

## Summer School Students 2022 Reports



**The four students who received bursaries to attend the JACT Classical Civilisation and Ancient History Summer School in Sheffield in August 2022.**

### **Summer School Report by Rebekah Butcher**

Thanks to the bursary from LSA Classical Association, I was able to attend the Classics and Ancient History Summer School – something which I would have been unable to attend otherwise and am very grateful to have been given. It helped me to explore specific topics in detail, give me more of an insight what it would be like to solely study classics and was just an overall fun time, where I was surrounded by people who were just as interested in the subject as I was.

I did attend with some people I knew which personally I would say put me more at ease, but if you don't know anyone else, I still would urge you to go. The summer school was very welcoming, and it was quite easy to make friends, who I hope to stay in touch with in the future. Most people did attend knowing no-one, but this meant everyone was open to new

people and conversations. As one of my friends said too, it was nice being able to make random classics references and everyone could understand it.

The main reason for going to the summer school was, of course, the lessons and they didn't disappoint. Each teacher had their own way of doing the lessons, and this meant every lesson felt different and the day didn't drag. Some teachers focused on more of a discussion format, whereas some leant towards making you work things out for yourself and some even included some games of Blooket (one of which I won!). Though it was five hours a day of Classics, it didn't get repetitive or boring, and did make the idea of doing Classics at university more attractive to me. My personal favourite lessons were either 'The Rise of the Roman Republic' as it taught me about a subject that I initially didn't know too much about or 'Women and Gender in the Ancient World' as this was a very interesting subject to me and the teacher was very enthusiastic about it. I did also hear about other classes where they were making up their own attack poems, which I must admit did sound very fun.

After lessons, there was usually a myth-based session, in which you were put into a variety of groups and given different tasks to complete. One of them was more of an icebreaker, where you got given a part of a myth and made to find the rest of the people with that myth, which was fun if a little confusing. Another task was trying to defend either the man or the woman in a famous myth, since the women were so often ignored and mistreated. I was given the task of defending Theseus over Ariadne, which admittedly was very hard (and I am personally team Ariadne). The women won in all seven groups, which were honestly deserved, but the debates were really fun to watch anyway as people got really involved. Finally, there was also a scavenger hunt which was quite hard but still very fun, especially since one of the teachers dressed up as Dionysus.

In the evenings, we had the choice to either work in the comedy or the tragedy play. I did the tragedy, where we performed Sophocles' 'Ajax', and we had the ability to either be a main actor, part of the chorus or work on props/costumes. This meant everyone had the opportunity to be in a role they were comfortable in, and personally I do believe the end product was very good. I personally was in the chorus, where we were sailors, and may have got overly attached to my sailor's hat. The comedy rewrote Aristophanes' 'The Wasps' and I have to say I did find it genuinely funny and was smiling and laughing quite a lot while watching it.



Though the summer school is pretty jam-packed, we did still have quite a lot of free time. I do have a memory of just watching the clouds and listening to music on the field, which was actually really nice. Each boarding house also had their own common room which I found nice, as it made it much easier to be sociable without having to go entirely out of your way to make conversation. On the last night, we were also given sweets and drinks in the common rooms, and it just created a really nice atmosphere on our last night.

Just before we left, people were signing each other's books – though you obviously didn't have to if you hate the idea of writing in a book – but it did make a really nice memento of the week.

Overall, if you are debating whether to apply to go to this summer school, I do urge you to go as personally I had a great time and think others would too.

*Rebekah Butcher*

### **Summer School Report by Eva Murphy**

My name is Eva, I am 16 years old and this year I attended the JACT classics summer school situated in Mount St Mary's college, Sheffield.

When my class teacher informed me of this opportunity, I was thrilled at the prospect of attending this summer school. Yes, yes, I do realise 'summer school' is a phrase that ignites fear and disgust in young people worldwide! Learning in summer?! Preposterous!! But I pledge to change your mind, so for the sake of this review- let's call it a 'summer camp'.

Arriving at the campus, there was a flurry of jittery excitement exuding from myself and everyone around me. We were all eager to know more about each other, animatedly chattering as we awaited the arrival of the other students. Once everyone had arrived- we were assigned boarding houses and the rooms we would be staying in for the next week. We unpacked and regrouped a short while later for a game of 'mythmatch'. (which is essentially a typical cringy ice breaker- but for classics nerds!) The course director, Rob, introduced himself and we were then given some free time before dinner was served. Myself and a few others decided to use this time to explore the grounds and get to know each other, enthralled in the adventure of a new atmosphere. After dinner, we received our course timetable which detailed our chosen classes. To be honest, the decision on which to pick was almost impossible- I could have done them all! There was an eclectic mix ranging from ancient languages (beginner or intermediate) to ancient magic, philosophy and the rise of the Roman Republic. Each subject was fascinating and perfect to enhance our knowledge of antiquity.

Lessons began on Monday; we had five lessons each day- each with a duration of an hour. After breakfast, we went to our first class- I had chosen 'personal poetry of the ancient world' in which we discussed the work of Ovid, Sappho, Catullus and many more fascinating figures. Perhaps my favourite aspect of the classes (apart from our walking encyclopaedia

teachers that is) was listening to the insights of my peers- comparing classical poets to Taylor Swift and Kanye West for example, making apt pop culture references that were surprisingly accurate! There was always a mature and welcoming environment in which I felt encouraged to offer my opinions, participating in class debates. Between each class, we had a fifteen minute break and an hour for lunch. I got the opportunity to study philosophy in which I entered feeling level headed, had my brain frazzled and left with an entirely different worldview. Even the most imperturbable people felt somewhat shaken. From Ancient Greek and Greek Religion to Ancient Magic- with each class, myself and my classmates developed a deeper understanding for every aspect of classics.

Each evening, we would work on and rehearse the play we were to put on at the end of the week. The students split into two groups- one for comedy, the other for tragedy. The comedy play was 'The Wasps by Aristophanes' and the tragedy play was 'Ajax by Sophocles'. Each play had its respective props team who laboured away, the tragedy team putting blood, sweat and tears into a remarkable set of paper hats for the chorus, splendid robes for Athena- complete with an origami owl (courtesy of me) and an authentic aegis.



TikTok memes and fantastic costumes made the modern interpretation of Aristophanes' Wasps utterly hilarious, and strikingly relevant for today's teens- and decidedly less peculiar than the original production, believe it or not!

The rest of the week consisted of a riveting scavenger hunt in which we separated into groups and followed numerous clues, consisting of piecing together myths, figuring out depictions of significant events in the ancient world and solving riddles (not quite as difficult as the riddles that Oedipus faced however!). We raced around the grounds, desperately scrambling to uncover the mystery- encountering all manner of human and beast (including one of our teachers dressed up as Dionysius, complete with pinecones littering the ground at his feet, an ivy wreath and an impressive leopard skin drape) all desperate to be the victors!

On our final night, after we watched the fantastic performances- to celebrate there was a book sale. With our hearts fluttering like a caged bird and anticipation coursing through our veins, we awaited the tick of the clock that signalled the start of the sale. Along with us, a hubbub of enthusiasm burst into the room, each student eagerly contending to obtain a copy of Herodotus' Histories, Livy and Thucydides graced the shelves alongside Latin literature and Greek grammar. Inspired by 'The Wasps' we swarmed the room until the shelves were bare.

The next morning, it was time to pack our bags and depart- with a heavy heart, we waved goodbye to new-found friends but took solace in the possibility of meeting each other again in the near future. Looking back on my experience of this summer camp, I am tremendously grateful to have been given such a fantastic opportunity, so many doors have been opened, lifelong friendships formed and I have come out with an even stronger passion for classics!

Dear reader, I hope my tales have eased your incredulity that summer school is monotonous and I implore you to seize any chance ('carpe diem!') you are given to do anything similar to this. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions as I would be delighted to share more stories! ([evamurphy44@gmail.com](mailto:evamurphy44@gmail.com))

*Eva Murphy*

### **Summer School Report by Spencer Bevington**

I have just spent a week at Classical Civilisation and Ancient History summer school at St Marys Mount in Derbyshire, thanks to a generous bursary from The Lytham St Annes Classical Association. I was delighted to be given this opportunity to enhance my Classics knowledge and a range of life skills that will drive my future goals. I will be eternally grateful to the people who supported my application and bursary for summer school. Thank you all for the experience.

I was apprehensive of my trip, being away from home however as soon as I arrived I was made welcome and made new friends immediately, I found most teens had the same kind of apprehension. I met some fabulous and interesting people at Summer School, the tutors and support staff were helpful, interesting, and very knowledgeable. My peers were from all over the country from different colleges and Universities. All young like-minded folk who were from a variety of backgrounds and educational establishments, through our conversations I took note on what their progression plans were and found out about different courses that are open to me at different Universities. I have met people who will be friends for life, and we have planned to meet at a summer festival.

All the lessons I chose to attend were interesting and engaging, I especially enjoyed the 'Classics in modern times' covering equality and subjective translations of Homer and this broadened my knowledge to help in my A level. My other subjects at Runshaw College are Drama and Textiles, I brought these together by participating in one of the optional plays the summer school had to offer. I decide to pick the 'Greek Tragedy' however I also had the

option to do a Greek comedy. Working together we performed 'Ajax' and I was one of the costume creators which I relished and built on my historical costume skills. We all had fun and connected as a team where some performed, and some were working backstage with a variety of interesting roles. My absolute favourite class was 'Introduction to Latin', this is something that I can engage in at home due to my fabulous enthusiastic tutor inspiring me and directing us to a variety of online tutorials and a YouTube channel, her determination for us to succeed has inspired me to self-study Latin in preparation for university.

Throughout my time in classics summer school, I collected extra knowledge in subjects like Minoans, Mycenaeans and Mythology from another academic perspective than my own tutors at college. I also now have a taste of university education and the type of content that I may expect in the future.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at summer school it has enhanced my communication, knowledge, and interest in Classics. I have discovered and learned about charities that can support studying classics and provide help and information. I have connected with others whose passion is classics and had an invaluable opportunity to discuss options for my next steps and progression for me with others' views and input. There are many opportunities I didn't know existed regarding university courses, careers, and apprenticeships. It's a wonderful opportunity which has been enjoyable is great for my personal statement and an experience to add to my CV. It has helped me solidify that classics is what I want to study at University, and I have narrowed down which Universities to apply to. I have added to my knowledge and covered subjects and themes that are additional to college and A level content.

We also had plenty social time and played outdoor games in the evening like 'man hunt' and a treasure hunt. There was a life sized outdoor chess board which we played a lot. There are lovely grounds to discover and lawns to socialise and sit in the sun. There are icebreakers at the start which are fun and gave everyone the chance to meet people as we all started as strangers and left as friends. I met every person who attended the Summer School either in classes, at dinner, in halls or socialising outside. I would recommend anyone to go to the summer school, it really is great. *Spencer Bevington*



## Summer School Report by Ashleigh Hamilton

I am extremely grateful to have received a bursary from LSA CA for this summer school as it not only gave me better understanding and knowledge of different Classical thoughts and ideas but it also made me more confident whilst discussing them with others as well as being a great opportunity to meet new people with similar interests. This summer school also gave me the chance to explore different elements of the ancient world which I had never been able to experience before. I had an amazing time and I am immensely grateful for this opportunity.

I particularly enjoyed the plays that we put on during the week since it was an amazing opportunity for us to more physically experience the classical world than is usually available since we had the opportunity to take part in even a comedy or a tragedy and watch the other. I thoroughly enjoyed playing Teucer in Sophocles' Ajax since it allowed me to empathise and understand the characters actions and motivations on a more personal level as well as being able to see first-hand the complexities involved in staging Greek tragedy. I also thoroughly enjoyed watching Aristophanes' Wasps which allowed me to see how Greek plays can be updated whilst still remaining true to their roots. This also complimented the sessions on introduction to comedy which I signed up for which I especially benefited from due to the vast array of material which we were given to work with which gave me a great opportunity to access ancient texts and see the similarities and differences in them particularly pre and post the end of the Peloponnesian war and the fall of democracy since this had impacts in places where it wasn't immediately obvious such as freedom of speech within the theatre.

I also tremendously enjoyed the introduction to Ancient Greek since it is a beautiful language which I would certainly like to continue learning in future. Learning ancient Greek was an amazing opportunity for me since once I get better at it I will be able to access Classical texts in the original language without the limitation of translation since this will allow me to formulate more opinions of my own on the texts without the limitations posed by the English language having slightly different emphasises. It was extremely fun to learn and the teacher was extremely encouraging and supportive due to the difficulties of trying to learn a new language which made this an extremely fun class to take. This also gave me pointers for where to go for future study of the language which I am extremely grateful for.

I also enjoyed being able to study ancient epics at a deeper level than I have ever been able to do before. I particularly enjoyed my sessions on both the Iliad and the Aeneid since having them back to back allowed me to deeper develop my understanding of them as well as the similarities and differences between them which in a way reflect the similarities and differences between Greek and Roman society which I found to be infinitely interesting. I also enjoyed the sessions individually as I feel like I have developed a greater understanding of both texts within themselves and their own themes and parallels within themselves. This has also taught me a new way to approach ancient literature which will be extremely useful for further reading of ancient literature.

However the session which I enjoyed most was the session on Socrates since this gave me not only a great introduction to this incredible ancient philosopher but also gave me greater

knowledge of ancient philosophy and people's reactions to it in general. It was also incredibly fun and challenging to actually use the Socratic Method to try and explain different concepts since it gives a unique outlook on how it would have been to actually experience his methods in the ancient world.

Overall I am extremely grateful to LSCA for the bursary since it made this incredible week possible for me. Thank you so much for an amazing time.

*Ashleigh Hamilton*