By the time that this JCT arrives through your letterbox, all the written submissions about changes to the A Levels and English GCSEs instigated by the Department for Education will be over. I have to say that I feel that the consultation processes have been remarkably open and fair: the examination boards and the DfE have been good at organizing meetings of their own and have invited a wide cross-section of teachers, academics and other interested parties to listen to their views. Even the smaller pressure groups have tried to get a representative body together. And there are two things which strike me, as having been something of a habitue of these sorts of meetings. First is the sense that – although they sometimes disagree on the precise way in which it might happen – the participants all have the same goal: to increase the number of pupils studying Classical subjects in state schools and at University. Well, perhaps no surprises there: it would be career suicide or social death to suggest otherwise! But the second one is this: the sense that now for the first time since 1988 the DfE has acknowledged that Classical subjects (though not all, pace Classical Civilization!) are worthy of study. And not just that: they are worthy of study by everyone. And this feeling that the Department actually wants to support Classics is a very refreshing one. In the last editorial I warned that we needed to be wary about having Classics perceived to be too closely associated with the political viewpoint of the Conservative party, and sure enough, soon afterwards, Labour’s Stephen Twigg was in the TES Magazine railing against the Gove curriculum proposals and equating the study of Latin to the use of the abacus in mathematics teaching. Twigg later adjusted his rhetoric in a personal letter; but the damage had already been done. And I suppose it will continue to be so unless we seize the opportunity. The Pompeii exhibition at the British Museum has been a very successful catalyst for plentiful and positive media references to the study of Classics. For the future, the ‘Classics in Communities’ project of 2013-14, which aims to provide opportunities for teachers to learn how to bring the ancient languages into Primary Schools, will no doubt provide more publicity, especially in deprived areas of the UK, for the study of Classics. Frequent, positive and influential interventions match the spirit of the times.

In this edition of JCT are articles which we hope will continue to be of interest and use to readers. Caroline Lawrence, the President of JACT, has written an entertaining piece on what we might never suspect about life in Roman times – worth copying for your pupils! This edition’s Special Feature is on the use of ICT in the Classics classroom: Alan Chadwick, Jonathan Eaton and Frances Sapsford each gave presentations at the Classical Association Conference in Reading in April 2013, and it is with pleasure that we include them here – all thanks to the CA for encouraging the presentation of the original papers! Caron Downes describes how she used QR codes to give breadth and engagement to her teaching, while Richard Morgan tells how his encouragement of a trainee teacher to develop the use of ICT was ultimately rewarding for both parties. Next, Bartolo Natoli explores the impact of experiential learning on a college-level class of students reading Catullus – something which has relevance to the study of literature at all ages. Emily Clark’s essay follows. She tells how she tried to use TPRS techniques in the class and evaluates the pupils’ responses. Evelien Bracke describes her experiences with teaching Latin to primary school pupils in a deprived area of South Wales, using the techniques of Modern Foreign Languages. Helen McGauran and Hella Eckhardt continue the primary theme with their website ‘Romans revealed’, which is based on original archaeological research in York. James Watson considers the difficulties and rewards of teaching GCSE Classical Civilization – with some thoughts which might influence future specification design. Charlotte Goddard reflects on the way a recent TV News programme treated the subject of Classics and makes some apposite comments about the way the media perceives the study of Latin in particular. Lisa Cashmore describes some of the ways in which she has helped to introduce Latin in a neighbouring school. Alison Henshaw reveals some lively ways to encourage pupils to understand the restrictions and opportunities afforded to Tacitus in his use of an annalistic framework. Penelope Goodman reminds us that the bi-millennium of Augustus’ death is approaching and provides an overview of what anniversaries meant for the Romans and could mean for us. Joanna Brown, in her article about Charicles, a Greek character from a school-boys’ text book of the 19th Century, reveals the importance of such narratives in enabling their readers to access and interpret the Greek world. One could compare the ways in which modern reading course text books try to achieve similar goals: could the ‘Melissa’ of Charicles perhaps be the ancestor of the ‘Melissa’ of Caecilius?