many the main thrust of early translation work was the grammatical aspect of the language.

⁴⁰ *Methods of Classical Teaching in Preparatory Schools* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* No.42 Vol. 5 March 1909, pg.316.

⁴¹ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.29.

⁴² J. Postgate *Are The Classics To Go?* in *Fortnightly Review* no.72 Nov. 1902 pg.873.

⁴³ E. Purdie *The Direct Method of Teaching Latin* in *School World* March 1917 pg.98.

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For them [younger boys] the important matter is to concentrate upon the meaning of the Latin, to grapple closely with the mechanism of some long period, and to rearrange its complicated members in some sort of intelligible English. Fluent and idiomatic renderings are well enough as a secondary issue, but only if they do not obscure the appreciation of the logic.⁴⁴

The obvious approach was the use of sentences. However, the character of such sentences was the subject of much discussion. The Classical Association Curricula Committee noted that while 'it is possible to present vocabulary and grammar either in the form of isolated sentences or in the shape of a connected narrative specially written for the purpose' it is 'not easy to write a connected narrative in which the new grammatical points are systematically introduced and the vocabulary gradually extended.'⁴⁵ W.H.S. Jones, an advocate of the direct method, suggested the use of Sonnenschein's book *Ora Maritima*, but as we have seen in chapter 3 attempts to present Latin in a modern context, bringing it into the world familiar to the school boy, were deprecated by many, including the 1921 Prime Minister's Committee report,⁴⁶ which considered it a false start. The book contained stories with rather trite illustrations. At the back of the book were exercises and explanations of grammar.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ C.E. Robinson *The Future of Education : Education in our Public Schools in Nineteenth Century and After*, London June 1917 pg.1322.

⁴⁵ *Report of the Curricula Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* printed in the *Classical Association Proceedings* Vol.5 1907 pg.101.

⁴⁶ *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.152.

⁴⁷ E.A.Sonnenschein *Ora Maritima : A Latin Story for Beginners* 1902, this edition 1937 pg.27.

II. Patruus meus.

[Second Declension : Nouns and Adjectives in *us*].

6. Patruus meus quondam praefectus erat in Africā Meridiānā. Nunc militiā vacat, et agellō suō operam dat. Agellus patruī mei nōn magnus est. Circum villam est hortus. Mūrus hortī nōn altus est. Rivus est prope hortum, unde aquam portāmus, cum hortum irrigāmus. In hortō magnus est numerus rosārum et violārum. Rosae et violae tibi, mī patre, magnam laetitiam dant. Tū, Lȳdia, cum patruō meō in hortō saepe ambulās.

7. In angulō hortī sunt ulmī. In ulmīs corvī nidificānt. Corvōs libenter spectō, cum circum nidōs suōs volitant. Magnus est numerus corvōrum in hortō patruī mei; multī mergī super oceanum volitant. Vōs, mergī, libenter spectō, cum super oceanum volitātis et praedam captātis. Oceanus mergīs cibum dat. Patrum meum hortus et agellus suus dēlectant; in agellō sunt equī et vaccae et porcī et gallī gallinaeque. Lȳdia gallōs gallināsque cūrat. Nōn procul ab agellō est vicus, ubi rustici habitant. Nōnulli ex rusticis agellum cum equis et vaccis et porcīs cūrant.

8. Ex hortō patruī mei scopulōs albōs orae maritimae spectāmus. Scopulī sunt altī. Et ora Francogallica nōn procul abest. Noctū ex scopulīs pharōs orae Francogallicae spectāmus, velut stellās clārās in oceanō. Quam bellus es, oceanē, cum lūna

undās tuās illustrat! Quantopere mē dēlectat vōs, undae caeruleae, spectāre, cum tranquillae estis et arēnam orae maritimae lavātis! Quantopere mē dēlectātis cum turbulentae estis et sub scopulīs spūmātis et murmurātis!



VILLA MARITIMA.

ULMI ET CORVI. MURUS. IANUA. RIVUS. CASTANEA. MERGI.

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It was thought that early translation work should relate to the people whose language was being studied. Lewis offered suggestions as to possible text books, but did not consider any of them to be satisfactory solutions to the problem.

There is no really good Latin text book for the second year. Somehow all the books are too higgledy piggedly...no such successful attempt has been made, so far as I know to construct Latin pieces on the proper plan... Sonnenschein's Latin Readers and Writers are perhaps the best, but they are not convincing.⁴⁸

He also suggested Macmillan's *Latin Course Part 2*⁴⁹ or North and Hillard's *Latin Prose Composition*⁵⁰. In his opinion it was still too early to attempt Latin authors and pseudo Latin text, albeit focused on the Romans, was worse than useless.

...such books as Welch and Duffield's 'Invasion Of Britain' do more harm than good as they give a wrong impression of what a Latin author is, if they do not actually create a distaste for the translation lesson.⁵¹

The pages printed overleaf do portray a particularly dry approach to translation, especially if one considers the audience, preparatory school boys, at which it was aimed.⁵² Such instructions as 'Take the **extensions of the predicate**. Translate.' reflect the dreary routine many must have experienced.

⁴⁸ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pgs. 48/53.

⁴⁹ *Macmillan's Latin Course* Macmillan 1885.

⁵⁰ *North and Hillard's Latin Prose Composition* Rivington 1895.

⁵¹ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.83.

⁵² W.Welch & C.G. Duffield *Elementary Classics : Caesar's Invasion of Britain* 1884 pg.xvii.

DIRECTIONS FOR TRANSLATING.

1. Pick out the finite verb (the predicate) and find out its voice, mood, tense, number, and person.
2. Find the subject or subjects with which it agrees. Translate.
3. If the verb is incomplete, find the object or completion. Translate.
4. See if the subject is enlarged by any of the methods mentioned below; if it is, translate, taking the enlargements with the subject.
5. See if the object is enlarged; if it is, translate, taking the enlargements with the object.
6. Take the extensions of the predicate. Translate.
7. Translate finally, putting in the introductory conjunctions or other words not yet taken.

The subject may be

1. A noun.
2. A pronoun (perhaps understood in the verb).
3. An adjective.
4. An infinitive mood.
5. A phrase.

The subject may be enlarged by

1. An adjective or participle.
2. A noun in apposition.
3. A noun in the genitive case.
4. A relative clause.
5. A participial phrase.

The object or completion may consist of a phrase, or of any of the parts of speech which can form a subject.

The object may be enlarged in the same way as the subject.

The predicate may be extended by

1. Adverb.
2. Ablative case.
3. Preposition and its case.
4. Adverbial sentence.

RULES OF AGREEMENT.

1. The verb agrees with its subject in number and person (and gender in the compound tenses).
2. The adjective agrees with its substantive in gender, number, and case.
3. The relative agrees with its antecedent in gender and number; for case it looks to its own verb.

PARSING.

1. *Verb.* Person, number, tense, mood, and voice, from — (give the parts). Agrees with —, its subject.
2. *Noun.* Case, number, and gender, from —, of the — declension. Give the reason for the case.
3. *Adjective.* Case, number, and gender, from — and is declined like —. It agrees with its substantive —. Give the comparative and superlative.
4. *Relative.* Case, number, and gender, from —. It agrees with its antecedent —. Give the reason for the case.

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The most suitable, although not ideal, were books such as T.S. Morton's *Legends of Gods and Heroes* or perhaps a simplified author, a more dangerous option.⁵³ The following page from Morton's book shows attempts to enliven the text by means of illustrations of statues.⁵⁴ The book does contain a few photographs, but they are not good quality and tend to make the subjects, statues, look two dimensional. After the especially created text there was a section on grammar, a page of which is printed on the following page.⁵⁵

⁵³ *ibid.* pg.84.

⁵⁴ T.S. Morton *Legends of Gods and Heroes* 1922 pg.69.

⁵⁵ *ibid.* pg.95.

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attulerat, corripuit et longe in mare jaculatus est. Tandem, dolore intolerabili confectus, domum ad Deianiram advectus est. Quae cum crudelem Centauri dolum serò percepisset, luctu oppressa ipsa se suspendio interemit. Rogum confestim Hercules exstrui jussit. In hunc rogum se projecit, Philoctetam amicum precatus ut ligna incenderet. Sic leto miserrimo periit Hercules, heroum omnium fortissimus et nobilissimus. Qui propter praeclara sua facta a Jove in numerum deorum postea receptus est.

ORPHEUS.

*Carminē dī superi placantur, carminē manes.*²³

De Orpheo quis non audit, praeclaro cantore, qui non feras solū et volucres sed etiam flumina et montes cantu suo attrahere potuit? Forte uxor ejus, nympha Eurydice, quam suavitate vocis captam nuper duxerat, serpentis morsu vulnerata periit. Orpheus autē tanto dolore affectus est ut ad Tartarum ipse uxoris repetendae²⁷ causā descenderet. Qua in re perspicī potest quāto cithara sit armis potentior. Cerberus enim, saevus Tartari custos, quem Hercules ipse vi et armis vix superare potuerat, ad citharae modos caudam leniter movens cantori viam dedit. Tantalus etiam, cujus ad aures vox illa dulcis et flebilis penetravit, perpetuae sitis paulisper oblitus est. Furiae insolitas lacrimas effuderunt. Pluto

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ipse ad misericordiam motus cantori concessit ut uxorem ab inferis reduceret, hac tamen condicione ne eam sequentem respiceret.²⁴ Quod pactum Orpheus prae amore non potuit servare. Cum enim



PLUTO AND CERBERUS. (From a statue in the Vatican.) Dis

longe processisset et jam e tenebris esset emersurus, magno uxoris desiderio motus Orpheus respexit. Eurydice statim ad inferos revocata est. Quam ob rem Orpheus, acerrimo dolore oppressus, in silvas se abdidit, hominum societatem effugiens. Forte quaedam Bacchi sacerdotes, quae per silvam eandem

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Subject and Object.

5. In a Latin sentence the Subject and Object are distinguished by their **case**; the Subject being in the **Nominative**, and the Object in the **Accusative**. In an English sentence the Subject and Object are distinguished by their **position**; the Subject being placed **before** the verb and the Object **after** the verb.

In translating into English take the Nominative before the verb and the Accusative after the verb, disregarding the Latin order.

What do the three following sentences severally mean?

- (a) *Lupus agnum devorat.* (b) *Agnum lupus devorat.*
(c) *Devorat agnum lupus.*

The Accusative Case.

6. Besides the two common uses of the Accusative, viz. (a) as object of the verb, (b) after a preposition, the following special uses should be noted:

c. **Double Accusative.** Verbs of asking and teaching can take two Accusatives, one of the person and one of the thing.

Deos auxilium orat. *He prays the gods (for) help.*

Docuit me litteras. *He taught me letters.*

d. **Factitive Verbs** (viz. verbs of making, calling and thinking), take a second Accusative in apposition to the first.

Iphigeniam sacerdotem fecit.

She made Iphigenia a priestess.

Mulierem Pandoram nominavit.

He called the woman Pandora.

NOTES ON TRANSLATION

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e. **Duration of Time.** Nouns denoting time (annus, dies, hora, etc.) are put into the Accusative when it is desired to explain how long a state of affairs lasts.

Multos dies detinebantur. *They were delayed many days.*
Tres horas mansit. *He stayed three hours.*

f. **Measure of Space.** Nouns denoting measurement (pes, passus, etc.) are put into the Accusative to express length, height, etc., or distance.

Muri decem pedes (acc.) alti erant.

The walls were ten feet high.

Mille passus (acc.) processit.

He advanced a mile (i.e. a thousand paces).

g. **Destination.** The names of towns and small islands and the words *domus* (home) and *rus* (country) are put into the Accusative (without a preposition), when spoken of as the place to which a journey is made.

Ithacam rediit. *He returned to Ithaca.*

Trojam profecti sunt. *They set out for Troy.*

Domum pervenimus. *We arrived home.*

The Genitive Case.

7. A few Latin verbs—*memini* (*I remember*), *obliviscor* (*I forget*), *misereor* (*I pity*), take a Genitive instead of an Accusative of the Object. In translating this Genitive no preposition should be used.

Nunquam obliviscar noctis illius.

I shall never forget that night.

The Dative Case.

8. a. The Latin Dative of the Remoter Object is generally rendered in English by the preposition **to** or **for**;

b. but occasionally by some other preposition, e.g. *impono*, *I impose (upon)*.

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At last the pupil has a competent enough grasp of the subject to attempt some original text. Of this there is no shortage, but one must choose wisely. The 1907 Curricula Committee felt that 'teachers cannot be too careful in the selections which they make of authors for study; much energy is wasted at present time by a haphazard method of procedure.' A variety of factors determined the suitability of texts. Teachers had to be careful to ensure that the content of texts was suitable. T. Pellatt recalled an instance when the master taking the class called the boy translating 'The rape of the Sabine women' from an Eton school book, *Extracts from Ovid and Tibullus*, to a halt and asked him to jump a line. Later in the day an older boy was prevailed upon to translate the censored line.

I can now see the words Langton Major wrote on a greasy envelope, which he had pulled out of his pocket: 'The more the maiden struggles the closer the warrior clasps her to his cuirass.' These words which had up to then seemed to us children to give the most natural and simple account in the world of a game of robbers and policemen between the Sabine ladies and the best team that Romulus could put in the field, now assumed a carnal aspect of enticing importance.⁵⁶

Texts had to be of an appropriate standard of difficulty, the content had to be worthwhile and the style of the author was taken into account as well. The Curricula Committee used these criteria to create their list of suggested reading, rejecting Eutropius, Nepos, Sallust and the Silver Age epic poets due to their 'inferior educational value'.⁵⁷ Their suggested course of reading for those who received a traditional education was as follows:

Preliminary Stage (Ages 10 or 11 - 14)

1st Year:

Preparatory Course

2nd Year:

Prose: Simplified Caesar - e.g. part of B.G. IV., V. (The Invasion Of Britain); or, Simplified Livy - e.g. passages from books II. and IX. The passages selected should form a continuous narrative.

Verse: Some fables of Phaedrus (Omitting the 'morals' which are difficult) and some easy selections from the elegiac poems of Ovid.

3rd Year:

Prose: Dramatic scenes and incidents from Livy- e.g. passages from books V., VII., VIII. (not simplified); or,

Episodes(not simplified) from Books V., VI., VII. of Caesar's *Gallic War*.

Verse: Stories from Ovid's *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, or

⁵⁶ T. Pellatt *Boys in the Making* 1936 pg.149.

⁵⁷ *Report of the Curricula Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* printed in the *Classical Association Proceedings* Vol.5 1907 pg.104.

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A miscellaneous selection of Latin verse.

Advanced Stage (Ages 14 - 18)

1st Year:

Prose: Cicero: one or more of the easier orations, such as *In Catilinam*, I., III., *Pro Lege Manilia*, *De Provinciis Consularibus*, *Pro Ligario*, together with passages of some length from other speeches, such as the *Verrines*, *Actio* II., Books IV. and V., and some stories of Roman life or easy letters of Cicero.

Verse: Vergil, *Aeneid*, I and II.

2nd Year

Prose: Livy, XXI. and XXII. (as much as possible of these books, not omitting the battle of Cannae in the latter part of Book XXII.)

Verse: Vergil, *Aeneid*, III., IV and V. (Considerable portions of Book V might be taken for rapid reading in class.)

A few select odes of Horace.

3rd Year:

Prose: One of the longer speeches of Cicero, or part of the *Civil War* of Caesar, together with the *Somnium Scipionis* and the praise of literature in the *Pro Archia* (sections 12 - 32)

The *Agricola* of Tacitus.

Verse: Vergil, *Aeneid*, VI. and parts of VII - XII.

Select Odes of Horace.

4th Year:

At this stage there will naturally be much freedom of choice.

a) The following books are suggested as necessary to complete the above scheme of reading:-

Prose: One or more books of the *Annals* or *Histories* of Tacitus.

One or more books of a philosophical or rhetorical treatise of Cicero (e.g. *Tusculan Disputations*, Book V., or a book of the *De Oratore*)

A few selected letters of Cicero.

Verse: Horace: select Satires and Epistles.

Selections from Catullus and Propertius.

Lucretius: Book V and selections from other books.

Juvenal: three or four satires.

b) The following books are suggested as less essential; some of these might be taken for rapid reading in class:-

Prose: Cicero, *De Amicitia* and *De Senectute*.

Livy: some of the later books.

Quintilian, Book X.

Seneca: a treatise such as the *De Clementia*, or selections from the *Epistulae Morales*.

Pliny: select letters.

Verse: Plautus or Terence: one or two plays.

Vergil: some of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ *ibid.* pgs 105/6.

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This progression of authors would give pupils a wide experience and many concurred with the suitability of Caesar as the starting block. One particular benefit was that battles and war held the interest of small boys.

I find that a simplified version of Caesar's invasion of Britain, or Hannibal's invasion of Italy, goes well as far as interest is concerned.⁵⁹

Whilst Lewis found that Livy and Sallust made a 'direct appeal' to boys⁶⁰ he was less enthusiastic about the use of Caesar and in particular 'the fatal Invasion Of Britain.', although he did agree that it is a popular choice in war time⁶¹. The 1932 conference at Oxford found that such authors were unpopular with girls.⁶² If teachers approached literature with a view to achieving 'intelligent meaning' military exploits were good material for studying the background and setting of stories. Having developed the ability to reach the goal of reading classical authors there was a fear that the effort to read in context would be lost.

What we stand for is rather the reading of Latin literature *as it was meant by its author to be read* - if a history, then with an eye to the facts, the march of events and the development of the historic sense; if a lyric or epic poem, then with an open mind for its power to touch the emotions and appeal to the sense of beauty.⁶³

The practice of moving boys up to the next class when they were ready rather than waiting for the end of the academic year led to a lack of continuity. W.R.Inge blamed this system for causing acquaintance with one author to be broken off before much progress had been made. He also realised that acquaintance with original authors was determined by the demands of examinations.⁶⁴ This is illustrated by a comment made in an inspection report for the Godolphin School in 1905 where the girls spent one of their three preps a week studying Caesar 'though the girls have done no Caesar before...The prospective requirements of public examinations appear to account for this practice.'⁶⁵ So in reality, although the sentiments behind the desire to create empathy and an understanding of the Romans and their culture as a whole were

⁵⁹ F.R. Dale *On the Teaching of Latin* 1914, pg.49.

⁶⁰ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.174.

⁶¹ *ibid.* pg97/112.

⁶² Report Of Informal Conference held at Oxford *The Teaching of Latin and History* 1932 pg.9.

⁶³ Professor Sonnenschein *Classical Association Proceedings* discussion on the teaching of Latin following the Report of the Curricula Committee Vol. 5 1907, pg.18.

⁶⁴ W.R. Inge *The Training of Reason* in A.C. Benson *Cambridge Essays in Education* 1918 pg.24.

⁶⁵ *Inspection report for the Godolphin School* 1905 Ed109/6610 pg.17.

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admirable, the content and importance of examinations dictated a very different treatment of material.

By this stage as little time 'as you dare' should be spent on grammar and syntax. The common *modus operandi* was to set a certain number of lines to prepare out of class and to go over this during the next lesson. The 1907 Curricula Committee criticised this system of 'prepared construing' in that it was time consuming. It recommended that texts are treated as unseen and translated in class orally, thus saving both preparation time and the time taken to create a neat copy.⁶⁶ Dennis Carey, an Old Shirburnian, recalls attending a weekly class, taken by the headmaster, at which one had to be ready to translate lines of the Aeneid that had been construed the night before. Anyone deemed not to have done sufficient preparation was put into detention....and this was in 1947! So the system criticised by the Curricula Committee was still in existence forty years later. Unseen translating was a regular feature of the curriculum and when conducted orally could strike terror into the less able or confident. Lewis called for a patient approach

Remember that a large percentage of boys are what is called nervous when called upon to translate before a class and nervousness leads to an impaired memory.⁶⁷

However, schoolmasters were not noted for their tolerance:

...that was also the Bear's failing - his inability to control his emotions. There was that appalling hour once a week when the Fifth did Latin Unseen with him...I used to pray that he would ask the more learned to stand up and translate. But every now and then it would be my turn, and the terror he struck into my heart turned my thoughts into stone. I have never really forgiven the Bear for the time I stood up and failed to emit one word - indeed I could barely see the printed word, let alone translate it. After several 'Well get on!' or 'Say something!' he got up, strode slowly towards me, and punched me hard on the left shoulder. I sat down in tears, curiously relieved that the tension had at last been broken and that it was somebody else's turn to translate.⁶⁸

The sheer mass of literature available together with the decrease in time allotted meant that not all pupils were able to cover the ground conquered by their predecessors. Extracts from letters home written at the turn of the century show that some were making great strides at a young age

⁶⁶ *Report of the Curricula Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* Classical Association *Proceedings* Vol.5 1907 pg.104.

⁶⁷ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.103.

⁶⁸ S. Pasmore in *A Century at Summerfields* 1964, pg.155.

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24th May 1897 (aged 9) I have finished Caesar and I am going to do Livy. It begins with a sentence which is used as an example of Apposition in the grammar.

4th February 1900 (aged 11) Tomorrow we are going to do some lyric (Saphic or Alcaic) verses! Of course I have never done any yet, except on my own hook, beside Elegiac,⁶⁹

In order to gain a breadth of experience and keep in step with the more sedate pace selections were taken from authors. These had to be chosen carefully to ensure that the character of the piece was not destroyed. The 1907 Report of the Curricula Committee suggested that Horace's Odes, Satires and Epistles and the Elegies of Propertius could be selected, but that 'the principle of continuity should be more thoroughly applied than at present to certain works.' The Aeneid fell into this category and whilst it advised that less important sections were read in translation, the books should be read in order and seen as part of a whole. The pick and mix method that was being employed by some was to the detriment of the literature, but sensible short cuts had to be taken on a long piece as being 'the only practicable method of acquiring an understanding of its contents and unity.'⁷⁰ The use of classical translations could be valuable in imbuing the Greek spirit, rather than 'going through the classical mill at a public school.'⁷¹ However, not all approved of this departure from the pure source.

...to know something about Latin by means of them (translations) is not to know Latin. The Latin masterpieces are works of art, in which the form and the substance are inseparable.⁷²

If, after the translation and discussion of books, the correct version was copied from the board to be learnt there was scope for the inept or lazy to succeed. Having struggled through class or perhaps even been certain of only preparing a few lines, the pupil could learn the accepted translation parrot fashion with far greater ease than he could have translated the whole.⁷³ Whilst such a practice did allow for a less than scholarly approach, it also ensured that pupils had the means, fair or foul, to prepare for exams, the target at the end of the course.

⁶⁹ R. Usborne in *ibid.* pg.42.

⁷⁰ *Report of the Curricula Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* Classical Association *Proceedings* Vol.5 1907 pg.105.

⁷¹ W.R. Inge *The Training of Reason* in A. Benson *Cambridge Essays in Education* 1917, pg.28.

⁷² J. M. Mackail *The Case for Latin in Secondary Schools* 1922, pg.25.

⁷³ The Clarendon Commission found that at Eton boys were being asked to learn as much as 300 lines of original Greek or Latin each week. However, as they were called to recite in the same order each time it was only necessary to learn a fraction of what had been set. Evidence that loopholes existed and were exploited by the naturally lazy pupil! W.P. Atkinson *Classical and Scientific Studies and the Great Schools of England* 1865, pg.47.

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The development of producing books of texts that were accompanied by notes was one which caused concern. In 1905 the Headmasters' Conference discussed the problems these brought. Instead of having to rely on their own wits to translate, as had been the case in the past, boys could refer to the notes.

Now almost every author who was read in school was cut up into fragments and annotated, sometimes by competent editors and sometimes by editors who were less competent, and the boys lost the advantage, which boys of his own generation possessed, of having to make out the sense for themselves, because they found, wherever there was a difficulty, it was explained to them by the author.⁷⁴

The use of the notes not only made the boys reliant on them, and were quickly forgotten, but they acted as a prop for inferior members of staff. The general opinion was that boys should be encouraged to work without them, spending more time doing unseen work viva voce in the classroom would be one way of avoiding them.

Thus the value of set books was questioned and the University of London considered abolishing them as a requirement for the matriculation exam. The Classical Association Council thought that this would damage the position of Latin in schools further. So in 1909 it was decided to have set books with questions arising from them in exams and expect a separate piece of text to be translated in an unseen test.⁷⁵

Efforts focused on making the most of literature, using it as a key to reveal the thoughts and lives of those who wrote it.

It should never be forgotten that Latin literature has largely contributed to making the life and literature of the civilised world today what it is.⁷⁶

If taught correctly social and political history could be introduced as a matter of course, filling a void and doing away with the need to provide specific lessons on such matters. For some this goal remained elusive:

We weren't taught nearly enough ancient history....we were taught nothing about art or architecture. But as a purely literary form of classical education ours must rarely have been bettered. If we didn't know much about how the Greeks and Romans lived their daily lives, we had a pretty fair idea of how they thought and how they could feel.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *Notes in Classical Books* Discussion at Headmasters' Conference AGM 1905, pg.48.

⁷⁵ Classical Association Council minutes July 10th 1909.

⁷⁶ Classical Association council minutes *Report of the Curriculum Committee on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools* 1907 pg.99.

⁷⁷ M. Longson *A Classical Youth* 1985, pg.63.

Composition

During the nineteenth century the real jewel of classical scholarship was not to be able to read original texts, but to compose verse in Latin and Greek. Dr. Whewell's (Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, not himself a classicist) evidence to the Clarendon commission indicates how this skill took pride of place at Eton:

The result of its (composition) occupying so much of their time is, that they bestow comparatively little of their time and thoughts upon the reading of Greek and Latin authors with a view to their matter. They are much better acquainted with the Greek and Latin written by themselves and their companions, than with any Greek and Latin written by ancient authors.⁷⁸

At the turn of the century the writing of verse, whilst not as important as it had been, still held an important place in determining the status of the pupil at his public school. Training began at preparatory school and it was wise to consider it compulsory 'for without it he will neither be well equipped for the next few years of his life, nor if he should happen to take a high place in his entrance examination, will he maintain his position at some schools.'⁷⁹ The demands of public schools once again having a direct effect on the syllabus of preparatory schools. By his final year at preparatory school short pieces of English narrative and simple poems should be within his grasp. As early as 1902 J. Postgate recognised that the importance placed on composition was misplaced: 'no one should be obliged or even tempted to pursue the practice of verse composition a single day after it is seen that he has no natural bent in this direction.'⁸⁰ The trend was away from emphasis on verse composition, but its fall from grace was a slow process, particularly while it held significant importance at Eton. In his book published in 1919 Lewis wrote:

Verse composition is, at present, rather under a cloud and seems likely to get more under a cloud in the future.⁸¹

This opinion was reinforced by the Prime Minister's Committee report two years later in which it was recognised that verse composition was for the specialist:

⁷⁸ Clarendon Commission Vol. 2 pg 43, Quoted in W.P. Atkinson *Classical and Scientific Studies and the Great Schools of England* 1865 pg. 45.

⁷⁹ C. Eccles Williams *The Teaching of Latin and Greek in Preparatory Schools* in *Special Reports on Educational Subjects* Vol. 6 1900, pg.193.

⁸⁰ J. Postgate *Are The classics To Go?* in *Fortnightly Review* No.72 1902 pg.872.

⁸¹ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.141.

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Greek and Latin verse used to be regarded as the fine flower of scholarship...Such a point is not to be reached without long and even arduous study, for which only a few have time and taste.⁸²

Thus they recommended 'with some reluctance' that 'composition of all kinds should play a more subordinate part than it has done in the past...under modern conditions something must be sacrificed.'⁸³ In the same year Sandroyd preparatory school, already seen to react to the public school pressure with regard to Greek, was criticised in an inspection report because all boys in the top year took Latin verses: 'surely, even from a scholarship point of view, a waste of time for those who have not got a special aptitude for the subject.'⁸⁴ However, there is evidence that some schools were already restricting the time allotted to this aspect of the curriculum. A 1921 inspection report for Sherborne, a public school which let Greek drop more readily than some preparatory schools, such as Sandroyd, and probably had lower aspirations for its pupils, found that verse composition was only attempted in earnest in the sixth form.⁸⁵

In spite of the shifting sands of opinion composition was often tackled from early on, although not all made swift progress on to writing verse. In 1909 *The Preparatory Schools Review* offered guidelines, as with grammar and translation, for a structured approach to the subject.

1. The aim of *early* Composition is to familiarise pupils with the commonest grammatical forms and constructions, and for this purpose isolated sentences are the most suitable. The correct order of words should be insisted upon from the first.
2. Exercises from the first should be based on the analysis of the sentence, and it is of greatest importance that the teaching should proceed on a definite and logical plan in each form and throughout the school.
3. It is suggested that composition exercises based upon the text in use and the practice of re-translation may occasionally be helpful, so long as they are subordinated to this definite scheme (see section 2); otherwise they are liable to lead to loose and unsystematic teaching.

⁸² *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.150.

⁸³ *ibid.* pg.151.

⁸⁴ Inspection report for Sandroyd. 109/573 pg 5.

⁸⁵ Inspection report for Sherborne. 109/1075 pg.8.

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4. It is inadvisable to spend time in Lower Forms on the less common case constructions before proceeding to simpler examples of the compound sentence, such as Final, Consecutive and easy Temporal clauses.

5. The point at which continuous prose may be begun must be left to the discretion of the teacher, but its value is doubtful before a boy has a good working knowledge of most ordinary constructions.

6. It is assumed that in all cases the Composition will be revised by the teacher with the boys, and individually in the upper forms.⁸⁶

Lewis advised a very structured start to composition. He took it for granted that simple composition would be started in the first year of Latin, but each sentence must be fully parsed as when translating into English.⁸⁷ Specific Latin prose books existed, which, like the grammars, were criticised for being poorly composed so that 'the arrangement is so vicious that they can only tend to confuse and distress the learner.'⁸⁸ However, some thought that the total immersion approach was the only practical way to make real progress.⁸⁹ Weatherhead considered it a mistake to waste time with elementary exercises and 'had no hesitation in introducing a boy almost at once to a continuous piece of good idiomatic English narrative' rather than 'ghastly translationese.'⁹⁰ He advocated the time consuming, but sure practice of making the class write out a fair copy of the finished text, emphasising the need for the use of idiom. Pupils had a fair copy book in which the correct version was written. Harrow was criticised for placing too much emphasis on the finished, polished version rather than the procedures necessary to arrive at that point.⁹¹ As we shall see in chapter 9 the practice of keeping a fair copy note book was one that continued throughout the period.

However, it is a tremendous leap from writing simple prose to creating a verse that scans. Some able masters were realistic about the value of this exercise,

⁸⁶ *Methods of Classical Teaching in Preparatory Schools* in *Preparatory Schools Review* no.42, Vol.5 March 1909 pg.317.

⁸⁷ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.32.

⁸⁸ K.P. Wilson quoted in C.T. Weatherhead *On Classical Teaching in The Preparatory Schools Review* No.55 Vol.6 1913 pg. 377.

⁸⁹ C.T. Weatherhead *ibid.* pg.377.

⁹⁰ *ibid.* pg.377.

⁹¹ *Inspection Report for Harrow* 1931 Ed109/4198 pg.22.

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achieving 'minimum of result for a maximum of effort...a maximum of time.'⁹² Others thought it merely a question of perseverance and application:

Sometimes a boy comes up and complains that a verse won't come out. I say, 'Go back to your place; use your brains, your dictionary and your grammar. If the verse has not come out by the time the bell rings we stay in and do it together. In five minutes, as a rule, the verse is done.'⁹³

There were also those who were less than competent themselves, making the whole experience all the more difficult for their pupils.

His main qualification was that he carried with him a black shiny book containing versions done by an admired brother at Cambridge, and the only line I remember from that thesaurus reversed the balance of the original sense, broke a cardinal law of syntax, and sounded horrid. Once he was mad enough to set us a quatrain from *The Gondoliers*.⁹⁴

There was a master at Summer Fields who had made a list of Latin tags which he liked to see appearing in composed verse as often as possible.⁹⁵

Due to such patchy teaching, restraints on the time table and the increased emphasis on literature, complex composition was a dwindling, but not dead, component of the curriculum, it was still part of the Winchester scholarship examination in 1930.⁹⁶

Verse Composition is, I fear, disappearing. It is being crowded out, and, though I regret it, I can not say that I think it worthwhile for any but those boys who quickly show promise to go very far with it.⁹⁷

Greek

Greek, already rather marginalised, was taught on similar lines to Latin. However, the goals were less lofty. The 1909 suggestions published in the *Preparatory Schools Review* applied to both Latin and Greek. They reinforced the resolution, regarding the lower forms of public schools, of the Curricula Committee of the Classical Association

⁹² C.T. Weatherhead *ibid.* pg.378.

⁹³ Dr. T. Rice Holmes *Suggested Modifications in Classical Teaching. With Special Reference to Mathematical and Science Students and Candidates for the Army in Classical Association Proceedings* 1905 pg.30.

⁹⁴ M. Longson *A Classical Youth* (The Leas, Hoylake) 1985 pg.29.

⁹⁵ G. Bolton *A Century at Summer Fields* 1964 pg.214.

⁹⁶ See chapter 2 pg.74.

⁹⁷ L.W.P. Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.205.

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that 'whereas Latin should be taught with a view to correct writing of the language as well as to the intelligent reading of Latin authors, Greek should be taught only with a view to the intelligent reading of Greek authors.'⁹⁸ Whilst recommending this for preparatory schools as well it also suggested that 'Greek composition, if taught at all in preparatory schools, should be restricted to sentences illustrative of common constructions.' Greek accents were thought to be superfluous and hinder progress. J. Postgate considered a knowledge of Greek accents 'an utterly useless accomplishment, [that] it is intellectual tyranny to require it and [that] the fact that it is required a serious hindrance to the study of Greek'.⁹⁹

The 1921 Prime Minister's Committee report found that a start on the language could be made more quickly as the basic grammar concepts would have already been covered in Latin. However, initial points tackled should be the 'forms and constructions in common use.'¹⁰⁰ Again, it warned against the trend of classics masters to work through each topic thoroughly, including rare and irregular forms. Caution was urged by those who adhered to the traditional approach:

The reaction against the study of grammar has gone too far in the last ten years. No language can be properly learnt without considerable labour at the grammar.¹⁰¹

Cruikshank considered that the study of Greek was a failure 'because it is regarded more as part of an examination than as the invitation to a great literature,'¹⁰² the same criticism that had been levelled at the study of Latin. The 1921 Prime Minister's Committee report echoed his concerns when suggesting Xenophon as a suitable author for the novice:

No author has, however, suffered more than Xenophon from the school master's habit of using him as an exercise book in Greek grammar.¹⁰³

The emphasis was that Greek should be read so that the literature could be appreciated. Cruickshank suggested that a graduated scale of honour of books be drawn up by the Classical Association, particularly recommending Sophocles' Oedipus

⁹⁸ *Methods of Classical Teaching in Preparatory Schools* in *Preparatory Schools Review* no.42 Vo.5 March 1909 pg.317.

⁹⁹ J. Postgate *Are The Classics To Go?* in *Fortnightly Review* no.72 1902 pg.877.

¹⁰⁰ *The Classics in Education* 1921 pg.147.

¹⁰¹ A. H. Cruickshank *The Future of Greek* 1917, pg.8.

¹⁰² *ibid.* pg.10.

¹⁰³ *ibid.* pg.154.

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plays and Aeschylus' *Prometheus Vincitus*. He leaves us in no doubt as to his view on the use of extracts from Aristophanes:

..his plots are weak; many of his allusions and jokes have lost their flavour or are unintelligible; much of his work is more fitted for the cloaca maxima than the classroom.¹⁰⁴

The Prime Minister's Committee Report did suggest suitable authors, as noted in chapter 3. The reading of Greek literature was the key to appreciating all literature and the fact that such a skill was becoming increasingly rare was considered to be a grave loss:

We ought to be giving our pupils a training in words through the study of the masters who use language with strength, precision, vitality and delicacy: but, in place of this invigorating and productive education, we fog and blur and stifle our pupils' mental life with the verbosity of North, More, Pepys and Byron.¹⁰⁵

The Direct Method

So far we have looked at the traditional methods of teaching, but there was a relatively new approach which attracted many. The direct method, championed by Rouse at the Perse School in Cambridge, treated the classics as living tongues, the emphasis being on the spoken word. In 1902 Rouse took over the headship of the Perse School discontented with the traditional methods of teaching classics.

After a few years spent as a Schoolmaster, I felt a conviction that something was radically wrong...The trouble lay not in the machinery of instruction...[but] in the spirit of the boys. They would work out of a sense of duty, or to please a master whom they liked, or to get promotion...but the work in itself was distasteful with the majority of boys, the work was an unmitigated grind, disliked and when possible evaded...why this was so, I did not know...the whole thing was dead. I had only a feeling that the key to the situation lay in making the work real by some means and conversation suggested itself as a possible means.¹⁰⁶

The aim was to train the ear, the eye and the voice, to develop the literary and dramatic instinct and to save time.¹⁰⁷

104 A.H. Cruickshank *ibid.* pg.16.

105 P. Gurrey in an undated letter found in the Classical Association archives.

106 The Perse School, Printed statement for the governors 1927 quoted in C.A. Stray *The Living Word* 1992 pg.19.

107 Board Of Education *The Teaching of Latin at the Perse School, Cambridge* Pamphlet no. 20 1910, pg.6.

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It is my belief that all boys trained in Latin on the direct method get far more profit, from the vitality and general mental stimulus incidental to the method, than they could possibly do from what we used to call the mental gymnastics of the old gerund grinding system.¹⁰⁸

The concept of the direct method was hard for traditionalists to accept. At the 1907 Headmasters' Conference Dr. Fletcher floated a motion that 'the teaching of Latin and Greek should not aim at enabling boys to speak those languages.'¹⁰⁹ He criticised the use of made up and trivial Latin and learning conversations by heart. After a speech in his defence, in which he asserted 'there was no need to be talking constantly about chalk and windows, but it was a curious fact that one could exercise speakers in almost all the essential rules of syntax without any larger vocabulary than chalk and windows,'¹¹⁰ Rouse succeeded in getting Dr. Fletcher to withdraw the motion.

A suggested curriculum reveals that the goals achieved echoed those following traditional courses:

Latin

Suggested syllabus for a course taught using the Direct Method ¹¹¹

Year	Age	Periods per week	Reading	Composition	Grammar	Antiquities
1	12-13	6 (45 mins)	A first year course on direct lines	Question and answer, dramatic scenes	Simple sentences	
2	13-14	6	A second year course on direct lines	Reproduction, plays	Complex sentence	
3	14-15	6-7	<i>Aenied</i> one book, Selections from Livy, Caesar, Horace	Reproduction, summaries, dramatisation translation	The period	Outlines of history
4	15-16	6-7	Cicero <i>de senectute</i> and <i>pro Archia</i> , <i>Aeneid</i> , one book, Selections from Ovid, Livy, Tacitus	As for third year	Sentence structure	Outlines continued

¹⁰⁸ R.B. Appleton (a teacher at The Perse School) *The Direct Method of Teaching Latin* in *The School World* May 1918 pg.153.

¹⁰⁹ Headmasters' Conference 1907 pg.68.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* pg.73.

¹¹¹ W.H.S. Jones *Via Nova or The application of the direct method to Latin and Greek* 1915, pg.154.

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Greek

Year	Age	Periods per week	Reading	Composition	Grammar	Antiquities
1	14-15	6	<i>Greek Boy At Home</i> [by Rouse]	Question and answer, reproduction, translation	Simple and complex sentences	Outlines of history
2	15-16	6	Selections from Lucian, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Homer	Reproduction, summaries, translation	Revision details filled in	Outlines continued

The sixth form course included study of a range of authors; Homer, Thucydides, Virgil, Horace, Plautus, Herodotus, Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero, Lucretius, Livy, Ovid, Tacitus and Juvenal.

Initially all work was done orally and only written down when a good result had been agreed upon. Grammar was still covered and particular use made of chousing work as a class. Simple classroom routine was conducted in Latin:

Master: *Claude ianuam* Boy: *Claudo ianuam*
 Master: *Quid claudis?* Boy: *Januam claudio*¹¹²

W.H.S. Jones printed a list of suitable phrases appropriate for the classroom situation including; *Noli mussitare* and *O stultissimos!*¹¹³ The question/answer routine was frequently used to reinforce vocabulary met in reading or to practise different grammar points, sometimes bringing in another member of the class to demonstrate indirect speech. It was important that the function of grammar was understood and 'mechanical, unintelligent memorising'¹¹⁴ avoided. Incorporating grammar into natural speech was designed to avoid this. By the third year they were able to use oral techniques on simple texts, but unseen translation was not met until the fourth year, this was tackled using the following steps:

1. The passage is read over silently once (or twice), so the general drift is caught. Unknown words are noted.
2. An effort is made to work out each sentence, in the light of the general sense, by aid of grammar and order of words. Parts that defy solution are noted.

¹¹² Board Of Education *The Teaching of Latin at the Perse School, Cambridge* Pamphlet no. 20 pg.8.

¹¹³ W.H.S. Jones *Via Nova or The application of the direct method to Latin and Greek* 1915, pg.76.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.* pg. 65.

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3. Idiomatic English equivalents for portions of each sentence are carefully chosen.
4. After a last attempt to see whether the context does not clear up the parts still unknown, a complete translation is written out.¹¹⁵

Compositions were also tackled, but only after the piece had been heard and often spoken in Latin first, or again the question/answer technique was used to elicit complete understanding of syntax, vocabulary, etc.

Magister: *Sextus labor confectus est. Deinde iussus est Hercules leonem Cretensem invenire. Coniunge haec.*
Puer: *Hercules, postquam sextum laborem confecit iussus est...*
Magister: *Aliter.*
Puer: *Cum Hercules sextem laborem confecisset...*¹¹⁶

Sometimes pictures were used as a stimulus.¹¹⁷ W.H. Jones did not consider it necessary to try verse composition unless studying for a university scholarship.

...no good comes from forcing boys with no gift for versification laboriously to up together tags that happen to scan.¹¹⁸

R.B. Appleton introduced a speech making lesson each week once the boys reached fourth form, keeping himself alive to the concept by reading Cicero's speeches and suggesting such training for others.¹¹⁹ Class participation was a key element.¹²⁰ The same theories were also applied to Greek which was started at the Perse School at the age of fourteen, after English, French and Latin.

Of course the success of such a system depended on the competence of the teacher and some experienced difficulty in recruiting appropriate staff as Dr. Eleanor Purdie of Ladies' College Cheltenham reported:

¹¹⁵ *ibid.* pg.48.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.* pg.25.

¹¹⁷ W.H.S. Jones *ibid.* pg.58.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.* pg.61.

¹¹⁹ R.B. Appleton *The Direct Method of Teaching Latin* in *School World* May 1918 pg.154.

¹²⁰ Board Of Education *The Teaching of Greek at the Perse School, Cambridge* Pamphlet no. 28 1914 pg.15.

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Again, the difficulty of securing an adequate number of experienced teachers, able and willing to work on direct method lines, is often very great; at certain periods we require some eight or nine teachers all working at once in order to cope.¹²¹

During the summer of 1911 a summer school held at Bangor promoted the use of the direct method, demonstrating the progress made by showing lessons in action. Feeling inspired by what they had seen, and probably influenced by Rouse's involvement with the school in its early years,¹²² Cheltenham Ladies' College introduced the use of the direct method. Time was of the essence as they only had four lessons and two prep. homework times a week, compared with the eight to twelve periods enjoyed by the Perse School. Thus as the more complex work of the third year was tackled they resorted to greater use of English in the interests of speed. Now rather more traditional methods were needed as:

We have found that the first two happy direct-method years have done much for them...but the direct method has not conquered for us the old, the almost insuperable, difficulty that they find in reading a Latin author for the first time.¹²³

The inspection report for the school in 1919 found that while the new method resulted in Latin being enjoyed by the girls they had not successfully solved the problem that

the girls had [not] got a real hold of the elementary rules of grammar and syntax, nor were they, to say the least, specially expert in finding their way through the complexities of a compound Ciceronian sentence.¹²⁴

This problem reflected what was found to be the chief flaw with the direct method, whilst it taught the classics it did not prepare pupils to pass the existing exams. R.J.B. Hicks answered this criticism in a letter in which he pointed out that the School Certificate examination was designed for pupils taught by traditional methods, so it was not a fair test of the success of this new method.¹²⁵ (The Perse School did not work towards exams, they had been banned by Rouse.) Although there were those advocates who would 'feel a return to old methods...would be going back to the prison house... In practice the Direct Method is discarded by all who use it...in the third or fourth year as the School Certificate is approached'.¹²⁶ Cheltenham Ladies' College continued to use direct method centred teaching, with some reference to the

121 E. Purdie *The Direct Method of Teaching Latin in School World* March 1917 pg.98.

122 Rouse was employed by D. Beale to teach Greek.

123 E. Purdie *The Direct Method of Teaching Latin in School World* March 1917 pg.99.

124 Inspection report for Cheltenham Ladies' College 1919 Ed109/1642 pg.15.

125 R.J.B. Hicks letter written c1926 found in Classical Association archives.

126 F.R. Dale *Latin by the Direct Method in Greece and Rome* Vol. 2 No. 5 Feb. 1933 pg.69.

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traditional method because it gave 'vitality to the study of the language and help[ed] pupils to a firmer hold upon it and ultimately to a greater enjoyment and appreciation of its literature.'¹²⁷ Dr. Purdie found that the problem was exacerbated by a lack of suitable text books for the intermediary stages, just as Lewis had found the traditional method lacking in such support material for Latin.

The enthusiasm with which this different approach was received was relatively short lived. Two hundred teachers attended the summer school at Bangor in 1913 and two years later saw the publication of Jones' book *Via Nova* promoting this approach. However, as F.R. Dale, who had included a chapter on the direct method in his book *On the Teaching of Latin* published in 1914, noted some twenty years later, the Perse School, which had thrived under Rouse's charge,¹²⁸ seemed to be the only place where the direct method was used in full.¹²⁹ After the first summer school in 1911 Professor E.V. Arnold wrote:

The holding of the school showed once for all that classical teachers are not possessed by that inertia which is commonly attributed to them, but that they are willing to learn from others, and to put themselves to trouble in order to increase their own competency for their work. Those who would have done so were no doubt in the main teachers from the smaller schools, in which the position of Latin is most insecure. Wisely therefore they refrained from proposing reform of classical teaching in those schools in which it occupies a special position.¹³⁰

So the method was not seen as a serious threat to the traditional approach in the traditional schools, (it is pertinent to note that in the same year as the first summer school Harrow was criticised in an inspection report for not even having Latin read aloud in lessons.¹³¹), but as a rescue solution in schools where Latin and teachers were weak. However, this theory would spell doom for the new method since it required very competent teachers to succeed. The Godolphin School, having received a fairly critical inspection report for a grammar centred approach in 1905, was criticised in 1923 for introducing a direct method course which 'appears to be of doubtful thoroughness.' The high percentage of time devoted to conversation, plays etc.

¹²⁷ E. Purdie *The Direct Method of Teaching Latin* in *School World* March 1917 pg.100.

¹²⁸ C.A. Stray *The Living Word* 1992 pgs23ff.

¹²⁹ F.R. Dale *Latin by the Direct Method* in *Greece and Rome* Vol. 2 No.5 Feb. 1933 pg.65.

¹³⁰ E.V. Arnold *The Summer School of Latin at Bangor* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol. 6, no.50, 1911 pg.179.

¹³¹ Inspection report for Harrow 1911 Ed109/4196 pg.16.

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resulted in a poor grammar grounding.¹³² In the event the lack of suitable staff and the constraints of examinations were major factors in its short lived success. The arrival of the First World War was another cause of its faltering progress. The summer school planned for 1914 had to be cancelled and those whose interest had been aroused left to fight, leaving the association the summer schools had spawned, the Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching, ARLT, in the hands of a now mainly female membership.¹³³ By the end of the war the curriculum was under increasingly intense fire from science and modern languages and weaknesses in the effectiveness of the direct method were being identified. The ARLT was described as a 'moribund society.'¹³⁴

Visual Aids

Equipment and resources for making visual aids more accessible were becoming more readily available. Lewis suggested ways in which the lessons could be enlivened and the text illuminated:

The Penelope...has numerous references to incidents in the career of Odysseus, all of them illustrated in good Greek vase paintings. Keep a collection of photographs and show them as the occasion arises. If your school possesses a lantern, as it should do, you will find a few slides still more effective.¹³⁵

The use of pictures and lantern slides was increasingly encouraged. In 1902 J. Postgate wrote that using illustrations was one way of making classics come alive¹³⁶, although some were of such a poor quality that they were considered to be detrimental. F.R. Dale thought that the text should be used to fuel imagination rather than drawings which 'sometimes...have been taken from sculptures or paintings where the artist, intent on his decorative design, has worked without thought of accuracy in detail or proportion. This has to be explained away, and is a nuisance...I feel that a text book can do with out illustration at all.'¹³⁷ In fact Dale was afraid that concentration on background material would overshadow the content of the text. It is probable that the majority relied on such illustrations found in text books, not having access to photographs or slides. In 1914 the Classical Association established the Classical

132 Inspection report for Godolphin School 1923 Ed109/6612 pg.10/11.

133 C.A. Stray *The Living Word* 1992 pg.48.

134 Editorial in *Latin Teaching* 1921 quoted in C.A.Stray *ibid.* pg.51.

135 L.W.P.Lewis *Practical Hints on the Teaching of Latin* 1919 pg.107.

136 J. Postgate *Are The Classics To Go?* in *Fortnightly Review* no.72 1902 pg.878.

137 F.R. Dale *On the Teaching of Latin* 1914, pg.59.

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Materials Board which was able to offer sets of slides illustrating classical authors read in schools to overcome this problem.¹³⁸ H. Browne, writing in 1917, encouraged all schools to have a small museum containing originals where possible or good replicas, making sure the distinction is noted.¹³⁹ He had done some research into the school museums at Winchester, Harrow, Rugby and Eton where the classical contents were significant. The replies suggested that they were not used to enrich lessons, but any benefit was accidental:

ETON - The Memorial Buildings Museum is not used for teaching purposes, but individual study can be encouraged.

HARROW - The collections are of great value to a small minority of boys with a scientific, archaeological, or artistic bent. For the rest it is a place where one takes one's people when showing them round.... Once on a time a Classical form-master tried the experiment of taking round his form (of small boys) to the museum once a week in school time, and showing them pictures. The then Headmaster soon put a stop to that.¹⁴⁰

In 1929 we learn of a slide collection being available at the Leeds and district branch of the Classical Association, but it was little used.¹⁴¹ Apart from being tied to traditional methods it is possible that teachers were reluctant to dabble in new technology. As we saw in Chapter 3 the 1921 committee considered that as schools were putting funds towards providing buildings and materials for the up and coming sciences, classics were becoming the poor relation. Given the lack of interest in existing school museums and slide collections one can assume that financial restraints were not the sole reason for a certain apathy. We have seen that generally classics teachers followed a safe and well-trodden path in their teaching, added to which they had a deadline to meet, that of the exam so they did not have time for what would have seemed rather peripheral activities.

For many success in Latin was the key to the next stage of their academic career. Teachers used whatever methods they knew guaranteed the surest success rate. Those who were scholarly and inspired were confident to attempt teaching that did not focus on wading through the primer, some were drawn to the even more

¹³⁸ Classical Association council minutes March 6th 1914.

¹³⁹ H. Browne *Our Renaissance : Essays on the Reform and Revival of Classical Studies* 1917 pg.205.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* pg.253.

¹⁴¹ Leeds and District branch of the Classical Association minutes 1929.

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radical direct method. However, those who were mediocre teachers or just reactionary continued a traditional approach. The more traditional the school the more likely it was that tried and tested methods continued. The development of the content of the syllabus should have ensured a modernising of the classics as well as making it more accessible to the pupil. Grammar was no longer to be an end in itself, but a means to an end; that of reading literature. However, teachers shied away from abandoning their grammar oriented approach in the fear that the language could be mastered by no other way. Criticisms, noted in chapter 4, of women teachers who did not have a sound grammatical approach would justify their fears. In order to be able to read authentic texts one's grasp of the language had to be sound. Suitable elementary Latin texts were difficult to find and once one moved on to authentic Latin there was a tendency to ignore the fact that it was a piece of literature. Studying texts out of context and learning parrot fashion reduced them to a piece of text, when so much more could be made of them. The teaching of Greek was open to similar problems. Ideals and principles paled into the background when the reality of passing an exam came into view. The controlling influences on the curriculum were, first Common Entrance and scholarship examinations wielded by the public schools and then the demands of universities and their entrance requirements. The failure of the direct method was partly due to its inadequacy in preparing candidates for these examinations. As we have seen time and time again, only a few inspired and able teachers could adapt their teaching to stimulate pupils and enliven the subject with any degree of success. The majority of average or poor teachers maintained a pedestrian approach always looking with tunnel vision towards the exams.

Part One Summary

In many respects we have seen some turbulent events and tremendous changes and yet when one assesses the position at the end of this period it does not seem to have undergone radical change. In boys' schools Latin was in a position of strength as the twentieth century dawned, a position that was almost immediately threatened by the 1904 regulation that removed it as a compulsory subject. Science and modern studies clamoured for their share of the timetable and the value of Latin had to be spelt out. There were attempts and discussions on how to make classics more attractive and modifications were suggested that would help silence criticisms. In girls' schools the subject had to gain respectability and win a place in the curriculum as a worthwhile subject.

We have already seen recurrent themes woven through these first thirty years. The problem and pressures of an overcrowded curriculum were a factor in the criticism of classics taking up too much time in boys' schools and not being allotted enough time in girls' schools. In order to retain its position in boys' schools and to gain a foothold in girls' schools the value of Latin was questioned and promoted. There were cries from the girls schools that they were unable to attain the same standard as boys given that they started four years later than the boys and complaints that the boys started Latin too young. Due to timetable restraints Latin was usually only taken by the brightest girls, but boys' schools were criticised for insisting that all took it. There was pressure to make the subject more attractive by moving from a grammar-centred approach to a literature-centred one: a move which some felt unable to make whilst they were working to the goal of preparing their pupils for examinations. This brings us on to the two main themes with which all the above themes are linked: the staff and the examinations.

The extent to which change was accepted and implemented depended on those working at the chalk face, the staff. The first world war had removed a generation of schoolmasters which resulted in a weakening of the profession for a few years as older masters with dated teaching methods were employed to fill the void. In many schools new masters probably had to follow the department scheme of work and methods with which the older generation were comfortable. The Headmasters' Conference and Independent Association of Preparatory Schools discussed change and reform, but comparatively few headmasters attended. School mistresses had not inherited such a sure tradition and so there was a tendency to approach their teaching with a mind alert

to new ideas and a readiness to experiment. This lack of experience led to some lively and successful teaching, but it also resulted in mediocre standards being achieved by some. Ultimately the focus was on one goal, the examination at the end of the course. Although not all girls were exam oriented at first, by the end of the period qualifications were becoming more important. Common Entrance, School Certificate and scholarship exams were the overriding influence on what was taught and how it was taught. It was all very well to discuss the ideal, but teachers were concerned with the practical problems of how best to achieve success at exam level. Some managed to combine the ideal with this practical goal, but for the majority it was a case of continuing with familiar and reliable methods. Concessions had been made with regard to Greek, but after thirty years of pressure to change and be changed Latin remained in a relatively strong position in boys' schools and had carved a corner of respect in girls' schools because of the demands of examinations.

The Preparatory School Early 1930's - 1960

And of course almost the first essential was a good grounding in the Classics. That Greek and Latin should perhaps not be taught until 'later' was an alarming thought. We had heard that in some schools two years were allowed to go by before starting on these. But surely not all.¹

All revolutions...start from the bottom and work upwards, and it is up to the preparatory schools to give the initial impetus to the movement.²

The preparatory schools entered the new century debating and questioning the role of Greek within their curriculum. However, both the status and teaching methods of Latin had remained stable throughout, as the masters were seemingly unaware of the battle their colleges in senior schools were fighting against the onslaught of science, modern languages and criticism from modern educationalists. The role of the preparatory school was to train boys to pass the Common Entrance exam to public schools and while Latin held its position here the *raison d'etre* of preparatory schools remained unchanged. That this was necessary, and a necessary evil perhaps, was acknowledged. In his address to the preparatory schools annual conference in 1933 F.B.Malim, the master of Wellington College, agreed that 'It is a matter for regret that the Public Schools do determine to a large extent what is taught in Preparatory Schools partly by their Scholarship Examinations and partly by the Common Entrance Examination.'³

However, the Hadow Report, 1926, had stimulated changes in attitude to education, education which was now open to all and therefore should be presented in more practical terms. It urged that the emphasis moved from absorbing knowledge learning through experience. In this atmosphere of revolutionary ideas the thirties saw a decade of turmoil within the preparatory school and a crisis of conscience regarding the content of the timetable and the weighting of the curriculum. Thus a great debate arose in which there was diverse discussion over a period of eight years.

¹ A wife and mother in c 1960 *A Century of Summer Fields* Ed. Usborne 1964, pg.315.

² Letter to *The Preparatory Schools Review* No. 126, Vol.11 March 1937 pg.320.

³ *The Preparatory Schools Review* No. 114, Vol. 10 March 1933, pg.369.

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There is an almost unanimous agreement that there is something radically wrong with our curriculum, and an almost equally unanimous disagreement as to the remedy.⁴

As the curriculum was recognised as being dominated by Latin, the future role of Latin formed the core of these discussions. The preparatory school curriculum was becoming cluttered and overcrowded.

The harassed Headmasters endeavour to trim their sails to every breeze, grossly overloading their curriculum, starving every subject of its proper quantity of hours in a vain attempt to propitiate criticism.....One fact stands out. However many subjects may be added to the curriculum, nearly one - third of a boy's school time must be spent on Latin. That is to say, that to one tenth of the curriculum we must devote one third of the available school time. It is by far the most important subject and holds that place of honour throughout practically the whole of a boy's Preparatory School career.⁵

So what were the arguments put forward to control the 'tyranny of Latin'? Was the overriding influence of Common Entrance recognised and checked? What proposed changes to the curriculum were discussed and how were these received?

The Early Years

As discussed in Chapter Two as far back as 1907 it was considered to be inadvisable to start Latin in the first year or two of preparatory school. The early years were a time for concentrating on one's mother tongue and the basics. 11 or even 12 was thought to be the optimum age for taking up Latin. Now, twenty five years or so later the issue of the correct time to introduce a boy to Latin was raised and vigorously discussed again. Thus one must assume that the earlier recommendations had remained as recommendations and not been put into practice on a large scale. This was certainly the case at Sandroyd:

Latin and French are both begun in the lowest form, an arrangement not generally recommendable (the inspectors of 1921 advised the deferring of Latin to form 1V), but as the teaching of this form is mainly in the hands of one mistress, who has some discretion in the distribution of time, and as the plan has been found to work satisfactorily, there seems to be no cogent reason for altering it.⁶

In 1933 W.W.Vaughan suggests 'not to start boys in Latin until they are at least eleven years old' as if this is new idea. This suggestion did meet with some opposition:

⁴ *ibid.* *The Curriculum of Preparatory Schools* W.D.Johnston No.114, Vol. 10 March 1933, pg.372.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Inspection Report, 1930, Ed 109/5574, pg.3.

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..I must definitely oppose the substitution of an English syllabus for Latin up to the age of eleven...I am convinced that nothing yet devised will compensate us for the loss of Latin in those early years when the memory is at its best and the reasoning powers need the best possible instrument for their development.⁷

However, there were few voices of dissent read in the *Preparatory Schools Review* and as H.N.P.Sloman wrote in 1933 'There seems to be some measure of agreement that between 10 and 11 is the right age to begin Latin...French having been begun some two years earlier.'⁸ It was felt that the time given up to English would cancel the delayed start in Latin as basic grammar would have been learnt, thus saving valuable time.

Latterly English grammar has been largely crowded out, and grammar has been taught as two separate and unrelated subjects, namely, Latin and French grammar....The proposed reforms afford an excellent chance of teaching grammar on general lines, applicable to most civilised languages. This should enable Latin and French grammar to be more quickly understood and mastered later on, which is essential if Latin and French are to be worth while in the preparatory school.⁹

The *Times* report on the I.A.P.S. annual conference in 1936 told of problems met in adopting proposals to start Latin at 11 and a ground swell of opposition.

There was much opposition to many of the proposals and particularly to the suggestion that Latin and French should not be taught until the age of eleven. After a debate in which the majority of the speakers opposed the changes, the conference, while refusing to adopt the report outright, passed an amendment which the sponsors of the report had accepted in the following terms:-

"That this conference approves the reform of education, is interested in the report of the curriculum committee and desire the council to continue investigations the points raised on it."¹⁰

So whilst those contributing to the *Preparatory Schools Review* tended to be in sympathy with the reforms, there were many more who clung to their reactionary views, thus making any definite change unlikely. It is interesting to note that I have found no reference to the experience of girls and the difficulties they faced due to making a later start being cited against the reforms. A reflection perhaps of the insular world of preparatory school masters and their lack of interest in external matters.

⁷ *ibid.* *Curriculum Reform* A senior representative No.124, Vol.11, June 1936, pg.241.

⁸ *ibid.* *The Tyranny of Latin* H.N.P.Sloman No.116, Vol.10, Nov.1933, pg.423.

⁹ *ibid.* letter by a 'linguist' no.126, Vol.11, March 1937, pg.322.

¹⁰ *The Times* Dec.23rd, 1936.

Latin For All ?

With the position of Latin within the curriculum being threatened and a possible prospect of a later start, thus less time in which to prepare candidates for Common Entrance there was a growing awareness that not all boys would cope sufficiently well to pass. So discussion arose as to the validity of making Latin compulsory for all. Already many felt that teaching Latin to some was akin to flogging a dead horse.

The trouble seems to be that we have in our enthusiasm neglected this saving clause [teaching Latin to those who are capable of enjoying it and therefore of benefiting by it.] and tried to thrust Latin upon all, including those to whom it is constitutionally uncongenial...If school authorities were agreed so far, the next step would be to persuade those at the older universities who still cramp our freedom of choice by their examination requirements.¹¹

Mr. Scott, being a public school master, blamed the next link in the chain, the universities, for the necessity of Latin for all or most. He went on to suggest that an early start be made in the teaching of Latin so that the 'naturally hopeless' could be weeded out. For some this was a defeatist attitude and a slow boy would struggle at all his studies.¹² It was even felt to show a weakness in character and be symptomatic of a general decline:

Does the contemplated change make for the upgrade and improvement of the race? Or is it a weak and ill-considered decline from a time honoured standard, simply to satisfy the whimperings of a post-war precocious slackness and sloppiness? Time was when the resolute wrestling with a new subject, the struggle with grammatical and constructional difficulties, were considered good for the training of thought and development of character, whether congenial or not. These good old fashioned theories have gone by the board.¹³

Those who were responsible for education in public schools felt that the present system left them with a problem of weak candidates who were reluctant to cover the ground work again.

There [public school] it is impossible to do very much with them, for they present the hardest of educational problems under any system of class teaching. Their foundations are unsure and their whole work is full of inaccuracy.¹⁴

Dr. Norwood went on to explain that the general standard reached in School Certificate examination is low. His address to the annual conference in 1934 was well

¹¹ *The Preparatory Schools Review* H.S.Scott No.115, Vol.10, June 1933 pg.398.

¹² *ibid.* J.W.Parr No.115, Vol.10, June 1933 pg.399.

¹³ *ibid.* *The Inevitableness of Latin* G. Blunt No.116, Vol.10, Nov.1933 pg.443.

¹⁴ *ibid.* *The Place of Latin in the Curriculum* Dr. Norwood No.117, Vol.10, March 1934 pg.468.

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considered and addressed a number of issues that were being discussed by the reformers. He recognised that Latin would not be an option for the majority whilst Oxford and Cambridge demand it, again the influence of examinations was highlighted.

...we ought to persuade Oxford and Cambridge to drop their demand for compulsory Latin in their entrance examinations. For until then you will be merely beating the air, and rendering the educational system less consistent and efficient.¹⁵

Thus the hypothetical question posed by the *Preparatory Schools Review* to the public school masters as to the possibility of Latin becoming an optional subject for the Common Entrance examination was considered a good idea, but impracticable by some and an unsuitable solution by others:

I do feel that the problem will not be solved by dropping Latin, merely that other (and inferior) instruments of the same culture may receive more attention in its place. This will only be to court disappointment¹⁶

It is interesting to note towards the end of this period of discussion the Spens Report, 1938, came to the conclusion that School Certificate should be following the curriculum rather than determining it. Throughout the educational world the effect examinations had on academic experience was being recognised as considerable.

Who's To Blame ?

The general cause of this cry for change is the expanding curriculum. The *Times* reported that the purpose of the I.A.P.S. committee submitting its proposals to the 1936 annual conference was ' by lessening the number of subjects and by making English the basis of preparatory school education, to regain that unity which was felt to have been lost when the purely classical curriculum went out of date.'¹⁷ However, for some this was not the sole cause of dissatisfaction. The teaching staff themselves and their dull teaching methods were to some extent responsible and with the prospect of less time available this would be a key issue. There were those who concentrated solely on past Common Entrance papers, a practice designed to achieve success, but had little in the way of enthusiasm for the subject.¹⁸

¹⁵ *ibid.* pg.470.

¹⁶ *ibid.* *The Tyranny of Latin* J.W. Parr No.115, Vol.10, June 1933 pg.399.

¹⁷ *The Times* Dec.23rd 1936.

¹⁸ F.R. Dale *Latin by the Direct Method in Greece And Rome* Vol.2 No.5 Feb. 1933 pg.67.

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But this later beginning does postulate good teachers - men who will rouse interest, demand and get accuracy, though not at first on too wide a field - men who will not make a fetish of learning grammar before a boy has any experience through translation of the language with which the grammar is concerned.¹⁹

That it is vital to have competent teachers is one point on which agreement was reached. In his speech to the annual conference in 1934 Dr. Norwood echoed the sentiments of H.N.P.Sloman writing in the *Preparatory Schools Review* the previous November in his insistence that the best teacher in the school should be allotted to the beginners class, although this was rarely the case:

In how many schools will such a good Latin scholar be found, engaged in teaching the beginners ? I have heard it said on pretty good authority, by one who has at any rate seen the inside of several scores of Preparatory Schools, that on average you would not find more than one good teacher in a school, and that he would not unnaturally be found to be absorbed in the task of putting the necessary polish on the Scholarship candidates : but the rest were very mediocre, and that it would not be unkind in some cases to describe them as the blind leading the blind.²⁰

One contributor to the *Preparatory Schools Review* regreted the fact that university graduates were so specialised and 'we all know how difficult it is to obtain masters of the old type capable of taking efficiently all the ordinary subjects.'²¹ This sort of man would be able to bring a variety of knowledge and instil interest in all his classes. In 1956 Broadlands Preparatory school was criticised for this shortcoming: 'a lack of the vigorous, decisive teaching that might give the necessary grounding.'²² The teacher's personality is the key to success.

I am more profoundly convinced than ever that for every single point that you may put down to the credit of the rightness of your method you may give nine to the personality of the teacher. It is his personality that counts everywhere and all the time.²³

It must be remembered that many school masters, both in preparatory schools and public schools had received little in the way of formal training. Those coming into the profession as young men would have been used to the academic atmosphere of their

¹⁹ *The Preparatory Schools Review The Tyranny of Latin* W.W. Vaughan. No.115, Vol.10, June 1933 pg.397.

²⁰ *ibid. The Place of Latin in the Curriculum* Dr. Norwood No.117, Vol.10, March 1934 pg.468.

²¹ *ibid. Curriculum Reform A senior representative* No.124, Vol.11, June 1936 pg.241.

²² Inspection report for Broadlands Preparatory School 1956 Ed 172/230, pg.5.

²³ *The Place of Latin in the Curriculum* Dr. Norwood in *Preparatory Schools Review* No.117, Vol.10, March 1934 pg.469.

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recent university experiences and need to adjust to the simpler requirements of their pupils.

Teaching method itself received relatively little attention in this debate. However in 1935 the *Preparatory Schools Review* printed a summary of an address given by the staff H.M.I., R.H. Barrow, called *Latin in the Classroom*. At this time of questioning he agreed :

We must think out again everything traditional, and justify or alter our methods or technique, and so be certain that we are adopting the best means to an end clearly envisaged.²⁴

The predominance of Composition was criticised: 'At present Composition takes precedence over all else, and I believe that this fact is the root of much unsatisfactory Latin.'²⁵ The problem was that boys were asked to run before they could walk and the ensuing failures were disheartening.

To give an example of the standard of composition towards the top of a preparatory school overleaf is a reproduction of a fair copy from a Latin verse book belonging to J. Graham who was a pupil at Sunningdale 1937 to 1939 where 'I sat at the feet of a superb and rather formidable teacher, G A. Ling. I think his methods might be justly classified as cramming, but they produced results.'²⁶ It reveals traditional attention being paid to Latin verse and the demanding standard exacted.

²⁴ *Latin in the Classroom* R.H. Barrow in *Preparatory Schools Review* No.121, Vol.11, June 1935 pg.130.

²⁵ *ibid.* pg 131.

²⁶ Private papers of J. Graham.

Sun rises: all things in his rays rejoice,
The birds long silent now lift up their voice.
O! Dear companions, now your tasks pursue,
While still the meadow shines with morning dew.

Lo! the glad ray descends from yonder sun,
That so your work may be the better done:
Let there be toil till noon; then run to play:
On this condition happy goes the day.

Some task the river & were the cygnet feeds,
Some through the brighter spaces of the meads,
Some watch their comrades and their gallant deeds,
And one his Wordsworth or his Shakespeare reads.

O! boys most fortunate and life most blessed!
When labour's ended comes the last prize rest,
The night returns with her great gift of sleep,
Along the stars their dutious vigil keep.

Soloritur: radiis fulgentibus omnia gaudent
Quaequo diu tacuit carmina furchit avis
Vos comites cari nunc instaurate labores,
Dum ~~motu~~ matutino pascua rose nitent.

Ecce jubar Phoebus laetum descendit ab illo.
Quo melius vestrum conficiatur opus.
sit labor ad medium solem; tunc currite luserum.
laeta agitur tali conditione dies.

Pars fluvium pulsant quaerunt ubi patulae cygni
Pars loca praetorum splendidiora petit.
Aspiciunt alii comites et fortia facta.
Silvius Nasonem } Vergiliumve legit.
Unus at Euripidom }

Felices nimium pueros vitamque beatam!
Ultima perfecto palma labore quies.
Nox simul alma venit grato cum munere so
Pervigilant certa sidera sola fide.

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Barrow suggested that Composition be tackled after Translation and in a structured way. The importance of a suitable reader was emphasised, one that was easy enough to make visible progress, contained useful and common vocabulary and constructions and which could be used by the teacher as a basis for grammar work. Barrow noted that the presentation of the reader was an important visual stimulus, 'The reader will be well printed and attractive'²⁷. Earlier the content of Latin texts suitable for beginners was criticised as lacking in interest and being dull.

..here we come to the real difficulty, I believe, the nature of the Latin texts often given to the boys to read. In Greek the problem does not arise, as most of the surviving Greek authors are interesting and often amusing, while most of the easier Latin authors are neither.²⁸

Sloman called for the need of books that contain mythology and similar matters that would attract a boy's attention. Barrow spoke of the ease and necessity of using original texts as starting points for putting Latin in context and teaching some background history: 'The content of the Latin read must be worth while and exploited to the full, and the background should be chiefly Roman.' This was reinforced by a letter from the headmaster of Repton, Mr. Christie, which was read at the same meeting.

I would emphasise the importance of visual aids, pictures in the Classroom, lantern slides of Classical life, illustrations in the text, and of new subject matter for reading. Anything to get away from the eternal Livy or Caesar.²⁹

One method of making Latin come alive, the Direct Method, was rarely mentioned and when it was it was not in enthusiastic terms. Sloman wished that it were a viable method, but because Latin is not a living tongue did not consider it to be a practical solution. Dr. Norwood was less than complimentary about it in his address to the annual conference.

The most miserably incompetent lessons that I have witnessed in Latin have been lessons given on the Direct Method by an average practitioner.³⁰

²⁷ *ibid.* pg.131.

²⁸ *ibid.* *The Tyranny of Latin* H.N.P. Sloman No.116, Vol.10, Nov. 1933 pg.423.

²⁹ *Preparatory Schools Review* *The Tyranny of Latin* H.N.P. Sloman No.116, Vol.10 Nov. 1933 pg.132.

³⁰ *ibid.* *The Place of Latin in the Curriculum.* Dr. Norwood No.117, Vol.10, March 1934 pg.468.

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The Direct Method was criticised for allowing inaccuracy to become acceptable: 'The Direct Method encourages "reckless" speaking, it thereby destroys correctness, the chief criterion of success.'³¹ The same writer questioned the success of French teaching, which does use the Direct Method. Whilst a modern approach to teaching did receive some attention, most of the ideas or topics under discussion were echoes of previous suggestions. No revolutionary methods were being expounded and the decidedly different approach of the Direct Method was not championed.

The Reality

Did these questioning years lead to permanent changes or were they just full of sound and fury signifying nothing? The requirements for Common Entrance were eased a little in that in 1939 it was decided that there was to be one paper in Elementary Latin and a second English paper. A second harder Latin paper would be optional.³² (A similar arrangement for Greek was instituted in 1945.) Further changes may well have come about, but for the arrival of war: 'By 1938 the threat of war was beginning to produce staffing problems.'³³ By the late thirties preparatory schools were more concerned with the practicalities of how to staff their schools and arranging evacuation of pupils and furniture to safer positions in the country than arguing about niceties of the curriculum. The *Preparatory Schools Review* became a more meagre publication and the articles reflected the immediacy of the situation; how to arrange blackout etc. As the war progressed the increasing number of obituaries makes for grim reading and there were few voices taking up the debate again after the War. In 1949 the restraints put on the timetable by exams and the domination of the timetable by Latin, French and mathematics were cause for complaint again,³⁴ but the status quo was not effected.

For those who attended preparatory schools the academic diet and its administration did not seem to change much, if at all. In 1948 Bramcote school was criticised by an H.M.I. inspection.

'...the curriculum is an extremely narrow one and ill suited to the wider needs of boys of the eight to thirteen age group.'

³¹ *ibid.* *Direct Action and Reaction* G.C. No.117, Vol.10, March 1934 pg.472.

³² *Headmasters' Conference Bulletin* no.3 1939 pg.21.

³³ *Rev. Wickham Shades of the Prison House* 1986, pg.121.

³⁴ *Headmasters' Conference* 1949 pg.31.

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The inspectors especially referred to the absence of systematic teaching through the school of art, music, manual training and elementary general Science.³⁵

all the curriculum revolved around Latin and Maths, with Greek for those who could cope, other subjects had a poor deal, and there was no Science at all.³⁶

A preparatory school in 1936 that had a curriculum of 34 hours of teaching allotted 16 hours to Latin and maths, 10 hours to French and Greek and the remaining 8 hours were shared by English, history, geography and science.³⁷ So Latin was holding its own and still claiming a lion's share of the time. Ten years later Hawtreys School gave 9 or 10 hours a week to Latin and 3 or 4 to Greek in the top two divisions, again the lack of handicraft, art or nature study being criticised and English still considered the poor relation.³⁸

For many Latin retained its place of honour, it was 'the premiere subject'³⁹ and those who could not cope were considered second class.

One of my many memories is of required study of the Classics before breakfast in Vth form under G.B. [the joint headmaster, Geoffrey Bolton], even Homer and Sophocles. Then, during breakfast, the master-in-charge would ring a bell and announce, "If you have finished you may read." which was the signal for the fifth formers to study our Greek and Latin grammars at the table, prior to being tested immediately afterwards. The rest of the school opened their Times newspapers.

There was in those days a form called 'Modern Side' composed of those in their last year thought to have no bent towards the classics. This was a mistake, as it made them feel thwarted and Philistines.⁴⁰

Traditional teaching methods were very much in evidence and there was a heavy emphasis on grammar:

The teaching was oriented towards grammar and the apparatus of language. It was instilled as a matter of pride that one could not be caught out in any way with irregular verbs. The most able knew all the rhymes at the back of Kennedy.⁴¹

In some schools there was little change in teaching technique the early part of the century.

³⁵ P. Land *Bramcote School: The First 100 Years* 1993, pg.81.

³⁶ Personal reminiscences of G.P. Robertson.

³⁷ L.S.R.Byrne & E.L. Churchill *Changing Eton* 1937 pg.17.

³⁸ Inspection report, 1948, Ed. 109/9177, pg.3.

³⁹ Interview with D. Carey (Eagle House) 7.7.'97.

⁴⁰ P. Nathan in *Time to Spare? A History of Summer Fields* by N. Aldridge 1989 pg.135.

⁴¹ Interview with D. Carey 7.7.'97.

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He made us learn Kennedy's grammar by heart. Particularly the rules of syntax at the back, the prepositional phrases and the gender rhymes. We learnt definitions, examples and exceptions till we could say them in our sleep. They had no reference outside grammar, however, and I can recall no conscious effort to interpret them in any kind of living context⁴²

These reminiscences date from the late thirties and the author remembers the extraordinary talented and somewhat eccentric character of 'one of the finest Latin masters in the country.'

He joined the staff in 1938, a pot-bellied balding bachelor who smelt strongly of beer after lunch. He was a brilliant teacher of Latin and was well known for the number of scholarships he had obtained at top public schools. His methods may now appear somewhat crude, for although they were staggeringly successful in implanting an indelible knowledge of Latin grammar, they achieved no success at all in teaching Latin as a history or literature or a culture. He was concerned solely with North and Hillard and Kennedy's *Revised Latin Primer*, the contents of which books he rammed into us with unremitting and brainwashing repetition.⁴³

This description of Latin and its teacher fits a popular stereotype that was later depicted in the book that is a delight to school boys to this day, *Down With Skool!* by Willans and Searle. First published in the late fifties (but based on the author's own experience of the thirties) part of its appeal is that it is very close to the truth in many cases.



I have been here thirty years. I have always said that and do not intend to change now.

Latin master finally make grate heave and totter towards desk you would think it was mount everest. Will he make it? Effort! He sits in the chair panting.

They sa : 'The gauls - galli - subject - go on molesworth oppugnant - what does oppugnant mean - they are attacking fossas. Ditches. What did you say molesworth? Why on earth attack a ditch? Keep your mind on the sentence. The gauls are attacking the ditches. What? *I am quite unable to inform you molesworth for what purpose the Gauls wished to attack the ditches.* The Latin is correct. That surfices.⁴⁴

Fig. 6

⁴² E. More *Oranges at Half Time* 1967 pg.20.

⁴³ *ibid.* pg. 21.

⁴⁴ G. Willans & R. Searle *The Compleet Molesworth* 1985 pg.40.

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Here the class is being led through a translation in the traditional way of parsing each word to build up the sense of the sentence. The content of the sentence is immaterial as far as the master is concerned, he is there to teach Latin, not add comment as a military historian. This is the very approach which has been acknowledged as being narrow and contributing to the dusty image of Latin. Given the nature of the book one assumes that there is some exaggeration here, but fears that throughout the period there existed those for whom Latin was the intensive study of the language with little consideration of context. It is, of course the larger than life characters who are remembered and recorded most clearly and the vast majority probably just plodded quietly on.

After the war schools busied themselves with moving back to their original buildings or adapting to life in their new adopted ones. There was little in the way of comment on classical matters as the fact still remained; Common Entrance was the goal and whilst Latin remained an examinable subject it would be taught. A letter written to the *Preparatory Schools Review* in 1958 could so easily date from the thirties and suggests that while there were those who attempted to make their subject interesting and relevant the old criticisms were still valid.

Always... the translation question is something to do with war or military affairs, in the type of Latin written by Julius Caesar.....what on earth is the use of teaching them Latin which deals with completely out of date tactics in long past military campaigns? What is the *educational* value of this? The natural result of a curriculum which is forced on us by C.E. papers is either that the boys are bored stiff, or - if one succeeds in interesting them in military Latin - that one is wasting time by creating a quasi-hobby which has little or nothing to do with life.⁴⁵

This letter prompted a response in the following issue in which E.P. Wyatt defends the relevance of military texts given that the Romans were an occupying power in Britain for four hundred years and ruled Palestine at the time of Christ.

Preparatory schools continued in their intransigent approach to change. Some still clung to the old pronunciation in the face of all round resistance:

Before I went to Summer Fields my father had had me taught Latin in the new pronunciation. He asked Mr. Williams why he taught the old. 'We teach them to speak Latin like little gentlemen' was the reply. My father nearly removed me from the school then and there.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ M. Gedge letter to *Preparatory Schools Review* May 1958 pg.9.

⁴⁶ G.W. Ward in Usborne Ed. *A Century at Summer Fields* 1964 pg.259.

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The connection here between the traditional pronunciation and training to become a gentleman is interesting. For this school it wasn't only Latin that conferred gentlemanly qualities, but the very way in which it was said. Both pronunciation and sentiments more appropriate to the mid nineteenth rather than the mid twentieth century.

In 1951 a book called *The Preparatory Schoolboy and his Education* was published by the I.A.P.S. This outlined timetables from two different types of school. One, a school which offered a broad range of subjects and the other a school 'in which the classics predominate.' The former devoted three hours each week to English, Latin, French and mathematics and one and a half hours to history and geography. Scripture, biology and civics were allotted thirty minutes only each week and the remaining thirteen hours was divided between music, art, craftsmanship and P.T. If a boy needed to take Greek in his final two years he would have to give up some time from his music. The second type of school allotted three and a half hours each week to Latin and French, six hours to mathematics, seven and a half hours were shared between English, history and geography and one and a half each of drawing and nature study. In the final year this became Six hours each for Latin and Greek, three and three quarters for French, five and a quarter for mathematics and four for the humanities and English. Mathematicians took more maths and a little science rather than Greek. Other activities were available in the form of evening and free time clubs.⁴⁷ This second establishment is far more academic in nature and it would be to this type of school a boy hoping to enter a major public school would be sent. Preparatory schools varied in many respects, the academic standard, the physical facilities and of course the cost. The standard of classics expected would vary too.

Greek had become an option for the brightest boys, but it was not always easy to make suitable provision for it. At Sandroyd it was studied 'at times outside the regular timetable'.⁴⁸ It was often started in the penultimate year, following the decision made by the joint H.M.C. and I.A.P.S. committees in 1909, and tackled with purpose:

Greek is studied by the majority of boys in the top two forms. Thanks to sensible time allowance and vigorous teaching, good progress is made.⁴⁹

Greek is started by about a dozen boys of the age of eleven, six periods a week being given to the subject.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ E.H. Allen & L.P. Dealtry *The Preparatory Schoolboy and his Education* 1951, pg.41.

⁴⁸ Inspection report 1930 Ed 109/5574, pg.5.

⁴⁹ Inspection report for Lambrook. pg.5 Ed172/259, pg.5.

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However, due to the trend in public schools not to start Greek initially, but to offer it as an option after a couple of years this was a questionable use of time and the I.A.P.S. sent the following resolution to the Headmasters' Conference pointing out this anomaly:

..this council [I.A.P.S.] welcomes the suggestion that the teaching of Greek should be encouraged at preparatory schools, but draws the attention of H.M.C. to the fact that it is not uncommon for boys who have done Greek at their preparatory school to be encouraged to give up this subject on arrival at their public schools.⁵¹

So whilst Latin continued to play a traditional role, Greek received varying attention depending on the individual school and their aspirations. The confusion met in Chapter Two continued creating lack of uniformity throughout.

Latin, The Survivor

What were the fortunes of Latin as the fifties come to a close? Had it become marginalised or was it alive and kicking in preparatory schools? Throughout the fifties the numbers in preparatory schools rose, some of the pupils transferring to the state system at eleven and others competing for places at public schools.⁵² Some were dissatisfied with the Common Entrance Exam, considering it more of a cramming device than being of educational value and failing to serve those who went to the state system well. In 1957 Lord Hailsham, then Minister of Education, advised the I.A.P.S. to examine their curriculum with particular reference to how children moving to and from the state sector would cope, and as a result *Foundations* was published in 1959.

Until there can be some radical changes in the C.E.E. it will be impossible for preparatory schools to follow an ideal or enlightened curriculum.⁵³

Schools were criticised for going too quickly over the fundamentals and for concentrating too heavily on science. This reflects a rise in science in the curriculum, it has gained a position which receives similar criticisms to those levelled at the classics forty years earlier. The report made seven recommendations:

⁵⁰ Inspection report for Elstree 1956 Ed172/259, pg.5.

⁵¹ Headmasters' Conference Bulletin no. 2 1944 pg.26.

⁵² see D. Leinster Mackay *The Rise of the English Prep. School* 1984 pg.281.

⁵³ *Foundations* 1959 pg.8.

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- a. A later start in Latin.
- b. Latin only to be taught to those likely to be academically capable of benefiting from it.
- c. Introduction of some science, formal or informal.
- d. A drive for greater literacy and therefore more, or at any rate more effective, English periods.
- e. Fuller attention to cultural interests, especially to music in all its aspects.
- f. More emphasis on (i) Geography, and (ii) Physical Education.
- g. Greater flexibility in our programmes to fit the needs of different and differing boys.⁵⁴

These recommendations suggest several interesting points as to the true state of affairs. The plea for a later start in Latin is by now a familiar cry, first heard in 1907, then again in the curriculum debate of the thirties. The reiteration of this would lead one to believe that earlier advice had been ignored by the majority of schools. The report found that 'A minority of the I.A.P.S. would start all boys on Latin at nine, letting those who cannot cope drop it at eleven. The majority are keenly of the opinion that it has only been examination requirements that have necessitated starting too many on Latin at too early an age.'⁵⁵ This created a problem of boys being more advanced in Latin than they were in their own language, although some defended this on the grounds that Latin's mental gymnastics would help. Sandroyd, criticised in inspection reports in 1921 and 1930, was again criticised in 1958 for the very same reason:

Boys appear to start Latin and French rather too early, before they have a sufficiently confident mastery of their own language.⁵⁶

Throughout the century the value of teaching Latin to those who struggled to cope has been questioned, but it would seem that there were still those who attempted to teach it to all, again the Common Entrance examination being the noose through which each boy must go. *Foundations* was highly critical of this philosophy.

We shall always have with us the non-linguistic type of boy to whom Latin is an anathema and meaningless, but whose approach to, say, Science and Technology, is easy and spontaneous. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that such a boy would be better off devoting himself, even at an early age, to some branch of learning for which he shows a greater aptitude.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *ibid.* pg.9.

⁵⁵ *ibid.* pg.22.

⁵⁶ Inspection report, 1958, Ed 172/259, pg.4.

⁵⁷ *Foundations* 1959 pg.23.

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The poor teaching of English was criticised, again echoes of the past where English had been barely taught. It was recommended that there be very close links between the English and the Latin syllabus; the same member of staff teaching both.

The advice concerning science suggests that while some schools were giving too much time to science, there were others that scarcely taught it. Given the very independent character of preparatory schools this was probably the case, they were autonomous units within a system in which they responded more with the public schools than with each other. The latter recommendations all point to an existing narrow curriculum. In 1958 the school inspectors found that 'As usual Science is barely touched upon.'⁵⁸

Details of teaching methods for Latin were suggested. The emphasis was on elementary grammar, leading to translation which becomes the vehicle for more grammar and syntax. Composition was to be left until there 'is complete mastery of Latin'. The use of visual aids was urged, together with visits to classical sites. This advice would suggest that many were still not looking for interesting stimuli in their teaching. Inspection reports of the time reveal that this is often the case.

It would be an advantage if time could be spared to give rather more attention to history, mythology and to the geography of the ancient world.⁵⁹

A well-chosen reader could serve to stimulate interest in both the language and the historical and cultural background of Latin.⁶⁰

Foundations was critical that 'Too often Greek was being taught in Preparatory Schools merely because of its market value in scholarship examinations.'⁶¹ Such criticisms we have seen being levelled at preparatory schools some fifty years earlier, the fact that they are still valid reflects the independent reactionary character of preparatory schools together with the overpowering influence of examinations. In spite of such criticisms *Foundations* was in favour of Greek being started at preparatory schools by the very able:

⁵⁸ Inspection report 1958, Ed 172/259, pg.4.

⁵⁹ Inspection report for Lambrook 1956, Ed 172/259, pg.5.

⁶⁰ Inspection report for Elstree 1956, Ed 172/259, pg.5.

⁶¹ *Foundations* 1959 pg.20.

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We would, however, urge strongly that any boy who has, by the age of eleven, shown outstanding talents in Latin should be given the chance to learn Greek.⁶²

The advantages of taking Greek were explained, not only for the future classicist, but for the scientist in that it would help with technical term and provide an exact training in discipline and precision. Many preparatory schools started Greek in the final two years. This was necessary grounding for those who wished to go to Winchester which did not offer beginners' Greek apart from in exceptional circumstances.⁶³ Some schools, such as Sandroyd, seemed to struggle to find sufficient time to make much progress:

With the meagre time allowance of three periods a week it is difficult to combine rapid progress with a sound knowledge of fundamentals.⁶⁴

Whereas other schools were 'not ungenerous' in their provision of time for Greek.⁶⁵ Greek was by no means extinct in the more academic schools, but it was confined to the most able at the top of the school.

⁶² *ibid.* pg.19.

⁶³ Inspection report for Winchester 1956, Ed 172/230, pg.20.

⁶⁴ Inspection report 1958, Ed 172/259, pg.6.

⁶⁵ Inspection report for Lambrook 1956, Ed 172/5374, pg.5.

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The shape of the proposed curricula was outlined in two suggested timetables printed in *Foundations*.

Two proposed schemes allocating time for preparatory schools creating a classical stream ⁶⁶

	Periods per week 8+ to 9+	Periods per week 9+ to 11+	Periods per week 11+ to 13+	Periods per week 11+ to 13+
			Modern	classical
Latin		6		8
Greek				5
Mathematics	9	8	9	6 9
English	10	6	10	4 6
French	5	4	4	4
Natural Science	2	2	2	2
History	2	3	3	3
Geography	3	2	3	2
Scripture	2	2	2	1
Music	2	2	2	1
Art & Handwork	3	3	3	2
	38	38	38	38

	Periods per week 1st year	Periods per week 2nd & 3rd year	Periods per week 4th & 5th years	Periods per week 4th & 5th years	Periods per week 4th & 5th years
			A Modern	A Classical	B & C
Latin		5 or 6	4	8	5
Greek				4	
Mathematics	6	7	10	6	8
Natural Science	1	1	4		2
English	8	6	4	4	6
French	5 or 4	5	5	5	6
Hist. & Geog.	6	5 or 4	4	4	4
Music	2	2	1	1	1
P.E.	3	3	3	3	3
General		1	1	1	1
Carpentry & Handwork	1	1	1	1	1
Art	2 or 3	1	1	1	1
Scripture	2	2	1	1	1
	36	39	39	39	39

⁶⁶ *Foundations*. 1959 pg.11/12.

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All the periods are 35 minutes long. In the second timetable the A stream in the upper school was to be a scholarship stream, the B stream sure C.E. passes and the C stream weak candidates. At the top of the school Latin had just over 20 % of the timetable, 4.5 hours per week and Greek 7.5%, almost 3 hour per week. This compares to the 38.5% or 11 hours for Latin in the 1931 timetable mentioned in the *Preparatory Schools Review*⁶⁷ and almost 10 % or 5 hours for Greek. This would suggest that Latin was losing ground. However, a comparison with St Piran's school in 1926 shows that the figures for Latin are on a par, although Greek is omitted. So whilst there was a decline, it was not dramatic.

Copies of *Foundations* were sold in their thousands.⁶⁸ Many welcomed the chance to challenge the Common Entrance Examination and criticise it for the strangle hold it had on the curriculum.

Either we can relegate examinations to their proper function of finding suitable entrants to the Public Schools, and realise that that is all they ought to do, or else we can carry on with their present use as a means of defining what we ought to teach, and by implication limiting what is taught. If we accept the second alternative we abdicate our right to educate. The price will be more and more complete rigidity of timetable, syllabus, and subject. At least let us do this with our eyes open and a realisation of what it means. 'Foundations' should then go into the nearest waste-paper-basket. In ten years our schools will be completely out of date.⁶⁹

By now this is an all too familiar reaction.

Changes had taken place over the last sixty years and the curriculum was no longer a classical kingdom. However, Latin in particular was a healthy survivor, owing its life to the Common Entrance examination and still holding a prominent position within the preparatory school. Issues met in Part One reoccur and in the thirties were discussed in depth. There are characteristics of Latin teaching which are out of date and seen as a stumbling block to the general development of education for the preparatory school boy. Pressures of a crowded curriculum could be eased by starting Latin later and only offering it as an option to the more able pupils. The actual

⁶⁷ *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol. 10 no. 108 March 1931 pg.205.

⁶⁸ A. Harrison. *How Was That Sir?* 1975 pg.63.

⁶⁹ R.G. Wickham *If the Foundations be Destroyed..* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* Oct. 1960, pg.7.

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teaching could be made more interesting by setting the work in context, using visual aids and not relying too heavily on the primer. The Common Entrance examination did adapt to meet a wider range of abilities in 1939 and but for the onset of war more modifications may have been accepted. However, the findings of *Foundations* in 1959 reflect a lack of real changes taking place at the chalk face. The standing of a preparatory school and therefore to some extent its security relied on how well it achieved its goal of getting pupils into their chosen public schools. Whilst Latin remained part of Common Entrance it would be taught in such a way as to ensure the best results possible and for many that was the way in which generations of preparatory school boys had been taught.

The Public School Early 1930's - 1960

*But the educational traditions of the Public Schools have given to the study of Latin an importance in the curriculum which it does not hold in most of the other schools.*¹

*Half a century ago, the Classical Association was latterly reminded, Classical studies were still both root and flower of all education in the schools and universities of this country....But the world has changed greatly since that Golden Age, and the status and prospects of Classical studies have changed with it.*²

The face of education had been steadily changing and the public schools were at the forefront of the battle in which an increasingly crowded curriculum threatened to squeeze out classics, having toppled it from its perch of supremacy. Public spending cut backs and the depression of the late twenties had left the country financially weak, whilst some public schools had sufficient endowments to weather such storm others relied more heavily on fees for funds. So public schools, whilst preparing boys for university, also had to provide a service that appealed to its customer and keep up with the demands of the twentieth century. The Classical Association sustained continuous defence of classical education, providing new support and taking initiatives. However, at Eton in 1960 the School Certificate results for Latin had dropped from 95.5% of the total number of candidates in the year group in 1910 to 30.5% and from 71.5% to 10% for Greek.³ This spectacular decline in popularity was held off for a long time and in this chapter we will chart its progress and examine the various lines of defence thrown across its path.

Taking stock of the situation

In the late thirties the Classical Association assessed the current situation and proposed measures that would help cope with recent problems. A report on *The Position of the Classics in the Schools* was presented to members of the Association council early in 1937. This report found that

¹ Board of Education *The Public Schools and the General Education System* H.M.S.O. 1944 pg.41.

² Greece and Rome *Fifty Years On* June 1954, No.2 pg.49.

³ Oxford Examination Board records.

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'It is a time of very great uncertainty in the educational world as in the social, political and economic. Old values are seriously called into question. A large and increasingly vocal body of opinion holds that a "new" world necessitates "new" education and there is strong advocacy of "realistic" education, learning by doing, arts and crafts, of "social studies", a "synthesis of knowledge" of man's story, and again of the new Science which deals with "life" and every-day things.⁴

This reflects the Hadow report of 1926 which advocated learning through practical experience, an approach designed to appeal to the wide range of abilities that were now receiving education. There was a growing 'discontent' that those who were not future classical scholars were poorly served by the existing system and curriculum which resulted in low marks being achieved at School Certificate and little real interest or knowledge in the subject being imparted.⁵ In 1938 the Spens report advised that the School Certificate examinations determined the curriculum, whereas the reverse should be true. As discussed at a meeting of the Classical Association in February 1938 the School Certificate examination was a stumbling block, being designed for 'future classical scholars'. The sub-committee agreed that the exam must change to reflect course changes and even considered the possibility of two exams, one for the majority and additional Latin for potential specialists. However, the discussions were in their early stages and this 1938 report did no more than make suggestions, aware that they were directed at a wide audience. The root of problems was once again laid at the foot of examinations.

A letter written in reply to questions posed by W.B. Russel of Australia offers a more optimistic opinion as to the state of the battle. The secretary of the Classical Association, T.B.L. Webster, wrote:

Latin is maintaining its place in the curriculum quite well. The worst period was during the war, but since then Latin has shown, if anything, a small revival.⁶

He mentioned the 1937 report which was instigated 'because we feel that the time has come when we should again take stock and consider whether we cannot, as an Association, be of more use to the schools.' However, he saw the prospects as being healthy:

⁴ Classical Association *The Position of the Classics in the Schools* 1937.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Letter from T.B.L. Webster 4th June, 1937. C.A. archives.

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My own impression is that both Latin and Classics are still very highly regarded as a preliminary training for all sorts of careers and that business men who are willing to accept University graduates are as willing to take Classicists as any others.⁷

A year later the second report of the sub-committee on *The Position of the Classics in the Schools* was produced, finding 'that the time has definitely come for some changes, a rather different orientation, in the teaching of Latin if it is to hold its place in modern Secondary education.'⁸ Previous recommendations regarding the optimum age for starting Latin were to have repercussions on the Latin course in general which, if the recommendations were followed would become at least two years shorter⁹. It must be remembered too that the Classical Association was also concerned with classics in state education which tended to make a later start in the subject. The chief concern was that at present the majority of pupils gave up Latin after School Certificate and the course was still tailored for the minority who continued classics to a higher level (a problem still in existence in the 1960's as we shall see in Chapter Ten). If the syllabus were better focused then a higher standard would be achieved and more might wish to continue with their study. This would also improve the standing of Latin in general.

...they believe that the prospect of a greater measure of success that should result from the changes is vastly preferable to the present large measure of failure and far more likely to further public confidence in Latin as an indispensable element in modern education.¹⁰

The method of teaching and structure of the syllabus were the chief focus of modernisation. The main recommendation concerning the content of the course was that its 'essential aim ...should be the reading and understanding of Latin authors.' Thus composition and grammar would take on secondary importance, 'but it does not mean there would not be insistence on a high standard of accuracy for that is imperative if very real loss in the educational value of Latin is to be avoided.'¹¹ Less time was to be spent on composition to allow more time,

time for reading and in particular for wider and more intelligent reading, for insistence on a much higher standard of English in translating than at present, and for giving the pupils such knowledge of the historical, political, and social background as will

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Second report of the sub - committee on *The Position of Classics in the Schools* C.A. archives.

⁹ As noted already many preparatory schools failed to act on these recommendations.

¹⁰ Second Report of the sub- committee on *The Position of Classics in the Schools* C.A. Archives pg.1.

¹¹ *ibid.* pg.1.

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enable them to have full understanding of the implications and underlying ideas of what they are reading.¹²

The practice of reading set books was one that had become increasingly popular as emphasis was laid on the content of the language rather than the mechanics of it. However, progress had to be monitored carefully or it became a 'hollow sham' learnt off pat with little understanding of the language at all.¹³ The committee was well aware of the dangers of proscribed texts for reading, which would present a narrow view of literature and could be memorised, thus weakening the position of grammar. However, these problems could be overcome by careful questioning about set texts and a wide variety of unseen translation passages.

A relatively new text book *Latin For Today* adapted from the American original to suit an English audience, was proving to be very popular and reflected that changes in teaching styles were necessary to cope with the shorter Latin course. We shall look at this book in greater depth in Chapter Nine. Later beginnings or poor grounding in some preparatory schools were obviously creating problems for public schools that used these books:

The reason for its adoption in some of the public schools seems rather to have been due to dissatisfaction with lower school work where boys enter from preparatory schools with a knowledge of Latin wholly incommensurate with the time they have spent on it and without interest or hope.¹⁴

This echoes the problems faced by Marlborough College in the 1924 inspection report quoted on page 97 and would suggest that in spite of intensive teaching preparatory school masters were failing to achieve high standards with all their pupils. It would give weight to the opinion that they crammed for exams and failed to instil genuine comprehension in the less able.

In 1939 the Board of Education published a pamphlet, *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics*, in which the details of the four year course were explained.¹⁵ The syllabus followed that suggested by the Classical Association, emphasising a broad range of reading set in a classical context, allowing opportunity for comment and discussion on background information.

¹² *ibid.* pg.2.

¹³ T.W. Melluish *Why Latin?* in *Greece And Rome* No. 38 Vol. 13 1944 pg.66.

¹⁴ Classical Association report *The Position of the Classics in the Schools* 1937.

¹⁵ Board Of Education *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* H.M.S.O. 1939.

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The subject matter should be Roman in character - descriptions of Roman life, public and private, historical episodes, stories of great characters and so on - rather than stories from Greek mythology or modern anecdotes, often with a humour that does not appeal to a child, or fairy tales presented in Latin dress.¹⁶

The need for total adoption of restored pronunciation was emphasised as there were still schools who had not made the change or use both, 'a practice which seems indefensible.'¹⁷ Now that time was more valuable it was crucial that all the work was carefully focused.

The purpose of the teaching is not primarily to produce the facility in using the language but to study an ethos through its language. Therefore the thoughts expressed, the historical events described, the social, political and moral situations presented, must be so selected as to be valuable in themselves. The author must say what is worth saying.¹⁸

The approach to composition, for many the zenith of Latin teaching, saw perhaps the greatest departure from tradition. Whilst composition was still part of the syllabus it should not be considered as the *raison d'être* for learning classics, a philosophy which had 'done the study of Latin infinite harm'¹⁹ in the past. The use of visual aids, pictures and objects was emphasised, but they must be explained and easy to view. Slides must be used judiciously as 'it is harmful to show pupils slides of sites and excavation, pottery and stratification, unless they have been carefully prepared for it.'²⁰ Setting up inter-school classical clubs was suggested.

The Classical Association considered four hours spent on Latin per week to be the absolute minimum necessary to achieve success. Public schools tended to split into specialising streams after two years and at this time at Winchester 10 lessons a week were allotted to those who were in the classical stream whilst others coped with 4.²¹ It must be remembered that whether on the classical side or the modern side a pass in Latin at School Certificate was necessary if one wanted to go on to certain universities. At this stage all or almost all boys took Latin for School Certificate at Winchester, in

¹⁶ *ibid.* pg.14.

¹⁷ *ibid.* pg.23.

¹⁸ *ibid.* pg.24.

¹⁹ *ibid.* pg.42.

²⁰ *ibid.* pg.57.

²¹ Inspection report 1938, Ed 109/1959 pg.20.

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1935, 96.5% and in 1940, 100%. At other leading public schools the statistics were almost as high.²²

Having made suggestions which would help to modernise the image of Latin attempts were made to ensure a positive image of a worthwhile subject was publicised. Always ready with reinforcements to help the cause the Classical Association's publicity committee produced a series of 'pamphlets' aimed at persuading parents of the value of the classics. The committee found that the language of the Spens Report 'appealed rather to Classical Teachers than an apathetic public' and in order to promote the shorter course of Latin the Association wrote a document in which the reasons for studying Latin were set out. This was developed into a defence which was pared down to eight points in its final form, a synopsis of which follows:

1. The Latin language is famous for its clearness, its dignity and its beauty.
2. Of 20,000 words most commonly used in ordinary written English over 10,000 are of Latin origin.
3. A knowledge of Latin is of great assistance in learning other European languages.
4. In certain professions and for admittance to certain universities a knowledge of Latin and Greek is necessary.
5. Some of the world's finest literature is written in Latin.
6. In English literature and even in the press there occur many references to the stories, legends and histories of the Romans.
7. Latin is a language of order and method. It develops clearness of thought and accuracy of expression.
8. The study of Latin is a study of a civilisation, one on which our own is largely based.²³

This pamphlet (together with a similar one on Greek) was sent to schools with an article *The Classics and the Businessman* which propounded the use of Latin to anyone considering a career in business, the logical and analytical skills learnt as a classicist being invaluable to the future businessman. In its letter to schools the Classical Association made several points which show it to be sensible to the situation and give the impression of the classics being a lively and up to date subject. It mentioned the changes proposed with regard to the curriculum. It informed teachers of the compilation of a list of books on classical subjects. There were several references to ways in which the classics could be made more interesting: 'The council is alive to the needs of wall pictures and other illustrations in connection with the Classical course', pointing out to teachers an exhibition of photographs exhibited at the Warburg Institute. It also promoted the Association's own journal *Greece And*

²² See appendix III pg 414.

²³ *The Value of Latin* issued by the Classical Association 1939.

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Rome which had four detachable plates in one issue illustrating some aspect of Greek and Roman life. It mentioned making contact with the B.B.C. with a view to broadcasting classical lectures in schools and reported good attendance at their own lectures arranged at various branches.²⁴ The tone of this letter was positive and upbeat.

For many who taught at or patronised public schools the Classical Association was preaching to the converted. Parents themselves were the products of a classical education, an even more intense one than that in existence, and expected classics to be part of the curriculum. The following extract from a letter written by a concerned father in 1944 reveals this loyalty to the touchstone of Latin. He expressed his disappointment

to learn that my son...has ceased to take Latin.... his last year's report was poor...may have been due to time in the sick room.

I do feel very strongly that Latin is an essential subject and that without it choice of career later will be restricted. Could you possibly arrange for Latin lessons to be resumed?²⁵

One old Shirburnian suffered from parental pressure as his father was a classics scholar and 'I had that rammed down my throat. I loathed every minute of it and could not give it up quick enough!'²⁶

The classics, or rather now Latin, still offered the opportunity to instil values that epitomised British citizenship and character.

I am more convinced everyday of the value of the study of Classics for making good citizens who will stand up for duty in an age of ugliness, for real values in an age of superficialities and for things of the spirit in an age of materialism.²⁷

By now war was approaching and schools lost able masters who left to fight, once again having to make do with the elderly or infirm, those more likely to be out of touch with recent developments. As we shall see many of the recommendations made during this decade were not acted upon, a response to similar points being called for as late as the sixties.

²⁴ Letter to Headmasters and Headmistresses Classical Association archives 1939.

²⁵ C. Heward *Parents, Sons and their Careers: A Case study of a Public School 1930 - 1950 in British Public Schools: Policy and Practice* Ed. G.Walford 1984 pg.153.

²⁶ Sherborne respondent 1947-1950.

²⁷ *Value of Classics in After Life* by the Headmaster of Mill Hill. Newspaper cutting in the C.A.archives. No details given.

Life At The Chalk Face

To what extent were the public schools affected by the new recommendations and the change in emphasis in the curriculum? The status of Latin seemed to retain its place but science was attracting more candidates and some remember there was no specific weighting towards any particular subject. One Old Shirburnian who won a classical scholarship to Sherborne first met science at his new public school and at the age of fourteen gave up the classics completely. The classics department labelled him a 'traitor', but the decision was necessary as he had decided to go into medicine, 'What could you do with Latin except teach?'²⁸ Those who did continue with classics seemed to follow a traditional course of study, having plenty of time within the timetable to continue the familiar syllabus:

At Rugby I was rushed through the early stages with what would now be regarded as excessive haste, and pushed quickly through my 'School Certificate' in such a way that it seemed merely a tiresome irrelevance and distraction from the main aim of education, namely, life in the Sixth Form. This was at a time when several regular masters were away fighting Hitler, but the Classics department seemed to be not only the best on the Arts side, but the one where almost automatically the best boys ended up. Each year we had one form-master who taught us for much of our programme. This consisted of two proses a week, one or two unseens, verse composition in both languages, and of course the reading of texts; there was a set amount of preparation for each lesson, thirty lines in the lowest year, forty in the next, and fifty thereafter, whether the lines were Catullus, Vergil or Demosthenes (and it made a considerable difference which it was!), and of course, exams twice a year. The masters must have worked hard, but we did too; I remember many a Sunday afternoon spent in my study struggling to render Shakespeare into hexameters or Herrick into couplets, and how I loathed the chore.²⁹

At Marlborough five 45 minute periods a week were allotted to Latin in the lower part of the school, whereas in the upper school it was 'an overwhelming proportion of the week.'³⁰ Here for the majority Latin was not popular, being 'a necessary evil or something that one did because it was part of the system' due to the requirements of university entrance. Still in some traditional schools where all or almost all took Latin to School Certificate those who were not full classicists were second class citizens:

At Eton, certain boys (Kappas) were excused Greek (and somewhat looked down on!)³¹

²⁸ Interview with D. Montague. 31. 1. '96.

²⁹ Personal reminiscences of G. Robertson.

³⁰ Personal reminiscences of D. West Marlborough, 1948.

³¹ Personal reminiscences of J. Graham.

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At Marlborough and Sherborne the majority of the curriculum was devoted to translation into English, translation into Latin and verse composition, some social and political history was touched upon in the upper school. This probably reflects the general trend at the traditional and more academic public schools. An inspection report of 1938 criticised Winchester College for 'not linking the various elements of Latin together.'³² There was too much emphasis on Caesar and Vergil and 'a tendency to attach too much importance ... to the fair copy and too little to the process of achieving it' when working on composition.³³ These comments suggest that the concerns and advice of the Classical Association and the Board of Education were of little interest to the major public schools at this stage.

The Next Salvo

During the war the affairs of the Classical Association took a slower pace. The council minutes in July 1941 note 'it is clear that the dislocation of school work through evacuation, as great in the receiving schools as in those evacuated, makes this a bad time to get much definite information'.³⁴ School magazines were reduced to the absolute minimum. Due to a lack of stability this was not the time for change. However, T.W. Melliush criticised the Classical Association for its idealistic attitude and the educational hierarchy for its sleepy approach.

While the ancient universities for the most part slumber like perpetual mountains, and professors, scholars, and men of letters hibernate in their cocoons, those chalky units, the master and the mistress, are within the classroom engaged on a campaign in which the total war effort, the tactics, strategy, ammunition, supplies and propaganda become the responsibility of the ordinary privates.³⁵

One feels that this endorsement of those at the chalk face may be misplaced given that the majority of energetic teachers were away at the war and there was a temporary feel to education at this time.

The best masters had joined the forces and we were badly taught by old boys brought out of retirement who made no effort to explain the relevance of classical studies.³⁶

As with the First World War there was not only a halt to developments, but also a return to rather more old fashioned teaching, a turning back of the clock.

³² Inspection Report 1938 Ed. 109/1959 pg.21.

³³ *ibid.* pg.21.

³⁴ Classical Association council minutes C.A. archives 1941.

³⁵ T.W. Melliush *Why Latin?* in *Greece And Rome* No.38, Vol.13 1944 pg.62.

³⁶ Sherborne respondent 1943 - 1948.

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The London branch of the Classical Association was concerned at the poor attendance for its meetings when it restarted after the war. However, as the war came to a close the main Classical Association continued in its attempts to make the classics an attractive and practical option.

Latin was holding its own in most public schools. 61% of boys at Uppingham took School Certificate Latin in 1945 compared with 97% at Eton. The overall number of candidates had dropped from 61.5 % in 1910 to 49% in 1945. So Latin's last bastion of the public schools remained relatively strong. However, the number going on to higher study was decreasing to an ominously low level. In 1902 the number of candidates taking Higher Certificate Latin was 59.5% of the total number of entrants, where as in 1945 this had fallen to 11%. Considering that the public schools were the strongholds of Latin, it must be assumed that the majority of this 11% came from the independent sector.

The legend that public schools were first and foremost centres of excellence in games with academic studies being an irritating interruption was given some weight by the Sherborne questionnaire. For many boys games were the *raison d'être* for life.

My public school being Sherborne, all matters scholastic were treated with fairly equal disdain by the pupils - all that mattered was excellence at games, or failing that, gymnastics. The need to study was the price paid for these enjoyments.³⁷

At Sherborne, in my days, virtually all peer group status was gained on the playing fields. Most staff reinforced this.³⁸

However, gradually the importance of matters academic had grown and pupils began to question the whys and wherefores of what they were doing.

The constant inquiry of a backward boy in an A form or the average B form is 'What is the good of Latin?' I even know of an overwrought master who rapped out: 'It keeps me off the dole. Get on with your work!' Colleagues, mostly those who never took it themselves at school, humorously hint at its uselessness as compared with the inestimable blessings of their own subject. Parents, too, though a few have a vague notion about a little Latin being part of the makeup of a gentleman, are often a hindrance. There is an authentic case at my old school where an irate mother

³⁷ Sherborne respondent.

³⁸ Sherborne respondent 1951 - 1955.

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challenged the headmaster with the query 'Why should my Tom learn Latin? Today I asked him the Latin for teapot and he could not tell me.'³⁹

The career path that lay ahead was becoming increasingly varied and parents and pupils needed to be persuaded that they were following a course that would lead to a secure and profitable future. Compared to the more practical sciences classics seemed to have little to offer the ambitious. Thus in 1943 a symposium entitled *The Classics and Education for the Professions* was held. Representatives of certain professions spoke in defence of Latin, explaining its use in their particular field. Viscount Caldecote, the Lord Chief Justice, emphasised that 'Latin at least should be required of a lawyer.'⁴⁰ He quoted the following resolution passed by the council and the four inns of courts.

While recognising that a classical education has not in the past been within the reach of all who have made the Bar their profession and that many lawyers have sustained eminence without this advantage, the Council is nevertheless satisfied that a classical education provides a sure foundation for the study of Law, that as a system of education it is eminently adapted to develop the power of grasping, analysing and expounding legal principles and problems, and that a sound knowledge of Latin is invaluable to a full and accurate appreciation of the niceties of the English language.⁴¹

His support was reinforced by a letter from a professor of Law at Oxford and a Bencher of the Inner Temple, 'I might sum up by saying that the classical man has the best intellectual background for the study of Law.'

Latin might be easier to defend as a prerequisite to an arts based career than in connection with more scientific careers. However, Professor C.E. Inglis, who had been president of the Institute of Civil Engineers felt that whilst later years should be spent studying mathematics and sciences, an early foundation of Latin was essential for the achievement of excellence.

I say, give me an engineering student who has received a classical education, and is not totally devoid of mathematical ability, and I will back him at long odds to develop into an engineer capable of rising to the highest eminence. On the other hand, if he has been reared exclusively on scientific subjects, it is equally certain that he will shoot up rapidly to a certain height in his profession. Beyond that he can not rise, since at the time he should have been throwing out abundant root formations this growth was stultified by the lack of an all-important ingredient in his mental nutrition, and the all important ingredient I have in mind is the study of the classics.⁴²

³⁹ A. Eustance *The Confessions of a Latin Specialist* in *Greece And Rome* No.18 Vol.6 May 1937 pg.165.

⁴⁰ Viscount Caldecote *The Classics and Education for the Professions* 1943 pg.5.

⁴¹ *ibid.* pg.6.

⁴² Professor C.E. Inglis *ibid.* pg.12.

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Dr. Clark-Kennedy represented the medical world and whilst being supportive of the classics he made demands which would have stung teachers out of any complacency engendered by the previous two contributors. He was keen to point out that medicine involved dealing with people so the humanities could help to enhance the human dimension. However, to do this classics must be taught less like a science and considered more as a whole,

..boys must be taught less Greek and more about the Greeks. Translations of the classics must not be despised. Greece and Rome must be brought into relation with the modern world.⁴³

Classics in themselves did not offer specific training to the pupil, unless one planned to teach them. However, they did confer specific skills on the student, skills which would stand them in good stead no matter what career they took up.

I have noted with interest that in more than one discussion on the training of young men for careers, some of the leading industrialists have stated that they do not always look for new recruits amongst those who have already been trained for business; they sometimes prefer to take a good classic, because they find he is more likely than one brought up entirely on a modern curriculum to be able to think clearly and logically, to analyse abstract ideas and to see things in perspective.⁴⁴

These valuable by-products of learning Latin had long since been propounded and the 1943 symposium reinforced what school boys had always been told.

We were led to believe that the discipline of Latin would spread across our lives and other school subjects to make us well organised, logical men and would help us in learning English and other subjects. I swallowed this dutifully as a boy.⁴⁵

Latin was a requirement for life and this should override the fact that it was not specifically career oriented. For some pupils the purpose of Latin was not an issue: 'The cursus honoris was clear, rewards were there at the end of the day in terms of jobs.'⁴⁶

One career, the church, did require classical training and Christine Heward notes in her book *Making a Man of Him* that some pressure was exerted by parents to provide their sons with the necessary qualifications whilst at school so they did not

⁴³ Dr. A.E. Clark-Kennedy *ibid.* pg.16.

⁴⁴ L.Hayward *ibid.* pg.17.

⁴⁵ Sherborne respondent.

⁴⁶ Interview with old Shirburnian, D. Carey.

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have to take up studying again once national service was over in order to commence training to enter the church.⁴⁷ However, generally the importance of Latin was falling in the opinion of parents, being on a par with music for parents at Sherborne by the 1950's. The number who felt that Latin was useful for a future career fell throughout the period.⁴⁸

In the late forties the Classical Association, returning to the unsolved problem, already discussed in 1938, of School Certificate being designed with the future classical specialist in mind rather than the average candidate, devised a scheme that would appeal to those who were only taking Latin to School Certificate with a view to University entrance rather than to the future classics specialist and could be used parallel to the existing syllabus. This new syllabus would break with tradition in that prose composition would not feature in the Elementary Classics exam and reading could be done in translation. Elementary Greek would be included in the paper, thus providing an attractive option for non classicists whilst keeping the study of Greek alive. Proposals were also made for a new syllabus for the Higher Certificate which would be an option for those taking the modern studies group of subjects.

It is designed to encourage the reading of Latin authors and an understanding of the life and times in which they wrote. Emphasis is shifted away from specialised linguistic study (for which many candidates in the modern studies group have neither the time nor the need) to a wider appreciation of Latin literature in relation to contemporary historical and cultural background.⁴⁹

This course would appeal to those who had completed the earlier course successfully and wanted to continue, but were not fully fledged classicists. A similar course in Greek was proposed 'primarily for candidates who take English, and on a basis of two years Greek begun after School Certificate. The examination should be such that a pupil of normal intelligence should be able to take it in two years.'⁵⁰ These proposed courses offered a life line to classical teaching and provided the less able or non linguist with a more palatable option. Naturally for such a course to work specific examinations would have to be created, a step that was not taken until the creation of the Cambridge Latin Course in the 1960's.

⁴⁷ C. Heward *Making A Man of Him* 1988 pgs,85, 98/9.

⁴⁸ See Appendix I pg. 390.

⁴⁹ The Classical Association *Proposals for a new kind of Latin Syllabus* C.A. archives. 1943.

⁵⁰ C.A. archives.

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However, the proposals were not accepted as a panacea by teachers. The headmasters felt 'little disposition to accept them as they stand,' making the point that they would not replace the existing course which was necessary foundation for the Higher Certificate course in either language. They doubted the ability of teachers to cope with 'so exacting a course' and felt that the work was too difficult for the type of boy at which it was aimed. The assistant masters welcomed the principle behind the suggestions, but felt that running two courses was not a practicable option for most schools. They also thought that it would need more time than the existing course to complete, an unlikely prospect.⁵¹

As a result of the 1942 Norwood Report state education saw the need for three different levels of education, depending on the ability and inclination of the child. As the 1940's came to a close the educational world was preparing itself for the introduction of new examinations for the more academic pupil; 'O' and 'A' levels which were to replace school and higher certificates in 1951. Thus the universities declared their suggested entrance requirements which were set out for the public schools in an article by J.F. Mountford printed in an H.M.C. Bulletin in 1949. The suggested demands were that a candidate must pass in English language and four or five other subjects. These subjects were to include a) a language other than English and b) Mathematics or an approved science. At least two of these subjects must be passed at 'A' level. If only five 'O' levels were offered another (not related to the 'A' levels) should be taken when sitting 'A' levels.⁵² It will be noted that no specific mention was made of Latin, although the value of a language was not forgotten.

Some knowledge of an ancient or modern foreign language is necessary for an educated person, not only because it is a key to a second literature, or opens the way to contact with men of other nations, or is valuable as an ancillary in other studies, but also because it gives some insight into the complex and highly important relations between verbal symbols and ideas.⁵³

It was hoped that the universities would agree to this scheme which would provide a uniform system for entry. However, the practice of Oxford and Cambridge to require Latin was accepted as continuing to exist and considered a 'minor modification'. At their September conference the Headmasters learnt that the proposals were being well received by the universities and there was general agreement on the matter. So Latin retained a foothold in the curriculum for the brightest boys, securing a safe future for

51 *ibid.*

52 J.F. Mountford in Bulletin No. 5 of Headmasters' Conference 1949, pg.55.

53 *ibid.*

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the time being, as those who were realistic had threatened that 'if Oxford and Cambridge abolished compulsory Latin, Latin would go in the schools the same way as Greek had gone'.⁵⁴ However, the opinion that 'it is important to maintain Latin culture as a fundamental element of the public school education'⁵⁵ formed during discussions on entrance requirements in 1938 seems to have been long forgotten. Unless one aimed high the Latin requirement was disappearing and as we shall see, during the fifties pupils' exam choices reflected this new found freedom.

The Last Stand

Attempts to justify the teaching of classics were renewed in the early fifties, together with pleas and suggestions to teachers to make every attempt to make their subject dynamic and relevant. The subject was 'a Cinderella, a necessary evil'⁵⁶ and there lurked the unspoken fear of what its fate would be if the need for it were removed.

The Classics no longer lead naturally... to 'positions of considerable emolument'. Latin.....now stands on its own feet and is fighting for its life.⁵⁷

The defence of the educational value of Latin was set out and critics answered. Wright's article gives an insight as to the content of these criticisms. There are some familiar ones: Latin is an ancient tongue, not relevant today, Latin is difficult and progress is slow and one which reflects the changes in education over the last fifty years:

A knowledge of Latin is not wanted by the world of commerce, by the civil service, or by the majority of the professions: in fact, nothing is immediately available to the Latinist except a teaching post in a school or university.⁵⁸

Wright's defence is a familiar one. Whilst sciences do advance with time Latin does not and so it can not become dated. Latin is the foundation of many modern languages and due to its very difficulty 'a premium is at once put on the qualities of accuracy, alertness and precision.' This provides training and discipline of the mind which is unsurpassed and a market commodity. In the war those classically trained were sought after by the services to learn Chinese and Japanese which involves logical speech. The lead comes from the universities and this defence of Latin will be insufficient alone.

⁵⁴ H. Elder *Headmasters' Conference* Jan 1946 pg.39.

⁵⁵ *Headmasters' Conference* Bulletin no.1 1948 pg.8.

⁵⁶ F.W. Garforth *Background Studies in the Teaching of Latin* Greece And Rome no.64, Feb. 1953 pg.20.

⁵⁷ F.A. Wright *The Latin Contribution to a Liberal Education* 1949, pg.20.

⁵⁸ *ibid.* pg.6.

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Latin must be studied for its inherent literary value and the universities must focus on this 'they must not be like the headmaster who in addressing his sixth form said: "Boys, this term you are going to have the privilege of reading Oedipus Coloneus - a veritable treasure house of grammatical peculiarities"'.⁵⁹

In 1951 the Classical Association produced another information/propaganda sheet for parents in which they realistically advised that Latin is not suitable for all, but was a necessary qualification for some

If he wishes to take up Law or enter the Church, he must normally have a qualification in Latin. If he intends to be a doctor, a pharmacist or a librarian some knowledge of Latin is most useful. To enter an Oxford or Cambridge College, he must pass an examination in Latin or Greek. Very few other universities will admit him to a language course, or indeed one in History or English, without a similar qualification.⁶⁰

The benefits of logical thought, a foundation to other languages, access to some of the world's greatest literature and an insight into a founding civilisation of our modern world were reiterated. The classics are relevant to today's society: 'One of the most permanent of the values of Latin is that it helps to make real to the pupil the continuing heritage of Rome in that part of the civilised world which has drawn its culture largely or in part from Europe.'⁶¹ The past reputation assigned to classics was more of a hindrance than a help in the modern age.

It is my considered opinion that the study of Greek and Latin is a fetish. The real value of a classical education was well expressed by the Oxford divine who said 'The advantages of a classical education are two-fold - it enables us to look down with contempt on those who have not shared its advantages and also fits us for emolument not only in this world, but in that which is to come.'⁶²

Classics had to work hard to shake off this dated image. The 1951 information sheet was followed by a pamphlet in 1956 under the title *Why Choose Greek and Latin?* This publication was written by professors at Irish Universities because 'there are signs that popular opinion is becoming inclined to dismiss classical studies as out-of-date, unprogressive, and offering few opportunities for attractive and rewarding

⁵⁹ *ibid.* pg.20.

⁶⁰ Classical Association *Why Latin? A Parent's Questions Answered* 1951.

⁶¹ W.B. Thompson *Relevant or Irrelevant? Classics in the Curriculum Today in Greece and Rome* No. 2, 1958 pg.196.

⁶² F. Jones Letter to the Times April 6th 1945.

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careers in the modern world.⁶³ It explained that for those who go on to taking a classical degree the career choice was not limited to teaching. Graduates in classics choose a broad range of careers and 'contrary to prevailing opinion, even the "hard-headed" industrial and business magnates welcome classical graduates for administration and management.'⁶⁴ However, in 1958 a survey into the number of non-teaching posts taken up by Latin and classics graduates revealed that D. Montague's sentiments (voiced on page 225) were very near the truth. Of all classics graduates 5% went into library and museum work, 4% into industry and commerce, 3% into the Church, 2% into the Civil Service, 1% into welfare work and social service and 1% into secretarial work. Thus five sixths chose teaching as a career.⁶⁵ Whilst the 1956 pamphlet and the 1943 symposium suggested that classics opened a world of opportunities, in reality once one had specialised in classics the easiest and most-trodden path was to continue down the same road.

In order to fulfil the vision of classics being a contemporary subject it would have to be taught in a contemporary way. Exam and time constraints meant that cramming techniques were employed and thus the curriculum could not be taught with the right emphasis, a by now familiar problem.

Having so short a time at his disposal, the teacher, compelled by considerations other than educational, concentrates on the minimum required for examination purposes; the course thus becomes a rush of undigested grammar and syntax, a hotch - potch of Ovid, Caesar, Livy and Virgil, neither valued or understood.⁶⁶

Moreover there still hovers round it a legacy from centuries of ruthless and pedantic teaching, an atmosphere of repression and irrelevance, which repels the utilitarian, independent mind of today. Hence there exists a sense of purposelessness in the teaching of it.⁶⁷

Every effort must be made to ensure that the classics keep their place among other subjects in the curriculum. They must be interesting to the pupil who has an increasing field of varied study from which to choose. So the emphasis moves away from language analysis to the study of language within a context.

⁶³ *Why Choose Greek and Latin?* 1956.

⁶⁴ *ibid.* pg.3.

⁶⁵ C.A. Archives *Non-Teaching Posts for Latin and Classics Graduates* 1958.

⁶⁶ F.W. Garforth *Background Studies in the Teaching of Latin Greece And Rome* no.64, Feb. 1953. pg.19.

⁶⁷ *ibid.* pg.20.

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When properly related to background, Latin ceases to be dead; it becomes the living medium of expression of living people, signifying a creative vitality.⁶⁸

This is a familiar suggestion and its repetition implies that was not acted upon by the majority. The timelessness of Latin was perceived as standing firm throughout:

The echoes of their music will not sound more faintly, their passions will not further cool, nor will their reasonings be challenged and refuted.⁶⁹

Towards the end of the decade there were continued calls for a syllabus that would enable these sentiments to become a reality, the 1938 and 1943 attempts at fulfilling this aim having come to nothing.

What we surely need to do in Latin is to plan very carefully an 'O' level syllabus and course which shall be satisfying in itself and which shall have a sense of completeness.⁷⁰

During the fifties there were attempts in London to raise the profile of Latin and to heighten public awareness that it was still considered a serious subject. It had been noted that the London Christmas lectures were designed to win 'a respected and influential position in society' for science and now classics must 'strive to retain or regain' a similar reputation.⁷¹ The London branch of the Classical Association organised a schools' classical exhibition to which schools could contribute work, models, photographs, declamations, scenes from plays etc. The first of these took place in January 1955 and was a great success, so much so that the hall was too small and a new venue had to be found for future occasions. Although the next exhibition was cancelled due to a 'flu epidemic, another was held in 1959. An inter schools' reading competition was started in 1952. This annual event became increasingly popular, with 33 schools entering by 1958. The branch also wanted to produce a record of Latin pronunciation.⁷² Although this venture failed due to the cost it is indicative of the wishes of the branch to reach and appeal to a wider audience.

With the university entrance examination prop now only applicable to those who aspired to Oxford or Cambridge the position of Latin was far from secure and we can see that in the fifties efforts were redoubled to ensure it retained its standing.

68 *ibid.* pg.22.

69 Professor Hinshelwood *Classics Among the Intellectual Disciplines* 1959 pg.8.

70 W.Thompson *Relevant or Irrelevant? Classics in the Curriculum Today* in *Greece And Rome* No.2, Oct. 1958 pg.196.

71 *The Juvenile Auditory* in *Greece And Rome* No.3 Oct 1954 pg.97.

72 Committee meeting minutes of the London Branch of the Classical Association.

The Fate Of Greek

Greek was already well into a decline, 21.5% taking School Certificate at Winchester in 1940 compared to 92% in 1910. The Board of Education pamphlet recognised that many took a year or two of Greek at the top of their preparatory school and felt that this was only of real benefit if the school allowed a lesson a day so that fast progress could be made in the new language. For those who did not have such an opportunity public schools ought to make provisions for beginners' Greek. A foreshadow of the popular Greek and Roman civilisation courses of today is seen in the suggestion that those who are unable to learn Greek take a lesson a week in Greek and Roman civilisation.⁷³ The decline in Greek was the reason for the formation of a joint committee of English and Classical Associations set up in 1936. The lack of candidates was due to 'little encouragement' to learn Greek in schools and little inducement to take it as a career choice as there were few opportunities if one wanted to teach. This situation echoes the problem of teaching Latin in the early girls' schools. The paucity of Greek teachers led to a decline in the number of schools which could offer Greek lessons which in turn led to a decline in those qualified to teach Greek. Thus in 1938 there was a proposal to initiate a new Greek course for those who specialised in English that could be taken in two years after School Certificate.⁷⁴ Like the new Latin syllabus proposals floated by the Classical Association, this came to nothing.

The Classical Association issued similar guidelines for parents on Greek to those on Latin:

1. Greek is a language of outstanding clearness and beauty. It surpasses Latin in its expressiveness, depth of thought and human appeal.
2. The Latin language was inspired by Greek. To have its full value, the study of Latin should be reinforced by the study of Greek.
3. A large percentage of words in daily modern use are Greek in origin: this is particularly true of scientific and technical terms.
4. Greek literature is the noblest literature in the world. Almost all our modern literary forms originated with the Greek.
5. The Greeks were thinkers. We owe to them not only the foundations on which modern mathematics and science are built, but also a great number of the ideas and ideals which are vital to our modern political thought.
6. Greek provides similar training in methodical and accurate expression to Latin.

⁷³ The Board Of Education *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* 1939 pg.63.

⁷⁴ Classical Association *Joint Committee of the Classical and English Associations on the Teaching of Latin and Greek* 1938.

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7. Famous men of all ages have testified to the efficacy of a classical course as a training for a successful career in any walk of life.
8. The Greek Culture lies at the root of our modern Western civilisation.⁷⁵

Some still felt that because Greek offered superior literature which lost more in translation than Latin, Greek should be promoted rather than Latin. In 1941 R.S. Stainer published a paper in *Greece And Rome* in which he set out his arguments for this approach. He criticised the teaching of Latin for relying too heavily on Caesar:

Everybody nowadays complains of North and Hillard with its narrow and almost exclusively military vocabulary; but it is only an indirect result of Caesar who is also narrow and almost exclusively military; a great man, but schoolboys can hardly be expected to take a keen interest in his conquest of Gaul, or a few bits of it - still less school girls.⁷⁶

Not all boys found the military emphasis tedious, for some it was the one aspect that enlivened otherwise dry teaching.

Latin was seldom taught in a relevant and interesting fashion, except perhaps military practice and weaponry.⁷⁷

The military angle of much of it interested boys.⁷⁸

For Stainer the emphasis on Latin was due to 'a combination of tradition, vested interests and *vis inertiae*'. However, the position of Greek was such that these hopes for it were impractical and idealistic. H.C. Oakley's realistic response to this article pointed out that there was not only an inadequate supply of qualified teachers to make the change, but that the market place, the parents, would be no more easily persuaded of the use of Greek than they were of Latin.⁷⁹ The fortunes of Greek seemed to have slipped beyond control.

The Headmasters' Conference in 1944 discussed the problems and fears concerning Greek whilst proposing the motion that more Greek should be begun at preparatory schools by more boys who were able. The lengthy discussions on Greek which had taken place thirty years before had shown that while the scholarship

⁷⁵ *The Value of Greek* issued by the Classical Association 1939.

⁷⁶ R.S. Stainer *Latin or Greek?* in *Greece And Rome* Vol.10 No. 30 May 1941 pg.100.

⁷⁷ Sherborne respondent 1939 - 1943.

⁷⁸ Sherborne respondent 1944-1950.

⁷⁹ H.C. Oakley *Latin Before Greek* in *Greece And Rome* Vol.11 No.31 Oct 1941 pg.19.

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demands on boys were excessive, the public schools were somewhat reluctant to offer beginners' Greek, although in the end they agreed to do so. However, they did expect that those who had aptitude and ability would have already made a start at their preparatory school. Winchester College did not offer beginners' Greek, but asked that two terms were covered in preparatory schools before entry.⁸⁰ The Sherborne survey shows that many did start at preparatory school, although in the forties and fifties there are quite a number who started aged thirteen or older. The public schools actively encouraged an earlier start than this.⁸¹ However, the preparatory schools seemed to be confused, not surprisingly considering the chaotic discussions and decisions made earlier.

...preparatory schools tend to think that we are apathetic about Greek, partly because we have made Greek optional in entrance scholarship curricula. The results of scholarship papers bears this out, that the quantity and quality of Greek in preparatory schools have been on the wane for the last ten years.⁸²

Mr. Elliot, representing Eton, explained that because the majority of boys had not received any previous grounding in Greek they had had to change their curriculum to include lots of translation with as little grammar as they could get by with and even less composition. He would be pleased if the preparatory schools started the grounding 'instead of making us do the grind of Greek.'⁸³ Mr. Hardy in proposing the motion was aware that the availability of teachers was a problem, but thought that as it was the younger members of staff who were involved in the war the older replacements should be qualified to undertake this as they had been educated in an age when Greek had been taught thoroughly to all. Parents had to be persuaded of the benefits of learning Greek, although Mr. Hardy also experienced those who had to be dissuaded due to their unsuitability. Those who were suitable would make a faster start if they began at preparatory school aged eleven or twelve.

The preparatory schools do want encouraging to start between 11 and 12, as in a few years the divine gift of memory begins to deteriorate, and memory is essential for any study such as that of the Greek language.⁸⁴

Not all were in agreement, H. Lyon from Rugby felt that preparatory school experience of Greek put off many pupils who gave it up at the first opportunity. In spite of his fears the motion was carried by a substantial majority.

⁸⁰ Inspection report for Winchester College Ed 109/1959 1938 pg.20.

⁸¹ H.H. Hardy (Shrewsbury) *Headmasters' Conference* Jan. 1944 pg.48.

⁸² Mr. Moore (Harrow) *ibid* pg.50.

⁸³ Mr. Elliot (Eton) *ibid*. pg.51.

⁸⁴ H.H.Hardy *ibid*. pg.49.

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Greek was struggling to survive in some schools, only 6.5 % of pupils taking School Certificate Greek at Uppingham in 1945, 36.5% at the more academic Eton and 6.5% of the total number of candidates for that year.⁸⁵ Thus in 1945 the Classical Association issued another publicity sheet putting forward the case for Greek:

Out of a sense, therefore, of the inestimable value of Greek, both to students and the community, for whom the experts in each generation attempt to interpret its meaning, the Classical Association urges upon the British people the claim of Greek to a considered and secure place in its system of education.⁸⁶

Greek was promoted with the following defence:

1. Greek literature was one of the most influential and original. Most of our literary forms, epic, lyric, tragedy, comedy, history and oratory have strong links with Greek literature.
2. The Greeks were pioneers in Science, mathematics and philosophy and were originators of political systems which are in use today.
3. The Greeks were directly influential on the Romans, Greek was the language by which Christianity was spread through the Empire, it was also the strongest influence at the revival of learning during the Reformation.
4. Greek has a wide educational appeal to stimulate the thought of youth.

The Classical Association pointed out that whilst translations were available 'no literature can be adequately represented in translation.'⁸⁷ However, the numbers taking Greek were becoming so few that in reality the battle to sustain its position had become a minor skirmish. Greek was a specialised subject, appealing to a minority, but some continued to apply pressure to maintain its profile.

The cause for this decline of Greek was only too obvious and it was improbable that much lost ground could be regained. However, the case for Greek had to be reiterated in the face of its opponents and new incentives to learn Greek found.

Science, technology and mathematics are coming to supremacy in schools, for the fabric of modern life is founded on them. Yet, no one, least of all the scientists,

⁸⁵ See appendix 1 pg.376

⁸⁶ The Classical Association *The Value of Greek* 1945.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

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believes that alone they can give a complete education.... For those who can learn some language other than their mother tongue the knowledge of Greek will open conversation with some of the master spirits of all time.... It is not, however, only through the well tried paths of classical teaching that Greece can be given a secure place in the education of today. There must also be experiment and adventure so that more and more may be made to feel that, if they do not have it, they will 'miss it.'⁸⁸

Attempts were made to encourage a similar approach to Greek as to Latin. Grammar should only be a subsidiary element of a course. R. Schoder promoted a new approach to teaching Greek in which 'grammatical dead-lumber was thoroughly pruned away. Traditional methods were left aside, as unsuited to this special goal... warning followed, but so did results.'⁸⁹ Emphasis was to be on reading Greek and according to F. Eliot, Greek should be read aloud as a living language:

Written language is always a means and never an end, and the advantages of learning Greek are therefore to be sought rather in speaking than in writing it.⁹⁰

The trend away from studying the language was reflected in the report from the educational sub committee of the Classical Association in 1953 that there was an increase in the number of candidates taking papers which include Greek literature in translation.⁹¹

Not only were methods for teaching Greek dated, but its visible aspects recalled a subject that belonged to the past. Classics departments were not financially demanding compared with the expenses required to run science departments. Some schools clung to old, tatty text books year after year which reinforced the image of an outdated subject. The Classical Association minutes in 1951 urged schools to throw away old text books and purchase more because 'the numbers taking Greek in schools are small and the demand for some editions is not sufficient to induce publishers to keep them in print.' This request was repeated in 1956.⁹²

In 1959 the Classical Association published a pamphlet called *Greek in the Twentieth Century*. This accepted that it would be the few specialists who were to

⁸⁸ C.A. archives.

⁸⁹ R. Schoder *Homer to the Rescue : A New Method in Beginners' Greek* in *Greece And Rome* No. 55, Jan 1950 pg.11.

⁹⁰ F. Eliot *Greek in our Schools* in *Greece And Rome* No.2 June 1995 pg.82.

⁹¹ Classical Association *Proceedings* Report of the Education Sub Committee Vol.51 1954 pg.41.

⁹² Classical Association *Proceedings*. Report of the Education Sub Committee Vol. 53 1956 pg.36.

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study Greek from now on, but was calling for sympathetic handling of those who were not going to continue with the language.

The task of teachers of Greek is at this time especially challenging and responsible. The responsibility they face is two-fold. There is first the teaching of those who may become classical specialists, to whom they owe the most and best of what they themselves received. There is also, not less important, the task of interpretation for those who will never become specialists.⁹³

The pamphlet recognised that translations were being widely used and, whilst no longer decrying this practice, advised the study of language as an appropriate support. The strong suggestion that adult beginners' classes be made available is an indication of the gap in education and the belief that it should be filled. Although the boys perceived Greek as gaining in importance in the minds of teachers at Sherborne, it was a subject which carried little prestige, because it was a reality for so few.⁹⁴

The Reality

Did the teaching in public schools reflect the new life that was being prescribed for the classics and did the subject survive as a healthy element of the curriculum or was all advice in vain? Inspection reports suggest that public schools carried on much as they had done in the past, taking little heed of the advice to consider the broader view of the subject:

It was suggested that much more use might be made of the Latin which is translated, and that various aspects of the subject - vocabulary, grammar, syntax and background knowledge of Roman life and History - might most naturally be treated in the Latin context....Many of the boys enter the school having studied Latin for some years and with some of the linguistic spade work already done. It might well have a tonic effect upon them if they were encouraged to make fuller and more practical use of their knowledge and to see Latin as a medium of thought and expression rather than simply the material for laborious dissection.⁹⁵

Likewise at Winchester 'the strength of the teaching is chiefly in the literary and linguistic side of classical scholarship and such branches as archaeology and the study of ancient art are not at present emphasised.'⁹⁶ As well as a criticism for not emphasising the subject matter, some of the masters at Eton were rebuffed for their out of date, even dull, teaching approach:

⁹³ *Greek in the Twentieth Century* published by the Classical Association 1959 pg.5.

⁹⁴ See Appendix no. 1 page no.392.

⁹⁵ Inspection report for Sherborne 1951 Ed 109/8741 pg.17.

⁹⁶ Inspection report for Winchester 1956 Ed 172/230 pg.20.

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...there might be too great a tendency to a didacticism which does rather more for the boys than is perhaps wise. Greater co-operation might well be a relief to both masters and boys, and if, in their early days of school mastering, one or two masters cultivated methods calculated to achieve this, they would find that the danger of monotony in tone and emphasis would become less.⁹⁷

The physical aspects of the teaching were also criticised for being out of date or drear. In 1951 it was suggested that Sherborne weeded out some of the older books in the library and bought some more classical texts.⁹⁸ One Old Shirburnian noted that the 'dog eared and ink stained text books put you off before you started.'⁹⁹ At Marlborough the lack of visual stimulus in the classrooms gave rise to the comment:

One or two of the Upper School classrooms are well equipped with maps, photographs and other visual aids, but not all rooms escape a drabness sometimes curiously associated with serious scholarship.¹⁰⁰

At Sherborne the position was probably similar:

My feeling was that Latin was an invention for the tormenting of the young with no relevance to anything else. I well remember the master who taught it and the medieval room in which he taught. Both far removed from the normal world.¹⁰¹

This would point to the fact that hopes for a new outlook on classical teaching did not change the reality of study for boys at public schools. The following memories of a public school boy in the early fifties confirm this:

The work consisted of Latin and Greek prose and verse compositions, Latin and Greek unseens, set books (prose and verse) and ancient history - not vastly different from what had been taught 100 years before. After our own attempts at prose and verse had been submitted and marked, we had to copy from the blackboard into a 'Fair Copy' notebook the elegant versions composed by Oxbridge dons, or occasionally by our form master himself.

Set books were construed 'round the class' after preparation the night before. No cribs were allowed, even for preparation, and condign punishment was meted out to those caught using them.

There can be no doubt that, as an intellectual discipline, it was all outstandingly successful...But I did not enjoy it...I never got beyond regarding the whole thing as an endless crossword puzzle or Mensa test. Indeed, in my first term at Oxford, my

⁹⁷ Inspection report for Eton 1955 Ed 109/8640 pg.41.

⁹⁸ Inspection Report for Sherborne 1951 Ed 109/8741 pg.17.

⁹⁹ Sherborne respondent 1953 -1957.

¹⁰⁰ Inspection report for Marlborough 1950 Ed 109/9177.

¹⁰¹ Sherborne respondent.

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Mods teacher exclaimed in astonishment, 'Has it never occurred to you that these are languages in which people used to think and speak to each other?' It hadn't.

...our visual impressions of the ancients and their world were gleaned from dreary black and white illustrations in textbooks. Unless the school master was capable of stimulating visual imagery, a gift given only to a few, there was little to rouse the imagination. It is difficult to understand military history when read at the rate of a page a day without a good topographical atlas. I had no real idea that Greece and Italy are mountainous countries, so I never understood the sheer difficulty of getting from Athens to Thebes, or even Megeira, or from Rome to Cisalpine Gaul. Similarly, it is difficult to be aroused by Sophocles when read in a 'dead' language at the rate of 30 - 40 lines a day.

Victorian teaching methods clearly had their merits in their own day. But, like so much else in Britain, what was good enough for them was axiomatically good enough for us. Much of the value of classical study at school and university in my day was smothered by the weight of its own tedium.¹⁰²

So the practice of prepared work that was then construed round the class is remembered as taking place at Sedburgh and at Sherborne, despite the fact that as early as 1907 such an approach was criticised, see chapter 5, page 181. For many Old Shirburnians the teachers and their methods conjured up fear and boredom rather than stimulating interest:

I never had any confidence in it or enjoyed it. It always rather frightened me. It was taught in a dry, pedantic way.¹⁰³

I was once beaten for consistently poor performance at the subject.¹⁰⁴

No background or historical detail was given.¹⁰⁵

Latin was taught by my house master, a revolting specimen.¹⁰⁶

The teachers were mainly older men, considered fuddy duddy by pupils.¹⁰⁷

The Latin master was frightening¹⁰⁸

These comments span the period and portray a very negative picture of 'teachers of classics [as] survivors of the past, in danger of being left stranded as the main stream of education rushes past them in full flood.'¹⁰⁹ Doubtless other subjects had their dull, stuffy teachers too, but the quantity of remarks would suggest that Latin offered the

102 Personal reminiscences of D. Edward.

103 Sherborne respondent 1937-1941.

104 Sherborne respondent 1941-1945.

105 Sherborne respondent 1938 -1942.

106 Sherborne respondent 1942-1949.

107 Sherborne respondent 1952-1956.

108 Sherborne respondent 1953 -1957.

109 G.B. Kerferd *The Study of Greek Thought* An inaugural lecture as Professor of Classics at Swansea. 1956 pg.4.

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fustiest image. (It is interesting to note that one of the few complimentary comments about teachers refers to a woman. One Shirburnian recalled fond memories of an elderly lady who gave him extra lessons in the holidays, 'of hideous aspect and heart of gold, she had discovered the art of imparting knowledge, perhaps even wisdom.')

Some teachers did make an effort to put the subject into context and the notes made by a pupil at Trinity School, Croydon in 1955 reveal an attempt to broaden the curriculum.¹¹⁰

Ch. 45, 5. "qui sociorum... vellent"
H. exhorts his troops to fight bravely, adding rewards of tax-free lands, money, and, as here, Carthaginian citizenship or return home with higher rank. Even freedom to slaves and compensation to masters, swearing by a solemn oath, inspiring his men with immense zeal for battle

Ch. 46, 1 "Apud Romanus... condecorat"
Romans in camp 5 miles from Ticinus. "Non tanta" = not so great as that of Poeni. Superstitio, wolf and swarm of bees, exorcised. Alacritas in H's army because of H's laud promise.

¹¹⁰ Personal papers of R.A. Andrews.

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Mentions of school classical societies are few. One started in 1947 at Marlborough and was 'perhaps the most exclusive of all school societies' having only eight members, all of whom came from the classical sixth form.¹¹¹ Latin, like Greek in the past, was being considered as a true academic's subject and as such held a certain kudos 'because it was the ethos of future academic life.'¹¹² However, the increasing factors leading to its marginalisation was having an effect on its wider appeal and prestige which in turn 'undermines confidence and increases the sense of purposelessness.'¹¹³ The Sherborne questionnaire shows that for the majority Latin was taken as far as School Certificate and then dropped, it was simply the means to an end.

In order to achieve that end time devoted to classics remained generous in comparison to other subjects. It was usual for the all boys in the lower part of a public school to take Latin. At Sherborne boys in their first two years had six periods of Latin a week, which then fell to five and then two in the fifth form. This would account for 15-17% of the timetable. The table over leaf shows the percentage of time allotted to each subject at Sedburgh. It will be noted that Latin and French had the greatest share until specialisation began and in the sixth form the classical stream spent 65.5% of its time on classics. In many schools there were now a number of routes one could take into the sixth form. In 1957 at Sherborne there were five options; Classics, modern languages and English, maths and science, medical or modern studies. The latter was 'not quite respectable, probably because it involved lots of Geography.'¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Marlburian 1951 pg.125.

¹¹² Sherborne respondent 1949-1952.

¹¹³ F.W. Garforth *Background Studies in the Teaching of Latin in Greece And Rome* No.64 Feb. 1953 pg.20.

¹¹⁴ Interview with C. Knott.

The percentage of time allocated to subjects at Sedbergh in 1953¹¹⁵

<i>Form</i>	<i>Clas</i>	<i>Lat</i>	<i>Div</i>	<i>Fre</i>	<i>Eng</i>	<i>Mat</i>	<i>Op.</i>	<i>Art/ Mus</i>	<i>Mod Hist</i>	<i>Anc Hist</i>	<i>Ger</i>	<i>Bg/ Art</i>	<i>Sci/ Hist</i>	<i>Phy</i>	<i>Che</i>	<i>C.A.</i>	<i>Gre</i>	<i>LF</i>	<i>CLF</i>	<i>RP</i>	<i>Geo</i>
U 6 CL	65.5		3	5.5	5.5		9	7.5								2.5					
U 6 Mod			2.5	6.5	6	21	9	7.5						22.5	21.5	2.5					
Clio		6.9	2.5	5.5	33.5		9	7.5	41.5												
Mod Lang		5.5	3.5	30	6.5		9	7.5			33.5										
Gen			2.5	18.5	23.5		15	7.5				13	14								
L 6 CL			3		5.5		15	9	9	8.5						2.5	21	15	6.9		
L 6 Mod			2.5		13.2	18.5	15	9						18.5	17	3					
Rem Mod			3		11.3	18.5	15	9						20	17.5	2.5					
5a CL		17.5	5.5	16	8	14		4.5	9								17			2.5	
5b CL		18.5	5.5	16	10	14		4.5	6.5								17			2.5	
5a Mod		15	5.5	13.5	9	14		4.5						13	13						
5b Mod		15	5.5	16	8.5	14		4.5						15	16						
U4 CL		12.5	5.5	16	8.5	14		7.5									16.5				9
L4 CL		12.5	5.5	16	8.5	14		7.5									16.5				9
U4 Mod			5.5	16	8.5	14		7.5	9					5.5	9						9
L4 Mod			5.5	16	14.5	14		7.5	8.5					9	8						9
111a		17	5.5	17.5	13.5	12.5		5.5	5.6												5.3
111b		17	5.5	17.5	15	12.5		4	5.5												5.5
11		17	5.5	17.5	16.5	12.5		5.5	5.5												6.5
1		17	5.5	17.5	12.5	12.5		4	6.5												5.5

¹¹⁵ The figures have been rounded down to the nearest thirty minutes.

U 6 CL	Upper Sixth, Classical	Clas	Classics; Latin, Greek or Ancient History ¹¹⁶
U 6 Mod	Upper Sixth, Modern (Maths and Science)	Lat	Latin
Clio	Upper Sixth, Modern History and English	Div	Divinity
General	Upper Sixth with no prospect of Oxbridge	Fre	French
L 6 CL	Lower Sixth, Classical	Eng	English
L 6 Mod	Lower Sixth, Modern	Mat	Mathematics
Remove Mod	Lower Sixth with no prospect of Oxbridge	Op	Options ¹¹⁷
5a CL	Top Fifth form, Classical	Art/Mus	Art/Music ¹¹⁸
5b CL	Lower Fifth form, Classical	Mod Hist	Modern History
5a Mod	Top Fifth form, Modern	Anc Hist	Ancient History
5b Mod	Lower Fifth form, Modern	Ger	German
U4 CL	Upper Fourth form, Classical	Bg/ Art	Biography or Art
L4 CL	Lower Fourth form, Classical	Sci/ Hist	Science or History
U4 Mod	Upper Fourth form, Modern	Phy	Physics
L4 Mod	Lower Fourth form, Modern	Che	Chemistry
		C.A.	Current Affairs
		Gre	Greek
		LF	Latin or French
		CLF	Classics or French
		RP	Some aspect of English or History ¹¹⁹
		Geo	Geography

P.E. took place once a week instead of morning break. There was a games session every afternoon.

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¹¹⁶ Subject chosen at discretion of form master.

¹¹⁷ Options were selected from a variety of subjects.

¹¹⁸ Art/Music incorporated a 95 minute slot that was also used for completing Prep.

¹¹⁹ My source has no recollection what this entailed exactly.

¹²⁰ Timetable found in the personal papers of D. Edward.

The amount of time allocated to Latin in the Classical Sixth is reflected in another timetable from the period which is printed below.¹²¹

ARV From marks: U.B.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1.	Mr. Boe Prose Notes	STUDY	UPPER S. Mr. Brown.	STUDY	UPPER LIBRARY	Mr. Anderson Unseen
2.	FRENCH	STUDY	English Mr. Brown Mr. Brown	Mr. Anderson.	English Mr. Brown	STUDY
3.	Mr. Anderson.	Mr. Boe Tacitus	STUDY	Mr. Boe Thucydides	Mr. Boe Homer	STUDY
4.	Headmaster V. H. H. G.	STUDY	Mr. Boe Verses	GYM	Unseen Mr. Anderson	STUDY
5.	STUDY in Hall		Mr. Boe UNSEEN		Mr. Boe	
6.	English Hall Mr. Brown		PROSE.		STUDY	
1.	PROSE		BOOK	BOOK	VERSE	
2.		BOOK	BOOK			

¹²¹ From the personal papers of D. Carey. Sherborne 1945 to 1949. Mr. Anderson taught Ancient History, Book refers to the set book

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Whatever the approach, the standard achieved at Sedburgh was high and with the introduction of 'O' levels in 1951 it was possible for some to sit the 'O' level exam at the end of their first year at public school, aged fourteen.¹²² The same was true of English, mathematics and French.¹²³ However, at schools that catered for the less able Latin was not compulsory, rather we read of it being available to the brighter boys only. At Milton Abbey Latin was struggling to keep its place within the curriculum:

This subject at the present time has a somewhat precarious foothold in the curriculum. All boys who on entry are placed in form 111A take Latin for a year, the majority having studied the subject with no great evidence of success for three or four years in their preparatory schools.¹²⁴

Eton also had problems with those whose grasp on the subject was weak. Their methods of coping with this were criticised for their monotony and ineffectiveness:

...although many boys had already covered the same ground, perhaps in the same ways, in their preparatory schools, their knowledge of elementary syntax was often uncertain. The law of diminishing returns may operate here. It is at least possible that...too rigid an internal sub division of the subjects, undue stress upon uniformity and the dulling effect of too much repetition - may together be responsible for progress which is less rapid than it might be.¹²⁵

However, Eton was a school in a class of its own so some special mention should be made of the reasons for its uniqueness. The curriculum was predominantly classical, embracing Greek as well as Latin, particularly at the pre specialist stage. In 1955 374 out of 770, 48.5%, of boys took Greek, 'an aggregate and proportion exceeded by few if any, schools in the world.'¹²⁶ However, only 13% continued after the specialisation stage. This pressure to take classics until 'O' levels was both admired and criticised by the inspection team. They welcomed the ability to fit in both science and classics and defer specialisation until later, but felt that 'the price paid for the inclusion of Greek, as well as Latin in the curriculum of so many boys is heavy and it might be profitable to consider its impact on German and science in particular.'¹²⁷ The

¹²² Personal reminiscences of C. Knot.

¹²³ J.C. Dancy *The Public Schools and the Future*. 1963 pg.40.

¹²⁴ Inspection report for Milton Abbey 1957 Ed 172/226 pg.10.

¹²⁵ Inspection report for Eton 1955 Ed 109/8640 pg. 38.

¹²⁶ *ibid.* pg.16.

¹²⁷ *ibid.* pg.17.

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1955 inspection report noted the growth and decline once specialisation starts, compared to the position in 1936.

The number of boys in specialist divisions at Eton in 1955 compared with 1936 ¹²⁸

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Number of boys</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total in 1936</i>
Classics	42	13.5%	18.5%
History	91	29.4%	45.4%
Mod. Languages	89	28.7%	23.8%
Mathematics	15	17.1%	{12.3%}
Science	53	17.1%	
Modern General	20	6.5%	—

It is interesting to note that while there was a decline in the classical group, it was not spectacular considering the rise in the humanities and science. Given the firm foundation created at the bottom of the school one can appreciate an unconcerned confidence. Whist the 1955 inspection report admired their position it also gave a quiet warning against complacency:

Eton continues to be a guardian of the Classical tradition and the numbers of those studying Latin and Greek show no tendency to decrease...the unique position of classical studies at Eton is a responsibility as well as a distinction.¹²⁹

So Latin remained safe at the traditional public schools which were academic in character. Some believed that this was due to the inherent qualities which a classical training bestowed, 'Essentially the object of Public Schools is to teach a boy how to learn. It is because the Public School aims at teaching how to learn that it continues to teach Latin.'¹³⁰ Others, more realistically as we shall see, realised that it was the means to an end:

It happens to be one of the 'hurdle' subjects for admission to Oxbridge, to many honours schools in the Arts faculties of Redbrick, and to the examinations of the Law society and for the bar.¹³¹

128 *ibid.* pg.19.

129 *ibid.* pg.41.

130 G. Snow *The Public School in the New Age* 1959 pg.89.

131 W. Thompson *Relevant or Irrelevant? Classics in the Curriculum Today* in *Greece And Rome* no.2, Oct. 1958 pg.196.

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Some, such as the compilers of the 1956 pamphlet *Why Choose Greek and Latin* interpreted the statistics optimistically. The number of candidates entering exams in Latin and Greek was rising steadily. In 1951 there were 27,716 entries for Latin 'O' level and 1,231 for Greek, these numbers had risen to 39,986 for Latin and 2,380 for Greek in 1956.¹³² This shows an encouraging trend. However, what is not mentioned is the fact that the overall number of candidates had risen. In 1950 44% of candidates offered Latin and 4.5% offered Greek in the Oxford Board examinations. By 1955 this had fallen to 36% for Latin and 4.1% for Greek. In 1960 another drop of 4% is seen for Latin and 0.5% for Greek. These figures relate to all schools and one must examine the public schools more closely to reveal the true picture there.

In 1950 100% of pupils took Latin at Eton and 96.5% at Winchester. This fell to 56% and 22% by 1955. By the end of the decade only 30% of boys took Latin 'O' level at Eton. Winchester had sustained interest at the 1955 level and in fact improved slightly. Uppingham, a school with less classical emphasis from the start, did witness a drop in numbers, but less dramatic as it was to a similar level as Winchester and Eton.¹³³ The reason for this sudden decline in the final strongholds of the classics was that the safety net of entry qualification to university had been removed with the new requirements following the instigation of 'O' and 'A' levels in 1951. Although Oxford and Cambridge still required them it would only be for a decade.

For some the final hurdle was crossed, for others it was rather a case of the remnants of the stronghold crumbling in 1959. The standards of excellence achieved by public schools ensured that they held considerable influence. In the years 1959-1962 51% of scholarships to Oxford and 48% to Cambridge were won by H.M.C. independent schools. Over half the entrants to Oxford and 44% of those to Cambridge were from public schools in 1955.¹³⁴ Thus when Oxford and Cambridge withdrew the entrance requirement of compulsory Latin the public schools were involved in the discussions, although in fact their discussions made little impact on the final decision. The Headmasters' Conference discussed two alternative motions, one for the retention of compulsory Latin or the alternative of demanding it only where candidates did

¹³² Figures from C.A. archives issued by the University of London Institute of Education.

¹³³ See appendix III pg.414.

¹³⁴ J.C. Dancy *The Public Schools and the Future* 1963 pg.58.

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not have an 'A' level in mathematics or a science. These were raised due to the feeling that Latin would be thrown out 'hook, line and sinker.'¹³⁵ The discussion took place at the end of the afternoon and the chairman was reluctant to let it continue beyond time, so only ten minutes were available in which to put forward arguments. Mr. Robinson felt that relieving the curriculum of Latin would make more time available and there would be the problem of what to do with this time. To spend it on sciences would result in specialisation, to spend it on English would be covering ground that Latin had been covering and to spend it on school boy modern languages would be a waste of time, as languages are best learnt by immersion in the country and culture being studied. The Headmaster of Eton, Dr. R. Birley, tried to make the conference aware of the gravity of the decision before them.

Surely we realise that the action of the two great universities of this country in saying that Latin is no more compulsory is a landmark in the history of the education and culture of this country, because it means that we are cutting off ourselves and our pupils from what are really the foundations of our culture, and I do not think it is a thing they ought to do without a great deal more thought than they seem to have given it yet.¹³⁶

Mr. O. C. Berthoud (Trinity, Croydon) disagreed with this as a bone of contention: it was the compulsoriness of the subject, preventing many good brains from having the chance of Oxbridge, that was the matter causing concern. The resulting vote was close, 76 for the retention of compulsory Latin and 65 against. The second part of the resolution was then considered in the event that the universities took no notice of their vote. The conference decided 87 votes to 19 that those following a scientific route should be excused Latin as an entry requirement. However, these discussions were too late, the die was cast and the remaining defence for Latin had fallen.

Headmasters' Conference also considered the issue of scholarships which the preparatory schools felt were 'unnecessarily hard'.¹³⁷ The structure and detail of the tests was being questioned and there had been a suggestion that Latin would be dropped if Oxford and Cambridge no longer demanded it. However, this was quickly scotched by Mr. Garnett, the member of the working party present at the conference, who announced that 'I should certainly want to retain

¹³⁵ K.D. Robinson *Headmasters' Conference* Sept 1959 pg.29.

¹³⁶ Dr. R. Birley *ibid* pg.35.

¹³⁷ *Headmasters' Conference* Sept 1959 pg.75.

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Latin.¹³⁸ By insisting on this the public schools offered a stay of execution to Latin, not only in public schools, but preparatory schools also.

However, for the majority Latin, like Greek, now had to be accepted on its own merits.

More insistent demands have arisen from the challenges of branches of study more immediately and obviously related to present day life; so that it has been necessary for classical studies not only to justify their continued existence, but also to do so in more restricting conditions, and often with teachers less well academically qualified than were formerly found.¹³⁹

The Board of Education issued a pamphlet in 1959, *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics*, which is an echo, and in some cases a copy, of its 1939 predecessor, reinforcing the by now age old advice:

Many preparatory and public schools are now doubting the wisdom of so early a start.¹⁴⁰

Attention is again drawn to the desirability of a single system of pronunciation throughout the country, and still more urgently, of consistency within each school¹⁴¹

The thoughts expressed, the historical events described, the social, political and moral situations presented must be so selected as to be valuable in themselves. The author must say something worth saying.¹⁴²

Unfortunately many courses of Latin in schools take little account of background and subject matter; many of them could take more account, but time is short and it is claimed that the learning of the Latin language takes all the time available.¹⁴³

So, in spite of attempts to prepare the way for Latin to stand alone as a subject there were those, both schools and individuals, who had continued along orthodox lines in their teaching reinforcing the traditional image of the classics.

138 *ibid.* pg.77.

139 Board of Education *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* 1959 pg.8.

140 *ibid.* pg. 15.

141 *ibid.* pg.19.

142 *ibid.* pg.20.

143 *ibid.* pg.45.

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Not all can be accused of being reactionary in attitude. Some, only about 30, were practising the Direct Method¹⁴⁴ and interest in the Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching (A.R.L.T.) was strong, nearly 300 attending a refresher course held by the A.R.L.T. in 1959.¹⁴⁵ The Latin newspaper *Acta Diurna* had a circulation of 25,000 compared to 4,000 in 1946 and a record of Latin readings had just been issued.¹⁴⁶ Examination of the syllabus continued and in 1960 the inclusion of composition in the 'O' level exam was being questioned.¹⁴⁷

Throughout this period efforts to promote the value of classics were redoubled; their benefits were now explained in more practical terms than they had been in the past. Other subjects were seen to be more directly vocational in character and classics had to show that it also had claims in this area. With the constant calling into question of the value of classics there were renewed attempts to make courses attractive, giving a more all-round education than just linguistic training. The popularity of *Latin For Today* suggests that many saw this as a realistic solution to modernising teaching techniques. Other subjects were gaining in popularity, particularly science and whilst Latin retained a relatively strong position up to School Certificate/'O' level the numbers who went on to become specialists were decreasing. New incentives to learn Greek were needed as it had already become a specialised subject. We read of classics being taught with old, tatty text books in drab classrooms. As in preparatory schools, inspection reports suggest that much of the teaching failed to encompass more than the basic literature and grammar required to pass the exams, neglecting background material and contextual work due to the constraints of time and lack of flair from the teachers. In spite of and because of the determination of the staff, determination to encourage as many as possible to gain a Latin qualification and determination to persist with teaching methods that would ensure their success, Latin remained a serious contender within the curriculum. Public schools had maintained standards and upheld the status of

¹⁴⁴ E. Henry *Via Nova- Road Closed?* T.E.S. 7th Sept 1956.

¹⁴⁵ S. Morris *The Present Position of Latin and Greek in Schools* Educational Review Vol.13 1960/61 pg.107.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.* pg.108.

¹⁴⁷ Classical Association *Proceedings* Discussion on 'O' Level Latin Vol.57 1960 pg.22.

Girls' Schools Early 1930's - 1960

For the vast majority of women, the business of home - making and the early nurture of children is a dominant theme in their lives, while for men the equivalent dominance is to earn enough to support their wives and families.¹

We hope that many of the girls will marry and prove wise and happy wives and mothers, but evil days may come and happy is the woman whose parents have given her a training enabling her to be independent.²

By the 1930's education for girls was well established and some girls' schools were already offering a full, rounded training, attempting to provide academic and social skills that would answer the varied demands of their customers. It had become more acceptable for one's daughter to follow an academic course. Girls became busier and more fully occupied as they embraced study, games and some of the traditional skills that were suitable accomplishments for a young lady. Classics were an integral part of the traditional curriculum at boys' public schools, but their role was changing as more demands were made on the timetable. Although classics did have a place within girls' schools, it was less secure and did not have the weight of tradition behind it that the public schools felt. However, as academic study became an established norm for some girls and university a more common goal, Latin at least had to be taught to those who needed it as passport to the next stage. This chapter will explore the fortunes of classics in girls' schools in the growing atmosphere of academic study for girls and the general decline in the status of Latin.

A Head Start?

As we have already seen, in spite of advice to the contrary, boys tended to start Latin soon after entering their preparatory school. Those who did delay the start still had covered two years, in order to cope with the Common Entrance exam, before entering public school at the age of thirteen. It was unusual for girls to begin Latin before they

¹ J. Newsome *The Education of Girls* 1948 pg.12.

² Headmistresses' report in Talbot Heath School's Magazine 1955.

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moved to their public school aged twelve. However, much depended on the character of the individual school.

Some attended schools that catered for girls from the age of five or six to sixteen. Often the school would be split into a junior and senior section, the break being made at the age of twelve and this was when the chance to start Latin was given.³ One school which did begin Latin at the age of eight was criticised for this early start at a time when the pupils should be concentrating on their English skills.⁴ Some attended private schools for girls up to the age of twelve, prior to moving onto public school. These preparatory schools varied tremendously, some not offering Latin at all and others offering it in the top year or two of the school, but without making sufficient room for it on the timetable:

The introduction of French and Latin is handicapped by infrequent lessons.⁵

The top form give two periods a week to Latin. Considering the shortness of the time allowance they have made reasonable progress; but unless it is possible to give a good deal more time to the subject it is doubtful whether the efforts can produce an adequate return.⁶

A group of four girls learn Latin from the student mistress. Their progress is rather slow; this is due partly at any rate to the fact that the time allotted to Latin is inadequate to meet their needs as beginners. It seems doubtful whether the inclusion of Latin in the curriculum is worthwhile unless the equivalent of a lesson a day can be set aside for it.⁷

One wonders whether at Wick House the student mistress was given the Latin group because she was the only one who was qualified to do so or because it was such a small group it was felt a suitable task for the student, who would not have to face the demands of teaching a whole class. Whatever the reason the advice that those starting Latin are taught by an experienced member of staff, given by Dr. Norwood at the 1934 I.A.P.S. annual conference⁸, was not followed, either due to ignorance or necessity. It would appear therefore that these schools gave lip service to Latin, hoping to offer an attractive, wide range of subjects, without really being able to make much progress.

³ St. George's, Ascot is one school which followed this pattern.

⁴ Inspection report for Daneshill school 1957 Ed 172/230.

⁵ Inspection report for Ridgeway preparatory school, 1957 Ed 172/230 pg.3.

⁶ Inspection report for Dorchester preparatory school, 1958 Ed 172/226 pg.5.

⁷ Inspection report for Wick House school 1952, Ed. 109/9177 pg.3.

⁸ See chapter 6 page 205.

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Throughout this period the majority who attended Westonbirt recall starting Latin at Westonbirt at the age of eleven or twelve.⁹ A few thought they had started after this age, but they may have been late entrants. Some do remember having already started Latin when they arrived at Westonbirt. In the 1940's 33% of respondents started Latin before Westonbirt compared to 13% in the previous decade. This probably reflects an increasingly academic approach to the education of young girls. In the fifties the number starting Latin early dropped again to 16%, a reflection of the decreasing popularity of Latin. Some of those who started Latin before public school stated that it was because they had attended their brother's preparatory school and followed the same curriculum as the boys. Greek for girls under the age of twelve was not considered at all.

Latin For My Daughter?

Once girls entered their senior schools the pattern tends to become more consistent, although not all schools conformed. A plea for more opportunities for beginners' Latin in sixth forms in 1944¹⁰ suggests that girls were able to progress through the majority of their education without Latin, only to find, like Yvonne Stevenson (above, Chapter 4 page 136) that they needed it to qualify for the next stage and it had been left too late. It is interesting to note that by the 1930's a new style of report form had been introduced at Goudhurst Ladies College. (Compare with that for 1916 on page 135) Here Latin was listed as a normal subject, although so was German so one wonders if they were still optional. Obviously the girl whose report this is did not take it, even though she was in a lower form, the time when most girls were taking Latin, even if they were to drop it later.¹¹

⁹ See appendix 11 pg 396.

¹⁰ Assistant Mistresses' Association Minutes of the Education Committee March 1944 pg.3 59/1/6/1-3.

¹¹ M. Kendon *Ladies' College Goudhurst* 1963 pg.103.

GOUDHURST COLLEGE

REPORT OF PROGRESS.

Term Summer 1937

Form 11

Name Philippa Kender

Place in Form 13 Examination

SUBJECTS	EXAMINATION MARKS Maximum 100	REMARKS	SUBJECTS	MARKS AWARDED Maximum 100	REMARKS
Scripture		Good.	Pianoforte		Is making very good progress. 97.5
English History		Very good. Philippa works keenly and with interest. Philippa does good work and should now try to pay more attention to detail. B.7	Violin		Very fair. E.
Geography			Singing Class		
Shakespeare			Harmony, or Theory of Music		
English Literature			Elocution		
English Grammar	}	Good. Philippa has made good progress in this term. 91.3	Painting	}	Philippa's drawing shows good improvement. 97
English Composition						Drawing
Arithmetic		Good. Philippa's work shows very considerable improvement. 87.	Handwork		Good. Philippa has gained a better control of materials towards the end of term. B.7
Algebra			Eurhythmics		Very good. 87.
Geometry			Drilling and Gymnastics		Quite good. 57.
French		Very fair. D.5.	Reading		Very good. 91.3
Oral French			Dictation		Very good. Philippa has ability and works well.
German			Poetry		Very good. 91.
Latin			Good. Philippa has been more persevering this term and her work has consequently reached a much higher standard.		
Science Writing		Philippa can write very well. 91.	L. Bradford. Form Mistress		
Botany Nature.		Good but work is spoilt by absence from lessons. 87.			
GENERAL CONDUCT					
Order Marks	Very good.				
Punctuality					
House Marks					
Next term begins <u>September 22nd 1937</u>			<u>A. Kender</u> Head Mistress		

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The more general practice was to teach Latin to all or the highest sets for a year or two and then a few dropped out, the rest continuing to School Certificate. The more academic the school the greater the percentage that continued. To give their girls a chance of going to university Latin was a necessity and in the increasingly academic atmosphere girls' schools were becoming as tied to examination as boys' schools. After the first year at Cheltenham Ladies' College about 10% gave up, either because they were struggling all round and needed reinforcement in other subjects, or because they were particularly musical and played two instruments.¹² Some old girls at Westonbirt made the point that the pupil's own opinion did not count, it was for the staff or one's parents to decide if and when Latin could be given up. Often the alternatives were rather more appealing to the adolescent girl than Latin. At Allerton 'Domestic Science was taken as an alternative to Latin in the S.C. and this suited the more practical girl.'¹³ At Westonbirt timetabling meant that taking Latin one missed out on further Domestic Science or Dressmaking. A girl could follow the academic route leading to a career or the route leading to homemaking, fitting her for life as wife and mother. That such a choice was possible reflects the changing atmosphere and attitudes for education for girls: fifty years ago it would have fuelled fears that womanhood and learning were mutually exclusive.

Parental aspirations played an important role in the choice and the comments below show a range of opinions:

I was given a choice of Domestic Science or Latin, so guess what - Domestic Science won! I was quite good at Latin as well, my father taught it so that was quite a help. Mother prevailed!¹⁴

I started Latin late and it was suggested that at 14 I gave it up (My Latin was not up to the general standard.) and I should take up German instead. My father was outraged at the school's attitude and insisted they continued to teach me.¹⁵

It was unfortunate that for some years to come Domestic Science was not very popular, partly because many parents pleaded for their daughters to be included in the 'Latin' stream which, unfortunately, did little or no Domestic Science.¹⁶

It is an interesting point that in two of the above instances the girl's father is keen for her to follow a course doubtless familiar to him whereas the one mother mentioned

¹² Interview with Miss Hayward, classics mistress at Cheltenham.

¹³ N.J. Henderson *The Story of Allerton* c.1961 pg.44.

¹⁴ Westonbirt respondent 1950.

¹⁵ Westonbirt respondent who went on to read Latin at Oxford. 1946.

¹⁶ M. James *The Kent College Saga 1886 - 1986* pg.39.

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would rather her daughter follow the more traditional training for a girl, doubtless familiar to her. In 1934 the Assistant Mistresses' Association discussed the problem of the congested curriculum and it is obvious that there were some parents who thought certain aspects of it a waste of time:

At one end of the line we have the parent who writes to the papers demanding that everything not obviously 'useful' shall be scrapped....History and Classics (he regards) as entirely superfluous...we can not altogether ignore the body of public opinion that he represents which maintains that by attempting too much we achieve little, that we turn out the children with a smattering of many subjects, but mastery of none.¹⁷

However, as Miss G.A. Richards of Grey Coat Hospital pointed out in her presidential address to the Assistant Mistresses' Association, whilst girls had to be trained for 'the happiest lot' a successful marriage 'we have to realise that not all women are fitted for marriage and we must make our girls see it also.'¹⁸ This acknowledgement of 'vocational spinsters'¹⁹ faced up to a reality many parents feared. Schools had to prepare girls for a variety of possible futures. Parents obviously wanted the best for their daughters and for some academic successes were not the goals to which they aspired, 'my parents were not interested in academic success.'²⁰ They placed more emphasis on the tangible skills of music and games. One old girl of the Royal School, Bath, gave up Latin before School Certificate because 'I had no time, I played the fiddle and the flute.'²¹ This was in the late thirties when music was an eminently suitable pastime for a young lady. Others saw a certain kudos in studying Latin, perhaps because it could label one as a possible university entrant. The Westonbirt survey suggests that Latin and Greek grew in prestige in the mind of parents, both starting from a low position. Science, the newcomer to the curriculum also rose in importance. Music and French were more important subjects in the thirties, one pupil recalling that 'French mattered'. The status of both these traditionally feminine subjects fell thereafter.²² The academic daughter was not the exception to the rule anymore and increasingly both parents themselves had received an academic education and hoped the same for their daughter. However, sometimes their own negative experiences persuaded them that Latin was of no value:

When I was choosing 'A' levels my father (who read classics at Cambridge and felt that any other subject would have been more use as a diplomat) said a. he would not

¹⁷ Assistant Mistresses' Association A.G.M. 1934 59/4/1/10, pg.79.

¹⁸ *ibid.* A.G.M. 1933 59/4/1/10, pg.15.

¹⁹ J. Okely *Own or Other Culture* 1996, pg.150.

²⁰ Westonbirt respondent 1940's.

²¹ Interview with Mary Montagu 31.1.96.

²² See appendix 11 pg.396.

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financially assist any child at University reading classics and b. doing subjects one is bad at encourages habits of hard work.²³

The Assistant Mistresses' Association welcomed the Norwood report's²⁴ recognition of the classics because it fostered 'clearness of thought and expression, ability to use language with skill and accuracy and a sense of continuity with the past, thereby achieving that self knowledge which is essential to culture through first hand contact with the ideas on which our civilisation is founded.'²⁵ Thus the classics embodied essential elements and high ideals of education suitable for girls. Even completing a short course of Latin a girl would benefit from its 'cultural value.'²⁶ Miss Strudwick considered that Latin would confer logical thought such as is required in mathematics on those girls who find mathematics difficult. However, for her the real value was in the beauty and preciseness of the language:

All the charm of all the muses often flowering in a lonely word.²⁷

The Same For Harry As For Harriet?

Having set off on the classical route did girls receive the same diet as boys? Even at the more academic schools, such as Cheltenham Ladies' College this was not possible due to greater restrictions on time. For the first three years the girls had 4 lessons a week which increased to 5 in the year before School Certificate. In the sixth form this became 6 lessons each week, a meagre amount in comparison to the 65% of the time table for sixth form Latin at Sedburgh in the same period. This time is similar to that devoted to Latin at Westonbirt. Some schools were less generous and their candidates struggled to make progress:

The rate of progress is impeded by the meagre allowance of 3 periods a week for the first three years; this does not allow frequent enough practice of grammar and vocabulary to ensure speed and accuracy, so confidence tends to flag. References to background material are included in the normal routine, but here again the feeling of pressure through lack of time does not encourage lively digressions into Roman life and thought.²⁸

²³ Westonbirt respondent 1950's.

²⁴ 1943 white paper on Curriculum and Examinations In Secondary Schools.

²⁵ Assistant Mistresses' Association News letter July 1944 59/1/6/1-3, pg.10.

²⁶ Assistant Mistresses' Association Classics panel Feb. 1943 59/1/6/1-3.

²⁷ Miss Strudwick quoting Tennyson at the annual conference of the Headmistresses' Association June 1934 MSS188 TBN 44 pg.25.

²⁸ Inspection report for Fernhill Manor 1957 Ed 172/230 pg.6.

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The Classical Association reported that there were 'complaints of inadequate time allotted to Latin'²⁹ However, schools that offered Latin had School Certificate as a goal and so study was serious as the girls would be facing the same exam as the boys, but with less time in which to prepare. This necessity would have had a deadening effect on the fresh approach seen in the early years, and have compelled a move towards the utilitarian approach so often criticised in boys' schools. In 1944 the Classics Discussion Group of the Assistant Mistresses' Association recommended an intensive course in formal grammar before starting to learn any language.³⁰ At Cheltenham the majority of time was spent on grammar and learning vocabulary. Unlike their male peers the girls did not attempt translation into Latin until the year before School Certificate and did no Latin verse composition at all. The majority of English to Latin work was done in the fifth year and then it was made topical by being set on contemporary subjects such as Princess Margaret's wedding. Little or no time was given to social and political history or other background aspects. Use could be made of archaeology as a 'fringe ornament.'³¹

The Westonbirt survey paints a similar picture.³² The technical side of the language received the most attention, although by the fifties this was decreasing. Those who attended Westonbirt in the forties had the most varied diet, possibly due to a particularly gifted teacher. Owing to the constraints of the syllabus, quality of staff and time available there was a danger that the approach was very narrow and dull. Girls' schools were falling into the cramming trap that was seen to do much harm to the cause of classics in general. In 1934 Sherborne School for Girls was criticised in an inspection report for a poor level of attainment in Latin, the main cause of this poor attainment was

to be found in the planning of the course of studies. The conception of the course conforms at every point with an old tradition of classical teaching - a tradition which, laying emphasis upon the grammatical and syntactical structure of the language, gives much time to the translation of English sentences into Latin. That tradition has worked well and will always work well if two conditions are fulfilled: These are - first that the pupils have a marked linguistic ability, and second that ample time is available. Then the flower of classical scholarship can grow to perfection. But in many schools, of which this is one, the time is short and not a few of the pupils are without marked linguistic ability.³³

²⁹ C.A. *Proceedings* Report of the Education Sub Committee Vol. 48, 1951 pg.39.

³⁰ Assistant Mistresses' Association A.G.M. Jan. 1944 59/4/1/17.

³¹ Interview with Miss Hayward 25. 8.95.

³² Appendix 11 pg.396.

³³ Inspection report for Sherborne School for Girls 1934, Ed 109/1084 pg.13.

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This emphasis on the mechanical approach to Latin was unpopular with the girls. One respondent to the Westonbirt survey mentions particular dislike at 'learning irregular forms required in the old School Certificate in the 1930's' whilst another found it 'merely tedious, repetitive, uninteresting with irrelevant texts to construe.' Some enjoyed it because 'it was easy if you had a good memory.'

The subject matter of set books usually anticipated a male audience. Miss Hayward, who taught at Cheltenham felt that this was not a stumbling block to progress: 'One can make the Gallic war as interesting to girls as to boys or even more.' However, a selection of comments from Westonbirt girls suggests that no one had succeeded in achieving this there:

I hated Gallic Wars book IV (1940's)

It was usually about things that interested boys - military events. (1950's)

I felt a lack of interest in much of the set book matter e.g. Caesar's Gaelic Wars. (1950's)

The subject had little relevance for me, perhaps the text book was to blame - Agricola's Suppression of Anglesey. (1950's)

However, the non military texts were popular and mentioned as a reason for enjoying Latin:

I enjoyed Virgil (1930's)

I loved the poetry, Ovid and Virgil particularly (1940's)

We learnt Latin poems and recited them with feeling (1950's)

The minutes of the Classical Association meeting held in February 1938 to discuss proposed changes to the School Certificate examination contain the following note:

Sir D'Arcy Thompson : Caesar and Livy, full of military terms, set in examination taken by prospective art-student daughter whom he had envisaged as reading Vergil, Horace and Ovid. Other daughter, over worked during preparation for classical scholarship, abandoned classics altogether in utter discouragement.³⁴

Although as we have seen that slow progress through texts could lead to tedium for boys, this would be more acutely felt by girls who, even in this age of equality of the sexes, are not generally interested in military campaigns in their early teens. The Westonbirt survey shows that there was increasing dissatisfaction with set books. In the thirties a relatively narrow range of literature was available for girls to read, much of which would have been traditional English classics, tales of romance, intrigue and adventure, all rather gentle in content and deemed suitable by adults. By the fifties the

³⁴ Classical Association Minutes 1938 C.A. archives, pg.4.

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range of literature had become considerably wider, beginning to push at the borders of acceptability. Girls expected more from their reading and found Latin set books rather tame. One pupil at Westonbirt in the fifties 'enjoyed learning about the wicked life of Roman times!'³⁵ Teaching had to be increasingly titillating to sustain the interest of the modern adolescent female.

With less time available for Latin than in public schools, girls' schools were less likely to treat Latin with the all round multi-faceted approach being advocated by the experts. There is no mention of Roman history in the thirties and forties at Westonbirt which would suggest that it was not taught at all. It was available in the fifties, but again a cramming method of teaching did little for its popularity:

The political history of Rome was taught solely by learning the dates of kings, republics etc.

Roman history as taught to us was very boring. It seemed irrelevant to the study of the language.³⁶

Even continuing with the higher level course at Cheltenham social and political history were covered as background, translation into English being the 'supremely important' element of the course. Books and film strips were not used in the forties and early fifties to help with archaeology and art. However, occasional visits were made to Roman remains. The time was divided into one prose lesson each week, one unseen lesson and two lessons for each of the set books. History, a necessary element of the advanced course, was the poor relation:

The only serious doubt concerns the study of the outlines of Roman History which is a necessity under regulations of the examination adopted, but which treated as it has to be treated, can scarcely make great appeal to many of the girls.³⁷

Schools were criticised for their dull, mechanical approach to the subject, compartmentalising the elements and being narrow in outlook:

Some important aspects of the work which are entirely neglected: a background of the history and civilisation of Rome and, for the older girls prose composition which at present is not attempted at all. ³⁸

..the introduction of Roman life and thought as part of the normal routine would enrich the course.³⁹

³⁵ Westonbirt Respondent 1950's.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ Inspection report for Cheltenham Ladies' College 1952 Ed 109/8794 pg.19.

³⁸ Inspection report for Luckley School, 1956 Ed. 172/259 pg.6.

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The method of work bears certain features which stamp it as being a little old fashioned: the reader or author tends to be kept separate from the teaching of syntax, and the manuals of composition seem in some quarters to dominate the work too much.⁴⁰

These faults, inherent in public schools, had also crept into girls' schools, the places where, given the lack of a strong tradition, experiment and innovation would be easier. Now both boys and girls were focused on a common goal: qualifications and as more girls need Latin to enter the next stage of their career the more it was treated as a means to an end, being nothing but a 'bugbear to some going to Oxford or Cambridge.'⁴¹

The proposals of the Classical Association to develop an alternative syllabus, designed to lighten the existing course and be of more use to pupils who did not intend to continue beyond School Certificate, were received with mixed feelings by girls' schools. The discussions in the forties hoped that 'a syllabus of this sort might meet a greater need at the Higher Certificate stage, e.g. for girls [specialising] in History or English.' The headmistresses wanted closer correlation between the two courses, so that the new course would include some unprepared translation, and some English into Latin (or Greek). The assistant mistresses were pleased at the prospect of an alternative paper, but found that the suggestions were impracticable. The chief reservation being that the new syllabus would require more time and 'In schools where there is only one Latin mistress this would present great difficulty.' It would be an expensive option to take as new text books would have to be purchased and the set books were too difficult for the average candidate.⁴² These criticisms reflect those of the Headmasters and masters representing the boys schools. So whilst the theory was an attractive one, the reality was that they were happier keeping to familiar ground.

By the last decade of the period when perhaps Latin teaching in girls' schools was closest to that in boys schools, although in many cases they were handicapped by a late start and still had fewer lessons, a similar percentage of those sitting the exam passed, in fact girls did slightly better than boys. The breadth of the syllabus had been sacrificed, but the desired standard has been achieved:

³⁹ Inspection report for St. Vincent's School 1956 Ed. 172/230 pg.9.

⁴⁰ Inspection report for Cheltenham Ladies' College 1952 Ed 109/8794 pg.18.

⁴¹ Interview with Mary Montagu.

⁴² Classical Association *Summary of the reports of the joint four associations on the C.A. suggestions for an alternative syllabus to the S.C. Latin syllabus* 1946 C.A. archives.

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The percentage of boys compared with that of girls who passed Latin 'O' level 1954 to 1957 ⁴³

	% of boys passed	% of girls passed
1954	54.9%	57.7%
1955	55.5%	60.9%
1956	59.4%	62.5%
1957	61%	61.1%

These figures reflect the position of Latin in all schools and so include those educated at state controlled grammar schools.

The Assistant Mistresses' Association thought that the time had come for a complete review of Latin at 'O' level because of the 'unduly difficult' papers set by the Oxford and Cambridge Joint board.⁴⁴ The limited time and late start were obviously still obstacles to success.

The Position Of Greek

Whilst many boys, the bright ones at least had met Greek, albeit in some cases fleetingly, before they went to public school girls were not offered the chance to study Greek until they were much older. At Cheltenham, one of the more academic schools Greek was an option available to those in their third year at the school, having completed one year of Latin. The choice was between Greek, German or Russian and in the forties and fifties 'there was no worry about recruiting enough girls.'⁴⁵ The girls normally came from the top set, X class, which held the *crème de la crème*; those in the next two sets were offered the option also. In 1953 the X class was abolished and girls were grouped alphabetically rather than according to their ability. However, three subjects retained a setting system, of which Latin was one. Usually about eleven girls in each year did Greek and followed a three year course to School Certificate. Westonbirt, a school which sustained a healthy Latin department, struggled to keep Greek going. It was available to 'those who were good at Latin and had determined parents.' In the fifties 'it was difficult to get into the Greek set, I think I asked and was rejected.'⁴⁶ In 1939 only two girls were taking Greek out of a total of 160 pupils at the

⁴³ Data from the University of London Institute of Education C.A. archives.

⁴⁴ Assistant Mistresses' Association Oct. 1953 59/1/6/1-3.

⁴⁵ Interview with Miss Hayward.

⁴⁶ Westonbirt respondent 1950's.

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school.⁴⁷ The few who did Greek were an exception and at times provisions were not made for them within the structure of the school:

It was not offered. I imagine the school had difficulties with getting staff immediately after the war.

I believe one girl wished to do it for 'A' levels and an outside tutor had to be found.⁴⁸

In the 1950's Greek was not a timetabled subject, the few who took it being organised outside the timetable. In 1954 four girls were learning Greek and an inspection report made the suggestion that an earlier start would make the subject 'less of a luxury.'⁴⁹ The picture is similar elsewhere, Greek was taken by only five girls in 1938 at Roedean and three girls in 1943 at the Godolphin school.⁵⁰ Seven keen beginners took Greek in voluntary lessons during the afternoon, 'the only time that can be spared for Greek at this stage,' at North London Collegiate School.⁵¹ Whilst the Westonbirt survey shows that it rose in status throughout the period, as academic work and results became more important, it remained a low scoring subject, attracting less prestige than other academic subjects. This was doubtless because it was such a minority subject that the vast majority were ignorant of its essence or even existence. It was generally considered good sense to confine the teaching of Greek in this way.

The present practice of offering Greek to sixth form groups only and only then to girls who have already show promise in Latin, seems right and sensible.⁵²

However, at Talbot Heath school the mistress who became head of the classics department in 1936 had 'a conviction that Greek rather than Latin should be the first classical language.' Thus in 1937 there were two forms of able girls taking up classics. The most able started Greek and the slightly less able started Latin.. After two years those who could not cope could dropped out. It was hoped that the most able of the Greek set would be able to start Latin in the Vth form:

It is hoped that this Main School Greek course may give an impetus to Classical Sixth Form work and may be of greater interest and value to girls who do not continue it beyond the School Certificate than the Latin course has proved to be in the past.⁵³

⁴⁷ Inspection report for Westonbirt 1939 Ed 109/1733 pg.12.

⁴⁸ *ibid.* 1940's.

⁴⁹ Inspection report for Westonbirt 1954 Ed 109/8802 pg.14.

⁵⁰ Inspection reports Ed 109/6002 pg.9. and Ed 109/6614 pg.7.

⁵¹ Inspection report for North London Collegiate School 1937 Ed 109/3985 pg.13.

⁵² K. Ollerenshaw *Education for Girls* 1961 pg.90.

⁵³ Inspection report for Talbot Heath School 1939 Talbot Heath archives. pg.13.

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This system was in its infancy when the report was written, but seemed to be a success. Out of 231 in the school 100 girls were taking Latin and 42 Greek. This approach was unusual and often the question of Greek or not depended not only on the structure of the school, but also on the members of staff available.

The figures for Greek during the last decade show that the majority of exam candidates were boys, although as with Latin, the percentage of girls who passed the exam is similar to that for the boys.

The numbers of boys compared to girls who took Greek 'O' and 'A' levels 1954 to 1958 ⁵⁴

	'O' level boys	'O' level girls	'A' level boys	'A' level girls
1954	1,780 72%	304 73%	1,221	153
1955	1,865	367	1,310	177
1956	1,945	435	1,337	181
1957	1,969	443	1,391	187
1958	2,053	466	1,271	194
1959	2,096	505	1,215	198
1960	2,090	527	1,288	206
1961	1,990	544	1,259	219

These figures include all schools and reveal cause for concern in the relatively small number of candidates. Although numbers of girls seemed to rise, the total number of candidates was rising too and so in real terms the numbers were falling.

The small numbers taking Greek meant that publishers did not want to produce new editions of text books because it was not financially viable, due to small print runs of the expensive method of setting Greek letters in hot metal.⁵⁵ This would have resulted in tatty, old-fashioned editions being used, detracting from Greek as an attractive subject.

⁵⁴ *ibid.* plus A.G. Geen *The Teaching of Classics* table 19 pg.241.

⁵⁵ Headmistresses' Association Annual Conference June 1937 MSS188 TBN 47, pg.34.

The Classics Mistress

Much popularity, success and survival, depended on those who taught. Some teachers were well qualified and enthusiastic whereas others struggled to maintain momentum. At Cheltenham there were seven in the classics department in the forties, a well staffed and healthy department. Westonbirt in the late thirties also experienced no staffing problem:

It must be admitted that Classics are very generously staffed in this school and that some reduction might be possible if it were necessary in future reorganisation.⁵⁶

The comments made about the difficulty in getting staff to teach Greek after the war and the fact that the Chaplain coached the older girls in the early fifties would suggest that this reduction had in fact been made. In some schools there was only one teacher who perhaps suffered from the lack of stimulus from colleagues. The inspectors' report for St. George's, Ascot suggests that 'the mistress would probably find it helpful to meet other teachers working in similar conditions or to attend a course.'⁵⁷ This contrasts with Cheltenham where they not only had each other, but also met other classicists, the Cheltenham branch of the Classical Association being a thriving one.⁵⁸ Convent schools seemed to struggle in particular. At the Brigidine Convent School, where the majority took the preferred option of Cookery, the nun teaching the first three years Latin was 'out of touch' whilst the final two years were taken by the French mistress.⁵⁹ At the Convent de la Sagesse in Romsey Latin was not part of the general curriculum, but taken by one of the sisters 'who...is not a specialist, but has offered to help these girls.'⁶⁰ The inter-schools Classical Associations started in the 1920's suspended their activities during the second world war, but as soon as hostilities were over inter-school lectures started up again with suggestions that the branches became inter-active.⁶¹ However, the South London branch had to merge with the main London branch in 1955 due to the resignation of a secretary and therefore one would suppose a suitable, committed replacement.⁶²

⁵⁶ Inspection report for Westonbirt 1939 Ed 109/1733 pg.12.

⁵⁷ Inspection report for St. George's, Ascot 1957 Ed 172/259 pg.10.

⁵⁸ Interview with Miss Hayward.

⁵⁹ Inspection report for Brigidine Convent School 1958 172/259 pg.7.

⁶⁰ Inspection report for the Convent de la Sagesse 1956 ED 172/230 pg.7.

⁶¹ Classical Association, London branch Nov. 1945.

⁶² *ibid.* March 1955.

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The character and calibre of the mistresses was important:

The popularity of a subject was dependent on who taught what. I had an inspiring teacher at first, but then didn't so wanted to give it up.⁶³

From the Westonbirt survey it is obvious that there was one particular teacher in the forties who was very popular, 'she even made chanting verbs fun.' However, there was also one who 'was dry, harsh and unforgiving and I was put off'.⁶⁴ Compared to leading public schools where entire departments were composed of high achieving graduates, it was not unusual for girls schools to employ those with mediocre qualifications, although they were more likely to have had professional training. The inspectors' report for Roedean noted the lack of high achievers among the staff in 1938.⁶⁵ Some staff were perhaps too rigid and set in their ways:

The senior classics mistress is in many ways a good teacher...she is a lover of classics, but she has the classical restraint too much developed so that she can not or does not let herself go. She works hard and is exacting. I believe the girls respect and like her, but she is at her most effective, probably with the abler ones. Miss Flemming and Miss Smith are the right teachers to tackle the slower witted.⁶⁶

For some the image of the classics mistress was one of a woman in a man's world. Academic women had at one time been a rare breed, but were becoming increasingly common. They had earned the stereotype of being enthusiastic, jolly hockey stick types who were frightfully hearty, or of being dragons and spiteful monsters in human form. The cartoon from *Punch*⁶⁷ printed overleaf portrays the earnest, enthusiastic attributes of the girls' school mistress.

⁶³ Interview with Mary Montagu.

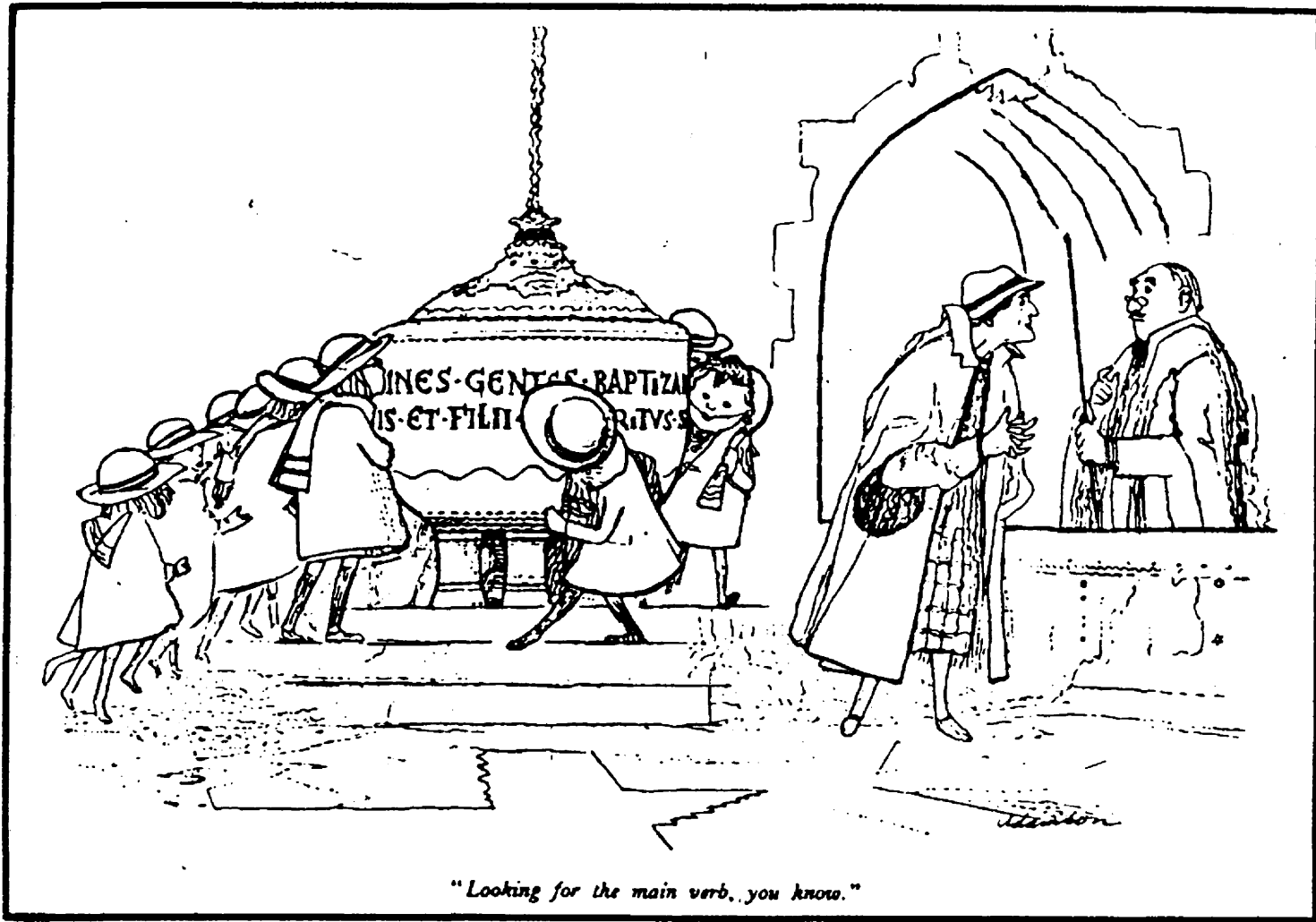
⁶⁴ Westonbirt respondents.

⁶⁵ Inspection report for Roedean 1938 Ed 109/6002 pg.17.

⁶⁶ Inspection report for Sherborne School for Girls 1934, Ed 109/1084 pg.4 of the unofficial report.

⁶⁷ Printed in Price and Glenday *Reluctant Revolutionaries* 1974 pg. 44.

Fig. 7



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It was not too easy to find anyone to teach Greek prose composition because most people didn't like it - women anyway, men were much better at it.⁶⁸

Finding staff qualified to teach Greek was a particular problem resulting in struggling and demoralised departments in schools. In 1943 the school inspectors were particularly critical of the Greek department at the Godolphin school:

Miss Darrok's work is very poor indeed. It seems likely that she may be leaving this year, and if she goes it will be possible to appoint a second full time classics specialist and dispense with the services of Miss Poynton who is kindly, but not very effective.⁶⁹

The problem of recruiting women able to offer Greek continued and in 1959 the Classical Association reported on the situation:

While the committee has been pleased to observe a continuing increase in the number of candidates taking Latin and Greek at 'A' and 'O' levels in the G.C.E. examinations, it can not regard as satisfactory the disproportionately small number of girls taking Greek at 'A' level. There is considerable difficulty in finding women to teach Greek and in some cases men have been appointed to teach Greek in girls' schools.⁷⁰

Given the difficulty in employing suitable teachers of Greek the desire voiced at the Headmistresses' Association in the 1930's to request some knowledge of Greek for English teachers was perhaps optimistic,⁷¹ but reveals that a training in classics was valued and perhaps considered synonymous with 'academic' in a way that English was not.

As society changed the whole question of staffing some girls schools was becoming difficult. In the thirties and forties teaching in a boarding school was an eminently appropriate post for a single woman. She was given board and lodging in return for certain duties, she was in a respectable establishment and safe from the designs of men and the world from whom she was sheltered. In the forties there were not as many opportunities to marry as later as eligible men were away fighting. If one specialised as a classics teacher one was almost guaranteed good employment prospects:

⁶⁸ Interview with Miss Hayward.

⁶⁹ Inspection report for Godolphin 1943, Ed 109/6659 pg.7.

⁷⁰ Classical Association *Proceedings* Report of the Education Sub Committee Vol.56 1959 pg.33.

⁷¹ Headmistresses' Association Annual Conference May 1932 MSS188 TBN 3, pg.28.

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In 1935 Miss Sweet advised girls intending to teach to specialise in Classics, Mathematics or Science because there was a shortage of well qualified applicants in these subjects.⁷²

However, as time progressed women wanted more independence and were less willing to be tied to the restrictions and long hours demanded in public schools:

The public schools are generally supposed to be able to recruit the pick of young university graduates for their teaching staff. Today this is not necessarily so. Young women teachers normally prefer day schools where they can live an independent life after school hours and at weekends, and boarding schools which are in the country or away from big centres of population find great difficulty in keeping young members of staff.... There are fewer unmarried women graduates than a generation ago.⁷³

J. Okely's book *Own or Other Culture* finds that female teachers did not provide aspirational role models, the majority 'presented themselves as victims of misfortune' and did not inspire their charges to become like them.⁷⁴ Increased education for women was also leading to greater choice of career and wider horizons. As science departments became more important schools had to budget to staff them and so particularly small schools could not be generous with remuneration:

The secretarial department had been abolished in 1958 and certain other subjects, like classics, had been under threat because, attracting relatively small classes, they were considered too expensive to staff.⁷⁵

The solution to this problem was to send the girls to the nearby boys' school thus relying, as some early headmistresses had, on the skills of schoolmasters.

Alive on Girls' Lips ?

The constraints of the curriculum and the ability and character of the teachers shaped how Latin was taught in schools. We have seen that much of the teaching was traditional and rather narrow in its scope. However, there were those who tried to inject life into the subject. The heavy emphasis on the Direct Method noted at Cheltenham in 1919 seems to have faded by the 1935 inspectors' report, but some teachers did make a little use of spoken Latin. Those in Miss Hayward's class in the forties and fifties did not converse in Latin, but if they were late in arriving or had not got the correct books they had to apologise in Latin.⁷⁶

⁷² A.B. Parry *The Kingsley School : A Dream Realised 1884 - 1984* pg.102.

⁷³ K. Ollerenshaw *Education for Girls* 1961 pg.71.

⁷⁴ J. Okely *Own or Other Culture* 1996, pg.158.

⁷⁵ P. Hurle *Malvern Girls' College : A Centenary History* 1993 pg.89.

⁷⁶ Interview with Miss Hayward.

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The main opportunities for experiencing the classics as living tongues were provided by Greek plays. The classics department at Cheltenham was particularly energetic at producing plays in the thirties and forties. In 1935 the school was praised for 'the expertise of the staff in the successful production in recent years of three Greek plays'.⁷⁷ The plays were performed in Greek and presented at special occasions. The *Antigone*, produced in 1947, was the climax to a speech day at which Princess Alice was guest:

The producers are to be particularly congratulated on the harmony and finish of detail and the beauty of the colour schemes, and on their mastery of the greatest difficulty of all, the chorus... Knowledge of Greek was not necessary for the appreciation of this moving and beautiful *Antigone*, as many of the audience testified.⁷⁸

However, schools with a less strong Classics department struggled to sustain earlier aspirations and performances were rare:

There is no Queen of Prussia now to visit the college to see *Alcestis* - and not enough Greek scholars to form the chorus.⁷⁹

The dramatic classical theme continued to be more popular as a means to a different end, namely to train girls in skills that would enhance her social accomplishments. Talbot Heath School performed 'The Trojan Women' in English in 1938. It was interpreted as a display of their elocution skills rather than classical knowledge in spite of the fact that it was the classical society that produced it:

...it at least served to show to what a very high standard of elocution the girls have attained. ...the Goddess Athena echoed with a purity and volume of sound which even modern loud-speaker apparatus could hardly have improved upon.⁸⁰

Another and even more distantly related activity was Greek dancing. This was often based on classical themes, but portrayed an idealised and pastoral Greece, a golden age of innocence and thus a suitable topic for young girls.

The girls wore little tunics and the stage properties were flowers, urns and Doric columns. One item was called 'The Temple of Persephone', another celebrated the original Olympic games with simulated archery and javelin throwing.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Inspection report for Cheltenham 1935 Ed 109/1644 pg.19.

⁷⁸ Cheltenham Ladies' College magazine, 1947 pg.35.

⁷⁹ G. Grylls. *Queen's College 1848 - 1948* 1945 referring to c.1945, pg.110.

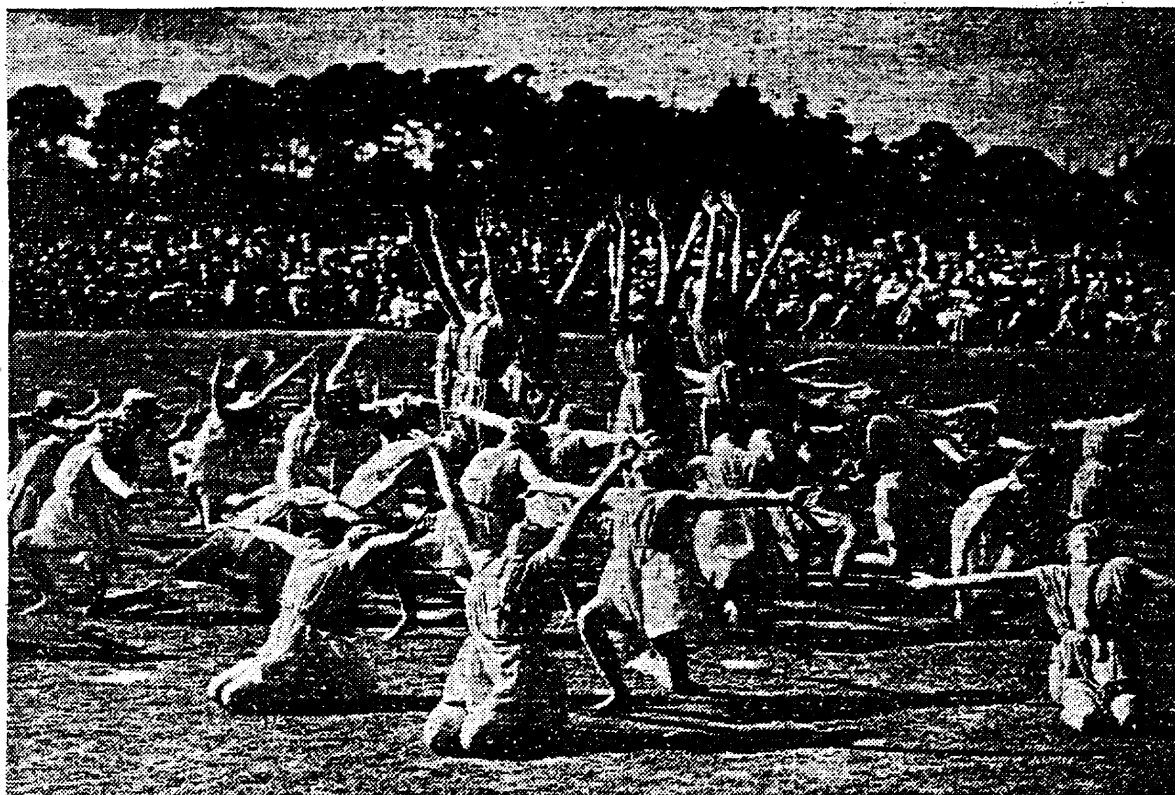
⁸⁰ Newspaper cutting in Talbot Heath school archives. 1938.

⁸¹ J.Whitcut *Edgebaston High School 1876 -1976* pg. 121.

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At this time, the thirties, Greek dancing was a regular part of the curriculum for the junior girls at Talbot Heath School. However, there is little mention of it during and after the war.⁸²

Fig. 8



⁸² Bournemouth Echo July 3rd 1939.

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In 1945 the president of the London branch of the Classical Association offered to give a lecture on 'metre' and approached the Mary Datchelor School to see if their choir would help illustrate it.⁸³ Here the girls would have used their talents at a scholarly meeting.

Classical societies survived in schools, but could hardly be said to be thriving. They seemed to consist of a few keen pupils. Cheltenham had an active society which 'in spite of difficulties ...has maintained a vigorous existence.'⁸⁴ In 1938 Talbot Heath School reported an increase in membership and made plans to produce the performance of 'The Trojan Women' mentioned above. During the war school magazines were reduced to the minimum and society news did not feature. The society at Cheltenham continued after the war, but there is no further mention of that at Talbot Heath. It would seem that for the majority their experience of classics was restricted to the classroom and more importantly to preparing for examinations. There were few opportunities to appreciate classics in their wider sense and these tended to be presented in a separate sphere.

A Suitable Training

So, increased attendance at universities and a flourishing of education for girls ensured that Latin was taught in most schools. Were the old barriers of gender stereotyping fraying at the edges, and had it become acceptable to undertake training that was not solely going to fit one for marriage and motherhood? Many of the girls who took classics would not continue their careers too far before they were married.

A dative put with show and give, tell, envy, spare, omit, believe, persuade, command, obey, to these add threaten, succour, pardon, please and when you are before the altar promising to obey your husband I hope that you will remember that it takes a dative.⁸⁵

Marriage often meant the end of an academic career and thus could bring disappointment to teachers who had nurtured the brains of bright girls.

⁸³ Classical Association London Branch Committee meeting minutes 1945.

⁸⁴ Cheltenham Ladies' College magazine 1940.

⁸⁵ A.B. Parry *The Kingsley School: A Dream Realised 1884 - 1984* recollections of Latin during the war.

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When I was teaching History at B.S. in Bristol after the war and very much her protégé, she [a Miss Baker] met Miss Hobbs in Late Lane with the announcement: 'I've got some bad news for you. Dorothy Brown is engaged to be married.'⁸⁶

Academic training was becoming increasingly acceptable as being suitable for girls and not handicapping them for any future role in life:

The woman who has managed to surmount the obstacles erected in the way of getting to the university and whose mind has been both disciplined and liberated by continued education until the age of twenty two, is capable of mastering the domestic skills with relative ease.⁸⁷

The Board of Education felt that girls' schools had the right balance between 'a high standard of work in academic subjects' whilst recognising 'the value of aesthetic and practical subjects.'⁸⁸ Few of those who took Latin at Westonbirt regretted having done so and some expressed the wish that they had worked harder. Its greatest asset being that it had provided continued help with English and foreign languages.⁸⁹ Some found it particularly useful in a career in nursing:

I did not think Latin was much use, but I find it more useful in my career of nursing than anything.⁹⁰

Whilst at school Latin was recognised as being special and conferred that quality on those who were chosen to take it:

If you were considered bright then you did it as a status symbol.

If you were capable of doing it you had to do it. It carried a cachet, the rest did German instead.⁹¹

However, it was an unpopular subject with the majority of those who took it. Many found it difficult and dull. There was resentment at working at a subject that was felt 'to be a dead language with no relevance to later life.'⁹² According to the Westonbirt survey its unpopularity increased, 57.5% thinking it unpopular in the thirties, 64% in the forties and 79% in the fifties. The chief complaint in the fifties was that it was boring. As other subjects became more interesting, offering greater pupil

⁸⁶ Dorothy Brown in *At Badminton With B.M.B. by those who were there* Ed. J. Storry 1982 pg.37.

⁸⁷ J. Newsom *The Education of Girls* 1948 pg.14.

⁸⁸ Board of Education *The Public Schools and the General Education System* 1944 pg.85.

⁸⁹ Westonbirt Questionnaire, Appendix 11 pg. 403.

⁹⁰ Miss Galloway, *Headmistresses' Association* MSS188 TBN 47, pg.57.

⁹¹ Westonbirt respondents.

⁹² *ibid.* 1950's.

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involvement, Latin failed to keep up: the necessity of examinations forcing a narrow syllabus on teachers which resulted in dry, pedestrian teaching. The fact that it was a university entrance requirement meant that the more able took it whether they liked it or not, there was no choice. However, as Latin fell in popularity, it rose in prestige in the minds of the pupils. In 1930's it carried little kudos, coming near the bottom of the table with Greek. In the next two decades it rose so that it was valued above art, Greek and religious studies, still not carrying much prestige compared to other subjects, but being recognised as a valuable academic qualification. A girl taking Latin was marked out as a possible university entrant, so it conferred on her a certain quality and ability.

Association with Latin did not always confer attractiveness in the eyes of the fairer sex:

A brilliant young Maths mistress...introduced to a partner at a tennis club asked what he did. 'He's a classical master at St. Dominics' was the reply. What a pity...what a shame.⁹³

She may have been disappointed because he did not hold the same interests as she did, but his expertise was almost pitied by her; in her eyes it was not an attractive attribute in a partner.

Whilst Latin had never held the position it enjoyed in public schools it had become an acceptable element of the curriculum. Due to the late start and a smaller share of the timetable it was an option offered to the brighter girls only, many of whom had the decision as to which option to take made for them by parents and staff. Those who took it set off upon the exam oriented route and this tended to stifle attempts to enliven the subject, making it conform to the same straight jacket of public school teaching. Academic qualifications were now not only acceptable, but expected. Due to the concerted effort necessary to pass exams and the lack of attractiveness compared to other subjects Latin was not popular, but rather seen as a special subject. Latin was portrayed as a Jekyll and Hyde subject. Girls taking Latin were bright, possible university entrants, those taking Greek, rare. The work was highly structured and the curriculum narrow. It was the traditional diet of boys' schools and many of the early texts met were of military exploits, an unfamiliar world

⁹³ Miss Drummond (Holly Lodge High School, Liverpool) Headmistresses' Association A.G.M. MSS 188 TBN 47, pg.1.

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to girls. However, some of the poetry had a feminine appeal, and there were opportunities to dress up in classical costume and dance or act. As we have seen throughout the character and quality of the teaching staff determined the status and success of Latin within each school. Some schools struggled to find staff competent enough to give the subject credence, whilst others contained thriving units of excellence. In the course of sixty years the boundaries of sexual stereotyping had become blurred, women were becoming scientists and doctors. Girls were coping equally well in Latin and Greek exams as boys, but, as with boys, the appeal of Latin per se waned and the abolition of it as a qualification for Oxford and Cambridge signalled a new chapter in its existence in schools.

At The Chalk Face Early 1930's - 1960

It seems clear that the time has definitely come for some changes, a rather different orientation, in the teaching of Latin if it is to hold its place in modern secondary education.¹

It was taught in a miserably inflexible and uninspired way and especially at my prep. school was accompanied by frequent beatings.²

In both preparatory and public schools the 1930's were a decade of a crisis of conscience. The Hadow Report, 1926, had urged that learning should become more of an exploratory rather than a didactic experience. The School Certificate examination had been criticised by the Spens Report, 1938, for having too much of a prescriptive effect on the timetable. Preparatory Schools were trying to solve the problem of an overloaded timetable that was weighted towards Latin and public schools attempting to instil a sense of value into their teaching. The time had come for a change, a change that would make the classics more accessible to those who were not natural classicists and an attractive option to those who were being tempted by the utilitarian qualities of science and only took Latin with a view to attaining a key qualification. Apart from working on the image of Latin and Greek the content of the curriculum also came under scrutiny. There were attempts to continue to change the emphasis as well as present the teaching in a more modern and child friendly way.

As the trend for pupils to take Latin purely for the qualification it bestowed grew, efforts were made to offer examinations that would cater for a wider range of abilities. In 1938 the Classical Association considered how examinations could be modified for those who do not continue Latin beyond the age of sixteen. One suggestion was limiting the amount of set books in the syllabus. There was an interesting contrast between the experience of those who taught boys, who 'by the time they enter public schools have already learnt Latin for some years and reached the conclusion that it is elaborate nonsense,' a condition attributed to bad teaching in the

¹ Classical Association *Second Report of the Sub-Committee on the Position of Classics in Schools* 1938 pg.1.

² Sherborne respondent 1951-1955.

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early years, and those who taught girls who have rarely heard of Latin before the age of twelve.³ One problem identified was the existence of only 'one type of examination for all candidates whether 'fitted or not for Latin.' Girls who failed to catch up on lost time felt this predicament most keenly,⁴ although as we have seen in the last chapter, by the 1950's girls were coping as well as boys with examinations.

In 1943 the education committee of the Assistant Mistresses' Association reaffirmed 'its belief in the value of classical studies for all pupils in a well balanced educational scheme and deprecated the tendency to restrict such studies to a select few.'⁵ It proposed the creation of four courses, a four year course, a three year and a two year one, together with one in classical culture for non linguistic pupils. Boys in independent education invariably spent more than four years on Latin, but this was not the case for girls. The Classical Association education subcommittee debated the format of new examination papers for the next four years. They created a specific syllabus for a proposed new exam, Elementary Latin, aimed at those who would drop Latin after School Certificate. Composition was not compulsory and time gained could be devoted to more reading. The proposed exam had three papers, one on unprepared translation with a prose composition option, one a translation and questions from a set author paper and the third on aspects of Roman life; social and political history, archaeology, literature and thought. The authors suggested were Virgil, Lucretius, Horace, Catullus, Tacitus, Livy and Cicero. Similar proposals were made for the Greek paper, together with the creation of options of Latin with Greek in translation and Greek with Latin in translation. It was also proposed to include a classics paper in the modern studies group of the higher exams, a paper that concentrated on literature and background and did not require great linguistic skill. It was recognised that in many schools children were taught in mixed ability groups and thus suggested the use of a pick and mix system. However, the traditional schools kept to their existing goals. The Common Entrance examination was still in place and children were sent to public schools with the intention that they should pass School Certificate. Scholarship sets existed for the brightest and there is no evidence that anyone else was offered an easier option. By 1950 'O' and 'A' levels had replaced School and Higher Certificates and the requirements reflected the three main areas explored in Chapter 5; grammar, translation and literature, and composition. In this

³ The Master of Marlborough and Miss Flemming (headmistress of Thoresby High School, Leeds) in the minutes of a special meeting of the Classical Association Feb. 5th 1938.

⁴ *ibid.* Comments made by Miss Dale and Miss Flemming.

⁵ A.M.A. Education Committee minutes Oct.9th 59/1/15/1-10.

chapter we shall explore the progress and development in the teaching of each of these traditional areas.

Grammar

During the early years of the century there had been attempts to loosen the stranglehold that the grammar grind had on the study of classics. It was this that was largely to blame for the unpopularity of the subject. Grammar, however, could not be ignored, it was the starting block from which the rest of the curriculum sprang. In 1931 West Downs preparatory school was criticised for spending a whole term on grammar before translating a sentence.⁶ For most Kennedy's *Latin Primer* was an integral part of life. Mary Montagu, at school at the Royal School, Bath in the late thirties, remembers Latin lessons being 'tied to Kennedy',⁷ while her husband writes of his days at Winchester House preparatory school:

In the early days we would revise a page or two of Kennedy's Latin Primer (or the Greek equivalent) every day in prep. Gradually this was extended until we revised half the primer one day, the other half the next - and finally the lot. As you can imagine, we got to know it. This may sound like a dull trudge that would put any one right off. But, oddly enough, I don't remember ever feeling pressurised. The proof of the pudding lies in the fact that Winchester House gained a considerable number of scholarships to public schools every year.⁸

Sometimes the punishment for failure was hard, it was 'driven in via the backside'⁹, crimes such as using a plural verb with a singular subject were a beatable offence in some classes.¹⁰ Whilst this did not seem unreasonable to some, others were alienated by such teaching methods:

You can't I'm afraid instil a love of a subject using the methods of Alcatraz / sing-song.¹¹

However, not all teaching was so harshly delivered, there were those who succeeded in bringing even the sing-song learning of grammar to life:

Latin too could be fun with Miss Davis. Helen Berry (1942-49) recalls reciting the noun for war as "b'lum, b'lum, b'lum" and when they got to the end of the singular

⁶ Inspection Report for West Downs 1931 Ed 109/1956 pg.5.

⁷ Interview with Mary Montagu, 31.1.'96.

⁸ Letter from D. Montagu 17.1.'96.

⁹ Sherborne questionnaire respondent.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

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instead of saying "b'lo" they turned it into "bloater paste". Coalville evacuees also recall her teaching them to sing "Clementine" in Latin, wiping away mock tears when she came to "Periisti occidisti, inde meae lacrimae."¹²

This was a case of girls receiving a more enlivened education than boys. F.S. Fothergill recommended singing in Latin as an end of term activity. He suggested a book by W.H.D.Rouse, *Chanties in Greek and Latin*, in which one of the most popular songs was 'Caesar's Triumph,' also sung to the tune of 'Clementine.'¹³

¹² *King Edward's Grammar School for Girls, Handsworth 1883-1983* 1983, pg.42.

¹³ F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 pg.167 reproduced below W.H.D. Rouse *Chanties in Greek and Latin Written for Ancient Traditional Airs* Blackwell, 1922 pg.73.

CHANTIES

THREE RAVENS.



1. Tres vidi corvos nigrantes
qui sedebant in quercu:
numquam vidi nigriores edepol!
tunc unus vocem fundebat,
"Desiderat hic escam venter:
cedo mi, cedo cedo cedo cedo mi!"
2. "en corpus non procul in campo,
en cadaver prostratum,
lautas epulas et pingues edepol!
sic copia multos per menses
erit esurienti iam praesto:
cedo mi, cedo cedo cedo cedo mi!"
3. "consanguineis quoque reddemus
gratiam mox optatam:
nam post epulas tandem pingues edepol!
erimus monumentum, sarcophagus,
tumulus, bustum, lapis, urna, simul:
cedo mi, cedo cedo cedo cedo mi."

CHANTIES

CAESAR'S TRIUMPH.



1. Ecce Caesar nunc triumphat qui subegit Gallias,
ecce turbam nunc reducit quae refert victoriam.
2. hunc Strabonem nominamus nempe ocellis paetulis;
dexter ad septentriones, laevus austrum prospicit.
3. hic secundus Ahenobarbus, cuius ex mento subit
messis ardens igneorum crinium quae pullulat.
4. deinde totum qui capillis Rufus illustrat locum,
non Apollo sic rubescit, non cometarum chorus.
5. hunc vocamus Tuberonem, fronte quod summa sedet
tuber ingens, sicut Alpes erigunt campis caput.
6. mox videbis Scipionem claudicantem sedulo,
semper incumbit bacillo, quod regit tardos pedes.
7. Crassipes post ambulabit qui pedes crassos habet:
dormiunt infantium par singulis in calceis.
8. ultimus tandem satelles sordidus Cento venit,
obsitos magna colorum copia pannos gerens.
9. militaris multitudo per vias sic ambulat:
ecce Caesar nunc triumphat qui subegit Gallias.
10. audies omnes canentes, dumque proculcant solum
quisque se laudant vicissim, nomen exclamant suum.

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The mistress who took the junior form at Sandroyd was praised in an inspection report in 1930 for her fresh approach:

The mistress who takes the lowest form is well qualified for giving the small boys a start. None of the heaviness too often attaching to Latin lessons was encountered anywhere. There is much variety of method, great care is taken over correct enunciation and accurate ('reformed') pronunciation....teachers are not enslaved to the text book.¹⁴

It is worth noting that here is an example of Latin being taught by a woman in a boys preparatory school. She was obviously the class teacher of those in their first year and had been entrusted with elementary Latin. Old boys often recall the loveliness and warmth of their first year teacher in contrast to the harsher world further up the school.

It was difficult to steer a middle course and there was the danger that poor grounding would lead to poor examination results, a criticism levelled at Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1935.¹⁵

During the 1930's the drive for grammar to be taught 'for use, and not for the defeating of the grammar paper'¹⁶ continued. In 1938 the Classical Association sub committee suggested that 'Grammar should be approached as far as possible by means of an analysis of words, forms and constructions which are actually seen functioning in the sentence; when the rudiments have been mastered further study should be confined to the learning of forms and constructions met within reading.'¹⁷ However evidence such moves were not completely successful can be witnessed in memories that, in spite of their dubious value, boys still continued to learn gender rhymes for 'end of term light relief.'

They were never much use because the words involved were mostly too rare to be encountered even in the most advanced 'unseen' or prose...Yet as a kind of doggerel the gender rhymes had an irresistible appeal.¹⁸

¹⁴ Inspection report for Sandroyd 1930 Ed109/5574, pg.4.

¹⁵ Inspection report for Cheltenham Ladies' College, 1935 Ed109/1644, pg.18.

¹⁶ R.H. Barrow *Latin in the Classroom* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* No. 21 Vol.11 1935, pg.131.

¹⁷ Classical Association *Second Report of the Sub-Committee on the Position of Classics in Schools* 1938, pg.2 .

¹⁸ E. More *Oranges At Half-Time* 1967 pg.20.

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At a meeting in a discussion series on 'The Position of Latin in a Four Year Course' in 1938 Miss Strudwick, Headmistress of St. Paul's Girls' School, confessed, or rather boasted of being 'an uncompromising champion of the old fashioned method of teaching that part [grammar] of the subject.' She did not see syntax and grammar as being 'drudgery to young pupils.'¹⁹ In the ensuing discussion Professor J.A.K. Thomson [branch president] 'put in a plea for explanations of syntactical difficulties in simple non-technical language and suggested that teachers should increase their own mastery of their subject so as to be better able to give clear explanations of its difficulties.'²⁰ This is evidence that there were teachers whose grasp of the subject was so insecure that they felt safest keeping rigidly to the primer; evidence which is supported by Miss Paul, from Kings College, who sympathised with Miss Strudwick's view and considered the 'unpopularity of Latin was due to the inadequate supply of properly qualified teachers.'²¹

An important development in the teaching of Latin was the publication of *Latin For Today* in 1934. The author, an American, Mason Gray, had written to fill a gap in the market and was successful. It became immensely popular with over a million copies being sold by 1961.²² It 'intended to humanise the teaching of Latin...The day of the grammar-grinder has passed, and with him has passed, we hope, the jungle book.'²³ *Latin For Today* was a rescue package for a subject which had suffered at the hands of teachers:

Teachers of Latin, as a class, have done more than any other group to lower the prestige of Latin as a school subject. Their severely...grammatical approach...rooted deep in narrow humanism, have kept the standing of Latin on a low plane.²⁴

However, success could not be guaranteed, as the publicity leaflet produced for the British market pointed out. The key factor remained the enthusiasm and ability of the teacher.²⁵

One benefit of the course was that it was aimed to provide the future specialist with a sound foundation whilst also appealing to those who were not intending to

¹⁹ Minutes of the London Branch of the Classical Association meeting of Nov.30th 1938.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

²² S. Morris *The Position of Latin and Greek in Schools* in *The Educational Review* Vol.13 1960 - 1961, pg.106.

²³ R.L Chambers *Latin For Today* in *Greece And Rome* no.16 vol. 6 Oct 1963, pg.49.

²⁴ Editor's (Paul Klammer) introduction to *The Teaching of Latin* M. Gray 1929 pg.vii.

²⁵ *Latin For Today : A Break With Tradition* Ginn nd, post 1948 pg.16.

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continue to higher education.²⁶ An aim the exams themselves were still trying to reach in 1960 when the 'O' Level became the subject of reform. (See Chapter 10)

It was an attractive series:

The distinct superficial attractions of the book are a wealth of interesting illustrations, excellent type, fresh and ingenious questions on the subject matter and the constant application to English orthography, grammar and vocabulary.

.....from the outset the principle has been maintained that the pupil must be interested in the subject matter and that he must also be satisfied that he is making progress in the language...The pupil is constantly encouraged to take in the sense of the passage as he reads it.²⁷

which fell in line with modern thought that connected Latin should be read as soon as possible and introduce it from the start. Rather than following the traditional order of starting with grammar and moving on to composition and then translation it tackled translation first, then the grammar met in translating, leaving composition to last. Thus grammar was learnt with some existing knowledge of its function rather than as a separate entity.²⁸ *Latin For Today* offered an alternative to the traditional method of dissecting the sentence to translate, 'pupils are trained to take in the thought of a Latin sentence in the Latin order *before translating*.'²⁹ The word order method, as it was known, looked at the sentence in its entirety. The stages were described as:

1. Oral reading of the sentence, clear of interruptions caused by correcting pronunciation.
2. Grouping of words in phrases, exaggerating pauses between to bring out the sense.
3. Re reading the passage after the meaning has been found.
4. Building up of skeleton sentences in which the group or groups find a place.³⁰

The vocabulary of 1,776 words was almost entirely made up (1,691 words) with words from Lodge's *Vocabulary of High School Latin* which contained 2,000 words compiled from Caesar's Gallic War i-v, Virgil's Aeneid i-vi and certain of Cicero's

²⁶ C. McEvoy *Notes for Teachers to Accompany Latin For Today Book One and First Year Course* Ginn nd pg. 3.

²⁷ C. McEvoy. Ed. *Latin by the Mason Gray Method* in *Greece And Rome* no.10 Vol.4 Oct. 1934, pg.38.

²⁸ *Latin For Today : A Break With Tradition* Ginn nd, post 1948 pg. 10.

²⁹ Quote from the preface of *Latin For Today* in F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 pg.113.

³⁰ C. McEvoy *Latin by the Mason Gray Method* in *Greece And Rome* Vol.4 no.10 1934 pg.36.

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speeches. It thus provided a core of words most frequently occurring in texts that were often part of the syllabus.³¹ Links with English words were emphasised.³²

The content of the Latin was entirely Roman, a strategy employed to facilitate progression to authentic Latin.

Some may consider it easier to stimulate or catch interest by 'made up' latinised stories with modern topical reference to football, the dogs or other such present day activities, but any apparent gain is likely to be paid for dearly later, if, and when, the break into Latin authors is more hardly taken.³³

The first page and the accompanying teachers' notes are reproduced overleaf and reflect the above points.³⁴

³¹ *Latin For Today : A Break With Tradition* Ginn nd, post 1948 pg.9.

³² C. McEvoy *Notes for Teachers to Accompany Latin For Today Book One and First Year Course* Ginn nd pg.3.

³³ *Latin For Today : A Break With Tradition* Ginn nd, post 1948 pg.7.

³⁴ M.D. Gray & T. Jenkins *Latin For Today : Book One* Ginn & Co. 1934, this edition 1957 pg.1 and C. McEvoy *Notes for Teachers to Accompany Latin For Today Book 1 and First Year Course to Lesson XL* Ginn & Co. no date page 10.



LATIN FOR TODAY

I

Ancient Europe

Read the following passage aloud. Try, with the help of the illustration on the opposite page, and of any English derivatives which suggest themselves, to get the thought of each sentence. Read the passage several times. Sometimes sentences later on will throw light on what has gone before, and a second or third reading will give you the idea. Then, with the aid of the notes and the vocabulary, clear up any doubtful points. Finally, translate the entire passage into good English.

1. Discipulī, pictūram spectāte (*Pupils, look at the illustration*). Pictūra¹ est tabula¹ Eurōpae² antiquae.³

Ubi⁴ est Britannia? Ubi est Gallia? Ubi est Hispānia? Ubi est Germānia? Ubi est Graecia? Ubi est Italia?

Britannia est insula. Sicilia est insula. Germānia nōn est⁵ insula. Gallia nōn est insula.

Hispānia est paeninsula. Graecia est paeninsula. Italia paeninsula Eurōpae antiquae³ est. Italia est longa. Italia nōn est lāta. Ubi est Rōma? Rōma est in Italiā.

Rōmānī (*The Romans*) in Italiā habitābant (*lived*). Germānī in Germāniā, Britannī in Britannīā habitābant. Gallia erat (*was*) prōvincia Rōmae antiquae.⁴ Hispānia prōvincia Rōmae erat.

in class may best be employed. The assumption throughout is of a forty-minute period. Where the period is longer the extra time may well be used in gathering up by revision the lesson just done.

The following well-tried method of lesson exposition is subjoined for the guidance of young teachers.

I. **Introduction.** Recall by question or narration the knowledge which pupils have and which they are going to connect with new information.

II. **Presentation of new knowledge:** (about two-thirds of the whole time)

III. **Correlation:** make sure old and new are properly joined.

IV. **Application:** apply knowledge gained by a black-board summary.

N.B.—These suggestions are meant merely as hints. They do not pretend to be exhaustive, and it is assumed that the teacher will always have sufficient initiative to accept, reject or modify according to his circumstances. Reckoning 4 periods a week and 12 weeks to a term and 3 terms to a year, the teacher ought to count on at least 140 periods; which should be enough to cover the 52 lessons in the book with ease.

LESSON I

1. The whole lesson should be read aloud slowly by the teacher to the class, the class being asked to notice particularly the pronunciation of vowels and diphthongs.

Words like *discipuli* and *pictūra*; *ubi* and *antiquae*; *Italia* and *Italiā*; should be pronounced close together in order to show clearly the difference between the vowels underlined.

2. This should be repeated by the teacher at least three times.

3. Next the whole class should read the lesson slowly aloud, the teacher watching closely for any mispronunciation of a vowel and marking it at once.

4. This process should be repeated until it is perfect.

5. Then two or three pupils should be selected to read alone.

6. The teacher then reads the lesson through, paragraph by paragraph, paying attention to expression and grouping of words and asking the class to *guess* the meaning of words. (Reference to the vocabulary before translation should be prohibited from the outset.) It will be found that a class of average intelligence will be able to make out the meaning of the first lesson without any reference to the vocabulary.

7. The next step is for the teacher to call attention to the *endings* of words, *e.g.* *picturam* and *pictura*; *Italia* and *Italiā*; *Europae*; *antiquae* and *Romae*; *est*, *erat*, *habitabant*.

These two principles, sensible guessing and attention to endings are vital in the study of Latin and should be practised from the start and carried on throughout the course. Do not be afraid of calling attention to fragmentary and isolated grammatical facts at first. Do not be in a hurry for the ordered setting forth of the paradigms. The mind of the pupil may be trusted to order these facts for itself. The paradigm will come in due time and will be all the more valued when it does come, because the need of it will be felt.

8. When the meaning of the piece is clear, English derivatives may be asked for from such words as *discipuli*, *antiquae*, *insula*, *longa*, etc. Riveting the meaning by a derivative will be found economical of time.

Homework. Copy out carefully and learn the vocabulary. This simple exercise will give the weakest member of the class the chance of making a really good start. In

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However, there were weak points and there were criticisms, one being that it was Latin made easy, but was it Latin?³⁵ Another was that some of the sentences, such as 'Neither booty nor food was being moved from the forests with carts by the men', were clumsy in English. It was criticised for its poor explanations:

"The person by whom something is done, when the verb is passive, may be called the personal agent, which means the same thing." This is neither good English nor common sense.³⁶

There was the feeling that it fell short of the mark:

Latin For Today has good points in comparison with the old time 'jungle book'. It deals with Roman life, it cuts out the ridiculous and exclusive emphasis on consuls, armies and fields and it has pictures. But if we are not to have clarity, and if the language is to be explained and Roman life to be described in terms which are not always the terms of common sense, then however good are the illustrations (and it is a pity that their general tone is so grey and dead) it is still a melancholy fact that our last hopes of this new method are cheated.³⁷

However, little was offered in its place so many welcomed it with open arms. Members of the London branch of the Classical Association thought it valuable, for all its faults. Miss Griffiths (Bromley High School) found it was attractive to the less able who struggled with the traditional course. There was a hope that it might stimulate the creation of more, improved courses.³⁸

In 1934 F.S. Fothergill, a classics teacher at Darlington Grammar school, wrote a thesis on *Latin in the Secondary School* in which he not only explained his own approach to teaching Latin, but he commented on the general scene of classics teaching at that time. His writings reflect the continuing grammar-bound state of teaching.

Are we not concentrating too much on sheer grammar and limited translation to the exclusion of any real knowledge of who the Romans were and what they did?³⁹

³⁵ R.L. Chambers *Latin For Today in Greece And Rome* no.16. Vol.6 Oct. 1963
pg.52.

³⁶ *ibid.* pg.50.

³⁷ *ibid.* pg.53.

³⁸ London Branch of the Classical Association *Discussion Series on the Position of Latin in a Four Year Course* Nov. 1938.

³⁹ F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 pg.45.

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However, in spite of this criticism he promoted a tightly structured syllabus and one in which the progression of grammar and syntax features highly.

In the first year a large amount of grammar must be learnt if the strain always on the second year is not to be increased.⁴⁰

Fothergill himself had started to use *Latin For Today* where each lesson follows the same pattern of translating a piece of connected Latin, notes on grammar, allusion, custom etc., grammar, vocabulary (with words to be learnt underlined), application of Latin to English and oral and written exercises to review and practice the lesson.⁴¹

The sentences are translated mentally as they come without any looking for the verb and only as a last resort are words looked up or given by the teacher.⁴²

He advocated plenty of choral repetition to help learn grammar and set syntax to be learnt from a small note book for home work. Whilst Fothergill liked the Mason Gray method for the first year, he found that the disparity between the reading and the grammar in the second year of the course meant he had to introduce other text books for coping with syntax.⁴³ One must remember that Fothergill was teaching in the state sector and had to complete his course in four or five years, thus his first two years were of necessity grammar based and he hoped that by the third year 'accidence is practically complete and the bulk of syntax also known.'⁴⁴

In 1939 the Board of Education published *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* in which the two approaches to grammar were recognised, the one 'exalts grammar till it becomes an end in itself, the other seems to regard it as so inherently unpalatable that it must be administered in the smallest of doses with many apologies.'⁴⁵ A middle course was suggested, echoing the advice of the Classical Association sub committee and laying stress on the 'practical needs of the moment.'⁴⁶ Explanation of the basic function of grammar is best done in English and the report accepted that this was a problem. A school master writing his own proposals for teaching Latin thought that the only way to start was to make a thorough study of

40 *ibid.* pg.97.

41 *ibid.* pg.113.

42 *ibid.* pg.115.

43 *ibid.* pg.188.

44 *ibid.* pg.234.

45 Board Of Education *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* pamphlet no. 116 1939, pg.39.

46 *ibid.* pg.40.

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English grammar, 'since our English colleagues often refuse to take the burden on their own shoulders, calling it pedantic and soul destroying and mechanical, we must carry it ourselves.'

The Board of Education stressed that grammar tackled should be known thoroughly so that pupils had a flexible knowledge of it rather than just a parrot fashion recall. Due to the intense nature of grammar it was advised against devoting a whole period to it. An added simplification was the recent trend to reduce 'the number of technical terms,' a trend which might be continued by the abolition of 'labels which convey nothing to the pupil.'⁴⁷ Grammar should now be understood and not wrapped in cryptic explanations.

For the very basic syllabus for preparatory school boys the standing joint committee of the Headmasters' Conference and the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools suggested the following guide lines:⁴⁸

<u>Grammar</u>	<u>Syntax</u>
<u>Stage 1</u> Declension of nouns, personal pronouns and adjectives Hic, ille, is, ipse, qui, quis. Cardinal 1-100 and ordinal numbers 1-10 Selected prepositions. Sum and regular verbs (less subjunctive)	Concords: subject and complement. Common uses of cases (including locative) The simple sentence; direct statement, question.
<u>Stage 2</u> Comparison of adjectives and adverbs. More prepositions and pronouns. Cardinal numerals 101 - on; numeral adverbs 1-10 Subjunctive of sum and regular verbs Commoner irregular verbs with their principle parts.	The composite subject; apposition. More uses of cases. Uses of participles; ablative absolute Uses of infinitive; indirect statement. Relative clauses. Commands and prohibitions. Final and consecutive clauses.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* pg.41.

⁴⁸ Standing Joint Committee of H.M.C. and I.A.P.S. 1949, H.M.C. records.

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It was hoped that this would be a basic grounding and that even those not trying for scholarships would go beyond it, a hint that scholars were still being pushed onto advanced levels at the top of their preparatory schools.

After refocusing goals and emphasis the precepts did not change during the forties and fifties. In 1959 the Board of Education issued an update of their 1939 publication. Apart from suggesting that common grammatical terms are used throughout the curriculum their advice on the teaching of grammar had not changed at all, still expecting a knowledge of basic grammar to be thorough.⁴⁹ *Foundations*, published in the same year and designed to refresh the preparatory school curriculum, printed a chart showing the correlation between English and Latin grammar.⁵⁰ It also advised the logical approach to grammar, suggesting, contrary to the Board of Education's advice, that two lessons a week be used for formal work on grammar and syntax.⁵¹ In 1950 Rouse, promoting the direct method, wrote:

But to get the good out of Latin and Greek you must let the poor languages have a chance of living and not kill them at birth. You must not begin Latin with exercises on the first declension, and so on to the fifth so that the matter is determined by the scientific grammar.⁵²

However, as we have seen, much depended on the training and skill of the teacher. The criticisms of an inspection report for St Nicholas' school in 1956 echo those of the past fifty years and reveal that, in spite of the above attempts, life at the chalk face was unchanging in some schools:

They learn the declensions, the conjugations and the rules of syntax and they learn them thoroughly, and on the whole the work is carefully done, but all this is at the expense of reading Latin and acquiring a feeling for the language.⁵³

Yet, there is evidence that where either timetabling restraints and perhaps a decrease in emphasis on grammar teaching had taken place the results were substandard:

⁴⁹ Ministry of Education *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* Pamphlet no.37 1959, pg.36.

⁵⁰ I.A.P.S. *Foundations* 1959, pg.33.

⁵¹ *ibid.* pg.23.

⁵² W.H.D. Rouse *What's the Use of Latin?* Written June 1950, published in *Latin Teaching* 1967 Vol.32 part 4 pg.191.

⁵³ Inspection report for St. Nicholas' school, Fleet Ed172/230 1956, pg.8.

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Staff are justifiably concerned at the insecurity of much of the grounding boys have received in their earlier years.⁵⁴

Such criticisms strengthened the case for the reactionary teachers who needed little persuasion that the traditional way was the best way. They also suggest the ineptness of others who found the grammar grind the safest position to take.

Sir, what is a gerund? (*Master stare at you as if amazed*)

What is a what? (He hav never heard of it)

A gerund, sir.

You ought to kno that. Look it up, boy. (*working himself into a rage*) really the ignorance of 2B they are the worst form i hav ever taken. What is a gerund, indeed! Worse than 3A last year! Much worse.

But what *is* a gerund, sir?

I have told you look it up look it up look it up. (*turning the leaves of the grammer beneath the desk*) A gerund is a - it is a verbal substantive, molesworth, declined like neuters of the second declension any fule knos that. It seems to me extraordinary ect....⁵⁵

Translation and Literature

Translation was the step to literature, the worthwhile goal of learning classics. Most advised tackling translation from the start, gradually building up vocabulary and meeting increasingly complex grammar. There were various moves to promote new and attractive text books that reflected recent emphasis on the importance of reading Latin. One rather specialised publication was *Latin With Laughter* written by Mrs. Frankenburg in 1931. This is was aimed at the lowest form in a preparatory school or the mothers who 'having learnt no Latin, or having forgotten what they have learnt, wish to give their small sons and daughters a foretaste of the subject before school life begins.'⁵⁶ This, described as 'a useful little work', contained simple stories with amusing illustrations and explanations of basic grammar points.

⁵⁴ Inspection report for Marlborough College 1950 ED 109/1977 pg.20.

⁵⁵ G. Willans & R. Searle *The Compleet Molesworth* based on 30's prep school life. This edition 1987 pg.135.

⁵⁶ Mrs. Frankenburg *Latin With Laughter* 1931, pg.9.

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Suitable material for making the transition from elementary sentences to original Latin was still hard to find. Mr Goddard (headmaster of the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Boys' School) suggested simplified extracts, moving on in the third year (of a four-year course) to simplified Caesar.⁵⁸

Even by the fifties there were schools where a slow start was made in continuous Latin, making the early days dull. Harrow was urged by the inspectors to enliven its course by including continuous Latin at the 'earliest possible stage'.⁵⁹ The continued hope was that the swing away from composition 'would allow more time for reading and in particular for a wider and more intelligent reading, for an insistence on a much higher standard of English in translating than at present, and for giving the pupils such knowledge of the historical, political, and social background as will enable them to have a full understanding of the implications and underlying ideas of what they are reading'.⁶⁰ The Board of Education's pamphlet published in 1939 echoed this, reiterating that it was important that the subject matter of any translation was Roman. It criticised those who thought that because composition required more effort it led to better results or those who concentrated the early years on memorising grammar to the expense of the Latin reader⁶¹. Fifteen suggestions were made as to the teaching of translation:

1. Continuous passages should be used as early as possible, within a few weeks.
2. Simple subordinate clauses can be introduced soon, but the vocabulary and grammar should be useful, frequently revised and the gradient of difficulty not too steep.
3. As noted in chapter 5 the third year should be the time to make the gradual transition to Latin authors.
4. Latin should be read aloud, using correct phrasing and intelligent expression.
5. Sentences should not be analysed and dissected too readily, reading aloud will give a good start to unravelling a sentence. Exercises in sentence structure in English and creating one Latin sentence from a series of simple ones will help understanding.
6. Pupils should be given initial help and clues when starting more challenging work.

⁵⁸ London Branch of The Classical Association *Discussion Series on the Position of Latin in a Four Year Course* Nov. 18th 1938.

⁵⁹ Inspection Report for Harrow 1951 Ed109/8988 pg.18.

⁶⁰ Classical Association *Second Report of the Sub-Committee on the Position of Classics in the schools* 1938.

⁶¹ Board of Education *Suggestions for the Teaching of Latin* Pamphlet no.116 1939 pg.25.

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7. Latin words should be associated with an idea rather than a particular meaning. Care should be taken to consider the sense of the sentence when choosing the English.
8. There should be close co-operation between English and Latin teachers.
9. The teacher should not be too keen to tamper with what the pupil has written. The pupil should learn to redraft his own sentences.
10. It is more valuable to translate as a class rather than leave such preparation of set books for prep. Any work set for prep must be marked.
11. The jotting down of a translation of a set book during class is discouraged, as this will lead to errors and a reliance on the English copy. If pupils are given a translation for revision it should be a good, printed one.
12. The teacher must undertake some background reading so that he has an understanding of it as a piece of literature. Books such as parts of the Aeneid can be put in context by reading the surrounding material in translation.
13. Unseen translations are often considered as different, there is no context of story or vocabulary as there is when translating set books. Thus:
 - a.) The piece to be translated should be within the ability of the class.
 - b.) The piece should reflect vocabulary being met in set books.
 - c.) Unseens should be practised orally.
 - d.) The way in which the teacher can tease out the meaning should be apparent to the pupil.
 - e.) Unseen exercises can be used as a stimulus for grammar revision or an opportunity to introduce new vocabulary.
14. Constant repetition is an important way of reinforcing vocabulary. Use of associations and 'memory hooks' should be made:
 - a.) Association of Latin words with French, English and Welsh.
 - b.) Reference of new words to known words by comparison of roots.
 - c.) A collection of prefixes and suffixes.
 - d.) Looking at the development of meaning.
 - e.) Looking at the background of certain words.
 - f.) Gathering words under topic headings.When a mass of new vocabulary is met the teacher should translate most of it, gradually putting the onus back on the pupil. One should beware of over or mis-use of word lists.
15. Pieces that are worthwhile should be learnt by heart to engender confidence with the language.⁶²

In the *Preparatory Schools Review* two years earlier R.H. Barrow had offered the same advice regarding unseens, suggesting that stage fright set in due to the clear

⁶² *ibid.* 1939 pgs 26-39.

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line drawn between literature and unprepared translation.⁶³ He also had the same thoughts on the value of reading Latin aloud.⁶⁴ All this advice was to make the teaching more streamlined and less pedestrian, to eradicate the style of teaching that led to the following criticism:

While the teaching is not incompetent, it is not always very effective and nothing was observed which was stimulating or attractive. The work in general appears to be handled on somewhat unimaginative and unresourceful lines...⁶⁵

The existence of set books was considered a problem by some. The 1938 report of the Classical Association sub-committee saw a 'serious difficulty'. Not only was there a tendency to cramming memorised translations but they severely restricted the breadth of reading. However, as the close study of text and translation are an important component of any course and the set book provides structure to the course it was unlikely the concept would be abolished, their existence was a necessary evil, one that could help ensure success in the final examination. Possible remedies were to reduce the emphasis on set books, devising questions that demanded a real understanding of what was read and encouraging wider reading by placing more emphasis on unseens.⁶⁶ The choice of set book authors reflects the suggested lists noted in Chapter Five. In 1938 the Education Committee of the Assistant Mistresses' Association proposed that school certificate included smaller portions from three books, to be chosen from two selections of Vergil, two selections from Caesar, one from Ovid and one from Cicero. The choice had to include a piece of prose and a piece of verse.⁶⁷ It is interesting to note that the majority of their classics panel were in favour of set books 'either on the ground that they gave the weaker candidates a chance of earning marks, or through the fear that their suppression would lead to the reading of 'snippets'. They felt that the pieces set were too long.⁶⁸ This view seems to be endorsing the parrot-fashion learning to which weaker candidates resorted.

⁶³ R.H.Barrow *Latin as a Living Tongue* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* no.127 Vol.11 1937, pg.373.

⁶⁴ R.H. Barrow *Latin in the Classroom* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* no.121 Vol.11 pg.130.

⁶⁵ Inspection Report for Roedean, 1906/6002 1938, pg.17.

⁶⁶ Classical Association *Second Report of the Sub Committee on the Position of Classics in the Schools* 1938, pg.3.

⁶⁷ Assistant Mistresses' Association Education Committee Minutes 18th June 1938 59/1/15/1-10.

⁶⁸ Assistant Mistresses' Association Classics Panel meeting Feb. 1937 MSS59/1/15/1-10.

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F.R. Dale (Headmaster of City Of London School) defended the use of Caesar, considering its subject matter to have a 'very important bearing on the history of Western Europe.⁶⁹ However, in reality some found the pace of progress and lack of commentary divorced the language from its content as reflected in D.A. Edward's experiences quoted on page 246. F.S. Fothergill noted Monroe's comments that whilst attention should be paid to the setting of Caesar its primary use was to read Latin concluding 'no wonder Caesar is unpopular!⁷⁰ He stressed that the subject matter of texts is not forgotten which 'too often ...is the case'⁷¹

It is necessary to give some account of the various tribes and their mode of life and warfare. I have a map done in the exercise book showing the localities of the various tribes which is open during translation.⁷²

Fothergill's approach contrasts with the experience of D.A. Edward and illustrates just how much stimulating a sense of interest relied upon the teacher. Lewis' opinion that matters military appealed to boys, especially in time of war, was still a valid point:

I found Caesar's Gallic wars and Hanibal walking over the Alps with the elephants very interesting.⁷³

I enjoyed the delightful idiosyncratic teaching of our form master; the adventures of Caesar as he stumped, rather ponderously, across England and Europe made more 'relevant' because of the war.⁷⁴

However, there were boys, not studying in the shadow of war, who found the surfeit of military content tedious:

Too much attention was given to Roman History, everlasting wars!⁷⁵

The activities of the Roman legions in Gaul and elsewhere seemed impossibly remote and boring, no relevance whatsoever, to modern life.⁷⁶

Just as we saw in Chapter Eight that some girls found Caesar tedious, so Fothergill considered the appreciation of poetry a difficult concept for boys, finding that they did not appreciate the beauty of it unless directly shown it. Thus Ovid was not an author

⁶⁹ London branch of the Classical Association *Discussion Series on the Position of Latin in a Four Year Course* Jan. 27th 1939.

⁷⁰ F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 pg.173 referring to Monroe *Principles of Secondary Education* pg.399.

⁷¹ *ibid.* pg.218.

⁷² *ibid.* pg.261.

⁷³ Sherborne respondent 1942 - 1945.

⁷⁴ *ibid.* 1945 - 1949.

⁷⁵ *ibid.* 1928 - 1930.

⁷⁶ *ibid.* 1953 - 1957.

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who fired enthusiasm, although here one suspects Fothergill's opinions are coloured by his own choice.⁷⁷ (The panel of investigators into the School Certificate in 1932 had found that 'from a perusal of candidates' scripts,...Unseen tests in verse translation are beyond the capacity of all but the best candidates both in Greek and Latin'.⁷⁸) The author most suited to 'arouse a desire' to continue Latin Fothergill suggested as being Vergil, he did not consider Cicero's more political writings to be interesting to boys up to sixteen.⁷⁹

As with the teaching of grammar, the advice given by the Board of Education in their 1959 pamphlet had not changed at all from that offered twenty years earlier, although there was the additional suggestion that easy authors are read aloud to encourage the practice of understanding without actual translation.⁸⁰

The Assistant Mistresses' Association was sceptical that set books succeeded in creating a feel for a Latin author, rather 'toil' and 'monotony,' due to the fact that they were part of a tight examination based curriculum.⁸¹ Memories of set book lessons at Sedbergh in the early fifties support this view, see Chapter Seven page 245,⁸² as does the practice of construing the Aeneid at Sherborne in a weekly lesson taken by the headmaster recalled by D. Carey:

We had to prepare the work the night before and he would pick on anyone to translate about six lines at a time. You were allowed a couple of mistakes, but if he thought you weren't sufficiently prepared you were put in detention.⁸³

The stranglehold of the exam syllabus was causing set books to usurp the role that grammar had been allotted in being responsible for deadening the curriculum.

In some schools they simply concentrate on the authors eventually to be set in the leaving examination which is domination with a vengeance!⁸⁴

⁷⁷ F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 pg.266.

⁷⁸ Quoted in a discussion on Curriculum Reform in *The Preparatory Schools Review* vol. 11 no.126 1937 pg.311.

⁷⁹ F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 pg.278.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Education Pamphlet no.37. 1959, pg.31.

⁸¹ Assistant Mistresses' Association Report 1939 MSS 59/4/1/3-26 pg.19 and Education Committee meeting minutes May 1937 MSS 59/1/15/1-10.

⁸² Written reminiscences of D.A. Edward pupil at Sedbergh 1948 to 1953.

⁸³ Oral interview with D. Carey 27.10.1998.

⁸⁴ F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 pg.43.

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Fothergill doubted that the aim of gaining an all round picture through what was read was practical. He thought that 'even the set book done in the certificate year is obscured and blurred from this point of view by the prime necessity of being able to *translate*'.⁸⁵ Even so he thought it 'important to provide an adequate background for the authors read without prejudicing the actual translation'.⁸⁶

...the main object should be to secure a grasp on the subject matter and by comprehending this to secure an introduction to the intellectual life and civilisation of the Romans. A general survey of the book studied should always be given afterwards and special reference made to its historical background.⁸⁷

Some teachers achieved the aim of instilling an appreciation of literature and the people who wrote it, while others failed. Some tried, but did not succeed, perhaps due to a lack of maturity on the part of their charges, others were not even trying:

Today, I marvel at the succinct aptness of Horace whom I could not bear at school. I knew about syllepses and zeugmas and anacolouthons, but no one pointed out the poetry or the wonderful pithiness of Latin.⁸⁸

It is probable that interest in the subject would be heightened and progress accelerated if it were found possible to implement the recommendation of the last I.A.P.S. report that 'throughout the course frequent periods should be devoted to an easy reading book and that this should be the basis of the method of teaching'.⁸⁹

85 *ibid.* pg.50.

86 *ibid.* pg.235.

87 *ibid.* pg.279.

88 Sherborne respondent 1936 - 1941.

89 Inspection report for Brockhurst School Ed 172/259 1956, pg.4.

Composition

The value of prose composition continued to be questioned. In 1932 Dr. Norwood chaired a panel that investigated the School Certificate examination. They found that:

Continuous prose composition should not be compulsory in either Greek or Latin. The panel are strongly in favour of its omission from the School Certificate Examination on the grounds that the work of the average candidate in this exercise is usually worthless.⁹⁰

In an article in the *Preparatory Schools Review* suggestions were made that the Composition paper of the Common Entrance Examination should comprise two parts; one part to contain simple sentences, demanding 'some solid knowledge of Latin.' The second section would be optional and test more complex sentence structure. The benefits of this would be that more time would be available to teach English and it would 'enormously lighten the load of the sub-average boy, who suffers under the present system, without holding back the brighter specimens.'⁹¹ For boys at preparatory school composition remained an integral part of the curriculum. John Graham, a pupil at Sunningdale, recalls writing out the master's (G.A. Ling, 'a superb and rather formidable teacher') 'best copies' after they had attempted translation themselves. An example of his work can be found in Chapter Six, page 207. The prime target of the master was the Eton scholarship and the boys 'did' the past scholarship papers at least once a week before sitting the exam.⁹²

It was thought however that the role of composition should be changing, becoming subsidiary to translation, and as R.H. Barrow suggested consolidating work recently met in translation and not set as a trap to trip up struggling pupils.⁹³ The Classical Association sub-committee report into the teaching of classics in schools in 1938 reinforced these sentiments, emphasising that, except in the cases of those who were to become specialists, composition should not be studied as an end in itself.

The aim should be that pupils should be able to write easy straightforward sentences using the words and constructions of the authors read[,] rather than endeavour to learn

⁹⁰ Quoted in *Curriculum Reform* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* No. 126 Vol. 11 1937, pg.311.

⁹¹ J.A.R. *Latin Composition Paper in the C.E.E.* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* No.126 Vol. 11 1937, pg.321.

⁹² From correspondence with and personal papers of J. Graham. Pupil at Sunningdale School, 1937 to 1939.

⁹³ R.H. Barrow *Latin in the Classroom* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* No. 121 Vol. 11 1935, pg.131.

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a wide assortment of constructions and idioms seldom[,] if ever[,] encountered in their reading.⁹⁴

In the discussions on the four year Latin course at the London branch of the Classical Association it was generally agreed that composition was valuable, Mr Oakley, City of London School, finding it forced the artistically minded to be accurate. However Miss Jeremy, from West Ham Secondary School, found that her pupils' grasp of the English sentence was so weak that they experienced difficulty coping with analysis of Latin sentences. A comment from Miss Gerner that the teacher 'must thoroughly understand the subject in order to make it attractive' hints that there were teachers who went by the book purely because they knew no other way.⁹⁵

The Board of Education's advice in 1939 reinforced the opinion that composition should be closely linked with translation; a sort of retranslating should be practised. This would ensure that constructions were met in their own tongue first, rather than by the back to front method of the English to Latin sentence.⁹⁶ Nine guidelines were offered to the reader:

1. Retranslation enables the teacher to control the grammar and vocabulary content of the sentences. The use of some oral work will speed the process.
2. Sentences should be designed so that a high level of accuracy can be achieved. 'A technique of teaching which openly treats Latin composition as successful negotiation of a series of traps or "snags" or tricks and the testing of which encourages or waits upon such teaching have been responsible for much bad and spiritless work.'
3. Written sentences should be done at school where the teacher can spot and correct errors at once. There should be great use of oral work.
4. At first six sentences are sufficient to tackle, thereafter a child should be faced with no more than ten. The reality is that much more is usually set for prep. or homework due to the need to set prep., its use as a starting point for the next lesson and the need to practise, a need which is not met if the sentences are too hard.
5. Composition and translation lessons should not be treated separately, one can proceed from the other in the same lesson.

⁹⁴ *Second Report of the Sub-Committee on the Position of Classics in the Schools* 1938, pg.2.

⁹⁵ London branch of the Classical Association *Discussion Series on the Position of Latin in a Four Year Course* Nov.30th 1938.

⁹⁶ Board of Education *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* Pamphlet no.116 1939, pg.42.

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6. Work set to be completed out of class should be prepared so that it can be successfully accomplished.
7. As pupils develop they will progress on to work independent of translation. All previous advice should be noted still.
8. Occasionally the class could compose a continuous piece of Latin by a collective oral method.
9. The transition from sentences to prose should be a gradual one. Pupils should be given advice as to Latin idiom and style. References to set books are a helpful aid. Sentences can be joined from a series of short ones to explore sentence structure.

The pamphlet recognised that verse composition was practised in some preparatory schools and some secondary schools before specialisation in the sixth form. It emphasised that pupils should have experience of Latin verse authors and that the teaching of metre should depend on hearing and sound, rather than on written rules.

Very much time is wasted in the attempt to make boys put together selected words to make a verse before they have either the experience of Latin, and particularly verse vocabulary, or the sense of rhythm which are necessary preliminaries.⁹⁷

Once a sense of rhythm is thoroughly mastered, good verse writing will follow. Evidence that Latin verse had fallen from grace is seen in a bulletin of the Headmasters' Conference in 1952 in which it was noted that there was a shortage of text books on Latin verse.⁹⁸ The following year the headmaster of Westminster reported that there were no books for Latin verse in print and in his opinion it was not worth reprinting any of those in use apart from Ainger and Wintle's *An English - Latin Gradus*.⁹⁹

Foundations, intended to bring Latin in the preparatory school in line with modern teaching, advised that composition should not be tackled until 'there is complete mastery of Latin.'¹⁰⁰ However, it did not suggest that composition was inappropriate for the preparatory school boy.

Whilst composition was no longer treated with the same reverence as it had been at the start of the century, it was not dead. The Board of Education's

⁹⁷ Ibid. pg.48.

⁹⁸ Headmasters' Conference 1952 Bulletin pg.17.

⁹⁹ Headmasters' Conference 1953 Bulletin pg.3.

¹⁰⁰ I.A.P.S. *Foundations* 1959, pg.23.

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pamphlet¹⁰¹ issued in 1959 printed, as it had with grammar, the same advice as it had done in 1939. In some schools composition, including verse composition was very much alive. D. Edward recalls working at prose and verse compositions and then writing down a fair copy composed by Oxford dons, available in books such as *Oxford Compositions* 'knowledge of whose existence was carefully concealed from us.' The following example show a fair copy composition made by D. Edward in 1950 when aged fifteen. It reveals a painstaking, time consuming approach to this aspect of the curriculum and is evidence that composition was still a serious part of the curriculum in some schools.¹⁰² That Sedburgh was not an isolated case is illustrated by the following piece of composition from a fair copy note book belonging to D. Carey dating from his time in the Classical Sixth at Sherborne.¹⁰³

101 Board of Education Pamphlet no.37.

102 Personal papers of D. Edward.

103 Personal Papers of D. Carey.

When I am dead my dearest
Sing no sad songs for me,
Plant thou no roses at my head,
No shady cypress-tree.

Be the green grass above me
With showers and dew-drops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain,
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain.

And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

Christina Georgina Rossetti.

Mortua sum furo ne me dignare querellis.
Dedit in exsequias nomina vana meas.
Neu rosa floreat capiti, praeter, arborea n
Neu signet maculam nigra supressum
Qua mea membra subant tamcum pia gen
terre

Quam largi rotes et levis imber alax,
Tu si fere amicus modo me vixisse memos
Ni potius moris immemot esse mai;
Non equidem certam rukantes debuerat un
Securos cimeter nulla lacebat hiemps.
Non subcultanki mihi mocha videbitur aegro
Flebilis quiddam Paulus est questi:
Ludere imaginibus tullebusti vaporis hoto
Quae neque fere noctem nec fugit ante
Totum erit meminisse cui per somnia; ff
Nulla mihi vicia curas prioris erit.

Annot Stone.

Hic iam octavus annus, vir clarissime ex quo
aut aditu omnino tuo ~~et~~ prohibebam aut admissus expect-
abam dum tibi vacaret. ~~et~~ Per tantum temporis spatium inter
molestias quas nihil agam conquereudo hoc opus urgeo,
donec iam sum editurus nullo tuo beneficio adiutus,
nulla erectus cohortatione, ne levissima quidem favoris
aura proventus; quamquam meliora speraveram ut qui
nullum ante te tamquam Maecenatem mihi eleg^{isse}~~erem~~.
Hoc quaeso habebat Maecenas ut hominem naufragum
de vita desperantem ex terra lentus intrueretur, eadem
cum ad terram salus evasis^{et} ~~erat~~ ^{praest} auxilium ~~per~~ iam
molestum? Quod de meo opere nuper aliquid scripsisti,
id maturius oblatum libenter accepissem, nunc dilatum
frigidumque fastidiosum, oribus non iam habeo quibus
impertiam, notus non desidero. Nec cuiquam velim
idcirco nimis asper et inhumannus videri quod, qui
mihi nihil praestitit, ei ipse nihil referam acceptum,
quodque nolim omnibus videri ea Maecenatibus debere
quae deorum beneficio ipse perficere potuimus.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms or was repulsed from your door; ~~It~~ during which time I have been ~~at~~ pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, or word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I ~~do~~ did not expect, for I never had a patron before. Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of ~~my~~ my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary and cannot impart it; ~~it~~ till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Dr. Johnson.

Greek

The popularity of and the opportunity for Greek had dwindled considerably by this latter part of our period. In 1930 Greek was only taken by a few scholarship boys at Sandroyd and then at times outside the regular timetable.¹⁰⁴ The lack of provision of Greek for girls restricted the number who were able to study Latin in the classical group for the higher certificate.¹⁰⁵ However, it remained as an option for the brightest in public schools and some preparatory school boys took the Greek option paper in Common Entrance.

Some thought it preferable to start Greek before Latin, in fact when Sir Richard Livingstone addressed the Headmistresses' Association on the subject of Greek at their annual conference in 1936, Miss Barrie was so inspired that she determined to start half her pupils on Greek first.¹⁰⁶ However, it was generally accepted that Latin would give valuable training in grammar and syntax and so made a rational stepping stone to Greek. The Board of Education's 1939 pamphlet advised that if this were so progress in Greek should be rapid.¹⁰⁷ At first there should be at least a lesson a day, after a year of such study at preparatory school a pupil would be able to cope at public school. An opportunity for public schools to offer beginner's Greek was also pressed for. As many of the grammar concepts would be familiar vocabulary presented the greatest challenge, syntax, should be covered as it is met in reading. However, it is interesting to note that Eton, where Greek was very strong, was encouraged to teach Latin and Greek 'more synoptically', so that a 'much closer relationship between the construe and assimilation of vocabulary, grammar, syntax and historical knowledge could then be sought'.¹⁰⁸ As with Latin, the problem of unnecessary complex grammar still existed. Dora Pym thought the pages of verbs in conventional grammars 'mortify the courage of beginners and do, in a sense, mislead them, because everything looks equally important and there is no light and shade'.¹⁰⁹ As with Latin, pupils experienced the routine approach that failed to convey a sense of

¹⁰⁴ Inspection Report for Sandroyd Ed. 109/5574 1930, pg.5 .

¹⁰⁵ Association Of Assistant Mistresses *Memorandum II on Classics in Girls Schools* 59/4/5/3 no date, pg.6.

¹⁰⁶ Headmistresses' Association Annual Conference June 13th 1936 188 TBN47, pg.61.

¹⁰⁷ Board of Education Pamphlet no.116 1939, pg.62.

¹⁰⁸ Inspection report for Eton 1954 Ed109/8640 pg.38.

¹⁰⁹ D. Pym *Outlines for Teaching Greek Reading* 1961 pg.7.

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the living tongue. D.A. Edward remembers being taught the theory of accents and particles, 'but without any hint that they had something to do with everyday speech'.¹¹⁰

In 1938 a joint committee of the Classical and English Associations met to discuss the teaching of Latin and Greek. The number taking the Greek option in the Modern Studies group of the Higher School Certificate was 'almost negligible' and they were looking for ways to boost interest. An alternative syllabus was suggested, primarily designed to students of English who started Greek in the sixth form. It would involve translation, comprehension and unseen work. Two of the following four options would be expected; Homer, three tragedies, one to be read in the original and the others in translation, Plato and Herodotus.¹¹¹ The Education Committee of the Assistant Mistresses' Association agreed with the principle, but felt that the amount of books set was too demanding.¹¹² Failing the option for any Greek language course their classical panel felt that at least 'an appreciation' course should be available for students of modern literature.¹¹³

The standing joint committee of the Headmasters' Conference and I.A.P.S. suggested that two years Greek would give a suitable grounding at preparatory schools. The aims should be to provide:

- 1) An outline knowledge of the history and civilisation of the Greeks.
- 2) A simple but well-grounded foundation of common grammatical forms, vocabulary and elementary syntax, which will enable the boy a) to translate easy passages, simplified where necessary, from Greek authors; b) to write, in Greek, sentences which involve only the simplest constructions.¹¹⁴

There was a warning against anticipating the public school curriculum by tackling Tragedy and continuous prose composition. As with Latin, emphasis should be on the Greeks themselves:

¹¹⁰ Written reminiscences of D.A. Edward. Pupil at Sedbergh 1948 to 1953.

¹¹¹ Joint Committee of the Classical and English Associations discussions on the teaching of Latin and Greek. Classical Association archives 1938.

¹¹² Assistant Mistresses' Association Education Committee Minutes 18th June 1938 MSS59/1/15/1-10.

¹¹³ Assistant Mistresses' Association. *Memorandum II on Classics in Girls' Schools* no date MSS59/4/5/3 pg.12.

¹¹⁴ Standing Joint Committee of H.M.C. and I.A.P.S. Headmasters' Conference 1949 pg.20.

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Greek, however, is not learnt primarily for its grammatical discipline, but in order that the legacy of Greece may be understood and appreciated through the study of Greek literature.¹¹⁵

The Committee did not prescribe a specific syllabus, but allowed freedom for teachers, merely suggesting that Herodotus, Xenophon and Thucydides would be suitable authors in the early stages.

In 1937 the problem of the supply of Greek texts was discussed by the Headmasters' Conference. Varied demands from different examination boards was resulting in texts becoming unavailable, publishers were not interested in small print runs; it was an expensive process to set the Greek script for printing. Thus they aimed to encourage examination boards to tighten the syllabus, so that publishers could be encouraged to print new editions.¹¹⁶ Although less pressing a problem they followed the same course of action for Latin.

In 1950 R. Schoder wrote an article in *Greece And Rome* suggesting that the text read dictated the grammar, syntax and vocabulary tackled. With this method he believed that Homer could be used successfully as a reader for beginners Greek.¹¹⁷

There is no evidence that this method was widely accepted. Traditional schools tended to keep to traditional methods, similar to those used to teach Latin. D. Edward's Greek composition, over leaf, reveals a standard and approach similar to that of his Latin composition.¹¹⁸ Greek was only available to the brightest, but its rarity did nothing to detract from the quality of curriculum.

115 *ibid.* pg.21.

116 Headmasters' Conference on classical texts *Bulletin* no.1 1937 pg.6.

117 R.V. Schoder (American Jesuit; author of *Greece From the Air*) *Homer to the Rescue : A New Method in Beginners' Greek* in *Greece And Rome* No.55 Vol.19 Jan.1950, pg.11.

118 D. Edward private papers.

O mother, I am not fain to strive in speech
Not set my mouth against thee, who art wise,
Even as they say, and full of sacred words.
But one thing I know surely and cleave to this;
That though I be not subtle of wit as thou
Not woman-like to weave sweet words and melt
mutable minds of wise men as with fire,
I too, doing justly and reverencing the gods,
shall not want wit to see what things be right.
For whom they love and whom reject, being gods,
There is no man but seeth, and in good time
Submits himself, refraining all his heart.

Ewingsbutne.

ὄ βούλομαι σοί, μήτε, ἐς λόγων μολεῖν
^{is that pertaining}
στομώσεως ἔμιλλαν, ἥτις εἰ σοφή,
ὡς φασιν αἶδε, ^{καὶ ἐστὶν ἡ} χῶσιον λόγων τίλεα.
ἀλλ' ἐν γε μήν κάτοιδα κοῦκ ^{give up} ἀφίσταμαι.
οὐ γάρ τι καγὼ ^{wit} φερντίδας ^{what I get for} πυκνός τις ὤν
^{of the} δίκην ^{himself} γυναικὸς ^{pleasant} Σωπυρῶ ^{mark} τὰ ^{depression} ἱερπύ' εἶπη,
σοφοῖσιν ^{myself} ἐστίαθμητον ὡς ^{mark} ἰήκειν φρένα.
ἔμως δίκην τε ^{base} καὶ θεοὺς ^{depression} αἰδουμένους
οὐδ' αὐτὸς εἰ ^{base} λείπομαι μὴ οὐχ ὄραν εἰ χ
οὐς γὰρ φιλοῦσιν οὐς τ' ^{myself} ἀναιγόνται θεοί
οὐκ ^{is that} ἔστιν ὅστις οὐχ ὄρα, ^{sometime} μαθὼν ποτέ
^{is that} εἴκειν ^{is that} χαλινῶ τ' ^{is that} ὄχμασαι τὸ πᾶν κέερα.

Aischylus - Hinds

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However, Greek continued to struggle for survival, particularly in the less traditional schools and girls' schools, as we noted in Chapter Eight the number of girls taking Greek was usually confined to very small groups. The 1959 Board of Education pamphlet, *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* noted:

Not infrequently, Greek makes its way into the curriculum of schools and especially of girls schools by such heroic measures as volunt lunch-hour groups or informal after-school classes.¹¹⁹

In the most traditional of schools, Eton, Greek continued to thrive:

The position of Greek in the school is remarkable in this country and it was refreshing to see Grecians coming 'not as single spies, but in battalions.'¹²⁰

This encouraging description of what was a rare occurrence was soon to become a piece of history as by 1960 the percentage of candidates offering Greek at 'O' level at Eton had fallen from 33% in 1950 to just 10% in 1960.¹²¹

Roman Civilisation and History

Classics traditionally meant the study of the Latin and Greek language and very little else, at least until one began to specialise after School Certificate. However, in order to convince popular opinion of the value of the study of dead languages there was an increased emphasis on the civilisations behind those languages.

It must be regarded as an essential part of a course of Latin in the main school that the pupils should gain a reasonably full and definite conception of the character and achievement of the Romans.¹²²

Achieving the right balance between language and history was difficult. Whilst the two were inseparable, there existed a certain tension between them as to where and how to place the emphasis.

It is, however, almost entirely a study of the language, and little attention seems to be given to Roman life and history. Moreover, there is a tendency artificially to divide the language into separate compartments Latin - English, English - Latin and Grammar.¹²³

119 Board of Education Pamphlet no. 37 1959 pg.57.

120 Inspection report for Eton 1954 Ed109/8640 pg.39.

121 See Appendix no.III pg.415.

122 Board of Education Pamphlet no. 116 1939, pg.51.

123 Inspection Report for Hawtreys 1948 Ed109/9177 pg.4.

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The obvious link was through the reader or set text; as F.R.Dale (headmaster of City of London School) reminded the London branch of the Classical Association in 1939 'the prime motive for learning a language was to find out what it says, and only secondarily how it says it'.¹²⁴ At the same meeting it was agreed that because so few learnt Greek 'background' work should include something of Greek interest as well. However, a word of warning against swinging the balance too far away from the language was given by F. Kinchin-Smith from the Institute of Education:

If 'background' teaching was overdone it might lead to our teaching not Latin, but something about Latin.¹²⁵

The Board of Education noted that in many preparatory and public schools little attention was paid to this aspect of the curriculum, either due to lack of time or lack of inclination. The view that background work was something added to a course was incorrect and did not help its fight for inclusion. Mythology was not as popular as it had been, so children did not even have that head start. It was to the advantage of classics if cross-curricular links could be forged between English, History and Latin teachers. The Board of Education made nine suggestions for teaching background material:

1. From the start the reader should be Roman in content.
2. Comments on material read are vital and must not be crowded out by the needs of the language.
3. The teacher should prepare points to note, even with an elementary reader before the lesson. Such comments should stimulate interest, rather than be a collection of facts.
4. There is a mistake in assuming children already know about fundamental operations familiar to the ancients, such a throwing a pot.
5. Discussion should arise from the text, but not replace it.
6. Frequent short talks, rather than more formal lessons are valuable and stimulate interest.
7. Pictures should be used judiciously. They should be good, easy to see and have a written description beside them. Postcards and pictures from journals are a good source of material and can be shown on an epidiastroscope to a wide audience. Lantern lectures are of value if the slides are carefully selected and the pupils prepared.

¹²⁴ London Branch of the Classical Association *Discussion Series on the Position of Latin in a Four Year Course* Jan. 1939.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

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8. The quality of commentary is more important than whether specific background lessons are available or not.
9. Regular information is important, thus a weekly lesson can be valuable. Such a lesson throughout the course will provide a very sound base.¹²⁶

The pamphlet warned against the premise that concentration on Roman Britain would provide sufficient knowledge. Some schools relinquished some time from grammar in one term of the third year to give a broad view of topics such as early empire, religion, social life, provinces and Roman Britain. If such a course is well balanced it is valuable. This advice necessitated a broad base of knowledge on the part of the teacher, warning those who were tempted to follow their own specific interests in detail. It was suggested that an overview of history should be attempted, rather than in-depth study of one period. Due to the restraints of time it would not be possible to give detailed treatment to all topics and one should consider the likely interests of one's pupils. The value of outings to inter-school lectures was emphasised as being able to create an interest that was intrinsic, rather than tied to the classroom.

An unusual item was a puppet performance by M.P.D. (of the Birds of Aristophanes)...this latter item and Miss Ford's lecture (slides of Greece and the Isles of Greece) were specially arranged for the interschools Classical Club of South London. We had full houses for both these engagements.¹²⁷

One Old Shirburnian remembers a teacher who successfully incorporated background work into his curriculum.

I was extremely fortunate to have a superb teacher throughout, as well as a live archaeological site nearby, with which those few who were interested became very involved. Latin came alive as part of our history!¹²⁸

Miss Hayward took girls from Cheltenham Ladies' College to archaeological sites or suitable Classical Association lectures. However, as in other areas, much depended on the teacher and there were those who failed to inspire:

I imagine lack of popularity was due to the very routine teaching which made no attempt to exploit the interesting aspects of the Roman Empire.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Board of Education Pamphlet no. 116 1939, pgs.53 - 58.

¹²⁷ London Branch of the Classical Association Secretary's report of the A.G.M. March 20th 1956.

¹²⁸ Sherborne respondent 1944 -1948.

¹²⁹ *ibid.* 1954-1959.

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Few of us at a relatively minor public school like Sedbergh, came from a background in which parents or relatives.....had visited Greece or Italy...there was no television from which we could have gained an impression of what they were like. There were not even any colour photos to speak of, and our visual impressions of the ancients and their world were gleaned from dreary black and white illustrations in text books. Unless the schoolmaster was capable of stimulating visual imagery, a gift given only to a few, there was little to arouse the imagination.¹³⁰

The situation at St Mary's, Wantage, is evidence that D.A. Edward was not alone in his experiences. There was a large collection of classical material in the library, 'but of the kind mostly calculated to appeal to the older pupil and specialist, and seemingly little used.'¹³¹ They were advised to stock up on material that would appeal to younger pupils, Eton College Choir School received the same advice.¹³²

The 1959 update of the Board of Education's pamphlet echoed the advice given in 1939, but it did place far more emphasis on the use of visual aids, which by then were more readily available and of a higher quality.

The language was the main hurdle in passing School Certificate and gaining that all important qualification and so for many this necessitated a single minded effort, being given little opportunity to explore the setting of what they were studying:

It was taught badly and one spent one's days learning verbs etc. that meant nothing.¹³³

The Oxford Examination Board report that 'many candidates were handicapped by insufficient knowledge of the literary and historical background.' reflects the lack of importance given to this by many.¹³⁴

However, those who were classicists and continued into classical sixth forms had the opportunity to concentrate on Ancient History. Note books containing the work of D. Edward completed in the classical sixth at Sedbergh show he wrote essays on such topics as 'What compensating advantages were there in Greek tyranny?' 'What does the modern historian find to criticise in Herodotus and Thucydides?' He studied

¹³⁰ Written reminiscences of D.A. Edward pupil at Sedbergh 1948 to 1953.

¹³¹ Inspection Report for St. Mary's, Wantage. 1955 Ed109/8632 pg.12.

¹³² Inspection report for Eton 1955 Ed109/8640 pg.5.

¹³³ Sherborne respondent 1947 -1950.

¹³⁴ Reports on Oxford Board Examinations 1937, pg.33.

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Roman provincial administration under the Republic as a special topic and wrote a project on Roman Britain, including some history, chapters on Romano- British pottery, Celtic art and the influence of Rome, maps etc.¹³⁵ Likewise, D. Carey's sixth form work at Sherborne, reproduced overleaf, displays depth and detail.¹³⁶ The able had time and interest to enjoy a full syllabus. Many wanted to stimulate this enthusiasm in those who were less able, but not all who worked in the classroom could to achieve this.

He might, however, without sacrificing that vigour, introduce the boys more readily to the culture and civilisation of which the Latin language is one important expression.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Personal papers of D. Edward 1951/2.

¹³⁶ Personal Papers of D. Carey 1948.

¹³⁷ Inspection report for Milton Abbey 1957 Ed172/226 pg.11.

legions

leg. I Fulminata - Syria	leg. X Pretensis - Syria	leg. XIX	
" II Augusta - 1000	" XI	" XX	Valeria Vitruvia (Duro)
" III Gallia - Syria	" XII	" XXI	
" IV Scythica - Moesia	" XIII	" XXII	Pinnagunia
" V Macedonia - Moesia E. York.	" XIV Gemina Martia - Danube		
" VI Vitruvia - Gothia Vitruvia (Rhine)	" XV Appolinaris - Pannonia		
" VII Gemina - Spain	" XVI		- Rhine
" VIII Augusta - Danube	" XVII		
" IX Hispania - York	" XVIII		Subidiaria: 1st Adjutrix - Danube Spain

The Assemblies (Comitia)

Comitia Cuiata superseded by Comitia Antunistia

met in Campus Martius Comitia Tributa - 35 Tribes

Consilium plebis almost same

100 senators in Senate - all ex-magistrates: great experience Consul - general + administrative Post

Practor - deal with law

Quaestor - finance

Aediles - Temples & public functions

Provinces governed by praesul + propraetor

"Aureus honorum" 43 age for consul

8 yrs interval necessary 40 praetor

(4 aediles) 37 aedile 34 quaestor

one plebeian & one patrician - laws

but usually two plebeian

The Direct Method

By the 1920's the direct method's popularity was waning. Some recognised the anomaly of learning a language and not speaking it, but due to the restraints of the exams could not embrace the direct method wholeheartedly. By the 1930's the critics were more vocal than the supporters. H.N.P. Sloman wrote in 1933:

I often wish that I could convince myself that the Direct Method.....was the solution of our difficulties; but I can not.¹³⁸

An article in the *Preparatory Schools Review* in 1934 attacked the direct method for failing to achieve its goals. The writer thought it a short cut that had not even worked for the teaching of French:

It has never been shewn that the time spent in trying to teach boys to speak and understand French 'like a native' is worthwhile anywhere.¹³⁹

The author of the article criticised the lack of accuracy that was a result of direct method teaching. Others were less vehement in their criticisms, some thinking it an attractive option, but one that was not successful.¹⁴⁰ Miss Strudwick, Headmistress of St. Pauls' Girls' School, provoked a lively discussion about the advantages of the direct method at a meeting of the London branch of the Classical Association in 1938. She criticised the way in which it introduced 'ideas belonging to another age' and 'idiom alien to the genius of the language'. Her view were rebuffed by those who maintained that the Romans were ordinary people who had ordinary conversations.¹⁴¹ Fothergill had tried using the direct method and liked the fact that it 'makes the boys feel that the Romans were living people like ourselves'.¹⁴² He also appreciated the more spontaneous approach to translation. However, he did experience problems, one being that due to the nature of the lessons there was more opportunity for boys to get out of control and even start 'fooling about'. It was hard to assess if a pupil had understood or not as some were reluctant to admit 'non intellego.' One also missed out on the 'value of logical training' of Latin, thus 'sacrificing the gains which are considered to be the real value of Latin.'

¹³⁸ H.N.P. Sloman *The Tyranny of Latin* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* no.116, Vol.10 1933, pg.424.

¹³⁹ G.C. *Direct Action and Reaction* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* No.117, Vol.10 1934, pg.471.

¹⁴⁰ *Latin for Beginners* by 'A fifth form master' in *Greece And Rome* No.43, Vol.15 1946, pg.24.

¹⁴¹ London branch of the Classical Association *Discussion Series on the Position of Latin in a Four Year Course* Nov.1938.

¹⁴² F.S. Fothergill *Latin in the Secondary School* 1934 pg.83 .

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I have concluded that the Direct Method is not only unsuitable for present conditions, but is even a step in the wrong direction and consider that it is to be avoided. This does not preclude, however, all spoken Latin. A certain amount of questioning and answering in Latin may well be part of the oral work....Latterly I have tended to cut it out to a large extent.¹⁴³

However, the general dismissal of the direct method did not exclude the speaking of Latin entirely. The Board of Education's 1939 pamphlet thought that 'both teacher and pupil utter too little Latin in the classroom and certainly the pupil utters too little Latin with his eyes off the book.'¹⁴⁴ It advised that oral and written work should be combined to aid with learning words, immediate correcting of mistakes and saving time. Some used short Latin phrases as part of classroom routine:

In class pupils were greeted in Latin 'Salvete O Puellae', they were expected to reply in like manner 'Salve O Magistra' and were given Latin names.¹⁴⁵

Of course, unless oral work was treated sensitively it could be used to terrorise the less able or shy pupil:

Latin was unpopular because one was very self conscious of making a fool of oneself in front of the class during translation or the spoken word.¹⁴⁶

At Harrow a lack of confidence in speaking Latin was noted. This 'hesitancy' was caused by the varied pronunciations in use. This observation by the inspectorate would suggest that oral work was rare and the reformed pronunciation not completely adopted.¹⁴⁷ Eton was warned of the same problem in 1955;¹⁴⁸ examples of the independence of independent schools. The Classical Association inter-schools Latin reading competitions¹⁴⁹, which were so successful, helped to kindle interest in London at least in Latin as a spoken tongue.

W.H.D. Rouse himself had devoted his retirement, begun in 1928, to translating, although in 1932 he did make a series of records of Latin lessons.¹⁵⁰ Just

143 *ibid.* pg.89.

144 Board of Education Pamphlet no. 116 1939, pg.20.

145 S. Harrop *Merchant Taylors' School for Girls* 1988, pg.138.

146 *Sherborne Correspondent* 1931 - 1935.

147 Inspection report for Harrow 1951 Ed109/8988 pg.17.

148 Inspection report for Eton 1955 Ed109/8640 pg.39.

149 Classical Association, Committee meeting minutes of the London branch, 1952.

150 C.A. Stray *The Living Word* 1992 pg.56.

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before his death in 1950 he wrote a piece promoting the direct method and jolting memories about its aims:

The result always is, that the language is taught better, in shorter time, and with more complete success, and - most important of all - the learners are happy all the while. Do not suppose this is a soft option, slipshod work, inaccurate and unscholarly.¹⁵¹

By 1956 interest in promoting classics was strong, but the direct method had few supporters.

The position of Latin has become precarious; but one might expect that where it has survived in schools at all, it would be approached at least in an awareness of the Rouse 'revolution'. This does not seem to be the case. There are probably no more than 30 teachers in England who use the direct method to any appreciable extent.¹⁵²

The reasons for its lack of popularity were thought to be the universities who considered it 'unscholarly and flippant' on the one hand and the teachers who felt the standard demanded 'too high' on the other. The writer of the article thought that reprinting Rouse's books and more intensive marketing than the occasional demonstration lesson was required; the ultimate rescue being a demand for classics graduates to speak Latin at universities (and of course exams which were suited to those who had been trained in the direct method). However, this wish was not put into practice.

The direct method was not completely obsolete. In 1961 S. Morris reported that interest was quite strong: nearly three hundred teachers had attended a weekend refresher course on the direct method the previous Easter. It was estimated that thirty teachers were using it, although Morris thought this too modest a figure.¹⁵³ The success of the direct method relied on the skill of the teachers, a skill which the Board of Education thought only a few possessed.¹⁵⁴ Had it not been for the ever present hoops of exams through which candidates had to jump, with their demands of set books etc. it may well have enjoyed a wider popularity.

¹⁵¹ W.H.D. Rouse *What's the Use of Latin?* in *Latin Teaching* June 1967 pg.192.

¹⁵² E.Henry *Via Nova - Road Closed?* Article in the *Times Educational Supplement* Sept. 7th 1956 pg.1085.

¹⁵³ S. Morris *The Present Position of Latin and Greek in Schools* in *Educational Review* Vol.13 1961, pg.107.

¹⁵⁴ Board of Education *Suggestions for the Teaching of Classics* Pamphlet no.37 1959 pg.16.

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The face of classics teaching was changing; Composition was now recognised as being appropriate for the brightest pupils only and there was a real drive to set the subject in its historical context by using texts that were Roman in character, encouraging museum visits and the use of visual aids. So much, however, depended on the skills and flexibility of the teacher. Throughout the period we read of those who inspired a love of the language and its origins. Those who were able to meet the challenges posed by learning Latin and Greek tended to be enthusiastic pupils who were taught by the most competent teachers. There were initiatives to inject more life into teaching and make it more user friendly, as we see with Mrs. Frankenburg's *Latin with Laughter*. The word order method popularised by *Latin For Today* was presented with in a Roman context and lectures provided by the interschools clubs were popular. Some, such as Fothergill, always seeking improvement were willing to experiment with new ideas. Yet there were still those who struggled 'simply survived, learning little and enjoying less.'¹⁵⁵

No time was spent telling us of those who used the language. This was not true for the scholars who had a very good master.¹⁵⁶

The quality of staff was a key element of the quality of teaching. At Sherborne the best member of staff taught the scholars and the sixth form. Fothergill thought that it was not important to have an expert taking the first year of Latin. Yet H.N.P. Sloman pointed out that in order to get off to a good start 'the best, the most enthusiastic, the most experienced master in the school' should take the beginners.¹⁵⁷ The less experienced the teacher, the less willing to experiment with new ideas and methods of teaching, as the old grammar grind provided a safe and rigid structure from which to work. Set books took up the tyrannical position within the syllabus once basic grammar had been mastered and the very nature of these provided a prop for the less able classicist, both teacher and pupil. Specific professional training although more widespread was still not undertaken by all. Some schools, particularly girls schools, experienced difficulty in obtaining enough staff with adequate qualifications in classics. At a meeting of the Assistant Mistresses' Association in 1944 it was found that all the schools represented, apart from Cheltenham Ladies' College, 'seemed to be understaffed in the classics department.'¹⁵⁸

155 Sherborne respondent 1940- 1944.

156 *ibid.* 1943 -1948.

157 H.N.P. Sloman *The Tyranny of Latin* in *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.10 no.116 1933 pg.423.

158 Assistant Mistresses' Association June 1944 MSS 59/3/3/8.

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A constant key factor that determined the content of the teaching was the demands of the examinations. The criticism of the Spens Report that School Certificate examinations were too determining in what was taught was found to be true in the case of Latin where the School Certificate examination was considered to have a 'cramping effect on the teaching of Latin Teaching at its worst leading to cramming of a deplorable kind'.¹⁵⁹ This led to a natural reluctance to accept new methods or to allow more time to enrich the existing course:

Of the two normal motives, educational justification and examination requirements, the latter appears to exercise the stronger influence on the course of these boys: it may fairly be said that some boys at least are persisting in Latin with a view to university entrance on rather rigidly formal lines, without getting much from it beyond their bare examination needs.¹⁶⁰

The theory that literature should be taught in context and provide a springboard for providing the whole subject with background and interest was admirable, but most teachers were unwilling or incapable of making it a reality in spite of the fact that the quality and accessibility of visual aids were improving all the time. Efforts were being made to apply modern teaching methods to the teaching of Latin, but only in some cases did such advice filter through to the classroom. Traditional teaching pushed pupils through exams, thus few found time or inclination to change.

¹⁵⁹ Professor H. Butler at the London branch of the Classical Association *Discussion Series on the Position of Latin in a Four Year Course* 1939.

¹⁶⁰ Inspection report for Harrow 1951 Ed109/8988 pg.17.

Classics : A Survivor ?

For over 100 years the classics as an education have been dying, and prophets have been saying they would: and we wake up in the 1960's to find that the prophecies have almost come true.¹

Latin is a wedding garment no longer de rigueur for those entering Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Utility English jeans will in future be permissible wear.²

This chapter provides an overview of the fortunes of classics once the decision in May 1960 to abolish Latin and Greek as an entry requirement for those reading science subjects at Oxford and Cambridge removed a safety net for classics, and with it some of the complacency that remained in the hearts of teachers. In fact this was only the first of three crises, identified by M. Forrest,³ that the classics were to face. The development of the comprehensive system threatened classics in the maintained sector, and the establishment of the National Curriculum, were two further hurdles lying in wait. After the 1960 decision the precariousness of the position of classics within schools became more apparent, but it proved not to be a fatal blow. In this chapter we shall see how the critical situation inspired initiatives and attempts to give new life blood to the dying subjects.

Latin : A Worthwhile Subject?

The realisation that Latin would be considered for its inherent worth and present itself as a valuable choice against the other subjects created changes in the emphasis of the syllabus. Latin was no longer a vehicle for training the mind by means of tortuous grammar exercises, but a language that was to be enjoyed for what it said, an objective that still had to be realised in many schools:

¹ M. McCrum (Headmaster of Tonbridge) *A Theory of Classical Education III : The Classics in the Sixties* in *Didaskalos* 1:3 1965 pg.3,

² T.W. Melluish *Latin Inquiry* in *Reappraisal* supplement to *Greece And Rome* Vol.IX No.1 March 1962 pg.42 The reference to a wedding garment suggests a requirement in an initiation ceremony, a beautiful and special one at that. Latin has lost this entry status, which has now become rather humdrum.

³ M. Forrest *Classics Teachers, Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* PhD thesis, University Of Exeter, 1989. Also *Modernising The Classics* 1996.

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...Sophia was sitting in her class, grimly allowing Mrs. Vandyke to take her through Caesar's Gallic Wars. Mrs. Vandyke taught from this text book only under protest, being a life long anti-militarist; but it had never occurred to Sophia, nor to any of the other girls in the Latin class, to connect the words on the written page with anything that had ever really happened. Men marched, camps were struck, winter quarters gone into, the cavalry charged, but to Sophia the Latin did not concern men, camps, winter quarters, nor cavalry. It existed to provide subjunctives and past participles and (Oh golly!) Gerunds.⁴

The desired focus had increasingly become reading Latin and grammar was taught as a means to achieve that end and achieving it within a relatively short period of time. More than that Latin had to be seen as relevant to life and education in the late twentieth century.

The future of classical learning depends on our being able to show that it makes a valid contribution to man's understanding of his world and therefore to the betterment of life.⁵

In April, 1960, the Classical Association met in Southampton and decided upon three lines of action; to publish a special supplement to *Greece And Rome*, airing teachers' concerns, to instigate a survey of the opinion of teachers on the existing 'O' level and to establish a single organisation of classical teachers.

Reappraisal

Produced as a supplement to *Greece And Rome* in March 1962 *Reappraisal* was a sounding board of ideas, stimulating, yet practical, addressing the issues faced by teachers, particularly those in grammar schools. C.O. Brink (formerly Kennedy Professor of Latin at Cambridge) started with an article on Small Latin, the experience of the many who take Latin as far as 'O' level only, reinforcing the Classical Association discussions of 1960 by calling for a greater sense of purpose in the 'O' level, for many the sole purpose had been the entry examination qualification.

Small Latin, if it is to survive, must learn to live in a house of its own....What 'O' level Latin lacks is a clearly defined purpose.⁶

He did not consider independent schools to be affected by this problem, although, even within public schools there were those who dropped Latin after 'O' level. C.W.

⁴ L. Hale *A Fleece of Lambs* 1961 pg.38 Whilst this book is a novel such descriptions reflect at least the common perception of Latin teaching, if not the reality.

⁵ R.R. Bolgar *A Theory of Classical Education* in *Didaskalos* 1:1 1963 pg.17.

⁶ C.O. Brink *Small Latin and the Classics* in *Reappraisal* 1962 pg.9.

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Baty (formerly staff inspector for classics for the Ministry of Education) continued the cry for a fresh approach, one suited to time and resources. While he applauded the enthusiasm and commitment of many staff and mentioned a numerous quantity of Greek courses starting, particularly in girls' schools, he noted that

..there are many teachers who work in isolation, some of them out of touch with books, journals, and the tools of scholarship generally. There is a danger that, dutifully though we pass on what we have inherited, some of it may lose its vitality and its meaning in the transmission.⁷

The remainder of the supplement was devoted to articles addressing particular problems. T.H. Rowland wrote about making a two year course of Latin a useful experience compared with the existing 'O' level course which 'by itself leaves a pupil ill-equipped to cope with the Latin he finds around him'.⁸ W.B. Thompson also criticised the existing system in which 'a man or woman may get a First in Classics without being able to read [aloud] a line of Virgil or Homer. But once a Classics graduate becomes a teacher of Classics, it immediately becomes incumbent on him to be able to read Latin and Greek aloud'.⁹

D.S. Colman stressed the importance of being aware and making the most of the setting of literature and noting its place in history.

the one essential is that all the windows should be kept open, so that when we look up from our texts we are aware of what lies beyond.¹⁰

The use of parallel sentences as an aid to teaching composition was suggested by P.H. Vellacott and Dora Pym wrote an article advocating the use of dictionaries for unseen work. The supplement was rounded off by a report from T.W. Melluish on the survey conducted by the Classical Association. Being wholly devoted to teaching Latin, *Reappraisal* helped to create some common identity among teachers as well as paving the way for future reforms. All the articles found shortcomings with the present system and the need to adapt was a subtle, but constant thread throughout. The final article, the results of the survey by the Classical Association, served to reinforce the

⁷ C.W. Baty *Classics in the Schools : A Survey of the Position and Prospects* in *Reappraisal* 1962 pg.14.

⁸ T.H. Rowland *Two Years of Latin* in *Reappraisal* 1962 pg.17.

⁹ W.B. Thompson *Reading the Classics - Aloud* in *Reappraisal* 1962 pg.21.

¹⁰ D.S. Colman *The Classics and History* in *Reappraisal* 1962 pg.27.

mood of the whole pamphlet, making teachers feel included, since for change to be successful it was vital that their support and enthusiasm was won.

'O' Level Reform

The 'O' level itself was an obvious target for reform since pupils studied to gain qualifications, those qualifications depended on passing exams which in their turn determined the structure of the syllabus. So to encourage reform at the grass roots level the exams had to be reconsidered, the hopes of generations as far back as 1907 were about to become reality. In April 1960 the Latin 'O' level paper was discussed by the Classical Association. It was considered that rather than being a paper determining a course geared towards preparation for 'A' level it should be an entity in itself. Due to the poor standard of work submitted in the English to Latin translation section a reduction in this was proposed. A more user-friendly course was desired, one that did not just appeal to language specialists. Two hundred members of the meeting agreed on the resolution 'that this meeting recommends a general reconsideration of the aims and syllabus of the ordinary level Latin examination with special reference to the requirements of the non-specialists'.¹¹ Only one member voted against this.

The Classical Association sent a survey to all its branches to assess opinions on the status quo and the possible reaction to change.

Was some qualitative change now called for in contrast with the inch by inch surrender that had resulted from past encroachments on the Latinists' time? It was clear that if some change were desired the Examining boards could be informed, so that the examination syllabuses could be attuned to the new pattern.¹²

The response to this questionnaire reflected an active interest from many. The opening question as to whether 'O' level Latin was valuable in itself was given 'a thunderous and all but unanimous affirmative'.¹³ The next two questions received almost equal agreement. It was generally agreed that

the Latin of the future will depend more and more on its own merits to commend itself to the architects of our time-tables than on any external support, and that if any

¹¹ Quoted in M. Forrest *Classics Teachers, Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* PhD Thesis, University Of Exeter 1989 pg.105.

¹² T.W. Melliush *Latin Enquiry in Reappraisal* 1962 pg.42.

¹³ *ibid.* pg.43.

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modifications were required to make the course up to ordinary Level a complete entity in itself, the Examining Boards should be asked to accept such modifications.¹⁴

The case for continuing to include Latin into English translation was upheld by most who used it as a vehicle to test grasp of syntax and understanding. There was also a fear that once the ability to write Latin was no longer required the subject would be not only dead, but extinct. However, sights were set lower than those of their predecessors:

Yet there was no sympathy with the tortuous subtleties of the multiple-construction sentence, whose coils wind themselves round the helpless candidate like serpents round Laocoon's sons. 'Straightforward sentences', was the universal demand, 'each demanding but one construction. More of them if need be, as long as they are kept simple.'¹⁵

Given the poor standard of Latin to English translation the 'O' level examination was not fulfilling its purpose to enable pupils to be able to read Latin at sight. However, the question wondering whether a wider reading of authors was desirable and practical threw up the problem of time restraints, 'for so many teachers with one eye on the calendar and the other on the unfinished portion of the syllabus, the relentless tick of the clock haunts the lesson like the tap of the death-watch beetle'.¹⁶ The subject of set books divided teachers into two clear camps, those who felt that they took up too much time and led to learning texts parrot fashion and those who felt that pupils should experience as much original Latin as possible. The latter group tended to desire access to a wider range of authors, with shorter pieces being set. In order to overcome the difficulty of learning the English whilst remaining ignorant of the Latin it was suggested that the texts were tested by comprehension style sentences.

The Oxford and Cambridge Boards already required some background knowledge and there was a strong feeling that this should be an integral part of the syllabus. Five elements that should be studied were identified as the Greek world, Roman history, Roman civilisation, the continuing significance of the classical world and Roman Britain. In spite of a recognition of the existence of these elements of the curriculum there was no enthusiasm to have them included as part of the examinable syllabus.

¹⁴ *ibid.* pg.43.

¹⁵ *ibid.* pg.44.

¹⁶ *ibid.* pg.45.

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They prefer to treat of background subjects as the occasion arises, as their enthusiasms direct, to the measure that their circumstances allow...One gathers that there is a solid lump of resistance, doggedly reiterating 'First things first: Latin is a language, and ours primarily a linguistic task.'¹⁷

This would suggest that whilst background studies were recognised as being part of the overall scene teachers jealously guarded their time and did not want to be forced to make any formal commitment in that area: after all they were only used to confining themselves to the linguistics.

The role of the 'O' level needed to be redefined. S. Wiseman writing in *Didaskalos* in 1964 noted that the exam tried to be both backward looking, assessing progress and attainment and forward looking, assessing suitability for sixth form and university.

For my own part and speaking of O-level papers in general, I believe firmly that the examination must be backward-looking, if only because it must be an adequate and efficient instrument for *all* the candidates, and not merely for the high fliers.¹⁸

The survey revealed that there were elements of the existing system which caused concern and there were those prepared to embrace change. In his report to the Classical Association T.W. Melluish noted

Even if it should prove that there is no urgent move towards any radical change it is already clear that the careful and interested scrutiny of the many problems raised by this investigation has proved of the utmost value to all concerned.¹⁹

Thus the Classical Association sent the following findings to the examination boards.

1. 'O' level Latin should primarily be an examination of language.
2. The examination should be as simple as possible with minimum prescription, but standards of accuracy should be high.
3. There should be the maximum number of alternative syllabuses with maximum freedom for teachers to develop what they thought to be most desirable.

English to Latin translation was to remain to test grammar. The syllabus should also be related to background topics.

¹⁷ *ibid.* pg.46.

¹⁸ S.Wiseman *Latin at the Ordinary Level* in *Didaskalos* 1:2 1964 pg.44.

¹⁹ T.W. Melluish interim report quoted in M. Forrest *Classics Teachers, Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* 1989 pg.116.

The Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching also sent out a questionnaire, but given that only 34 replies were received the results are not particularly telling. One statistic does reflect the support for Latin to English translation: 75% were in favour of this.²⁰

However, there were those who remained reactionary in their view.

...some considerable change in teaching method is inevitable if the subject is to survive...the majority of the profession - and particularly its older members- are bound to feel opposed to this change, which will demand great sacrifices on their part.²¹

Joint Association Of Classical Teachers

The 1960 conference and survey had shown that there was dissatisfaction with the existing system. The third initiative of the Classical Association ensured that there was a forum where teachers could air their views and an association which could give them a strong sense of identity. In the summer of 1962 the Joint Association of Classical Teachers, JACT, was founded. It was a federation of three existing societies, the Classical Association which had begun formally in 1903, the Orbilian Society which was only open to those teaching in Grammar schools and membership by invitation only and the Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching set up in 1913 as a result of the summer schools run from 1911. The initiative for the establishment of this new association came from John Sharwood-Smith (son of E. Sharwood-Smith) who, as Forrest writes, 'could foresee the bleak prospects for Latin in its unreformed state in grammar and public schools. There was an urgent need for research into the teaching of Latin and for applying new technology to Classics teaching; there was, moreover, a need to network information to teachers in school in order to provide them with the necessary support'.²² Although the support of the public schools had been questioned J.C. Dancy, headmaster of Marlborough, offered reassurances as to their

²⁰ M. Forrest, *ibid.* pg.122.

²¹ R.R. Bolgar *A Theory of Classical Education in Didaskalos* 1:1 1963 pg.26.

²² M. Forrest *Classics Teachers, Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* 1989 pg.157.

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involvement.²³ It is interesting to note that the development was particularly welcomed by Mother Mary St. Thomas with convent schools in mind.²⁴

In 1963 the society's first magazine, *Didaskalos*, was published having John Sharwood-Smith as its editor. This made an annual appearance for the next fourteen years when it changed its identity and became *Hesperiam*. The journal was an important forum for ideas to be aired, books to be reviewed and exams to be criticised. It is in the pages of *Didaskalos* that we read of the gradual changes that altered the face of Latin over the next few years.

The 'O' level Question

Imperfections in the system and a fight for survival now spurred on the desire for change.

There is now a real prospect that a radical change of emphasis in the standard curriculum will take place, gradually perhaps, because it is not easy to slough off the deeply ingrained habits created by a long past, but nevertheless surely it is high time that it did, for, if the classics are to continue to hold a serious place in Education, development is urgently necessary.²⁵

The initiative had been taken and the 'O' level paper now fell under close scrutiny as to whether it was fulfilling its purpose and whether it demanded the right balance of skills.

C.W Baty considered the key elements to be:

Some knowledge of vocabulary, of a general rather than a technical (military or legal) kind; some ability to understand and therefore to translate, straightforward Latin; and for this purpose, a sufficiently sure grasp of accidence and syntax to make the orderly understanding of Latin possible; some knowledge of the place of Rome in world history, whether this can or should be examined or not.²⁶

Discourse on the concerns raised in *Reappraisal* continued in the pages of *Didaskalos*. There was considerable discussion on how to achieve the aim of reading Latin with the least waste of time and the most progress; 'accurate, fluent and appreciative reading, not.....the mastery of the language as an end in itself',²⁷ a goal increasingly sought

²³ *ibid.* pg.150.

²⁴ *ibid.* pg.156.

²⁵ M. McCrum *A Theory of Classical Education III : The Classics in the Sixties* in *Didaskalos* 1:3 1965 pg.7.

²⁶ C.W. Baty *Latin at Ordinary Level* in *Didaskalos* 1:1 1963 pg.74.

²⁷ E.J. Kenney *A Theory of Classical Education II* in *Didaskalos* 1:2 1964 pg.4.

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after as the century had progressed and yet due to the existing exams rarely found. E.J. Kenney reasoned that linguistic detail must be mastered 'in so far as it is relevant'²⁸ to the reading of Latin, and prose composition does not fulfil this criterium. He felt that because one never needs to be able to write Latin, because the standard of prose composition was so poor and the quality of the English set to translate often poor too there was little point in keeping it in the examination.

Is the aim of teaching our pupils to read intelligently and fluently helped by composition? If not, it must go, or be retained only as optional. In my view composition does not help.

However, this view was countered by A.G. Lee who put forward the argument that one can not expect to master a language without being able to write it.²⁹

The question of the value and use of set books continued to be a bugbear. In her contribution to *Reappraisal* Dora Pym had explored the issues. There were those who championed the use of set books 'declaring that even for those pupils who make a poor examination showing, the careful attempt to master some portion of Latin literature had been of value'.³⁰ However, the tendency to 'parrot-like memorising of inferior translations' called for considerable criticism. Unseen translations were an impractical substitute due to the lack of suitable original material. Dora Pym advocated a middle course of replacing set books with unseens, but allowing dictionaries to be used in exam rooms. This would allow access to a wide range of literature and test knowledge of the language at the same time. Examination boards which dropped set books in favour of more unseen work found that teachers concentrated on working through collections of gobbets and past papers rather than reading any connected Latin, thereby ignoring the goal to read more of the original language and adopting techniques more akin to cramming.³¹

The age of technology was dawning and some were quick to exploit it. Schools were investing in language laboratories for their modern languages and tape recorders were portable and becoming more common. Given that two of the four

²⁸ E.J. Kenney *A Theory of Classical Education II* in *Didaskalos* 1:2 1964 pg.5.

²⁹ A.G. Lee *The Value of Prose Composition* in *Didaskalos* 1:2 1964 pg.23.

³⁰ D. Pym *The Fig Tree* in *Reappraisal* supplement to *Greece And Rome* Vol.IX No.1 March 1962 pg.35.

³¹ C.W. Baty *Latin at Ordinary Level* in *Didaskalos* 1:1 1963 pg.75.

language skills, hearing and speaking, are aural skills³² these developments could be used by Latin teachers. In an article in the 1964 issue of *Didaskalos* P.L.K. Buckle suggested the use of pictures and tape recorders to chant phrases about the pictures and going into the language laboratory to practise grammar and syntax. The use of tapes would ensure a consistent pronunciation.³³ Although it is presented as a rather experimental and modern concept there were echoes of the Direct Method here.

Reform and the search for a modern image continued and there was a danger of throwing the baby out with the bath water. M. McCrum warned against an acceptance of mediocrity in attempts to popularise the subject by quoting T.S. Eliot. Such forebodings had been voiced throughout the period and poured cold water on optimism for better things to come.

in our headlong rush to educate everybody, we are lowering our standards, and more and more abandoning the study of those subjects by which the essentials of our culture...are transmitted; destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp with their mechanised caravans.³⁴

Both grammar and public schools were working towards the same goal: 'O' level. As the headmaster of Marlborough had promised there was support and interest in JACT from the public schools and articles by public school teachers were contributed to *Didaskalos*. What of the rather more ostrich like preparatory schools? Did they embrace the atmosphere of reform with equal enthusiasm?

Reform At Grass Roots ?

The Common Entrance examination continued to be the climax of preparatory school years and maintained its stranglehold on the syllabus and curriculum.

'Of course, apart from health, Latin is really our strong point.' he [headmaster] confided, 'Naturally...The basis of all grammar' stated Mr. Gretton, showing animation. 'Useful for other languages too, including English. The foundation of an orderly mind. That's Latin' he asserted. 'Have another cup of tea.'

³² M. Sargent *Audio Visual Techniques of Language Teaching : The Theoretical Basis* in *Didaskalos* 1:1 1963 pg.134.

³³ P.L.K. Buckle and R. Ellwood *An Experiment in Audio Visual Latin Teaching 1* in *Didaskalos* 1:2 1964 pgs71f.

³⁴ M. McCrum *A Theory of Classical Education III : The Classics in the Sixties* in *Didaskalos* 1:3 1965 pg.19 quoting T.S. Eliot *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* 1948 pg.108.

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'You can't' said the headmaster 'talk rot in Latin.'

'Show me the boy who's got a thorough grasp of Latin and I'll show you a boy who's fit to tackle anything. Fit to tackle life.' he said impressively.

'Gives the mind...gives the mind muscles.' he said... He changed key.

'Besides, they're still mad keen on Latin for the Common Entrance.' he said, clinching it.³⁵

The above extract from a novel depicts the scene in which parents, choosing a preparatory school for their son, meet the headmaster. Traditional benefits of learning Latin are summed up by the him, not only does it fulfil the high ideals with which it is associated, but it is a key Common Entrance subject. This depiction of the preparatory school character in a story shows the popular perception of the establishment being synonymous with Latin, a perception which had more than a grain of truth.

In the atmosphere of positive change the preparatory schools made their own response. The publication of *Foundations* in 1959 had already paved the way for change and many realised its genuine need.

there is and will be less time for Greek and Roman studies in the time tables of a highly technological and scientific age. The status of classics is bound to be different but their value will be undiminished...both the content of classical syllabuses and teaching techniques need to be adapted or radically revised ..³⁶

The existing Common Entrance Latin consisted of two papers 'to sort out the cavalry from the infantry and to eliminate camp followers'.³⁷ Paper 'A' was the main one which had to be passed and paper 'B' was for setting purposes. The core of the papers was translation, but the headmaster of Dean Close Junior School, Cheltenham, E.J.B. Langhorne, criticised it as being 'pretty arid country'. Progress was slow and the goal of pieces from past papers and gobbits of adapted Latin dreary. Langhorne advised more reading aloud and familiarity with the original word order from the first. Despite years of encouragement to teach Latin within the context of the ancient world this was still largely ignored, it was proficiency in the language that was required at Common Entrance, not a knowledge of social history.

requirements in basic accidence and syntax are sound and sensible and can hardly be faulted; but the Roman substance is trivial. After five, six or even seven periods of Latin per week for at least three years, the average preparatory schoolboy need not

³⁵ L. Hale *A Fleece of Lambs* 1961 pg.206.

³⁶ E.J.B. Langhorne *Latin in Preparatory Schools 1* in *Didaskalos* 1:3 1965 pg.104.

³⁷ *ibid.* pg.106.

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know one fact of Roman history and can get by without ever having heard of Palinus, Vulcan, Hadrian's wall, Isca Silurum or the Colosseum.³⁸

It seemed obvious that language work should be Roman in content. Langhorne was less supportive of prose composition than those reconsidering the 'O' level paper, describing it as 'a refined and anachronistic accomplishment for the connoisseurs of classics in an age of technologists and cosmonauts'.³⁹ Thus he suggested the removal of translating English into Latin from the 'A' paper, replacing it by set books to ensure extensive reading of Latin. The paper would retain Latin to English translation, sentences chosen from set books and testing of grammar. A continuous unseen question would remain, the pieces chosen being by an author of the set books. Following Dora Pym's suggestion Langhorne would have also liked dictionaries to be allowed for this. He suggested including a question on Roman history and mythology as an option against the composition section of the 'B' paper. These proposals echoed the discussions about the 'O' level paper and displayed a sensitivity of the current atmosphere.

There was support for some of Langhorne's proposals by A.T. Davis (classics master at Harrow) who agreed that the composition element of the paper took up too much time and effort for the average pupil. Although he was sceptical about the standard of reading that could be reached by a boy and felt that more emphasis should be laid on basic foundations. He suggested a paper 'A' which tested grammar and syntax in question one, a comprehension for question two and an unseen to stretch the more able for question three. Although the detail of his suggestions differed from Langhorne's he was in agreement that

There is a desperate need for the revision of the Common Entrance Examination if Latin in preparatory schools is not to collapse under the weight of its own futility; nothing less than an open statement of this opinion can produce the sort of changes which will enable the public schools in their turn to provide a more worthwhile and purposeful course.⁴⁰

Their wishes were granted in that in 1968 a new Common Entrance Paper was produced. Its aim 'the fluent and exact reading of Latin and the intelligent understanding of what is read' was welcomed with open arms by those who considered that the old paper and syllabus 'allowed the subject of Latin to be taught as something

³⁸ *ibid.* pg.106.

³⁹ *ibid.* pg.112.

⁴⁰ A.T. Davis *Latin in Preparatory Schools II* in *Didaskalos* 1:3 1965 pg.124.

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divorced from any people who ever existed, let alone a people who directly influenced the history and language of the examinee's own country'.⁴¹

Hitherto the C.E. paper has restricted the course to grammatical tests of accuracy, particularly in the 'A' paper and the boys and the Romans have suffered...the only continuous Latin met has often been written by Englishmen and the Romans as a nation and purveyors of this language have almost been disregarded as irrelevant.⁴²

[The old Common Entrance paper was] a diet of grammar memorised for its own sake (or so it must have seemed) and of syntax rules learnt for the sake of putting unrelated English into Latin and, by a code cracking process, Latin into what was too often meaningless English...it did terrible things to the vast majority, for whom the examination was completely unsuitable and who, largely because of its sterility and seeming painlessness would drop Latin at the very earliest opportunity, and in any case after 'O' level.⁴³

The new paper aimed for the continuous reading of Latin at the earliest possible stage and this was an important step towards reading Latin for its own sake. Reading aloud was also recommended, fulfilling the wishes voiced by William Thompson in *Reappraisal*. It was a paper which reflected the latest views on teaching language.

Gone are the questions that ask for the 'dat. sing. and gender' of this or that noun; gone are the short English and Latin sentences; gone, it seems, is all trace of composition. Instead we see two longer and more interesting passages of Latin, a number of questions appended to those passages and, sandwiched between, the 'cultural' question.⁴⁴

This paper also required background knowledge. In an attempt to quell the fears of those who worried over finding enough time for this it was suggested that a foundation course was taken before tackling the language to put it in context. Naturally there was reaction from the traditionalists:

There had been a real storm over the new Common Entrance Latin paper. Real difficulties had arisen in attempting new methods without a textbook. Reactionaries were trying to put the clock back.⁴⁵

41 C.A. Stuart- Clark *The New Latin Common Entrance - A Preparatory School Reaction* in *Didaskalos* 2:3 1968 pg.156.

42 *ibid.* pg.157.

43 M.R.F. Gunningham *Latin for Common Entrance : A Critical Look at the New Paper* in *Didaskalos* 3:3 1971 pg.464.

44 *ibid.* pg.466.

45 JACT council meeting minutes 16th October 1968 quoted in M. Forrest *Classics Teachers. Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* pg.308.

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However, the new paper was received with enthusiasm by many. C.A. Stuart-Clark, the senior classics master at Cheam, welcomed the opportunity to study Latin in its Roman context and found the reformed paper offered new life to the subject.

Stories rather than exercises will be the order of the day and it is more than a possibility that our 'dead' languages may really come to life again for prep. school boys.⁴⁶

However, this optimism was not the dawning of a new and safe age as Latin fell from the list of compulsory Common Entrance subjects, removing yet another safety net.⁴⁷ P. Attenborough foresaw that this could mean the beginning of the end of Latin in preparatory schools. Pressures from science, general opinion and financial restraints on staffing still lurked as real threats.

..the subject may disappear completely first from some small preparatory schools and then in consequence from more preparatory schools and then more public schools and so on..⁴⁸

Writing from his position as a public schoolmaster Attenborough placed much of the responsibility for this on the standard of teaching received in preparatory schools. His stress that the course should be 'largely linguistic' and criticism of a recent lack of detail would suggest that the new paper with its emphasis on reading rather than grammar was not creating the sound foundation expected by public schools.

In short, if Latin is to survive in preparatory schools for a long time, I think we have to make sure that the course is a really good one, being part 1 of an 'O' level course. It should be largely linguistic, progressing only as far as the boys can cope with and include a carefully thought out cultural side.⁴⁹

Attenborough's critical and pessimistic view of preparatory school Latin was countered by an article written by Tony Wood, classics master at Dean Close Junior School, Cheltenham. He blamed public schools for repeating work covered in the last year of preparatory school and called for more communication between public and preparatory schools. Far from weakening the position of Latin the removal of it from the compulsory Common Entrance subjects strengthened its case since the weakest pupils

⁴⁶ C.A. Stuart-Clark *The New Latin Common Entrance - A Preparatory School Reaction* in *Didaskalos* 2:3 1968 pg.159.

⁴⁷ By 1966 eighteen public schools no longer required Latin for entrance.

⁴⁸ P. Attenborough *Latin in the Preparatory Schools : A Public School Point of View* in *Didaskalos* 3:3 1971 pg.453.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* pg.457.

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were no longer dragging it down.⁵⁰ He also thought the new Common Entrance paper a step towards Latin retaining its place in the curriculum. Wood's conclusions are worth looking at in full as they reflect the shift in emphasis in Latin teaching that had come about since the 1960 conference in Southampton.

1. The new approach to Latin does not require the same kind of grammatical knowledge as the traditional method.
2. The present Common Entrance Examination paper is in line with the modern approach, and no longer implies a reorientation of attitude so that grammar is no longer the prime tool with which our pupils work.
3. Grammatical knowledge should be induced after suitable experience, and not learnt in isolation.
4. A course as interesting and well integrated as the Cambridge Schools Classics Project⁵¹ should receive close consideration from both public and preparatory schools.
5. Communication between the two types of school should be considered of prime importance to the survival of Latin, as well as very much to our mutual benefit.⁵²

The first three points reflect sentiments that have become increasingly voiced and yet studiously ignored throughout the period covered by this thesis. Only now that the Common Entrance examination has been restyled to suit them was any real change practically possible.

The Position Of Greek

Greek had already become a marginalised subject and continued to struggle. A conference of classics masters from Eton, Harrow, Charterhouse and the City of London School met at Eton in 1967 to discuss the fact that 'the schools have lost the battle for Greek'.⁵³ It was agreed to remove Greek composition from the syllabus. Again one problem was presenting an image of a subject appropriate for the end of the twentieth century.

Yet some of our problems today are due to the fact that Greek courses in schools are still fundamentally nineteenth century in their content: the concentration on linguistic

⁵⁰ T. Wood *Latin in the Preparatory Schools : A Preparatory School Point of View* in *Didaskalos* 3:3 1971 pg.458.

⁵¹ The Cambridge Schools Classics Project was an important milestone in the development of classics teaching and will be explored in full later in this chapter.

⁵² T. Wood *Latin in the Preparatory Schools : A Preparatory School Point of View* in *Didaskalos* 3:3 1971 pg.461.

⁵³ T.J. Saunders *Greek, The Rescue Operation* in *Didaskalos* 2:2 1967 pg.23.

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detail presupposes a prolonged course of study, such as is unlikely to be possible in the future in any but comparatively few schools.⁵⁴

Independent schools were able to devote more time to Greek and follow a four year course to 'O' level, a luxury which Comprehensive schools could not provide. The increasing lack of specialists was continuing the ever decreasing circle of teachers and opportunities. T.J. Saunders suggested that Universities offered courses that conferred 'an ability to read the language easily and fluently.'⁵⁵ A survey of common Greek courses in *Hesperiam* found 'serious imperfections' in all of them.⁵⁶ Nairn's *Greek Through Reading* presented too much grammar in an illogical order in the early stages, Wilding's *Greek for Beginners* placed too much emphasis on grammar and too little on reading. The amount of background material was sparse. In *Thrasymachus* the balance of reading and grammar was good, but the text was unsatisfactory.⁵⁷

The Greek 'O' level needed to receive the same treatment as the Latin had. The Oxford Board was criticised for producing papers that were 'not only dull and outdated; they fail to provide for the needs and interests of our pupils today.'⁵⁸ As with the Common Entrance and 'O' level papers there was too much emphasis on grammar and composition. In order to make the subject accessible to more than just the specialists, Michael Gunningham of St. Ignatius' College suggested a language paper comprising translation and comprehension and a literature paper covering a range of original Greek.⁵⁹

The Cambridge School Classics Project

So far we have considered the traditional routes pupils took to reach the two goals of Common Entrance and 'O' level. The distinct and conscious change in emphasis from a subject that was grammar oriented to one that was literature oriented called for a change in attitudes and for a new approach that was tailored to the changes. Whilst

⁵⁴ C. Handley *The Future of Greek in Schools* in *Didaskalos* 2:2 1967 pg.13.

⁵⁵ T.J. Saunders *Greek: The Rescue Operation* in *Didaskalos* 2:2 1967 pg.24.

⁵⁶ D. Geoghegan 'Reading Greek' and Other Greek Courses in *Hesperiam* No.2 1979 pg.64.

⁵⁷ *ibid.* pg.64.

⁵⁸ M.R.F. Gunningham *The Oxford 'O' Level Greek Syllabus and Papers* in *Didaskalos* 2:2 1967 pg.38.

⁵⁹ *ibid.* pg.41.

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new text books were written the most important development was the work of the Cambridge School Classics Project, CSCP.

In 1964 a conference of schools, held in Cambridge, met to discuss the problems of teaching Latin, particularly those caused by the creation of the middle school system in the state sector. The seeds of a need for a new project were sown and the following points were highlighted as the chief concerns.

1. A move to reform the teaching of Latin (and possibly Greek too) to 'O' level and beyond.
2. An attempt to offer some study of the Ancient World to all pupils through the medium of English.⁶⁰

By April 1965 a grant of £34,000 had been obtained from the Nuffield foundation and, based in Cambridge, the project was underway. The programme followed two main aims:

Firstly the development of a scientific investigation into the problems of teaching Latin in the light of recent developments in linguistics. The emphasis would be upon achieving reading fluency without sacrificing comprehension.

A wider study of the possibilities of Classical Civilisation as part of the study should be properly related to actual texts in Latin.⁶¹

The project designed a three year course and started trials in schools in 1967. The course was based on a series of booklets in which one met Roman characters and through the stories about them was introduced to various aspects of Roman life. The teaching of grammar was inductive rather than didactic and there was no English to Latin composition required. The conventional case labels were replaced by 'form A' for nominative, 'B' for accusative and so on. Martin Forrest, one of the participants in the project, summed up the characteristics of the course as follows:

1. The objective of the new course was defined as reading skill.
2. The sentence itself was always viewed in the immediate context of the paragraph, sentence patterns were compared with one another and all other parts of the language were treated with reference to their typical place in the sentence structure.
3. Devices had been used to highlight the maximum similarity between Latin and English.

⁶⁰ M. Forrest *Classical Teachers, Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* PhD thesis, University of Exeter 1989 pg.204.

⁶¹ *ibid.* pg.228.

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4. The heavy burden of grammar that was formerly handled openly with the pupils had not vanished completely, but over grammatical drilling had been replaced by a 'programmed grammatical experience' in the reading passage.⁶²

However, it soon became apparent that the new course was not a panacea. As early as 1966 the project committee noted concerns over the need for a clearer pattern of grammar, the simplicity of the exercises, the slow gradient of difficulty and the unsophisticated subject matter.⁶³ The lack of English into Latin translation would mean that the course would not prepare for an existing exam so Examination Boards had to be approached with a view to creating a different exam. The Southern Universities' Joint board created an 'O' level specifically for those who had followed the Cambridge course. Internal politics of the project meant that there was a rush to publish the latter stages of the course and initial hopes were clouded by practicalities and criticism.

There are two main criticisms of the CLC: traditionalists lament the absence of the traditional basis of grammar and syntax; those who are familiar with the course complain of the concentration of new morphology and syntax in unit III, which is excessively exacting of the pupils and retards the speedy progress to which they have become accustomed.⁶⁴

(Having experienced the course at first hand, starting Latin aged 13 at grammar school, I can confirm that it both fulfilled its goals and deserved its criticisms. The course gave me a lasting enthusiasm for the language, but once past stage 2, the notorious sticking point, became very much more challenging due to a quantum leap in the understanding of grammar. The gap caused by the inductive approach to grammar certainly made life more difficult for me than for my peers who had experienced a more traditional approach, when studying for 'A' level and beyond.)

Given its radical departure from traditional Latin one may wonder how well public and preparatory schools received the new course. Predictably preparatory schools were wary of the approach.

Indeed, I am not sure I would go the whole way with the Cambridge Schools Classics Project in excluding any formal learning of grammar or syntax - to be fair, the project

⁶² *ibid.* pg.270.

⁶³ *ibid.* pg.273.

⁶⁴ M. Ricketts *The Cambridge Latin Course : An Appraisal* in *Didaskalos* 4:1 1972 pg. 168.

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makes it clear that it has placed on the teacher 'the responsibility' of meeting the need for such 'formalization'.⁶⁵

When the existing classics master arrived at Sandroyd in 1971 he found the project being used for the first year of Latin only. Once he was in charge of the department, two years later, he jettisoned it.

It was not the way I had been taught and so I didn't feel comfortable using it. There was too much pointless vocabulary which was largely irrelevant to the boys' ultimate goal of scholarship and CE which were very traditional in their exam content, battles siege, soldiers etc. They were trying to teach it the way French was being taught and it didn't work. The grammar was not being explained....it almost seemed to be conning the children to pretend that the language was so simple and straightforward. Because pressure for exam passes to the top public schools was so intense, I, as a new and young head of department was not prepared to delay the children's proper introduction to Latin for a whole year. They had to get to grips with real Latin sooner or later and I wanted it to be sooner.⁶⁶

It is interesting to note that after substituting it with Wilding's Latin course he found that too much time was spent adapting the course to avoid meeting complex syntax too early and eventually created his own traditional course which is still in use and leads to a consistently high standard at Common Entrance. That he is able to design and use his own course in such a way reflects the independent nature of preparatory schools, a characteristic which has helped to ensure the survival of Latin and to a degree the traditional approach to it. C.A. Stray found that whilst the project gave security to Latin in schools (not independent ones) in the Swansea area because the LEA had been willing to fund it, it was also difficult for teachers used to traditional methods to assimilate the new approach to grammar whilst it attracted pupils who found it difficult to see the course through.⁶⁷

The project also produced its foundation course in 1972. This was aimed at those taking the Classical Civilisation courses, non linguistic courses which were becoming very popular, particularly in Comprehensive schools. 1975 saw Classical Civilisation being offered as an 'O' level subject for the first time. The quick growth in the number of such courses was an indicator as to where the future of classics lay.

What has happened in this period is that the centre of gravity within the subject has changed from the first ingredient [linguistic study] to the second [non- linguistic study].

⁶⁵ M.R.F. Gunningham *Latin for Common Entrance : A Critical Look at the New Paper* in *Didaskalos* 3:3 1971 pg.467.

⁶⁶ Oral interview and e-mail correspondence with AJ Brisbane, Head of Classics, Sandroyd.

⁶⁷ C.A. Stray *Classics in Crisis* M.Sc. 1977 .

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As the former has declined, so the latter (known in the trade as Classical Studies) has grown. Although linguistic studies will always remain the 'seed corn', the trend is already clear.⁶⁸

It might be thought that the CSCP material would be ideal for preparatory schools which had been urged to use foundation courses. By now being rather familiar with the character of the preparatory school Latin master it should come as no surprise to us that whilst some public schools took part in early trials, preparatory schools were not interested.

Remarkably little interest was kindled among classics teachers in preparatory schools, where it might have been expected that the concept of a Classical Studies Foundation Course would have appealed as a preliminary to Latin. In general it would seem that the preoccupation among preparatory school Classics teachers was with ensuring that their pupils met the requirements of Common Entrance Latin rather than with offering a broadly based foundation in general classics through English, or whetting the appetites of potential students.⁶⁹

The extent to which the independent sector accepted the new scheme can be seen in the CSCP draft evaluation report of 1980. By this time the project was over ten years old so this represents where true loyalties lay.

⁶⁸ CSCP discussions 9th May 1972 quoted in M. Forrest *Classical Teachers, Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* pg.373.

⁶⁹ M. Forrest *Classical Teachers, Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* pg.287.

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Charts to show the results of the Cambridge School Classics Project evaluation in 1976⁷⁰, ⁷¹

	CLC	CLC & Classical studies	CLC in the past	Other Latin course	Other Latin Course and Classical Studies	Classical Studies without Latin	Neither Latin nor Classical Studies	Queries	No Reply	Total
Comprehensive	70 9%	86 11%	30 3.8%	108 13.5%	52 6.5%	25 3%	316 40.5%	1 0.5%	84 10.5%	772
6th form college	2 10%	3 15%	1 5%	8 40%	4 20%	0	1 5%	0	1 5%	20
Middle schools	2 1%	3 2%	2 1%	2 1%	2 1%	10 7%	95 66.5%	0	26 18%	142
Maintained grammar schools	39 25%	31 19.5%	4 2.5%	37 23.5%	26 16.5%	0	11 7%	1 0.5%	7 4%	156
Direct grant grammar schools	7 20%	9 25.5%	1 2.5%	11 31%	7 2%	0	0	0	0	35
Independent schools (primary and secondary)	10 7.5%	11 8.5%	3 2%	33 26%	27 21%	1 0.5%	18 14%	1 0.5%	22 17%	126
Independent secondary schools	16 19%	12 14%	1 1%	16 19%	14 16.5%	1 1%	11 13%	2 2%	10 12%	83
Independent primary schools	9 4%	14 6.5%	6 2.5%	43 20.5%	50 24%	0	45 21.5%	3 1%	36 17%	206
Total	155	169	48	258	182	37	497	8	186	1540

	Foundation course undertaken	Latin compulsory	Total
Public schools	14 41%	23 67.5%	34
Preparatory schools	4 36%	9 81.5%	34
Direct Grant schools	5 26%	15 78.5%	19
Comprehensive schools	38 31%	32 26.5%	119
Grammar Schools	12 24%	27 54%	50

⁷⁰ *ibid.* pg.424, The percentages are my addition.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

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Thus we see that only 4% of preparatory schools were using the new scheme, compared to 20.5% using another course, whereas in public schools the spread was even. It is interesting to note that a greater number of preparatory schools had also given up the course. There is evidence that not all preparatory schools had eschewed the Classical Studies course. The high percentage of compulsory Latin in preparatory schools and the relative high number of public schools where it was compulsory contrasts strongly with the maintained area. Obviously the removal of it as a compulsory Common Entrance subject had not heralded its demise. However, that 40.5% of comprehensive schools did not offer Latin is evidence that fears about the status of Latin within the comprehensive system were well founded. As Forrest notes there appears an ever-increasing divide between the independent sector and the state sector:

That a chasm now exists between many independent and some maintained schools on the one hand and the majority of maintained schools on the other can not be denied.⁷²

In 1971 a group of Scottish teachers produced their own new project. Having the advantage of seeing both the strengths and weaknesses of the Cambridge Latin Course their new course *Ecce Romani* emphasised the role of grammar more and called the cases by their traditional names. This course held greater appeal for traditionalists. Cheltenham Ladies' College had not been attracted by the sound of the Cambridge Latin Course, but adopted *Ecce Romani*.⁷³

Greek was also thrown a life-line by the Cambridge project. In 1965 JACT began to think about creating a new Greek course that would be suitable for completing in two years of the sixth form. It was not until 1979 that *Reading Greek* was ready for use in schools. It comprised a volume of grammar, notes and vocabulary, a volume of text and exercises and one with selections of original Greek. The course was designed to be a fast-track route to learning Greek and as with the Latin course the emphasis was on reading.

⁷² *ibid.* pg 467.

⁷³ Interview with Miss Hayward.

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The attraction of being able to read continuous Greek as soon as the alphabet is mastered need not be emphasised. The everyday situations presented seem preferable to a catalogue of myths and legends.⁷⁴

The project team had obviously taken note of criticisms of their Latin course and endeavoured to avoid making the same mistakes. The 'risqué'⁷⁵ content of some of the texts was designed to appeal to older pupils. Grammar was not disguised, but introduced as one met it in the text, consolidated with short exercises.

I find it difficult to fault the design of this course. It seems to have been put together with flair and imagination, intelligence and enthusiasm. It comes as a breath of fresh air blowing through the cobwebbed purlieus of Greek studies.⁷⁶

Writing as one who followed the course when it was first published I can only agree with Geoghegan that it was a stimulating experience and one which fulfilled its aim, to reach 'O' level in two years.

The Reality

Classics has faced continuing problems since the first crisis of having its status as a compulsory entrance subject to Oxford and Cambridge removed. However, they have been reprieved from obscurity by the efforts of enthusiastic specialists who have worked to create a modern image for ancient studies.

Along with the changes that were introduced into school classics teaching in the 1960's went a spirit of optimism and idealism that transcended some of the mundane realities of school and classroom life.⁷⁷

In 1981/82 the Classics Committee of HM Inspectorate conducted a survey into the position of classics in independent education. They gathered information from 33 schools, including 5 preparatory schools. The results of this survey show that the position of classics was fairly healthy and many aspects will be familiar to us. In all the secondary schools there was provision to study Latin to GCE, 'O', level, and in 19 of these the study of Latin was compulsory for one year at least, in 12 of which it was compulsory for two. In 7 of the

⁷⁴ D. Geoghan 'Reading Greek' and Other Greek Courses in *Hesperiam* No.2 1979 pg.63.

⁷⁵ *ibid.* pg.68.

⁷⁶ *ibid.* pg. 75.

⁷⁷ M. Forrest *Modernising The Classics* 1976 pg.90.

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schools was there an option from the start. However, in only 3 schools was Latin compulsory right through to 'O' level standard.

Nineteen of the schools offered main school Greek courses and one offered the two year course leading to the Alternative 'O' level in the sixth form. Greek was only compulsory at any stage at one of the schools. Many of the Greek classes were small, only 14 of the 49 teaching groups had more than six pupils and 22 groups had three or fewer. Thus 'the 19 schools which offered Greek below the sixth form were prepared to teach it to very small groups'.⁷⁸

It is interesting to note that the growing interest in classical civilisation courses in state schools was not so strong in the independent sector. Only 9 of the 33 schools offered any classical courses which were not linguistic below sixth form level. Given the unsuitability to follow a linguistic course shown by some candidates and the fall out rate from 'O' level courses the inspectorate suggested schools gave more serious consideration to non linguistic courses.

Almost all schools allowed four periods per week in the first years of the course with a tendency to increase this to five by the final year. The inspectors found this provision to be 'at least adequate and often generous'.⁷⁹

The above facts paint an encouraging picture, but the presence of the 'ostrich syndrome' was found to be wide spread.

Less than half the schools had any kind of written statement at all (whether syllabus or scheme of work) referring to classics. A few of those which did exist were clearly obsolete and had not been revised to take account of developments within the past decade.⁸⁰

Departments were found to be ignorant of recent thinking about the curriculum and proposals on examination reform. The inspectors found it difficult to pin down departmental philosophies. Some of the widely held tenets they revealed were traditional and certainly now rather passé.

⁷⁸ A survey by HMI *Classics in Independent Education* 1984 pg.7.

⁷⁹ A survey by HMI *Classics in Independent Education* 1984 pg.6.

⁸⁰ *ibid.* pg.9.

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...the predominant emphasis was on aspects of language acquisition - notably the induction into grammatical structures, the peculiarities of an inflected language and so on.⁸¹

It was found that headmasters had a greater sense of the aim of teaching classics than the teachers themselves, offering familiar lines of defence.

One head regarded classics as 'culturally valuable and a discipline in its own right'; another spoke warmly of its 'combination of humanity and academic rigour'; it was in the words of one, 'the *sine qua non* of a good school'.⁸²

These comments probably reflect the traditional character of the headmasters, plus the fact that they were, in a sense, salesmen persuading the parents of the worth of their school, whereas the masters were more involved with the day to day running of the classroom. Few of the departments met together frequently and there was little liaison with other schools; 'a tendency towards isolation was pronounced in many schools'.⁸³ Although the courses provided by the CLC had offered in-service training for some, 'the majority had attended no in-service training at least in recent years, and of these teachers a high proportion had no other real contact with other classics teachers outside school'.⁸⁴ However, in two thirds of the schools at least the head of department belonged to JACT.

About 25% of the departments had no specific classroom base. There were examples of lively displays in some classrooms, but it would appear that these were the minority. There was reference to a superb collection of classical art that was locked away and never seen by the pupils, one of the public school museums mentioned by H. Browne in chapter five perhaps. The general feeling is that the visual aspect continued to fulfil the age old fusty image of classics.

One head of department's teaching room contained all the classics stock and equipment in chaotic confusion. This last instance perhaps epitomises a certain insensitivity to the possibility of enlivening and enriching pupils' work by means of an attractive and informative environment, which characterised too many cheerless classrooms encountered.⁸⁵

Although little Latin was found to be uttered, the lessons in the first years concentrated on translation, taught orally. The inspectorate strongly

81 *ibid.* pg.9.

82 *ibid.* pg.10.

83 *ibid.* pg.11.

84 *ibid.* pg.13.

85 *ibid.* pg.16.

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recommended that more emphasis should be placed on speaking both Latin and Greek. As time progressed lessons naturally became more exam based, with examples of 'spoon fed' lessons taking place. The conclusions noted that there was a greater emphasis on the literary aspect of the language than in the past and a move away from the traditional emphasis on prose composition.

In all five preparatory schools visited pupils studied Latin for at least one year. The time allocation varied from four to eight lessons a week. As we have found throughout this study 'teaching was dominated by the requirements of the Common Entrance examination and of the public schools to which pupils were likely to proceed'.⁸⁶ The schools had no up to date scheme of work, did not hold formal meetings of departmental staff and did not take part in curriculum discussion. Nonetheless Latin was considered to be a major subject, not only because of its importance in Common Entrance, but because it offered traditional benefits: 'an important linguistic discipline, giving a training in accuracy and acting as a foundation and support for other languages'. Whilst background studies were considered to give variety rather than have inherent interest of their own. Teaching resources were not all found to be appropriate to pupil's needs.

...in two of the schools the main Latin courses books embodied a now outmoded approach to the subject. In only one school was there appreciable use of other materials. In the rare instances where audio-visual aids were said to be available they were little used.⁸⁷

The content of the teaching was 'narrowly concerned with language work'. Pupils were keen and results, achieved by the most able, good. However, there was concern that there was no provision for the weakest pupils.

There can be no doubt that within the maintained sector pupils studying classics were an increasingly rare breed. The creation of the National Curriculum as a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act (in which Latin does not feature), and league tables have presented classics in state education with their third crisis, identified by Forrest. Few openings for Latin teachers in the

⁸⁶ *ibid.* pg.34.

⁸⁷ *ibid.* pg.36.

state sector cause the ever dwindling supply of specialists and the vicious circle of decline already experienced with Greek. Forrest foresees teachers being attracted to the independent sector where classics departments are still an integral part of most schools, thus dealing the final blow to classics in the state system.⁸⁸ Independent education is not bound to follow the National Curriculum which gives it space to continue with its more traditional curriculum. Certainly, while most independent schools endeavour to follow the spirit of the National Curriculum they do find space to include Latin. There has been a steady erosion of time and staff. In boys' schools there was a 17% fall in those studying Latin beyond 'O' level between 1953 and 1963, although it is interesting to note that classics in girls schools was thought to be increasing, although 'the numbers were too small to allow generalisation'.⁸⁹ The 1968 public schools commission reported that 16% of boys' schools and 7% of girls schools reflected a decreasing significance in Latin in the curriculum.⁹⁰ In 1971 the classics department at Sandroyd was three strong and the boys in their final year received 8 Latin and 4 Greek lessons a week, now the department consists of one teacher and lessons have dwindled to 4 Latin lessons each week with no provision made for Greek. However, in many other respects there has been no change of policy for the last century. Boys still start Latin at the age of nine and although they have dabbled with a little French before they start French in earnest then too. In spite of it no longer being a compulsory subject for Common Entrance, at least 80% are expected to sit Common Entrance Latin. The only text book is Kennedy's *Revised Latin Primer*. So far from being a dead subject Latin is alive and kicking in the independent sector.

The decision to remove Latin as an entry requirement for Oxford and Cambridge in 1960 had taken away its last prop. From now on Latin really would have to rely on its own merits. Relatively quickly there were developments which would have helped to reassure teachers and send a signal that genuine efforts were being made to save Latin from sinking into oblivion. The publication of *Reappraisal* which addressed specific problems and the

⁸⁸ M. Forrest *Classics Teachers, Comprehensive Reorganisation and Curriculum Change* 1989 pg.484/508.

⁸⁹ T.T.B. Ryder *Latin in Two-subject Honours Degrees* in *Didaskalos* 1:3 1965 pg.131.

⁹⁰ First Report Of The Public Schools Commission Vol.2 pg 75 quoted in A.G.Geen *The Teaching of Classics* M.Ed. Thesis, University of Wales, 1974 pg.121.

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creation of The Joint Association of Classical Teachers offered solidarity and support to teachers, some of whom must have been wondering what the future held for them. Practical steps were taken to make it easier to implement proposals suggested on updating teaching, the new 'O' level did shift its emphasis to reading Latin and the new Common Entrance paper also moved towards continuous text that was Roman in content. Although Greek 'O' level was seen to be in need of similar revision it was left behind.

The lifeline thrown to Latin by the work of the Cambridge School Classics Project was a significant departure from traditional approaches used in the past. Therefore, while it did not appeal to traditionalists, it offered a breath of new life to what had become, when compared with its rivals, a rather worn and weary subject. It also led to the development of *Reading Greek*, a rescue package for Greek and the creation of the foundation course which in turn resulted in Greek and Roman Civilisation courses at colleges and universities. To an extent the tables had turned for the university classics departments which had to hope for sufficient interest from schools to justify their existence. There has been a growth of courses for beginners' classics in a variety of guises at universities, they are having to fill a void caused by the general falling off of classics coming from schools which in turn creates a justification for their existence.

Those teaching Latin were faced with a situation that some had feared for years, but the independent nature of private education, a tendency towards reactionary attitudes and a desire to cling onto conforming to the image and standards that have become synonymous with their name ensures a place for Latin, and in public schools Greek, for the present at least.

Conclusion

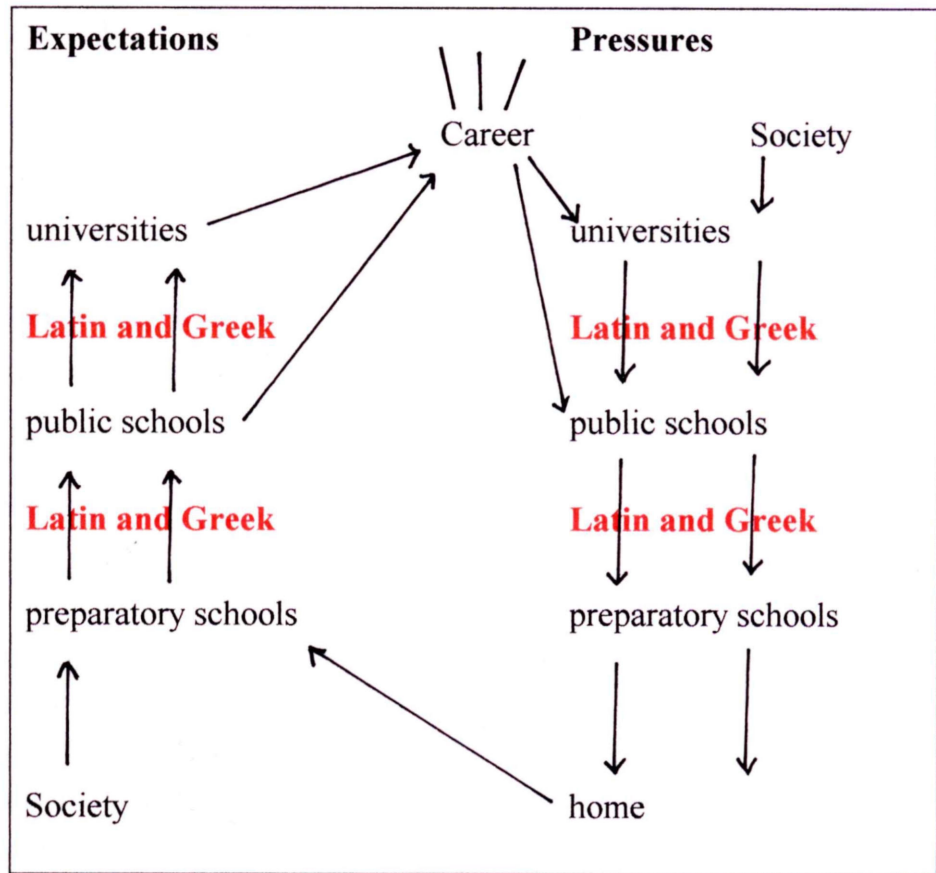
There can be no doubt that the position of classics in 1960 was a very different one from that at the turn of the century. Greek saw the most spectacular change in fortunes, moving from a subject which had been at the heart of the public school curriculum to one which was most certainly a speciality taken only by a few. Increasing clamour from promoters of other subjects threatened to topple Latin from its supremacy and yet in independent schools, whilst there was a crumbling and erosion of its position Latin held its ground with far more certainty. In order to assess the extent to which the effect of pressures from without and weaknesses within the teaching of Latin influenced the changing curriculum we shall re-examine the chains of pressures, expectations and themes identified in the introduction.

Conclusion

Expectations and Pressures : The effect on classics

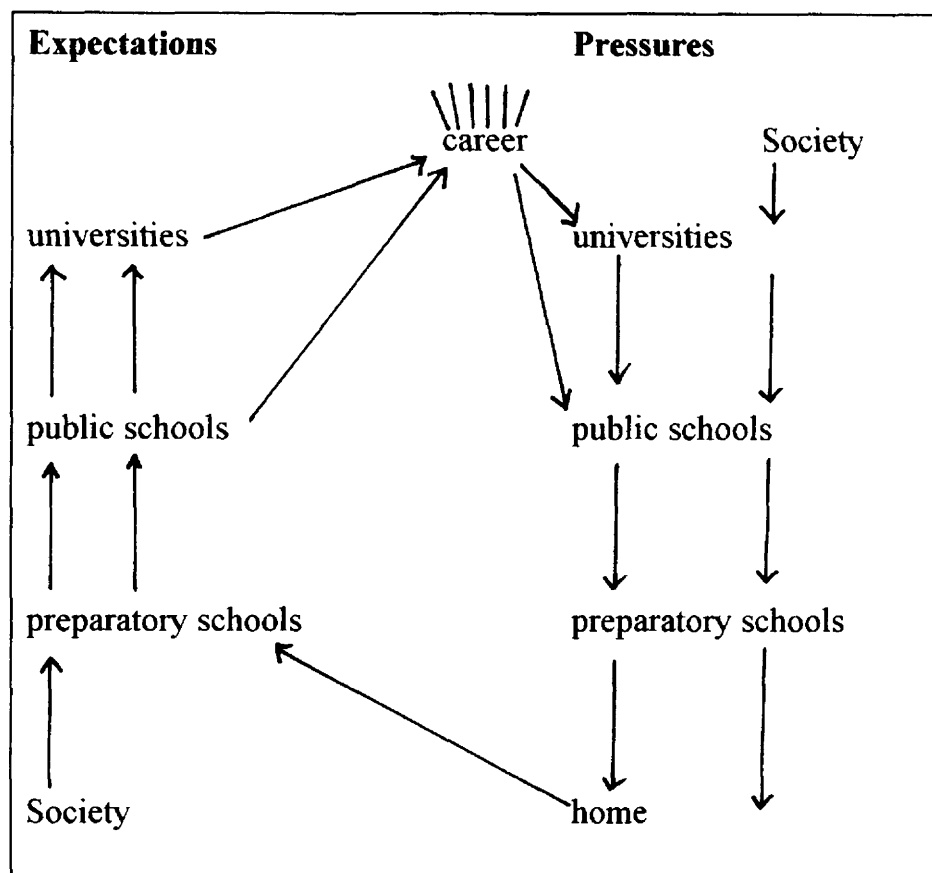
Below are the same charts illustrating expectations and pressures on each element of the chain as we saw in the introduction. This time the need for a classics qualification to the next stage has been shown.

Boys, 1902



Conclusion

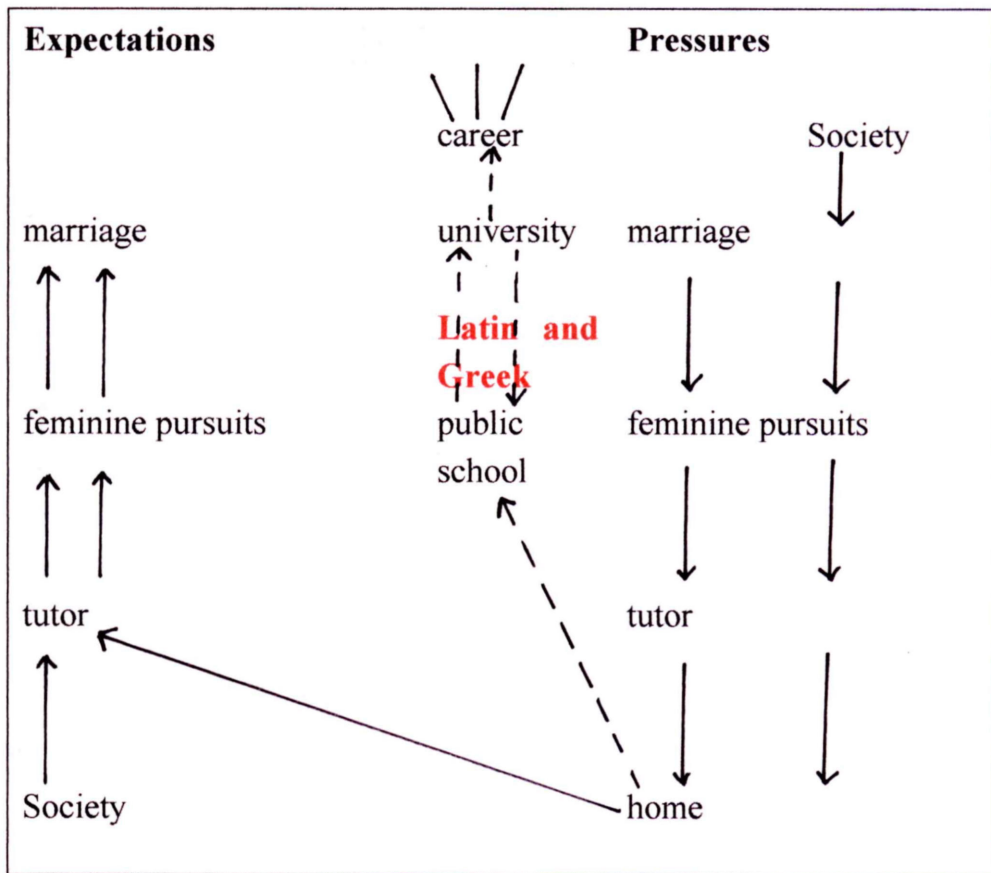
Boys, 1960



Whilst the expectations and pressures still link each stage in a similar way and the educational experience followed much the same path as it had done for boys in independent schools at the start of the century, there is no mention of classics. That is not to say that it had vanished completely from schools, it is just no longer part of the chain of progression.

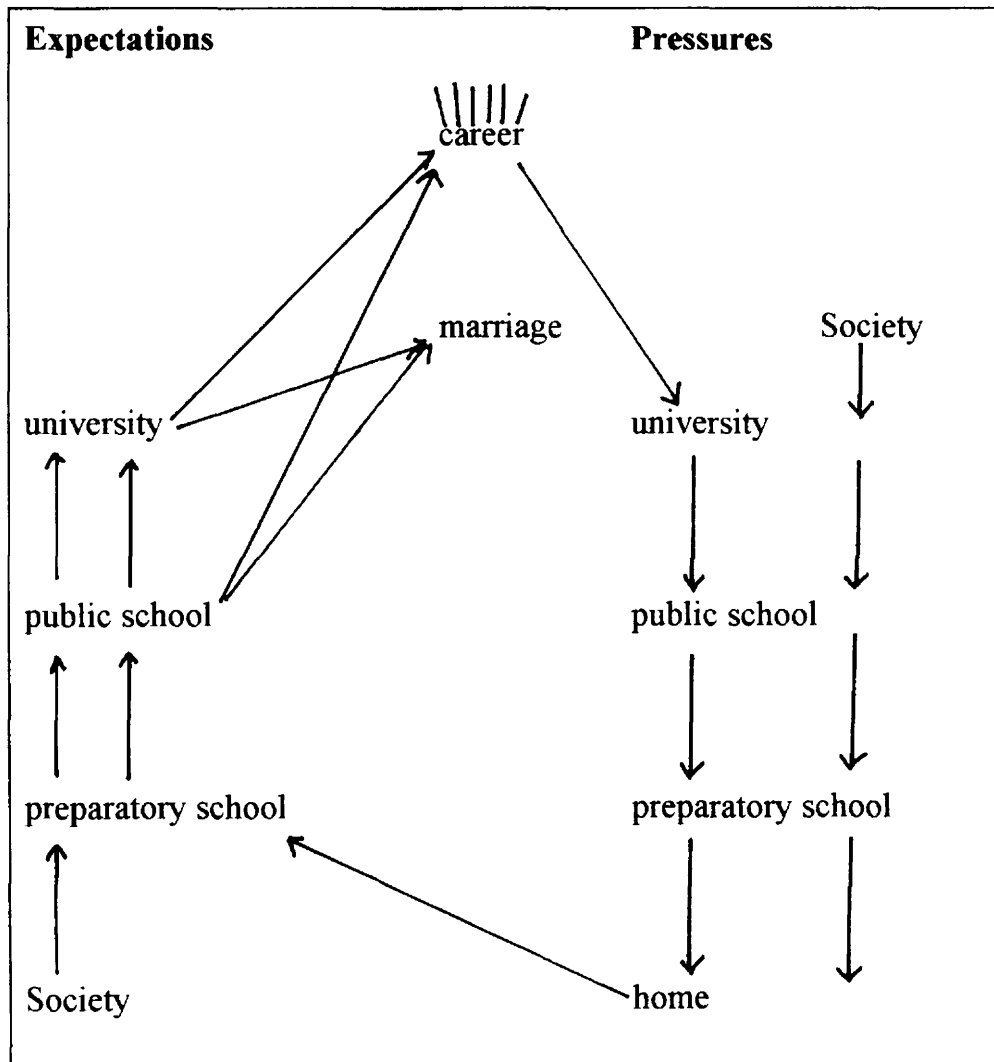
Conclusion

Girls, 1902



Conclusion

Girls, 1960



For girls the chain of progression had altered considerably, becoming far closer to that of the boys. Again, Latin and Greek did feature as part of the chain for the few that took the academic route at the turn of the century. Sixty years later all girls experienced an academic education, but classics was not a compulsory part of progression.

We must now analyse the causes and nature of this change in progression.

Milestones and millstones

Between 1902 and 1960 an accumulation of events, decisions and a changing atmosphere gradually added more millstones round the necks of those promoting the cause of classics.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1902 | The Education Act puts emphasis on the scientific content of the curriculum. |
| 1904 | Regulations for secondary schools declare that Latin is no longer a compulsory subject if the school can claim omission of Latin is to the advantage of the school. |
| 1907 | H.M.C. decides that Greek is no longer compulsory for entrance to public schools. |
| 1916 | Committee on the position of modern languages. |
| 1916 | Committee on the neglect of science |
| 1918 | Final vote of Headmasters' Conference not to have Greek as a compulsory subject for entrance to Oxford and Cambridge. |
| 1918 | World War 1 ends. There is a feeling that Britain lacks scientific and technical expertise. |
| 1919 | Compulsory Greek abolished at Cambridge |
| 1920 | Compulsory Greek abolished at Oxford. |
| 1926 | Hadow report, emphasis in Education to be on learning through experience. |
| 1938 | Spens report, Latin omitted from the core curriculum for first years of grammar school education. |
| 1951 | New 'O' and 'A' levels. All universities apart from Oxford and Cambridge drop the entrance qualification of Latin, providing one language is offered. |
| 1960 | Latin removed as a requirement for admission to Oxford or Cambridge. |

Events that created a significant change were the decisions by Oxford and Cambridge to remove the entrance requirement of Greek, 1919/20 and Latin, 1960. The waiving of a Latin qualification by other universities at the establishment of 'O' and 'A' levels in 1951 marks the start of a decided decline. The following graphs¹ show the effect of these decisions on the percentage taking School Certificate/'O' level at two

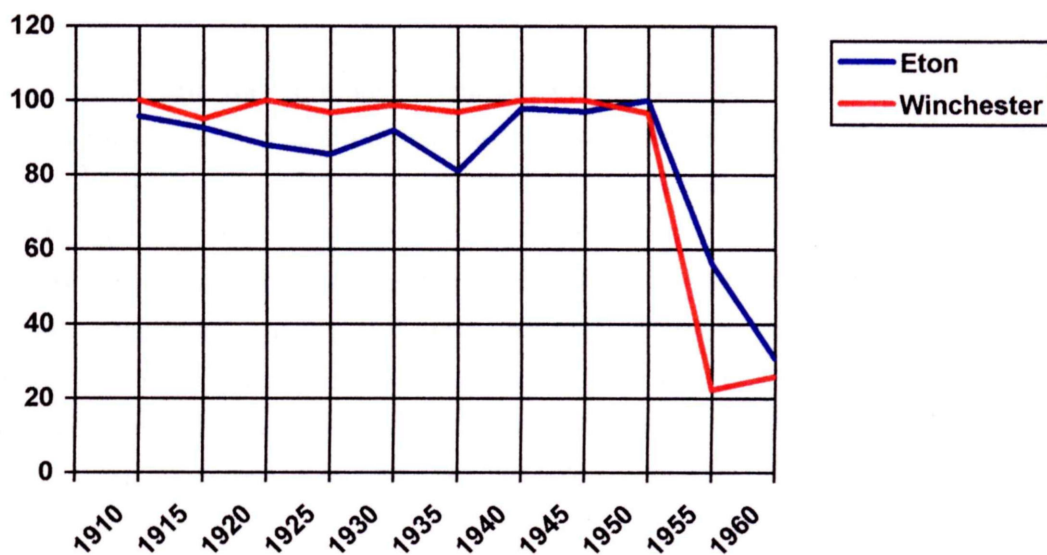
¹ Data taken from Appendix III.

Conclusion

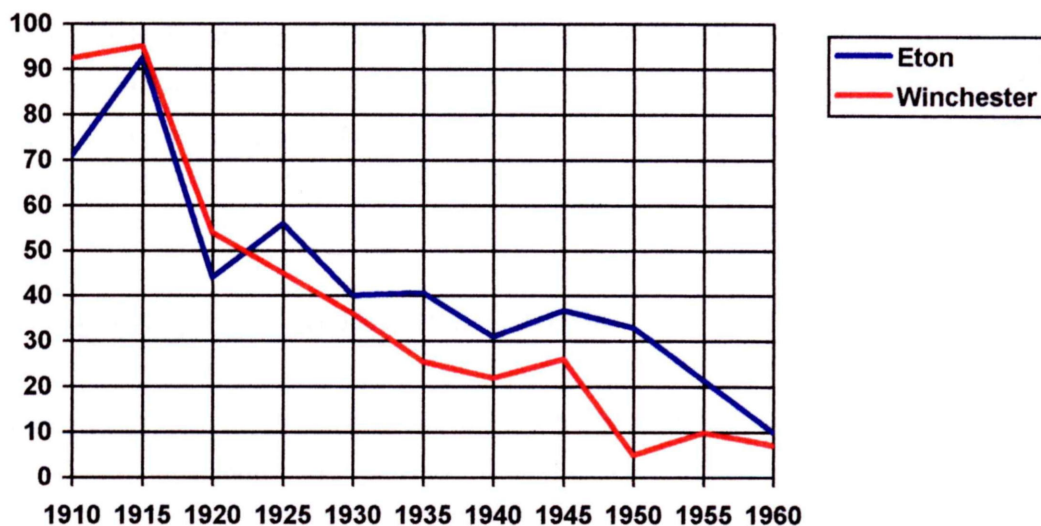
leading public schools. The peaks on the graphs in Latin for 1950 and Greek for 1915 are interesting. The 1915 one corresponds to the general percentage of candidates shown on the chart on page 8 of the introduction. Given that the data are arranged at five yearly intervals it is unlikely that the peaks are as pronounced as they seem here. What is interesting is that they occur directly before a distinct drop: the forthcoming crisis makes them seem more pronounced. The 1915 peak in Greek would be those boys who were at school during much of the debate over the quality and quantity of Greek taught of the last ten years. It is interesting to ponder whether a higher profile of the subject led to improved results. In 1950 the new 'O' levels were introduced and it is possible that they were perceived as being easier than School Certificate, particularly without the restrictions the grouping system of School Certificate.

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Graph to show School Certificate Results in Latin at Eton and Winchester, 1910-1960



Graph to Show School Certificate Results in Greek at Eton and Winchester, 1910-1960



The place of classics within the curriculum was threatened by those who felt that the timetable was unbalanced and criticised the role of classics. There was increasing need for a wider range of skills as the fields of science and technology

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expanded beside which the benefits of a classical education were perceived to be tenuous.

Educationally valid?

The position of Latin was no longer accepted as an integral part of the status quo, but challenged throughout. The traditional defence was that it was ideal for training the mind and developing logic, it was part of our heritage and its literature and society provided models on which our civilisation was founded. It also provided a valuable framework for learning other languages. However, these theories began to look weak compared to the more practical skills provided by other subjects, particularly science. The First World War cast a shadow over the honourable tenets of classics in the light of the more obvious benefits from science and technology. Criticisms of intellectual paralysis caused by emphasis on classics were made at an apt time. Mediocre results in both girls' and boys' schools raised doubts as to the justification of spending so much, or for some, any time on the subject. Due to emphasis on composition and then grammar, there were accusations that pupils could not even read Latin in boys' schools at the start of the century, whilst the general standard in many girls' schools was poor. In the relatively new world of education for girls parents had to be persuaded of the value of Latin. Although Latin was taught in girls' schools it was usually to the brighter girls only and whilst it gained a foothold in the curriculum it was due more to its necessity as a university entrance subject rather than because of the qualities it conferred, it had become part of the chain of pressures and expectations. The 1960 watershed and fall off in numbers suggests that whilst the value of Latin had been defended throughout, pupils tended to take it because of its necessity as a passport subject rather than for any other qualities it may have bestowed.

Shifting emphasis in the curriculum

Throughout the century the benefits of studying were perceived to change. The advantages of discipline and logical training were overshadowed by vocational interests. Promoters of science and modern languages both laid claim to a greater share of the timetable and schools gradually responded, building new science laboratories, with funding from industry provided for this after World War II, and creating alternative streams to the classical one. Classics now had serious rivals, although it still held a key card in that it retained its status as an entrance requirement to university. The 1926 Hadow Report advocated learning through experience and the

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claims of classics seemed to be out of step. Girls in particular faced an ever increasing field of opportunities as the gender barriers surrounding certain professions disappeared and it became acceptable for a girl not only to follow a career, but also choose one in traditionally male dominated areas. The classical tradition familiar to the elite classes who patronised independent schools was increasingly anachronistic and so increasingly at risk. The landed gentry themselves were becoming a minority. In the thirties and forties country houses were being demolished because their owners could no longer afford to repair them. Such families were entering the job market for the first time. The clientele of public schools was beginning to demand a different sort of schooling, for many being a gentleman simply wasn't enough.

The lion's share

At the turn of the century boys' schools were accustomed to giving the lion's share of the timetable to classics. Not only did classics dominate the timetable, but the early start made in preparatory schools ensured that throughout their schooling classics received most attention. In 1931 the top stream at a preparatory school still devoted a third of the timetable to Latin.² For girls' schools attempting to compete in the educational field, which they had so recently entered, the above goals were difficult. Girls, starting Latin three years later than boys, were handicapped from the beginning. Girls' schools were unwilling to devote such a large proportion of their short day to classics, having so many other subjects to include, subjects such as drawing and music which didn't feature at all in some boys' education and yet were invaluable in the rounded training schools attempted to give girls.

As the shifting emphasis in the timetable became obvious and Latin began to feel the squeeze there were recommendations by the Classical Association Curricula Committee as early as 1907 that not only would it be convenient, but advisable if young children mastered the basics of their education before tackling Latin and a later start were made. From inspection reports and a return to this theme in the curriculum debate in the thirties and then again in *Foundations* in 1959 it is obvious that few schools responded to this advice, either being unaware of it or ignoring it in the light of Common Entrance demands. Gradually champions of other subjects in the curriculum did claim their share of time and boys began to study a curriculum that was more akin to that found in girls' schools. An allocation of time that classics teachers in both types of school found to be inadequate to meet demands.

² See *Preparatory School Review* notes in Chapter 2, page 67.

The changing face of classics

Despite a seeming intransigence from teachers in the face of change, the character of classics taught did change. From the nineteenth century emphasis on composition classics became a grammar dominated subject. The grammar grind was recognised as contributing to the negative view of the subject and there were moves away from teaching grammar as an end in itself to a means to an end: to read classical literature. The 1938 Classical Association sub committee report on the *Position of the Classics in the Schools* identified the 'essential aim' of teaching classics to be 'the reading and understanding of Latin authors.'³ The shift in emphasis came about because the character of exams was changed in order to reflect these new goals. As we have seen teachers taught within the straitjacket of an exam syllabus and so naturally responded to changes which were reflected in the exams. In the years after 1960 changes continued to take place, grammar becoming even less emphasised in the Cambridge Latin Course and finally the language itself becoming marginalised amid the popularity of ancient civilisation courses.

Latin for all

The suitability of every pupil to take Latin was increasingly questioned by those who supported other areas of the curriculum, particularly by the *Classics and the Average Boy* letters in *The Times* in 1912 and the preparatory school curriculum debate of the thirties. The most elite public schools only accepted able boys who were able to cope with classics, thus we read of all or almost all studying classics at such establishments whilst schools that attracted a wider range of ability began to offer alternatives. Other subjects gained a foothold on the timetable and Modern Side streams were created for those who struggled with classics. This sidelining of the less able initially led to a stigmatising, not only of them, but of the subjects they learnt. Only as opportunities for those with qualifications other than classics widened and able pupils chose to study such subjects did they gain respectability. Girls' schools, faced with an overcrowded timetable from the start, accepted that not all girls were suited for Latin, in fact there

³ Second Report of the sub committee on *The Teaching of Classics in the Schools* C.A. archives pg.1.

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were other subjects that were considered perhaps even more suitable for girls and so Latin was set against the option of domestic science in many cases. Latin was only available for the brighter girls and Greek, if available at all, only for the very able who showed a flair in Latin.

Response to change

As a result of the above changes and developments in education and their effects on the teaching of classics we must now assess the response to such changes. Those who were in touch with the wider educational scene were sensitive to the fact that change was inevitable and immediately took steps that might be described as a damage limitation exercise. In 1903 the Classical Association was founded, providing a lively forum for classicists to discuss the shape of classics of the future, how to promote its worth and how to ensure that teachers adapted to the changing situation. There were new ideas and incentives offered to teachers: the direct method, championed by Rouse in the 1911 - 1913 summer schools in particular, books such as Valentine's *Latin, its Place and Value in Education*, 1935 and the publication of a new course *Latin for Today*, 1934.

Some teachers were aware that the future of classics depended on the present and tried out different methods of teaching in attempts to ensure they presented their subjects in the best possible light. We have seen that the women tended to be less conservative in this respect than the men, because, initially they were not so motivated by the importance of examination results. Two world wars called a halt to modernising the image of Latin as many schools had to rely on masters brought out of retirement, or those who were coming towards the end of their teaching career and who taught as they had been taught. The recurrence of certain topics, such as the best time to start Latin, suggests that many schools ignored or were unaware of the issues of the day. The most reactionary seem to have been the preparatory school masters, who in spite of the publication of the *Preparatory Schools Review* which contained articles and letters concerning various aspects of teaching Latin maintained a 'head in the sand' attitude. This was partly because they were unaware of the issues and did not keep in touch and partly because of the character of the schools and their staff. As we noted in the introduction it is unlikely that the comparatively lowly position of a preparatory school master with mundane duties and elementary academic standards would attract the more lively and interested staff. There was little academic challenge and the masters could be said to lead a sheltered existence; they were free to continue teaching as they saw fit and that was using tried and tested methods. The continuation

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to foster healthy classics departments may also have been as the result of very practical considerations. Text books were not replaced frequently, specialist equipment was not required: it was a relatively cheap department to run. Preparatory schools had received no help with funding science laboratories as the public schools had and we read of some schools still not offering science in the fifties. Diversification was an expensive option some of the smaller preparatory schools could ill afford. In order to compete in the market place preparatory schools had to portray a successful image, so the ultimate goal was Common Entrance results that would lead on to the next link in the chain. Girls' schools and public schools did show more interest, but even so those who showed any flair in creating enthusiasm for the subject were few. Independent schools did not require specific teaching qualifications, rather competence in the subject. This led to some teachers ploughing straight into the profession using the same tactics by which they had been taught. Although there was a greater tendency for women to have been professionally trained, girls schools encountered difficulties with finding teachers who were sufficiently competent in classics themselves in the early years. The results of this problem: pupils who were poorly grounded in grammatical basics, were highlighted by the 1932 conference at Oxford. An even more severe situation existed with regard to Greek teachers in girls' schools which continued throughout the period. As academic results grew in importance teaching became more structured and focused, leaving little room for innovation. The cycle of masters in boys' schools moving from public school to university and back to school again gave little opportunity for experience of wider horizons. Teachers perpetuated a fusty image of Latin, adhering to familiar methods because they worked and because they were easy to use, especially for those who were not completely competent in the subject themselves.

Thus we see two tiers of response to the threat of change; those who saw change as inevitable and turned to meet it, attempting to deflect some of its effect and those who either remained unaware of approaching changes or who chose to ignore them, sheltering behind the independent nature of their schools and not considering such changes a realistic threat to their existence.

Factors affecting the nature of change

The speed and character of change was determined by a variety of factors which shaped the nature of that change.

Probably the most influential of these factors was the existence of examinations. Calls for modern teaching methods, less emphasis to be placed on grammar, setting the subject in context and a wide experience of literature were admirable, but for many teachers impracticable. They were faced with two problems, to ensure their pupils passed the exam at the end of the course and to do so with fewer lessons than they had enjoyed in the past. Thus teachers felt increasingly pressurised to maintain a level of success. The standing of a school depended on its success, preparatory schools aspired to feed the major public schools, even better to win scholarships to them and public schools endeavoured to send a steady flow of candidates to Oxbridge. The reputation and thus the lifeline of independent schools rested to a degree on academic success. So no matter what went on in the classroom the ultimate goal was an examination and it was up to the staff to ensure that this goal was met.

Naturally the second important factor affecting the nature of change was the staff themselves. Teachers were only too aware that the one tangible proof of their competence was the examination result. Thus many retained familiar and reliable methods, ensuring levels of success they could rely on, teaching to meet present needs rather than presenting classics in a new light. They were not willing to give up time to experiment with different methods and felt there was no opportunity to include more in what was already a very busy syllabus. To respond to the call for change and at the same time to maintain standards required staff who were not only aware of the need for a response, but were capable of reaching the same goal via a different route. There were few who were capable or willing to risk taking such steps. We have already commented on the lack of initiative from the preparatory schools masters. Shortages of staff in girls' schools and during war time often meant a step back from embracing change.

Thus the quality of staff and the stranglehold of examinations resulted in a slow response to calls for change. Parents and pupils were influenced by the changing perception of classics. For them the subject began to lose its certain cachet as other subjects gained in respectability and the career market sought more diverse skills. Parents of girls had always questioned the value of Latin and as early as 1902 we read

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of some boys' parents interested in 'commercial value from every subject'.⁴ The 1943 symposium on 'Classics and Education for the Professions' was a response from the Classical Association to this growing demand for career oriented education.

Independence of independent schools

Independent schools were separate and to a large degree autonomous units. Some schools were accountable to a governing body, but others were owned and run by the headmaster. They were private institutions, similar, but different. However, they were not totally free or separate as they were inexorably linked by the system. Preparatory schools prepared boys to pass Common Entrance examinations and public schools worked towards School Certificate/'O' level and university entrance. The success of each school could be measured by exam results and there was pride and competition involved in maintaining a place in the pecking order. Some elements of this disjointed system responded to change, whilst others chose to ignore it as the attempt to introduce a uniform system of pronunciation illustrated. The larger and more prestigious elements of the system, schools such as Eton and Rugby, were influential in that preparatory schools who aspired to send pupils there followed their lead and if that meant ignoring advice of the Headmasters' Conference in 1906 to drop Greek for example, so be it. The preparatory schools were criticised in 1916 for making 'a fetish of individualism',⁵ a criticism that reflects frustration at their lack of co-operation and which we have found to be indicative of their character in general. Holding the lowliest position in the system they did not always respond to tugs of change from above, thus blocking the modernising influences many desired to see sweep through the entire system.

Many independent schools were isolated from each other geographically and although there were associations such as the Classical Association and Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching as well as the independent schools' bodies themselves it would seem that, apart from the competitive atmosphere of the games field, there was little intercourse between colleagues from other schools. Even by 1984, as we noted in Chapter Ten, the H.M.I survey *Classics in Independent Education* discovered that few departments met as a group within one school, liaison with other schools was even less common: 'a tendency towards isolation was pronounced in many schools'.⁶ We have seen that teachers in girls' schools with small departments, or perhaps just a

⁴ *Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.3, No.23, 1902, pg.183.

⁵ *The Preparatory Schools Review* Vol.7 No.68 1916, pg.120.

⁶ A survey by H.M.I. *Classics in Education* 1984 pg.11.

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solitary member of staff in charge of classics, led a lonely existence. The creation of inter-school classical associations was designed to provide support for such staff in the London area. Whilst there was doubtless more support in boys' schools for those who taught a key subject it was improbable that masters took the opportunity to benefit from sharing their experiences with others in different schools.

The character of the independent sector resulted in an organisation that was slow to respond to change, unwilling to depart from the norm until a change in goals, the examinations, demanded it. Girls schools, not having an established norm at first searched for the ideal curriculum and were far more open to new ideas. As education for girls became established, however, they too became tied to the system by examinations.

Worlds Apart ?

The experiences of girls and boys were worlds apart initially. Few girls had the opportunity to start Latin before the age of twelve and then only the brightest were encouraged to continue, although parents were often more interested in the practical training domestic science had to offer, prowess on the games field or the more ladylike pursuits of music and art. There were few boys who hadn't started Latin by the age of twelve and it was expected that they would continue, perhaps with the addition of Greek, until School Certificate at least. Just as academic girls were initially considered to be unfeminine and were rather frowned upon by society, so boys who could not cope with classics were considered to be second class citizens.

As education for girls became established it was no longer a stigma to be an academic female and for those who aspired to university that meant a classical female to a greater or lesser degree. To achieve success girls had to cope with a shorter course and fewer lessons than boys. As the curriculum of boys' schools became more diverse and Latin no longer received the lion's share of lessons the quantity of lessons received by girls and boys became more equal. As girls schools moved towards offering a serious academic curriculum for those who were able they found less freedom to teach Latin for enjoyment and moved towards the exam focused teaching found in boys schools. Even though they now had a full day timetable, Latin was still not started until the age of twelve, so boys in most preparatory schools had something of a head start. For both girls' and boys' schools restraints of time and a desire for success made the teaching of Latin a serious business.

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So in reality the worlds of boys and girls moved closer together, both in the experience in the classroom and the quality of results. By the 1950's much of this convergence had taken place. In the new 'O' level examinations a similar percentage of girls passed the exam as boys. Girls' schools offered Latin as an option to the most able and by the 1950's inspection reports tell of a narrow, cramming approach at many girls' schools. Influenced by the university entrance qualifications concerning the new exams even the most traditional of boys' schools had begun to waive the classics option for some in the fifties, as the graphs on page 363 show. The hold of exams remained as strong: 'Having so short a time at his disposal, the teacher, compelled by considerations other than educational, concentrates on the minimum required for examination purposes'.⁷ Influenced by the exam factor the worlds of boys and girls had converged. Yet the numbers of girls who specialised in classics remained relatively few in comparison to boys. This was partly due to the lack of Greek courses and teachers available for girls. There were also those who still felt that the most appropriate training was that of homemaker.

Imagine my sitting at dinner last Friday next to a girl, under twenty who had published a novel, was learning Latin and Greek, and attending an Ambulance Class - and yet she was quite a nice girl; though I had to tell her that she would be much better employed learning to sew on buttons and make puddings.⁸

The above factors are all linked to create the overall picture of classics in independent schools over a period of sixty years. Influences such as: educational trends, government decisions, the effects of war, changing social attitudes and the increase in technology all brought change to the character and purpose of education and so to the character and purpose of classics taught. In many cases the links of progression are related not so much as a chain, but as a series of chains which are interlinked, the different elements of which can be seen in the simplified diagram overleaf:

⁷ F.W. Garforth *Background Studies in the Teaching of Latin Greece And Rome* no.64, Feb.1953 pg.19.

⁸ Extract from recently-published autobiography (no details given) c 1950 in *The Education of Girls* National Union of Women Teachers nd.

	Prep schools	Public schools	Girls' Schools	Trends in classics teaching	Trends in education	University requirements
pre 1900	Classics very important.	Expected to deliver a gentlemanly training	Girls prepared for the marriage market rather than a career	Emphasis on composition		
1900's	Scholarships to public schools highly sought after		Lack of suitably trained classics mistresses		Latin no longer required to be taught in state secondary education	
1910		Increasingly career oriented skills required	WW1 gives women more independence	Emphasis on grammar		
1920's		Modern sides become increasingly accepted	Education for girls becomes established		Increasing pressure to teach more science and modern languages	Greek and Latin dropped as an entrance requirement to Oxbridge
1930's	Curriculum content discussions		Improved quality of teachers of Latin.	Emphasis on literature and its context	Spens : Latin no longer part of core curriculum of grammar schools in early years	
1940's				Classical Association promotes Latin for its inherent value	World War II interrupts calls for reform.	
1950's	<i>Foundations</i> published, revaluation of curriculum		Girls achieve similar quality of results as boys.			Latin dropped as an entrance requirement by all but Oxbridge
1960's	New Common Entrance paper			Literature in translation. Rise of social history courses		Oxbridge drop the Latin requirement

The above themes have been identified throughout this study and contribute to the way in which the face of classics changed during sixty years when not only education itself changed, but society, the class system and gender roles. Given the nature of the transition the changing character of Latin teaching was sedate and a retreat 'in order and without panic'⁹, whereas that of Greek was far more swift and ruthless. Whilst there were many factors affecting the character of this change Latin ultimately owed its survival in its traditional role and guise to its status as an entry requirement to Oxbridge. Boys, rather than choosing not to study classics and thereby become an academic outcast, now had to make a positive and determined move to follow the classical route. Girls, too, were free to make their own decisions regarding classics with out fear that such a decision would rob them of their femininity in the eyes of the world, or that a lack of classics would curtail their academic progress. By 1960 the classical route for boys and girls was similar if they chose to take it.

⁹ Professor Gilbert Murray in *Report of the Proceedings at the Imperial Conference of the Teachers' Associations* July 15th 1912.

Appendix I

Analysis Of Questionnaire Sent To Former Pupils Of Sherborne School For Boys

600 questionnaires were sent to old boys who attended Sherborne from the late twenties until 1960. The sample number was chosen to correspond with the number in the survey on a girls' school, Westonbirt. Sherborne is a larger school than Westonbirt so 20 names were selected at random from each year, although, due to the age of those in the early years there was little selection necessary as the extant number of old boys was relatively few.

292 replies were received, 48.5 % of those asked.
Of these replies:

31 (10.5%) were from those who had started at the school in the 1920's.¹
100 (34%) were from those who had started at the school in the 1930's.
108 (36.5%) were from those who had started at the school in the 1940's.
53 (18%) were from those who had started at the school in the 1950's.

1. *Did you learn Latin at school?*

All respondents learnt Latin at school.

¹For the purpose of analysis the questionnaires have been divided into decades depending on the date when the pupil started at Sherborne.

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2. *If you learnt Latin how old were you when you started? (percentages)²*

	6 years	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11/12 years	13/14 years	no reply ³
1920's	3		38.5	32	12.5	3.2	3.2	6.4
1930's		9	26	26	24	10	4	1
1940's	2.5	3.5	34	19	22	10	5.5	1.5
1950's		16.5	39.5	5.5	32		3.5	1.8

The overall percentage for each age group :

6 years	1.3%
7 years	7.5%
8 years	32.8%
9 years	20.5%
10 years	23.6%
11/12 years	7.5%
13/14 years	4.1%
no reply	2%

In the 1920's the majority, 38.5%, recall starting Latin at 8 years old.
The number who started aged 9 is close behind, 32%.

18.5% recall starting Latin age 10 or older, very few starting after the age of 11.

In the 1930's 26% recall starting at both 8 and 9.
The number who started aged 10 is close behind, 24%.
14% recall starting later than the age of 10.
9% recall starting at the age of 7.

In the 1940's the majority, 34% recall starting aged 8.
The numbers who remember starting at the age of 9 or 10 are close, 19% and 22%.
15.5% recall starting later than 10.
6% started before the age of 8.

In the 1950's the majority recall starting at the age of 8, 39.5%.
32% started at the age of 10 with only 5.5% starting aged 9.
3.5% started aged 13 or 14.
16.5% started earlier than 8.

Throughout the period 8 years old was the most common age to start Latin. This shows that the opinion that it was inadvisable to start Latin in one's first year at preparatory school was ignored by many schools. Although by the 1950's there is an

²Percentages are of the number of respondents in each particular decade.

³'No reply' includes those who can not remember or who wrote an inappropriate answer to the question.

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obvious move to boys starting at the age of 10, a considerable number, 16.5%, were starting before the age of eight.

The great majority had begun to learn Latin before they started at public school. Those who were late beginners were probably those who had been educated abroad before being sent to England to public school. The few who learnt Latin from the age of 6 either experienced a home tutor, or perhaps a governess with a classical education, or were sent to preparatory school exceptionally early, perhaps due to parents being abroad.

This question had a good response rate with respondents being certain about their experiences.

3. *Was Latin compulsory for everyone?*

All respondents remembered Latin as being compulsory.

4. *At what age could you give up Latin if you wanted? (percentages)*

	9 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years	Don't know
1920's		6		9.5	45	3		35
1930's	1	2	6	17	51	5	6	12
1940's		1.5	4.5	26.5	55.5	0.9	1.5	8
1950's		7.5	1.5	22.5	56.5	1.5	1.5	7.5

The overall percentage for each age group:

9 years	0.3%
13 years	3%
14 years	4%
15 years	20.5%
16 years	53%
17 years	3%
18 years	3%
Don't know	12%

The option to give up Latin was only available after school certificate had been sat. Depending on grounding and ability boys sat the school certificate any time from the age of 14 to the age of 17. The majority were 16 when they took their exams.

A few recall being able to give up on arrival at Sherborne, these were possibly boys who had no hope of taking it for school certificate and concentrated on English and Mathematics instead.

The few who recall giving up Latin aged 18 were those on the classical side who took the question to refer to their own experiences rather than to school policy. If they were heading for university and were on the classical side there was no chance of giving up.

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The older the respondents, the less sure their memories.

5. *What were the positive and negative aspects of learning Latin for you at the time?*⁴

Positive Aspects (percentages)

	1920's	1930's	1940's	1950's
Help with spelling and grammar	6.5	10	8.5	8.5
Help with foreign languages	2.5	5.5	3	5.5
Public school and university entrance relied on it.	1	9	5.5	4
Logical and good discipline	4	7	4	6
Enjoyed the challenge and found it easy.	5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Useful for career	6.5	2.5	1	0.8
Imparted a sense of Roman history	2.5	1	2.5	2
Good teachers			2	
Made one a member of the elite	1			
Accepted as part of curriculum	6.5			
Helped with prayers and graces	1			
Helped with plant names	1			
No positive aspects given	13.5	12.5	14.5	17.5

Negative Aspects (percentages)

	1920's	1930's	1940's	1950's
Boring and tedious, rote learning		6	6.5	5.5
Irrelevant, a dead language	4	5	6.5	12.9
Difficult and hard work	1	3.5	9	4
Harsh, poor teaching methods		3	4	5.5
Too much time spent on it	4	3	5	0.8
Penance, hated it	6.5	1	5	2
No use in career	2.5	0.4	2	
Everlasting wars & history	1			
Stammer	2.5			
No negative aspects	23	19.5	10	16.5

In the 1930's Latin was found to be of a particular help with spelling and grammar and with foreign languages. It was also seen as being logical and providing good mental

⁴Percentage of answers for each decade. Some gave more than one reason.

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discipline. This suggests that there were particular staff who linked Latin well with other subjects and imparted its educational value to the boys.

The 1930's were also the decade when the pressure to have Latin as a stepping stone to the next stage of education was felt most keenly. Few from the 1920's gave this a reason for Latin being important, the curriculum was something not to be questioned, but followed. For many of these respondents the advent of the second world war would have made a greater impact on their future career than their educational qualifications.

The number of those who found Latin useful for their career dwindled steadily throughout the period as specific skills and training became more important. It is interesting that the number that criticised the uselessness of Latin did not rise, but in fact fell away in the fifties. There was criticism that too much time was spent on Latin to the detriment of other more useful subjects, especially in the 40's. However, this criticism faded in the fifties too. Perhaps by this time it was seen purely as a qualification and not as a direct vocational route.

Latin was disliked because it was boring and tedious. No mention of this in the 20's reflects the sentiment that one did what one told with out question. Then, compared to an increasingly dynamic curriculum Latin became dull, but not increasingly so as it did with the girls.

Latin was criticised for being irrelevant and dead, a criticism which unlike the girls doubled in the 1950's. Other studies were seen to have a direct relevance in their lives, but Latin, still taught with little attention paid to the background, see no.11, was purely a means to an end.

There is an increase in the number criticising the difficulty element of Latin in the 1940's. During this decade Latin was also generally hated and considered a penance. This was possibly due to recourse to older teaching staff who used rather dry teaching methods, while the younger, more interesting teachers were involved in the war.

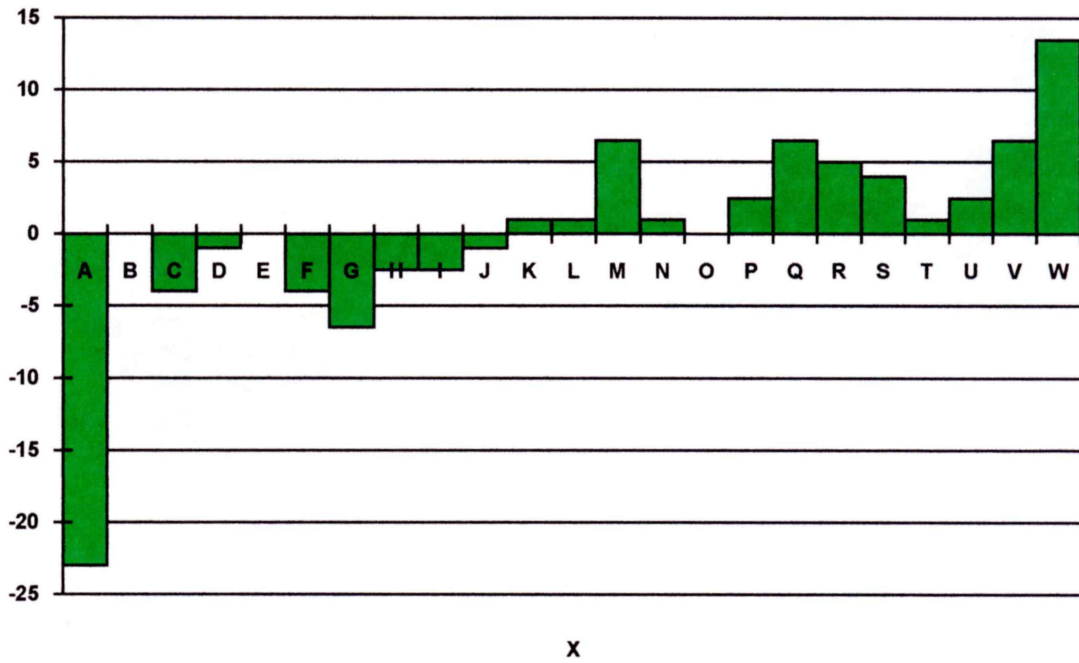
There are several who have commented on the harsh and in some cases brutal techniques employed, particularly in the thirties and early forties, to extract results. The steady rise of complaint at this does not reflect the pattern of comments, but does reflect the fact that pupils were experiencing a more lively approach at school and were becoming more discerning over their treatment.

Although those who wrote from the 1920's accepted Latin as part of the curriculum, they were also those who particularly hated it.

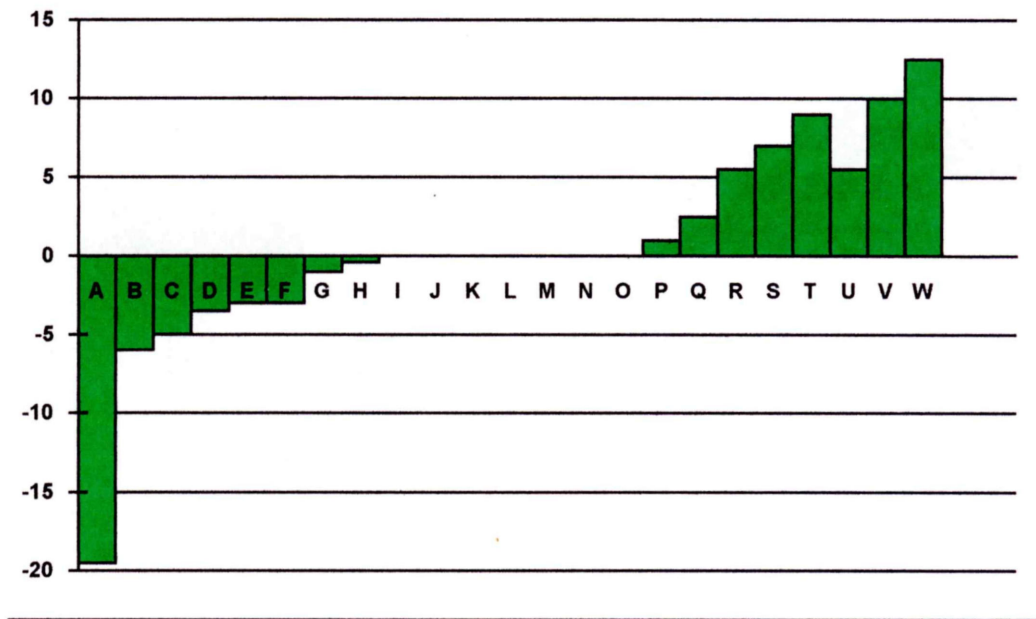
Some factors remain constant. The number who enjoyed Latin and found it easy hardly changed at all. However, it is interesting to note that it is considerably fewer than the girls in the same category. An example of girls' tendency to be naturally diligent and enjoy academic success? It is also worth noting that the girls had more to say about the content of what they read, being both positive and critical, whereas boys (with the exception of one in the 1920's) do not consider that as a factor at all.

Appendix I

Graph to show the reasons for liking and disliking Latin in the 1920's
 (Key for A-W on page 382)

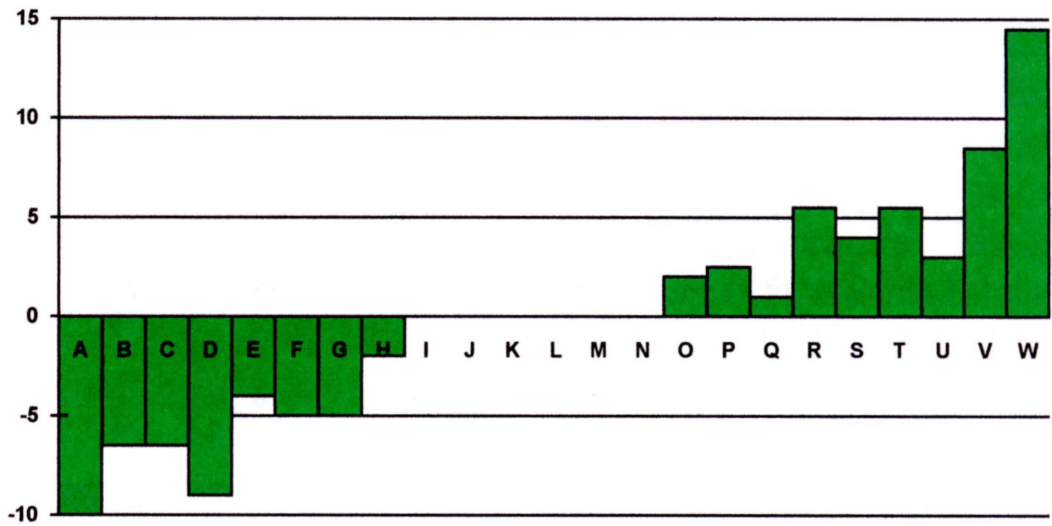


Graph to show the reasons for liking and disliking Latin in the 1930's

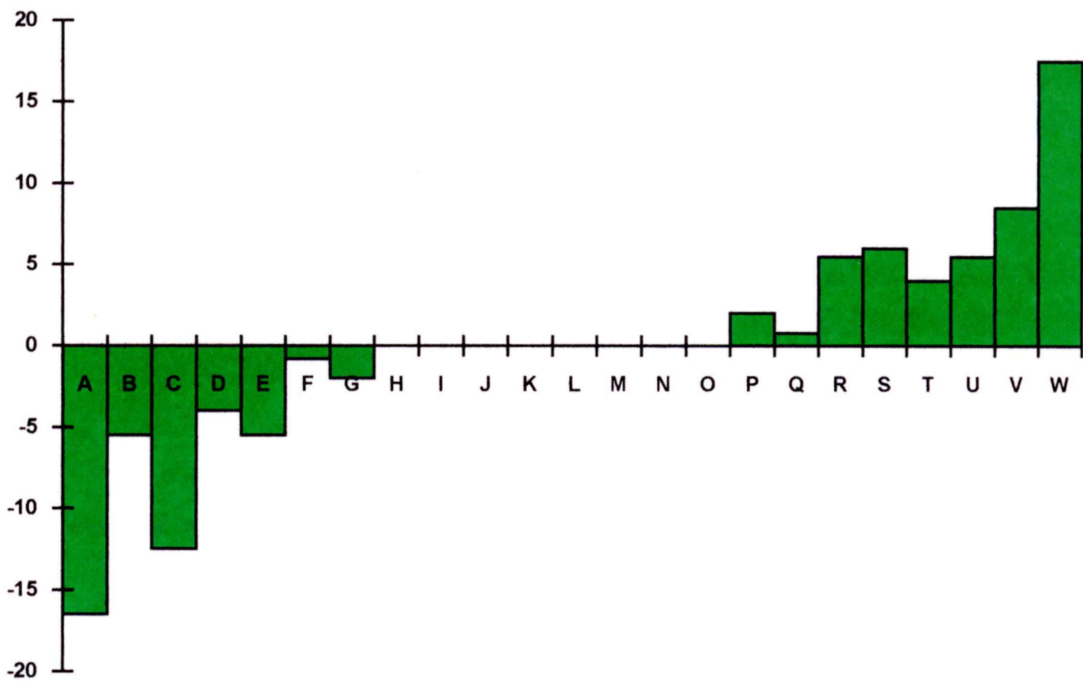


Appendix I

Graph to show the reasons for liking and disliking Latin in the 1940's



Graph to show the reasons for liking and disliking Latin in the 1950's



Appendix I

A	No negative response	K	Helped with plant names
B	Boring and tedious, rote learning	L	Helped with prayers and graces
C	Irrelevant, a dead language	M	Accepted as part of the curriculum
D	Difficult and hard work	N	Made one a member of the elite
E	Harsh, poor teaching methods	O	Good teachers
F	Too much time spent on it	P	Imparted a sense of Roman history
G	Penance, hated it	Q	Useful for career
H	No use in career	R	Enjoyed the challenge and found it easy
I	Everlasting wars and history	S	Logical and good discipline
J	Stammer	T	Public school and university entrance relied on it
		U	Help with foreign languages
		V	Help with spelling and grammar
		W	No positive aspects

Appendix 1

6. *In what way, if any, have your feelings towards this subject changed since leaving school?*⁵ (percentages)

	1920's	1930's	1940's	1950's	Overall
Help with English language	9	20	22.5	22.5	17.5
Help with foreign languages	12	16.5	12	24.5	14.5
I wish I had done more	6	5	8.5	3.5	6
Positive already, no change	27	14	10.5	17.5	19
Negative already, no change	3	5.5	10	5	5.5
Understanding of history		5	8.5	3.5	5.5
Help with career	3	8	5.5	8.5	6
Help with botany	12		4	3.5	3
Useful with crosswords	9	2.5	2		2.5
Change from negative to positive	21	3	5	7	10.5
Change from positive to negative	6	1.5	2.5		1.5
Good background, valuable		3			1
Help with music			0.5		0.2
Ornithology			0.5	3.5	0.5
Good discipline		15.5	5.5		6.5

As with the girls the appreciation of help with the English language as an adult rises, although not quite so steadily. There is a great leap from the 20's, 9% to the 30's, 20% and then the rise tails off. Many of the later respondents were involved in journalism or some other form of writing and so appreciated the grounding. In fact one wrote that the inability of anyone under the age of forty to write proper English is due to the decline in the teaching of classics.

There is also a rise in the appreciation of the help Latin gives with foreign languages, although there is a strange dip in the 1940's.

The desire to have done more/made more progress falls away in the 50's. Respondents wrote that demands made by future careers were the key issue and they felt that more time spent on Latin would have been wasted.

The rise in those who had not changed their negative feeling in the 40's fits with the picture found in no.5, that Latin was difficult and disliked in particular during that decade.

Whilst there was a dip in the numbers who appreciated the historical legacy of Latin in the 1940's for the girls there is a rise for the boys.

In spite of the increase of those who found Latin irrelevant and no use in future career in no. 5 the reality was that as an adult Latin was found to be of use in careers,

⁵Percentage of those who answered for each decade. Some gave more than one response

Appendix I

especially for those at school in the 50's. The direct value of Latin had not been obvious, but English skills and mental discipline were becoming increasingly important in the competitive world of business. Medicine was mentioned as being one particular vocation where a knowledge of the classics helped. Those who studied law also found their knowledge of Latin especially useful.

The oldest respondents who now have more leisure time particularly appreciated the help with botany and plant names in general and crossword solving. Ornithology, a pastime for the rather more active, is a leisure occupation enjoyed by the younger members who use their knowledge of Latin.

The number of those from the 1930's who value the discipline of Latin is interesting.

Appendix I

7. Was Latin a popular subject? Why? (percentages)

	Popular	Not Popular	Don't know
1920's	10.5	85.5	4
1930's	18	62	20
1940's	15.5	73	11
1950's	15	83	1.5

The majority felt that Latin was not popular, although its unpopularity did not increase as it did with the girls. It is strange to note that the decade when most complaints about physical punishment for failing to achieve satisfactory results were loudest, the 30's, is also the decade when Latin was at its most popular. The reasons for disliking Latin are given below. (percentages)

	1920's	1930's	1940's	1950's
Dead language, irrelevant	37.5	16	32.5	45
Teaching poor and dull		6	17.5	9
Difficult	12.5	24	22.5	20
Boring	12.5	16	13.5	20
Waste of time	12.5	16	5	
Harsh discipline	4		3.5	2.2
Hated it		1.5	1	
Necessary evil		8	5	
Self conscious in front of the class		1.5		

The fact that Latin was considered to be taught badly in the 1940's reflects the comments made in no.5 and strongly suggests that the war was the root cause of the problem. However, it was considered to be more boring and more difficult in the 30's and 50's. This was probably compared to other subjects, such as Science which were firmly established at Sherborne by the 30's.

The respondents from the 1950's did not consider too much time to have been spent on Latin in question 5. and did not consider it to be a waste of time, unlike their predecessors. Although it led to no specific career Latin was inevitable if one had aspirations of Oxbridge or following certain careers.

Reasons for Latin being popular were that Latin was easy and enjoyed by clever boys. A few mentioned liking the logicity of it and there was the occasional recognition of a good teacher. Some wrote that it was popular, but went on to say that it was accepted as part of the curriculum without being considered in a positive or negative way.

Appendix I

8. *At what age could one start Greek? (percentages)*

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	?
1920's			12.5	3	3	6	12.5	3	21.5	6	12.5	18.5
1930's		3		3	10	15	19	7	6	2	5	30
1940's	0.9		2.5	4.5	9	5.5	7	21	9	5.5	3.5	29.5
1950's		3.5	3.5	9	14.5	14.5	9	14.5	11	1.5	3.5	11

Many who did not take Greek found it difficult to remember this.

In 1920's a considerable number, 21%, started Greek at the age of 8, however, this trend for an early start fell, although many seemed to start in their third year at preparatory school. The top years of the preparatory school was a popular time to start. Some did not begin until they reached Sherborne, having attended schools where Greek was only taught to scholars or not at all. The strong numbers of boys starting Greek relatively early in their preparatory school career, right into the 50's is an instance of the recommendations made after the great debate on Greek during the first years of the century falling on stony ground in preparatory schools.

Appendix I

9. Which pupils were allowed to take up Greek? (percentages)

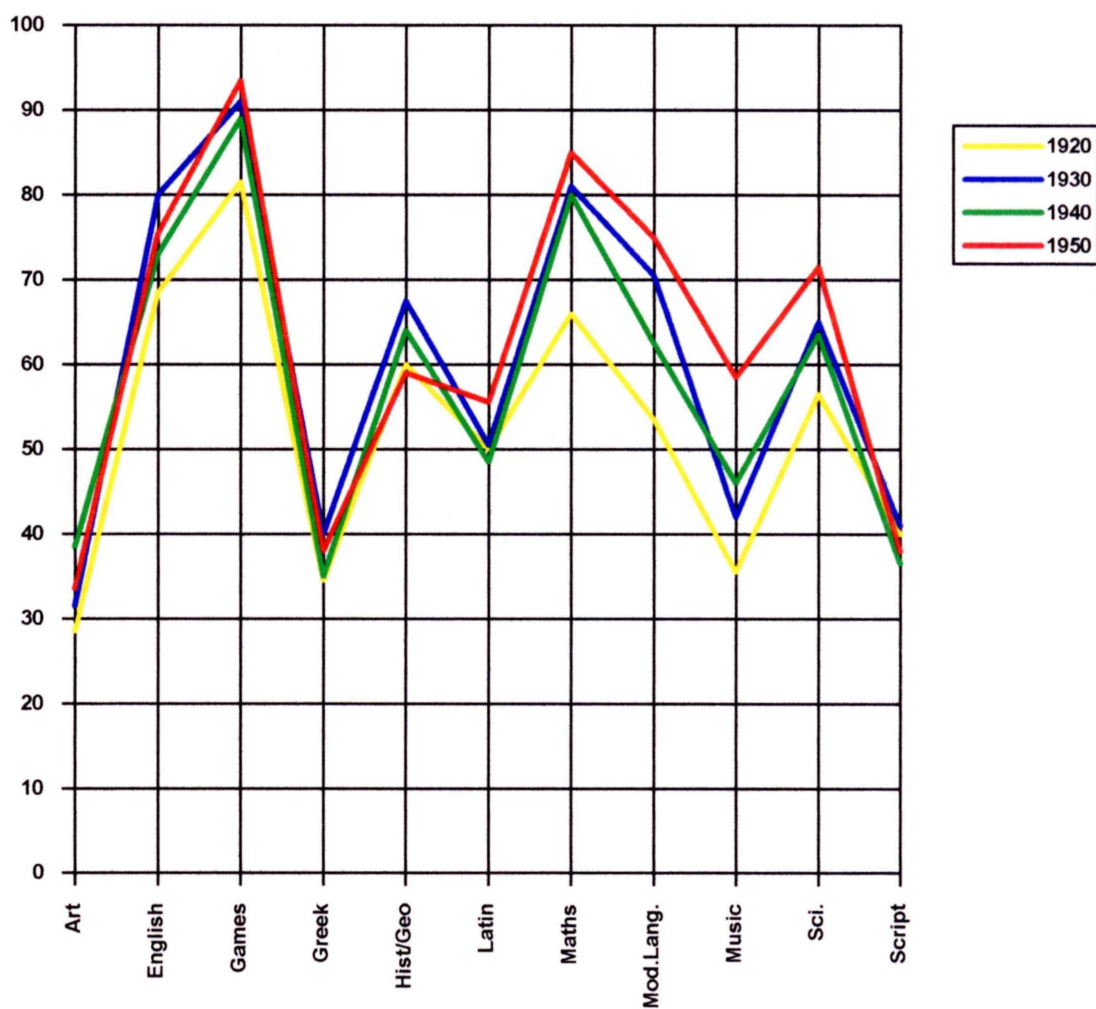
	1920's	1930's	1940's	1950's
Clever boys/ Those who excelled at Latin	3	23	29.5	46
Any one who wanted	20	9	15.5	16.5
Prep. school top year	3	4		7
Those hoping for scholarships - Prep. school	13	9	5.5	1.5
Those on the classical side	23	17	12	5.5
Those whose parents wished		3		
Those whom the headmaster preferred		1		
Do not know	33	34	37	22

Greek was increasingly offered to boys who were bright and showed an aptitude for classical languages. The old criteria of Greek being a kingpin in the public school scholarship was considered less as time went by. The number who refer to the classical side dwindles too, possibly because the number of boys specialising in classics had dwindled and there was greater variety in their 'A' level choices. Those who wrote 'any one who wanted to' tended to be offering it as a suggestion and were probably under a misconception that this was the only criteria.

Appendix I

10a. *The ability to excel in which subjects carried the most prestige in the minds of the pupils?*⁶

	Art	Eng.	Games	Greek	Hist/ Geog	Latin	Maths	Mod. Langs.	Music	Science	Script.
1920	28.5	68.5	81.5	34	60	50	66	53	35.5	56.5	40
1930	31.5	80	91	40	67.5	50.5	81	70.5	42	65	41
1940	38.5	73	89	35	64	48.5	80	62.5	46	63.5	36.5
1950	33.5	75.5	93.5	38	59	55.5	85	75	58.5	71.5	38



⁶The figures are a percentage of the maximum score for each subject in relation to the number of responses, so they are comparable.

Appendix I

Games, as with the girls, takes the lead, being at its height in the 1950's, suggesting that there was no diminishing in the games cult.

Mathematics is the strongest of the academic subjects, becoming more important as time moves on. This is closely followed by English (on a par with English during the 20's and 30's).

Modern languages increases in importance, a dip in the 40's may reflect lack of good teaching due to the war.

Science makes an expected increase, more marked than that at Westonbirt. Scientific careers were becoming an attractive option, it was a subject that mixed academic work with practical application and is traditionally popular with boys.

History and Geography reached a height in the thirties, but otherwise remained constant, as did Scripture.

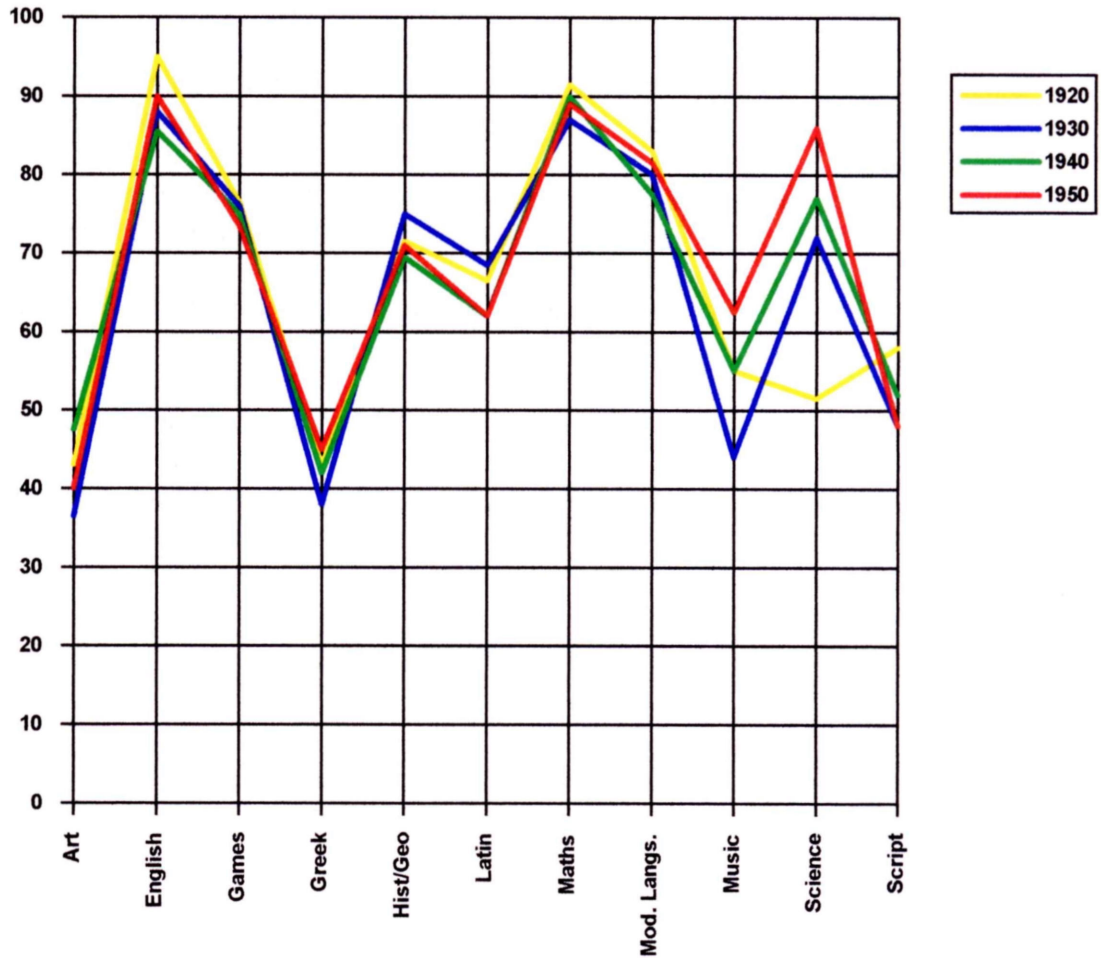
Art was relatively constant compared to music which increase in kudos. It has been pointed out that the music at Sherborne was particularly strong in the 40's and 50's and it is a particularly visual way of showing ones skills.

Greek was a low scoring subject, due to its exclusivity. It did not gain or loose much in the way of kudos. Latin, too was fairly constant, being considered more highly in the 50's, the decade when academic success seems to have been most appreciated, perhaps as the world was becoming a more competitive place. However, of the academic subjects taken by everyone it is the second lowest, next to Scripture (which was hardly considered because one's results in it did not count)

Appendix I

10b. *The ability to excel in which subjects carried most weight in the minds of the parents?*⁷

	Art	Eng.	Games	Greek	Hist/ Geog.	Latin	Maths	Mod. Langs.	Music	Sci	Script
1920	43	95	76.5	43	71.5	66.5	91.5	83	55	51.5	58
1930	36.5	88	76	38	75	68.5	87	80	44	72	48.5
1940	47.5	85.5	75	42	69.5	62.5	90	77.5	55	77	52
1950	40	90	73.5	45	71	62	89	81.5	62.5	86	48



⁷The figures are a percentage of the maximum score for each subject in relation to the number of responses, so they are comparable.

Appendix 1

English and Mathematics are the most prestigious subjects and their status remains constant throughout.

Science also scores highly, making a dramatic improvement. Modern languages do not fall in status as they did for the parents of girls, they are considered quite highly and their scores remain fairly constant.

Unlike the girls' parents who considered music in a less favourable light, the parents of boys appreciated the strong music department at Sherborne and it remains popular.

Games, whilst not as important as for the boys themselves, still carries considerable kudos. They do carry less and less importance, but the fall is minimal. As with music, the games fields is a visible way of seeing and showing off ones son's skills, and perhaps reliving one's own youth!

Greek, together with Art, remains the lowest scoring subject. Again, it was rather considered a subject apart.

The status of History and Geography remained constant throughout, scoring fairly highly.

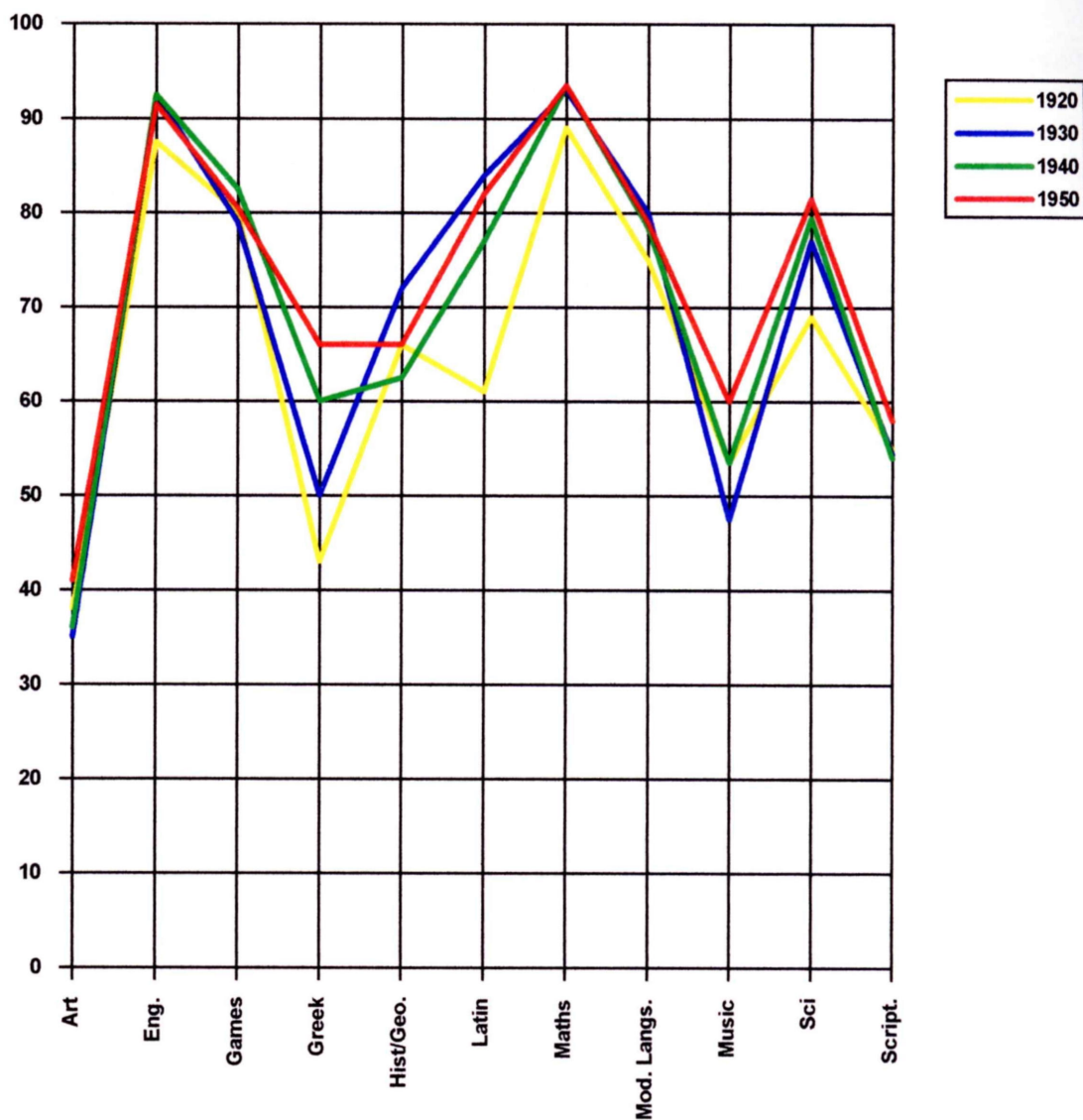
Scripture dropped after the 1920's and then maintained a relatively low place.

Latin was considered more important by parents than by pupils, but still comes after games and is on a par with music.

Appendix I

10c. *The ability to excel in which subjects carried the most prestige in the minds of the staff?*⁸

	Art	Eng.	Games	Greek	Hist/ Geog.	Latin	Maths	Mod. Langs.	Music	Sci.	Script.
1920	38	87.5	80	43	66	61	89	75	53.5	69	55
1930	35	92.5	79	50	72	84	93	80	47.5	77	54.5
1940	36	92.5	82.5	60	62.5	77	93.5	78.5	53.5	79.5	54
1950	41	91.5	80.5	66	66	82	93.5	79	60	81.5	58



⁸The figures are a percentage of the maximum score for each subject in relation to the number of responses, so they are comparable.

Appendix I

As with the Westonbirt survey respondents found this particularly difficult to answer, many having no idea of what staff thought. However, others were guided by their house masters.

Some mentioned the games cult being reinforced by the staff and it is obvious that games scores very highly here, the scores being constant throughout.

English and Mathematics have the greatest status and change little in time.

By the 50's Science is an important subject, having increased in importance steadily over the years. This falls in with the other scores for Science and reflects the growing impact Science was making on society.

Modern languages have a firm standing which does not alter much in time. History and Geography, while being less important, also remain constant.

The rise of prestige for Greek is interesting. This possibly reflects greater status being given to academic subjects in the 50's. Latin too, scores more highly than with parents and pupils and after the 20's grows in status. It was the responsibility of staff to prepare their students for the next stage and if that entailed passing Latin at S.C., then Latin was important.

Appendix I

11a. *How much importance was given to the following aspects of classics?*
(percentages)

	1920's	1930's	1940's	1950's
Grammar	85.5	88.5	84.5	95.5
Learning vocabulary	85.5	86	89	95.5
Translation into English	85.5	84.5	89	90
Translation into Latin	78.5	77.5	65	80
Latin verse	44.5	46	49.5	48
Social History of the Romans	44.5	36.5	36.5	40.5
Political History of the Romans	49	33.5	36	36.5
Classical drama	32.5	28.5	30.5	31.5
Archaeology	32.5	23.5	23	26
Classical art and sculpture	31.5	23	24.5	24.5

Unlike Westonbirt the figures for learning Grammar do not drop dramatically in the fifties. It is then that they are of paramount importance. Sherborne obviously followed a traditional approach in its teaching.

The figures are remarkably constant across the decades. There being a distinct decline in political history and art and sculpture after the 20's. Most recalled concentrating on practising the mechanics of the language and covering very little of the background material. In spite of pressure to teach Latin in context it would appear that Sherborne clung to its time tested approach, doubtless working with the goal of passing exams, rather than opening up the subject to a more interesting treatment.

11b. *How much time was spent on Latin each week?*

The majority of respondents found it impossible to remember this. However, those who did remembered spending between four and five periods a week on Latin, plus a prep. A couple, presumably on the classical side, recall having about thirteen lessons a week and one from the 1940's remembers as many a twenty lessons per week.

Appendix I

The results from the questionnaires must be treated with a certain amount of caution. Facts and sentiments recalled from over sixty years ago may have become blurred with the passage of time, although elderly people often remember the distant past more clearly than more recent events. Also many were not privy to the thoughts of parents and staff. Several who were unsure were unable to complete the last two questions. However, many had definite ideas and accompanied their answers with pertinent comments. These imponderables cover both questionnaires and so bestow some comparability on the results.

Appendix II

Analysis Of Questionnaire Sent To Former Pupils Of Westonbirt School For Girls.

597 questionnaires were sent to all old girls who had attended Westonbirt since its foundation in 1928 until 1960. 132 replies were received, 22% of those asked.

Of these replies 4 (3%) were from those who had started at the school in the 1920's¹

30 (22.5%)	"	"	"	1930's
56 (42%)	"	"	"	1940's
42 (31.5%)	"	"	"	1950's

1. *Did you learn Latin at school?*

All but two learnt Latin whilst at Westonbirt. The exceptions had arrived very late and it was not considered worthwhile starting Latin at such a stage in their school career.

2. *If you learnt Latin how old were you when you started? (percentages)²*

	7 years	8/9 years	10 years	11/12 years	13/14 years	15 years	no reply
1920's		25		50	25		
1930's	3		16	46.5	13	3	10
1940's		19.5	14	55	8.5		
1950's	2	7	7	66	11.5		

The overall percentage for each age group :

7 years	1.5%
8/9 years	12%
10 years	15.5%
11/12 years	56.5%
13/14 years	11%
15 years	0.75%
no reply	2%

The majority did not begin to learn Latin until they first went to Westonbirt at the age of 11 or 12. Those who recall starting at the age of 13 or 15 were possibly late entrants. Many of those who had started Latin before Westonbirt explained it was because they had attended a boys' prep. school.

In 1930's the majority, 46.5% recall starting Latin at 11/12 years old.

23% started later

9% started before Westonbirt

¹For the purpose of analysis the questionnaires have been divided into decades depending on the date when the pupil started at Westonbirt.

²Percentages are of the number of respondents in each particular decade.

Appendix II

In 1940's the majority, 55% recall starting Latin at 11/12 years old
8.5% started later
33.5% started before Westonbirt

In 1950's the majority, 66% recall starting Latin at 11/12 years old.
11.5% started later
16% started before Westonbirt

It would seem that during the 1940's there was a greater opportunity and trend to begin Latin before public school. This declined in the 50's as the profile of classics became less important. Why was it not there in the 30's?- One can not attribute this completely to faulty memories due to the time lapse. In the 1930's girls prep. schools were still rather insular, concentrating on the basics, plus the accomplishments of music and needlework. The latter were not so important after the war when women of all classes had contributed to the war effort. Education was disrupted during the war and afterwards there was a sudden supply of good teachers ready to be put to use.

Of those who started Latin later than twelve in the 1950's some may have transferred to the private system after failing 11 Plus and whose parents would rather pay than suffer the ignominy of sending a daughter to a secondary modern school.

3. *Was Latin compulsory for everyone? (percentages)*

	Yes	No	Don't know
1920's	50		50
1930's	56.5	43	50
1940's	87.5	12.5	
1950's	95	4.5	

Some respondents noted that during the early forties Latin was unavailable due to the war. Latin was compulsory for the majority of pupils, although a few very weak candidates may have been excused. Those who claim that Latin was not compulsory possibly remember a late arrival who did not start Latin or very weak girls who gave up the subject early.

Appendix II

4. *At what age could you give up Latin if you wanted? (percentages)*

	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	?	any time
1920's				75		25	
1930's	3.3	6.6	23	16.5	3	36.5	10
1940's		16	33	28	8.5	8.5	1.5
1950's	4.5	19	35	21	7	11.5	

The overall percentage for each age group:

12 years	2%
13 years	21%
14 years	31%
15 years	23%
16 years	6.5%
Don't know	16%
Any time	3%

It would appear that School Certificate was a deciding factor, one either gave up Latin before specialising for School Certificate aged 13 or 14 or after School Certificate at the age of 15. However, particularly in latter years there appears to have been some weeding out after the first year of Latin. A couple of correspondents noted that giving up was not so much to do with want, but ability and by the 1950's it would seem that those not suited were not encouraged to continue after an introductory year.

Appendix II

5. *What were the positive and negative aspects of learning Latin for you at the time? (percentages)³*

Positive Aspects

	1930's	1940's	1950's
Helped with spelling, grammar	9.5	8.5	11.5
Helped with foreign languages	6.5	3.5	5
Enjoyed the challenge and found it easy	8	13.5	9.5
Orderly and logical	8	4	5
Liked the poetry and stories	2.5	3.5	7
Imparted a sense of history	1	0.5	3
Liked the teacher		3.5	2
Helped with Science	1	1	
Helped with plant names	1		
A good School Cert. Subject	2.5	2.5	
No positive reason given	13.5	11	9.5

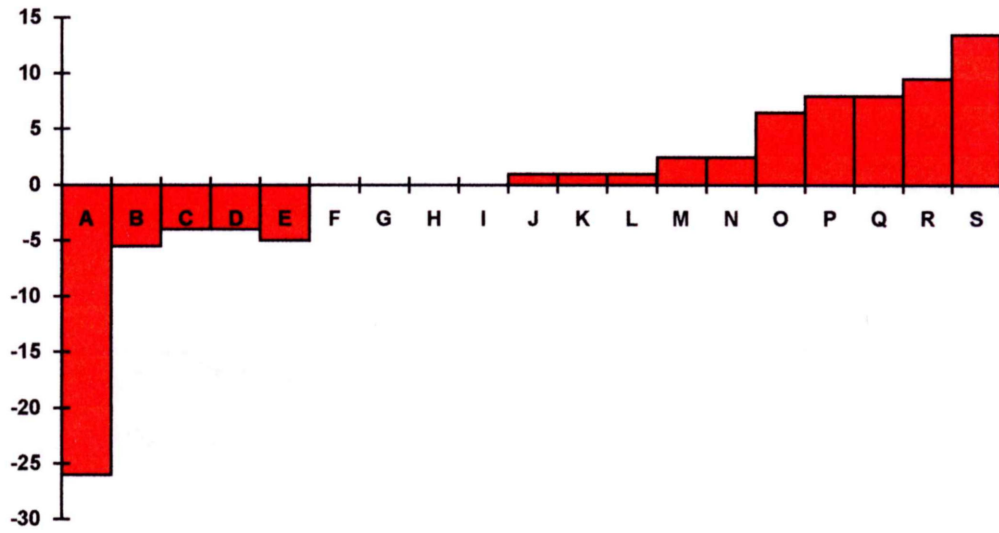
Negative Aspects

	1930's	1940's	1950's
Boring and tedious, a grind	4	5.5	13.5
Irrelevant, a dead language	5.5	5	5
Difficult and hard work	4	5	5
Dislike of set books		1	3
Dislike of Roman history			3
Poor teacher		2.5	2
Hated it	2.5	2.5	2
No negative reason given	26	21	12.5

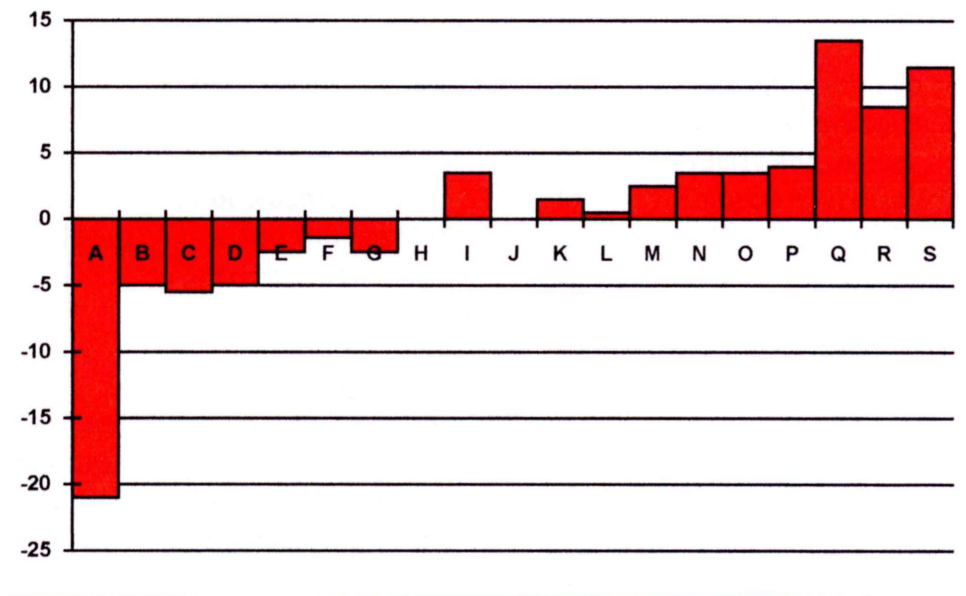
³Percentage of answers for each decade. Some gave more than one reason.

Appendix II

Graph to show the reasons for liking and disliking Latin in the 1930's
(Key for A-W on page 401)

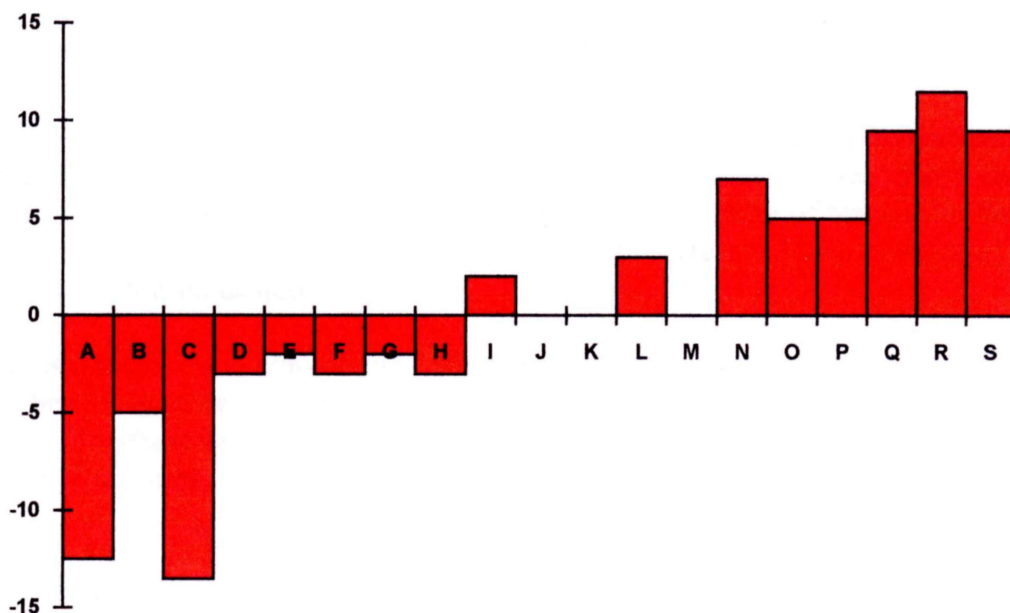


Graph to show the reasons for liking and disliking Latin in the 1940's



Appendix II

Graph to show the reasons for liking and disliking Latin in the 1950's



A	No negative response	K	Helped with Science
B	Irrelevant or dead language	L	Imparted a sense of history
C	Boring, grammar grind	M	Good subject for School Cert.
D	Difficult, hard work	N	Enjoyed poetry and stories
E	Hated it	O	Helped with foreign languages
F	Disliked set books	P	orderly and logical
G	Poor teacher	Q	Enjoyed it, a challenge and easy
H	Disliked Roman History	R	Helped with English
I	Good teacher	S	No positive response
J	Helped with plant names		

5. In the 1940's Latin was considered to be less of an aid to spelling, grammar and foreign languages than in the 30's and 50's. Why? Perhaps a particular teacher was unable to make strong cross curricular links. It was also found to be easier in the 40's (13.5% compared to 30's : 8% and 50's : 9.5%) Would this suggest less of an emphasis on grammar and biting the bullet of the grammar grind, thus making it more enjoyable, but less structured? (Answers to 11a would suggest that plenty of grammar was taught)

The fact that fewer found Latin orderly and logical in the 40's would fit in with the above pattern.

Poetry and stories became more popular as time went on. Teachers tried to make the subject more lively and interesting as other subjects became more attractive. Attempts are made to make Latin less dry. The rise in enjoying a sense of history would suggest that the teaching of Latin became more diverse. There is no mention of dislike of Roman history in the 30's and 40's, probably because it was not taught as such and hardly ever mentioned.

Appendix II

Few found Latin a help with Science and this dropped completely in the 50's. Science was becoming more technical and traditional. Botany and the need to cope with Latin names were giving way to Chemistry and Physics. Those in the 30's who found it a help with plant names are now elderly people who have time to spend in the garden. This also reflects an age when studying wild flowers was a ladylike pastime and the result of belonging to the leisured classes.

There are relatively few negative aspects given in the 1930's. Some commented that one just did what one was told, one didn't question and children didn't dare to complain. The fact that there is no comment on like or dislike of teachers in the 30's would accept this acceptance philosophy, teachers were not to be questioned, they were part of the status quo.

There is a steep rise in considering Latin boring and tedious in the 50's. Other subjects were becoming more attractive and dynamically taught. Children were expecting more interest. Teaching was generally becoming more interactive, with increased input from the pupils and they resent having to learn lots of information.

There is a rise in the dislike of set books. Why? There was increasingly exciting literature available in English and pupils had greater access to a wide variety of books in the 50's. compared to this some Latin set books seemed dull and dry. In 1930's literature in general was perhaps duller and drier, being heavily censored, thus Latin texts were not particularly different.

Many factors remain constant.

Appendix II

6. *In what way, if any, have your feelings towards this subject changed since leaving school? (percentages)*

	1930's	1940's	1950's	Overall
Help with English language	12.5	25.5	31.5	25.5
Help with foreign languages	19	23	21	22
I wish I had done more	16	11	11.5	12
Positive already, no change	22.5	12.3	11.5	24
Negative already, no change	6	3.5		2.5
Understanding of history	6	3.5	6.5	5
Help with scientific career	6	6	5	5.5
Help with plant names	6	3	1.5	3
Logical training	3	3		2
Change from negative to positive		1	1.5	1
Necessary for Oxbridge		1	3	1.5
Help with choral music		2	1.5	1.5

4

The greatest benefits are the help with languages. The appreciation of help with English language as an adult seems to rise steadily : 12.5%, 25.5%, 31.5%. Perhaps this reflects the amount of current exposure to English and a lively interest in language. The older one becomes the more knowledge one takes for granted and thus remembers fewer links.

Regret at not having done more decreases after 30's. Is this because Latin was becoming more rounded and less of a pure grammar exercise, thus pupils felt they had received a whole education? More probably it is that later pupils consider that Latin was becoming less useful as a qualification and time would have been better spent on other subjects?

It is a surprise that in the 50's there is no one who claims to have had a lasting negative attitude, especially after a greater willingness to be critical in no.5

Many who appreciated the historical legacy conferred by Latin referred to holidays abroad. There is a drop in the response of these in the 1940's, possibly due to the fact that the structures for such luxurious holidays took a while to be replaced in the post war period.

For many the scientific career mentioned was nursing.

The decline of those who considered Latin helpful with Botany reflects comments made in no.5

There is no appreciation of logical training from those who attended in the 50's. By that stage was it no longer fashionable to extol the virtues of the classics as training for the mind? It seems too early to be not politically correct to label girls as being in need

⁴Percentage of those who answered for each decade. Several gave more than one response.

Appendix II

of logical training as it was not their forte. Perhaps the teaching itself was less regimented and logical?

The omission that Latin was necessary for Oxbridge in 30's probably reflects the fact that relatively few girls were going to Oxbridge at that time.

It is strange that no one from the 30's mentions later help with choral music, especially when music is probably more available in latter years when respondents would be retired and have more time to appreciate it.

Appendix II

7. Was Latin a popular subject? Why? (percentages)

	Popular	Not popular	Don't know
1930's	19	57.5	23
1940's	16.5	64	18.5
1950's	11.5	79	9

The majority felt that Latin was not popular. The reasons for this are given below.

	1930's	1940's	1950's
Dead language, irrelevant	13	25	25
Teaching poor and dull	13	14.5	11.5
Only for swots			2.5
Difficult		47	29
Boring, lots of rote learning	13	25	38
Not fashionable		2.5	5.5

Only two reasons were given for Latin being popular, it was well taught and it was easy. One correspondent felt that 'If you were considered bright then you did it as a status symbol.'

There is a steady decrease in the popularity of Latin, although inability to remember among the more elderly correspondents must be taken into account.

In later years pupils were more willing to criticise and explain the reasons for lack of popularity. Teaching would seem to have improved making the subject less difficult.

There is a steady increase in the complaint that it was boring and there was lots of rote learning, pupils were becoming less tolerant as other subjects became more lively - English with a variety of texts and scope for creativity where one was neither right nor wrong, Science with an increasing practical element and Art with less drawing and greater use of mixed media.

Latin steadily became less fashionable, there was little kudos ascribed to it by the pupils and it led to no specific career.

8. At what age could one start Greek? (percentages)

	11	12	13	14	15	16	?
1930's			13	3	16.5	3	63
1940's	3.5		9	29	1.5	12.5	42.5
1950's	7.5	2.5	5	23	7.5	10	43.5

Appendix II

The majority found it difficult to remember this. Some mentioned that there were only two or three pupils learning Greek some years, hence the confusion of those not involved. It would seem that it was offered to a few after two or three years Latin.

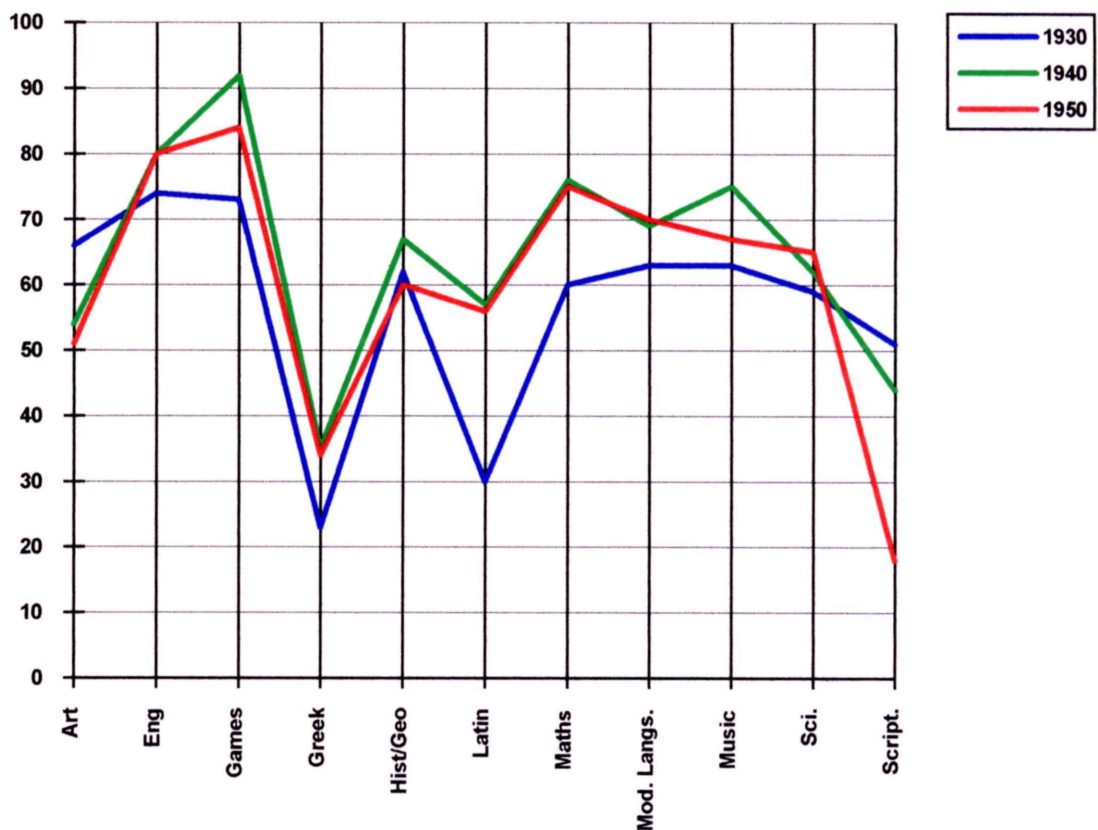
9. *Which pupils were allowed to take up Greek?*

One or two pupils from each decade remembered Greek as being on offer to all. The vast majority remember it as only being available to those who 'were good at Latin' and Oxbridge scholars. In the early 1940's 'it was not offered. I imagine the school had difficulties with getting staff immediately after the war.' Another remembered that 'I believe one girl wished to do it for A levels and an outside tutor had to be found'. Four pupils do not remember Greek being offered in the 1950's, but the majority say it was available for the few.

Appendix II

10a. *The ability to excel in which subjects carried the most prestige in the minds of the pupils?*⁵

	Art	Eng.	Games	Greek	Hist/ Geog	Latin	Maths	Mod. Langs	Music	Science	Script
1930	66	74	73	23	62	30	60	63	63	59	51
1940	54	80	92	35	67	57	76	69	75	62	44
1950	51	80	84	34	60	56	75	70	67	65	18



10a. Only two subjects show a steady decline, Art and Scripture. The former because academic subjects were seen to be more important and there was never an Art cult as there was a Games cult. Some said that Scripture was not a key exam and the subject became increasingly unfashionable.

Games, almost on a par with English in the 1930's takes the lead, although the drop in the 50's would suggest a move away from a games cult as academic success was seen to have its rewards.

Science only increases slightly in status where as Latin and Greek do make noticeable increases, as does Maths. Is this because there was an increasing regard for subjects

⁵The figures are a percentage of the maximum score for each subject in relation to the number of responses, so they are comparable.

Appendix II

considered to be academic as girls began to compete for places at universities? It is interesting to note that whereas there is a rise in prestige, there is a steady decline in popularity. Does this reflect the philosophy that difficult academic subjects equate to prestige? (Games apart)

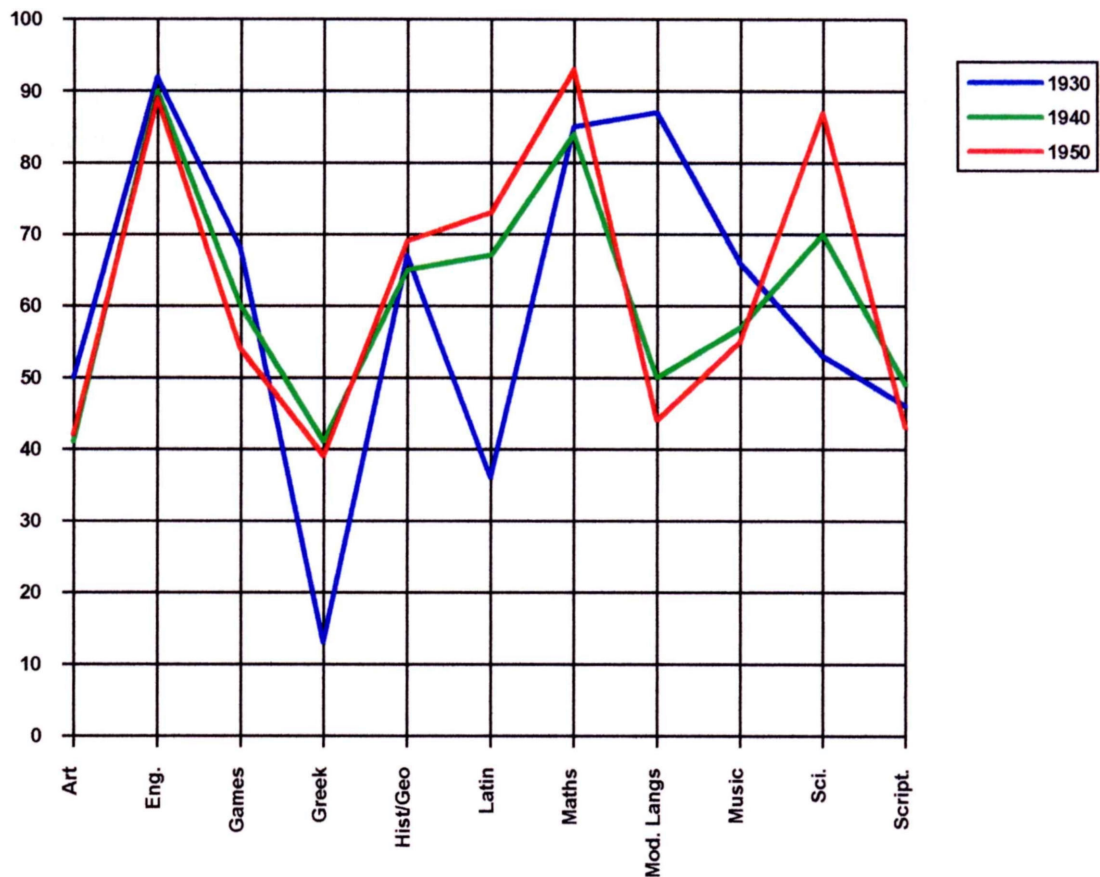
Greek has low scores, but was probably such a rare subject that it wasn't really considered, just an exception to the rule.

The 1930's respondents were more reserved in giving their scores than later ones.

Appendix II

10b. *The ability to excel in which subjects carried the most prestige in the minds of the parents?*⁶

	Art	Eng.	Games	Greek	Hist/ Geog	Latin	Maths	Mod. Langs	Music	Science	Script
1930	50	92	68	13	67	36	85	87	66	53	46
1940	41	90	60	41	65	67	84	50	57	70	49
1950	42	89	54	39	69	73	93	44	55	87	43



One would expect academic subjects to grow in prestige as it became increasingly normal for women to have a career and parents themselves were the products of a more modern education.

Art does make a predictable fall as does Music, although the fall is not as marked as one would expect. It was obviously still important to have some musical accomplishment as a 'string to one's bow' in the 50's.

The most interesting fall in prestige is in that of Modern Languages. As foreign travel was becoming easier all the time this seems strange.

⁶The figures are a percentage of the maximum score for each subject in relation to the number of responses, so they are comparable.

Appendix II

Science makes the expected leap - completing the three peaks of English, Maths and Science, foreshadowing the three main strands of the National Curriculum of today.

Greek and Latin were less important than any other subject in the 30's, but Latin rises almost as much as Modern Languages falls. Although Greek does rise it still remains the lowest, probably because it was too exclusive and not considered by the vast majority of parents. Latin is fourth in this league table by the 50's, next after the key subjects. By then perhaps it was considered to be a good, sound academic subject and it was quite acceptable for a girl to be seen as an academic, whereas in the 30's it was best to have one's daughter trained in basic English, Maths, and French.

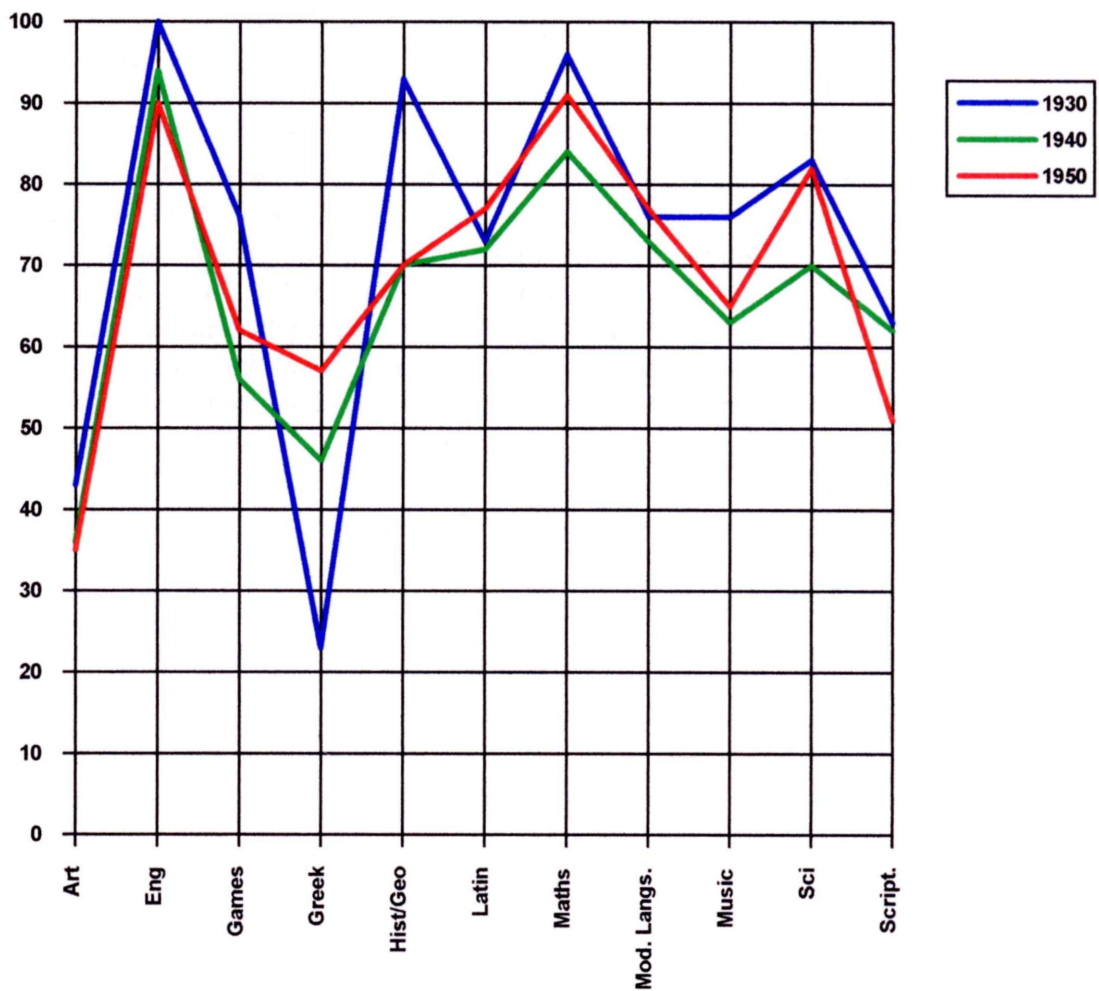
There is little movement of History and Geography or Scripture, rather ordinary subjects? Scripture's low position reflects that given to it by the pupils.

Games falls steadily, but not far, it brought family prestige at the time, but not useful qualifications.

Appendix II

10.c *The ability to excel in which subjects carried the most prestige in the minds of the teachers?⁷*

	Art	Eng.	Games	Greek	Hist/ Geog	Latin	Maths	Mod. Langs	Music	Science	Script
1930	43	100	76	23	93	73	96	76	76	83	63
1940	36	94	56	46	70	72	84	73	63	70	62
1950	35	90	62	57	70	77	91	77	65	82	51



Respondents found it difficult to remember any bias at school and felt that each teacher considered her own subject to be most important. It is difficult to assess the thoughts of those one does not know very well.

Art obviously had the lowest overall prestige which dropped as time went on.

⁷The figures are a percentage of the maximum score for each subject in relation to the number of responses, so they are comparable.

Appendix II

English and Maths were very high in the 30's, but dropped slightly.

Games and Music make the expected drop as academic subjects become more important.

The prestige of Science dropped in the 40's which is odd.

The lack of importance attributed to History and Geography reflects the previous tables. They probably had a smaller share of the timetable.

Latin and Modern Languages make little movement and are on a par.

Greek makes the greatest movement and that is up. Is this because it was easier to find staff qualified to teach this in the 50's and the small teaching groups were special rather than the ad hoc arrangements made for the subject in the past? (One pupil had to have an outside tutor in the 40's)

These results reflect the fact that Latin was not considered to be a popular subject by the pupils. In the 1930's both languages score very low compared to other subjects, but as the status of Scripture and Art as serious subjects falls that of Latin and Greek rises, although music still remains ahead. The status of Latin for parents rises in time and it would appear that pupils always thought their teachers attached importance to the subject. Some felt that because only a very few took Greek it was an elitist subject, whereas others felt that because the majority were not affected it carried no status at all.

Appendix II

11a. *How much importance was given to the following aspects of Classics?*

	1930's	1940's	1950's
Grammar	97	97	76
Learning vocabulary	84	93	78
Translation into English	84	86.5	84
Translation into Latin	75	75	70.5
Latin verse	43	48.5	50
Social history of the Romans	23	33.5	41.5
Political history of the Romans	22	37	33.5
Classical Drama	23	28	32.5
Archaeology	16	22	19
Classical art and sculpture	18	28	19

Respondents from all years wrote that there was no official background work done, although some was touched upon in passing. Some had learnt about classical art in their art lessons and met classical drama in drama lessons or elocution lessons. There was some confusion about Latin verse and some gave it a high score because they read Ovid and Vergil rather than creating their own verse. For the majority Latin lessons consisted of learning grammar, vocabulary and translating.

The figures for learning grammar and vocabulary drop in the 50's which is to be expected as moves were made away from the grammar grind mentality and there were increased efforts to make the subject more attractive.

The amount of translation into English declines and there is a predictable drop in translation into Latin in the 50's.

There is an expected rise in the peripheral aspects of the subject, but the 40's seem to be the richest decade for Political History, Archaeology and Art and Sculpture. Is this why it was found to be easy (no.5) in the 40's, because it was made interesting? Generally the peripheral subjects still receive low scores and the language side obviously received more attention.

11.b *How much time was spent on Latin each week?*

The majority of respondents found it impossible to remember this. However, those who did thought that between three to four 40 minute periods a week, plus one prep were allotted to Latin. Those who went onto A level spent about 6 hours a week on the subject.

Appendix III

Examination Statistics

Table to show School Certificate results in Latin, 1902 - 1960 (percentages)

	<u>Eton</u>	<u>Marlborough</u>	<u>Uppingham</u>	<u>Winchester</u>
1902				
1910	95.7			100
1915	92.5			95
1920	88	46	68	100
1925	85.4	83.6	64.8	96.7
1930	92	91	83.3	96.7
1935	81	84.3	86.4	96.8
1940	97.9	84.4	81.7	100
1945	92	78	61	100
1950	100	78	51	96.6
1955	56	31.9	34	22.3
1960	30.7	25.8	32.8	25.8

Appendix III

Table to show School Certificate results in Greek, 1902 -1960 (percentages)

	<u>Eton</u>	<u>Marlborough</u>	<u>Uppingham</u>	<u>Winchester</u>
1902				
1910	71.9			92.3
1915	92.5			95
1920	44	13.3	45.4	54.5
1925	56	22.7	22.9	45
1920	41	21	30.5	36
1935	40.6	13.4	18.9	25.5
1940	31	20	13.4	21.9
1935	36.7	13.3	6.7	26
1950	33	2.7	2	5
1955	21.4	7	3.4	9.9
1960	10	4	2.8	7.1

Appendix III

Table to show School Certificate results for Latin 1902 - 1960 (percentages)

	<u>Cheltenham Ladies College</u>	<u>Downe House</u>	<u>Sherborne School For Girls</u>	<u>Roedean</u>	<u>Godolphin</u>	<u>Wycombe Abbey</u>
1902						
1910						
1915		0	0	0	16.6	13.3
1920	38.8		35			
1925	57		15			
1930	32		18.75			
1935	55.5		17			
1940	72.9	0	14.7			
1945		9	28			
1950		33.3	18			
1955		8.4	3.4			
1960		17.8	8.3			22.2

Appendix III

Table to show School Certificate results for Greek 1902 - 1960 (percentages)

	<u>Cheltenham Ladies College</u>	<u>Downe House</u>	<u>Sherborne School For Girls</u>	<u>Roedean</u>	<u>Godolphin</u>	<u>Wycombe Abbey</u>
1902						
1910						
1915						
1920						
1925	57		0			
1930	8		0			
1935	16.6		2.8			
1940						
1945			2.8			
1950						
1955		0.9	10.3			
1960			2			3.7

Appendix III

Table to show Higher Certificate results in Latin 1902 - 1960 (percentages)

	<u>Cheltenham Ladies' College</u>	<u>Downe House</u>	<u>Sherborne School For Girls</u>	<u>Roedean</u>	<u>Godolphin</u>	<u>Wycombe Abbey</u>
1902	5 ¹			8.3	0	14
1910	14 ²			0		0
1915	11 ³					
1920	60		0			
1925	0		0			0
1930	25	0	0		0	0
1935	9	0			0	12.5
1940	15	0	0			0
1945	25		0			
1950	28	0	6.25%			0
1955						0
1960			20%			

¹Higher Local Examinations.

²Higher Local Examinations.

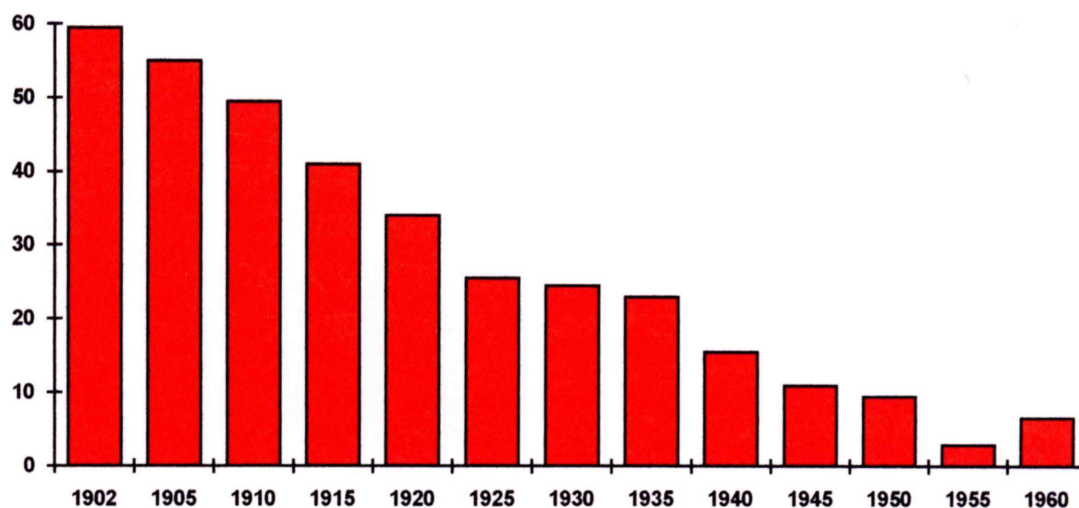
³Higher Local Examinations.

Appendix III

Table to show the number of candidates for Higher Certificate (Classical Studies 1920-1950) and 'A' level in Latin

	<u>Total number of candidates</u>	<u>Number of candidates in Latin</u>	<u>Number passed (including distinction) (Percentage of Latin candidates)</u>	<u>Number of distinctions (Percentage of Latin candidates)</u>
1902	2296	1367 59.5%	855 62.5%	34 2.4%
1905	2142	1185 55%	856 72%	41 3.4%
1910	2165	1080 49.5%	658 60.5%	40 3.5%
1915	1740	720 41%	571 79%	37 5%
1920 Classical Studies -	1240	423 34%	286 67.5%	24 5.5%
1925	2057	529 25.5%	317 59%	
1930	2416	602 24.5%	380 63%	
1935	2299	541 23%	346 63%	
1940	2882	456 15.5%	326 71%	
1945	3522	399 11%	279 69.5%	
1950	5886	569 9.5%	375 65.5%	
1955 'A' level -	29472	879 2.9%		86 9.8%
1960	13736	909 6.6%		123 13.5%

Graph to show the percentage of candidates taking High Certificate (Classical Studies 1902 - 1960) and 'A' level Latin



Appendix III

Table to show the number of candidates for Higher Certificate and 'A' level in Greek 1902 - 1960

	<u>Total number of candidates</u>	<u>Number of candidates in Greek</u>	<u>Number passed (including distinction)</u> (Percentage of Greek candidates)	<u>Number of distinctions</u> (Percentage of Greek candidates)
1902	2296	1174 51%	878 74.5%	48 4%
1905	2142	1000 46%	735 73.5%	29 2.9%
1910	2165	894 41%	613 68.5%	34 3.5%
1915	1740	590 33.5%	459 77.5%	24 4%
1920 Classical Studies -				
1925				
1930				
1935				
1940				
1945				
1950				
1955 'A' level -	29472	854 2.8%		72 8.4%
1960	13736	825 6%		86 10.4

Appendix III

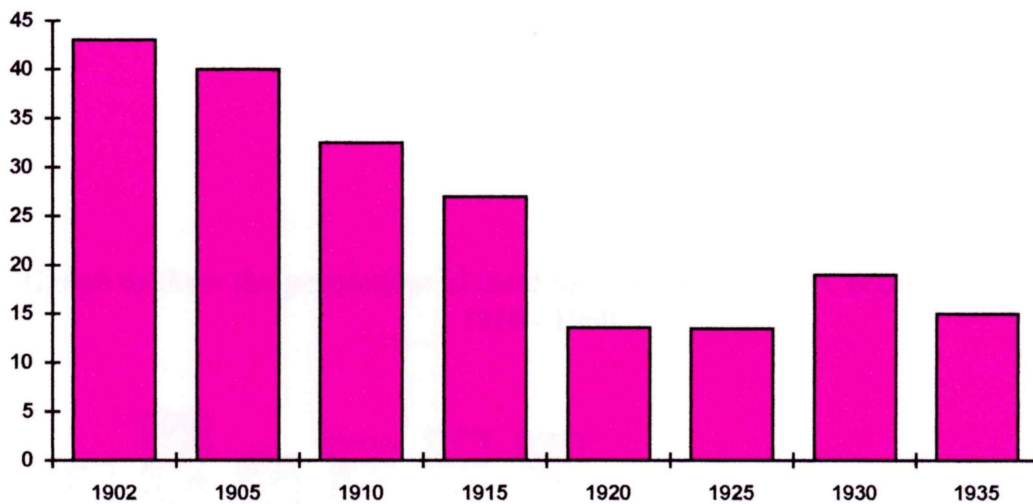
**Table to show the number of candidates for Lower Certificate in Latin
1902 -1935**

	<u>Total number of candidates</u>	<u>Number of candidates in Latin</u>	<u>Number passed (including distinction)</u> (Percentage of Latin Candidates)	<u>Number of distinctions</u> (Percentage of Latin Candidates)
1902	1090	777 71%	415 53.4%	83 10.5%
1905	1078	757 70%	442 58%	61 8%
1910	1065	661 62%	411 62%	70 10.5%
			<u>2nd Class</u>	<u>1st Class</u>
1915	1102	607 55%	347 57.5%	51 8%
1920	1183	657 55.5%	302 45.5%	38 5.5%
1925	1858	1249 67%	558 44.5%	77 6%
1930	1284	841 65%	321 38%	36 4%
1935	720	545 75%	247 45%	41 7.5%

Appendix III

**Table to show the number of candidates for Lower Certificate in Greek
1902 -1935**

	<u>Total number of candidates</u>	<u>Number of candidates in Greek</u>	<u>Number passed (including distinction)</u> (Percentage of Greek candidates)	<u>Number of distinctions</u> (Percentage of Greek Candidates)
1902	1090	476 43%	282 59%	55 11.5%
1905	1078	436 40%	246 56%	114 26%
1910	1065	349 32.5%	219 62.5%	39 10%
			<u>2nd Class</u>	<u>1st Class</u>
1915	1102	300 27%	178 59%	28 9%
1920	1183	161 13.6%	84 52%	15 9.3%
1925	1858	257 13.5%	145 56%	16 6%
1930	1284	252 19%	161 63%	40 15%
1935	720	109 15%	45 41%	3 2.5%



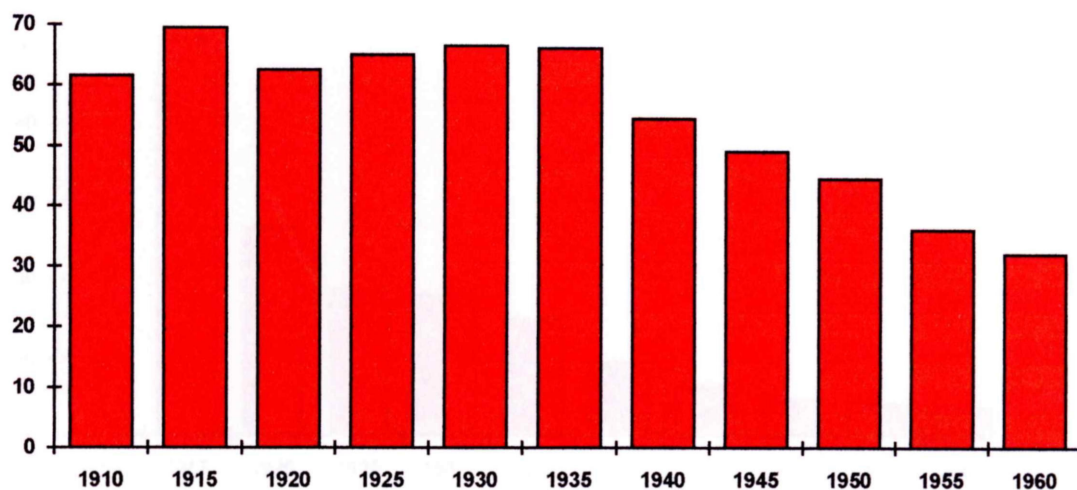
**Graph to show percentage of candidates taking Lower Certificate Greek, 1902
-1935**

Appendix III

Table to show the number of candidates in School Certificate Latin 1910 -1960

	<u>Total number of candidates</u>	<u>Number of candidates in Latin</u>	<u>Number passed with credit</u> (Percentage of Latin candidates)
1910	662	410 61.5%	278 67.5%
1915	721	502 69.5%	207 52.5%
1920	3714	2263 60.5%	1127 49%
1925	5838	3799 65%	1793 47%
1930	7628	5100 66.5%	3013 59%
1935	7950	5314 66%	3064 57.5%
1940	9050	4971 54.5%	2506 50%
1945	10962	5401 49%	2560 47%
1950	10697	4812 44.5%	2087 43%
1955 'O' level -	22544	8120 36%	4601 56.7%
1960	27523	9052 32%	5691 62.9%

Graph to show the percentage of candidates taking School Certificate Latin 1910 - 1960

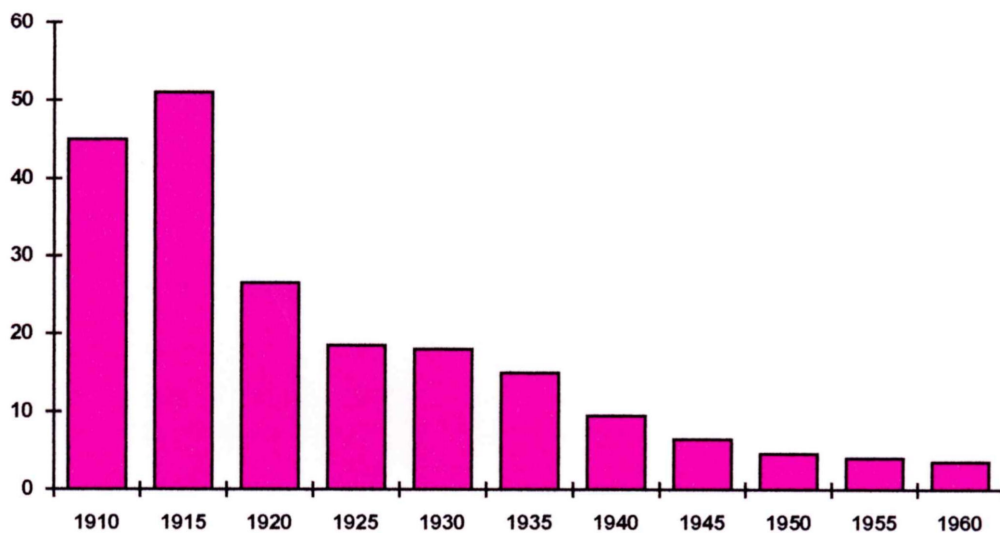


Appendix III

**Table to show the percentage of candidates taking School Certificate Greek
1910 - 1960**

	<u>Total number of candidates</u>	<u>Number of candidates in Greek</u>	<u>Number passed with credit.</u> (Percentage of Greek candidates.)
1910	662	298 45%	180 60%
1915	721	373 51.7%	207 55%
1920	3714	985 26.5%	598 60.5%
1925	5838	1101 18.5%	754 68%
1930	7628	1397 18%	924 66%
1935	7950	1198 15%	597 49.8%
1940	9050	893 9.5%	531 59%
1945	10962	763 6.5%	357 46.5%
1950	10697	500 4.6%	238 47.5%
1955 'O' level -	22544	933 4.1%	726 73.1%
1960	27523	1006 3.6%	740 73.6%

**Graph to show the number of candidates in School Certificate Greek
1910 - 1960**



Sources

All books were published in London unless otherwise stated

References with the code Ed 109/...or Ed 172... refer to records kept at the Public Record Office, Kew.

References with the code TBN... or MSS...refer to records kept at the Modern Records Centre, Warwick University

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Downe House	1934	Ed109/67
	1956	Ed172/259
Elstree	1954/5	Ed109/8640
Eton	1905	Ed109/6610
Godolphin	1923	Ed109/6612
	1943	Ed109/6614
	1911	Ed109/4196
Harrow	1920	Ed109/4197
	1931	Ed109/4198
	1944/5	Ed109/8988

Hawtreys	1948	Ed109/9177
Lambrook	1956	Ed172/5574
Marlborough	1924	Ed109/6596
	1937	Ed109/6598
	1950	Ed109/9177
	1926	Ed109/6167
Micklefield	1926	Ed109/6167
North London Collegiate	1910	Ed109/3982
	1914	Ed109/3983
	1926	Ed109/3984
	1937	Ed109/3985
	1906	Ed109/5999
Roedean	1927	Ed109/6001
	1938	Ed109/6002
	1921	Ed109/5573
Sandroyd	1930	Ed109/5574
	1958	Ed172/259
	1910	Ed109/1078
Sherborne	1915	Ed109/1079
	1921	Ed109/1075
	1934	Ed109/1084
	1905	Ed109/1077
Sherborne Girls School	1914	Ed109/1071
Sherborne Prep.	1928	Ed109/1072
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St. Mary's, Calne	1913	Ed109/6562
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The Downes, Colwall	1939	Ed109/1971
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