

Pegasus Flies Onward

by

Nicola Ernst, Julius Guthrie and Josh Littell¹



Pegasus - 50th Anniversary Cover

¹ The authors would like to thank Prof. T. Peter Wiseman for answering a number of questions that they had during the writing of the piece.

For those people familiar with Greek mythology the name Pegasus conjures up the image of a striking white flying horse speeding across the skies of their imagination, yet, for some it brings to mind the image of a much more tangible and cherished phenomenon: a small bundle of articles bound with staples and the image of the aforementioned mythical horse spread across the page, enticing them to open up and see what is inside. *Pegasus*, the journal of the Classics and Ancient History Department at Exeter University.

Pegasus, like its mythical counterpart, has a proud history shrouded in the sorts of mythos naturally generated by the oral tradition with each passing cohort of both undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff take with them their own experience of *Pegasus* and what it means. *Pegasus*, omnipresent and everchanging, is forever familiar and yet never the same.

Coronavirus, COVID or SARS-COV-19, whichever dreaded “C-word” is used, has caused some of the greatest upheaval to the academic landscape likely to be witnessed for a generation. During these uncertain times classicists, ancient historians and archaeologists (as well as our esteemed colleagues in other departments) around the world have had to modify and innovate in the undertaking of their daily activities as educators, and also in the pursuit of their research. Yet, even during these uncertain times the wheels of progress have continued to turn: conferences have moved online, papers continue to be published and books are still being printed. It is against this backdrop that *Pegasus* has continued its own growth and will remain a focal point for the department and wider community that it serves. It is also this moment of great challenge that seems most appropriate to look back and take stock of what the journal has achieved and how it has upheld a tradition of community, creativity, and excellent research. The 62nd volume, due out soon, will be but a continuation of this rich heritage, no matter what the world may throw at it.

History

The story of *Pegasus* is, as is inevitable in a student journal, very much a study of those people who have dedicated themselves to its success. Nonetheless, despite lacking the tag of ‘student’ one of the two most notable amongst these intrepid individuals has been David Harvey, who was omnipresent in the development of *Pegasus* throughout the vast majority of its history. It is David Harvey whose name appears on nearly every issue from the foundation of the journal in 1964 until 2006, be that as an editor or an advisor. Alongside David Harvey, Exeter’s long serving department secretary, Valarie Harris, must also be mentioned for her most important role: physically typing *Pegasus* when it was cyclostyled, stapled and sent-off to whomever wanted a copy; a process that only ceased in 1988 after twenty-four years of manual production!

Quite appropriately for a journal named after a mythical creature, the founding of *Pegasus* has fallen into something of myth. David Harvey has written that it was in response to the English Department’s launch of their own journal – *Daedalus* – that Classics students felt the desire to set-up one of their own.² The tone of *Pegasus* was established from the very first issue, which featured a mix of the serious and the silly discussing everything from the role of bees in antiquity,

² Harvey 1981: 19 in Stubbs, H.W. (ed) *Pegasus* (Exeter. 1981).

to crosswords and a short piece on the art of swearing in Latin.³ The ethos of *Pegasus* was summed up in its second issue, the first to feature an editorial, where Claire McMillan, Terry Hunt and Bernard Moss set out their aims that *Pegasus*, as a student magazine, should be “both serious and humorous.”⁴

It was perhaps never expected, even if it were certainly hoped, that *Pegasus* would become quite the feature of departmental life which it was to become. The road, however, has not always been a smooth one and *Pegasus*, like all longstanding publications, has had moments of hardship to go with its moments of triumph. Storm clouds of what was to become *Pegasus*' experience of the overhaul in academia in the 1980's began to gather in 1984, where, in the editorial, Teresa Walters notes *Pegasus* had struck funding issues.⁵ The situation became far more egregious by 1988, when *Pegasus* lost its previous departmental subsidy and became an entirely self-funding affair. In many ways, *Pegasus*' moment of transformation was in part a result of its resounding success, with editor Claire Summerhays noting that if *Pegasus*' international audience was to be expected to pay a marked-up price it also required an increase in quality. It is then no surprise that 1988 was the first issue produced via what modern students would recognize as contemporary methods and out of a moment of near disaster *Pegasus* ascended to fresh heights.⁶

It is though the success of *Pegasus* which we hope to celebrate here and the meaning which it has to so many within the classical community. Even in the otherwise gloomy editorial to the 1988 edition it is noted that *Pegasus* had increased its global reach, being read in Pisa and Genoa amongst other places. Indeed, this widespread distribution continues to this day and *Pegasus* only this year welcomed a new subscriber in Canada who joins a small cohort of “Pegati” who enjoy unfettered access to the journal around the world. Furthermore, it is not merely in terms of distribution that *Pegasus* has continued to spread its wings, but in contributions also, with articles and reviews submitted from France, Greece and Italy in the last half-dozen years.

Community

Pegasus is, nonetheless, more than just history; *Pegasus* is an integral part of the department's community, its identity, and a showcase for the links between Exeter and the classical world.⁷ In many ways the journal is a bridge between undergraduate students and their post-graduate peers, helping to foster community within the department. There is always a sense of pride to be attached

³ Moss, Bernard. “...and the bees”; Keer, Bob. “Crosswordus Classicus” and Clark, Raymond. “The Art of Swearing in Latin”. All in *Pegasus* 1 (1964) available at: <http://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/pegasus/back-issues/>

⁴ *Pegasus* 2 (1964): 2.

⁵ *Pegasus* 27 (1984): i. Additionally, see Wiseman, T. Peter ‘The class of 1980’ in *Pegasus*, 53 (2010): 32-3 who offers a succinct analysis of how life in the department changed after 1980 and in doing so charts a history similar to this.

⁶ Summerhays, Claire. ‘Editorial’ in *Pegasus*, 31 (1988): 1. Sadly, the price of *Pegasus* has not been subject to rigorous record keeping and so we do not know exactly what sort of “jump” in the pricing occurred in 1988. For context, however, the following reference points are available: 1976, 10p; 1996, £2GBP for students and £3GBP for non-students; 2014, £3GBP for students, £5 for non-students.

⁷ The connection between Exeter and the Classical World does, naturally, pre-date the journal by centuries and has been explored in an exciting new study by a former *Pegasus* editor in the form of T. Peter Wiseman. See Wiseman, T. Peter. *Exeter and the Ancient World* (Exeter: Forthcoming)

to seeing that it was *your* department that won a massive grant, or your dissertation tutor who just published a book. In one particularly innovative piece, *Pegasus* 40 contained an interview with a current (and still so) academic, allowing student readers a glimpse behind the curtain of what academics really do and why they are interested in the subject in the first place.⁸ Similarly, *Pegasus* has had the good fortune to serve as the showcase for the incredible research of the department's own academics: no issue is complete without an update on departmental life, research and a word or two from the Head of Department.

Pegasus also plays a social role within Exeter. First and foremost this has been done through the journal's launch party – a yearly gathering in the A.G. Leventis Room complete with wine. The launch sees a number of staff and graduate students having the opportunity to network and chat to each other in an informal and relaxed environment away from the pressures of classes. In addition, the journal's generally relaxed tone, and inclusion of traditionally 'non-academic' materials makes it accessible for these different students, and career phases. Let it not be said that staff do not secretly wish to participate in a Latin crossword or hear the latest piece of student poetry on student life in the modern age.⁹

Future

The central theme of this short retelling of *Pegasus*' history and its place in the world has been twofold: community and the need to soldier on. Sadly, no look to the future can occur in these times without a nod to what is happening in the world, the C-word has profoundly affected the academic landscape and will likely continue to do so. In the humanities, budget cuts are a fact of life that is unlikely to be reversed anytime soon for a great many people; one major academic press went out of business and the disruptions to international travel have had an effect on university finances in the U.K. in a uniquely precipitous manner due to U.K university income structures.

Pegasus has not been unaffected by the current crisis. The publication timeline has been changed, with a September launch being revised myriad times. The traditional launch party will almost certainly have to be scrapped or moved online. The process by which the journal is sold, traditionally occurring in person and paid for cash, will have to be revised. Indeed, there could be a case that the whole thing should wait, yet, such an argument goes against the ethos of the journal. Rather than be put-down, *Pegasus* will take flight again with its 62nd issue as this cohort of editors make their small dent in the journal's future past. *Pegasus*' traditions of academic integrity combined with a playful and light-hearted twist will continue, as well as the articles, reviews and news that one might expect to find in a departmental academic journal. Old features will return: the Creative Corner, which incorporates poetry and creative writing related to Classics, and longstanding favourites, such as the publication of the best undergraduate essay.

Gazing any further into *Pegasus*' future might seem slightly difficult, when considering how *Pegasus* has changed over the decades and how fluid the editorial roster can be. Nonetheless, some things can be said with certainty. *Pegasus* will continue to give many postgraduate research

⁸ McHardy, F. 'An Interview with Hans Van Wees' in *Pegasus* 40 (1997): 7-9.

⁹ Eg. Hayes, S. 'A Modern Juvenal' *Pegasus* 56 (2013): 60.

students the opportunity to gain experience in the editorial process, maintaining a long-running Exeter tradition. As *Pegasus* gallops onwards, it will undoubtedly become a showcase for the diversity of the modern Classics community. Using the internet to attract papers from academics around the world, the journal has attracted submissions from as far as India, and it is such connectivity that makes *Pegasus* relevant for the future. In the interest of open-access, *Pegasus* has even archived all back-dated volumes online to allow for free public access: *Pegasus* will continue in this essential endeavour.

The future of *Pegasus* is thus very bright, a guarantee in a world of surprises. It is the promise of this years editors that the journal will continue to publish articles of excellent quality, remain a home of classically-inspired creativity and vision, and uphold its position as an integral part of Exeter's Classics department – as well as probably continuing to challenge and alarm its unwitting editorial teams – for decades to come.

Fingers crossed for many more years of research, community and change at *Pegasus*.

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ne285@exeter.ac.uk

jg439@exeter.ac.uk

jl937@exeter.ac.uk