

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter for parents and friends of Steiner Waldorf education.

### News from our oldest school: Michael Hall

We celebrated our 90th birthday today. We are the longest running Steiner Waldorf School in the English speaking world, having started our life in Streatham, London, in 1924. During the Second World War the entire school was evacuated to Minehead in Somerset, after which it moved to its present home at Kidbrooke Park, Forest Row.

Teachers, children and parents celebrated by letting off 500 balloons (biodegradable of course), each with a tag containing the children's' message for their School. The balloons and their message will hopefully travel far and wide, with the finder of the one that travels furthest winning a prize! In addition, celebrations included a verse written especially for the occasion, a song, the planting of an Oak tree with the wishes of all the School community contained deep within its roots and, finally, an enormous cake!



Julie Ruse

### News from a newer school: What Language Do The Angels Speak?



Every school asks about the value of the Christmas play. One way to keep the question alive, while recognising the worth of tradition, is to place constraints on, or new rules for, the play every year.

Here in Frome, we gave ourselves two new rules last Christmas. Our children learn Mandarin and Spanish, and both Mary and the Angel were Mandarin speakers. So we began with the idea that they would speak their lines – and sing! – in Mandarin. Then we thought it would be exciting to perform in our half-built hall, with builders' lights and a screed floor.

As we started rehearsing, we saw that the Oberufer play allows an Angel to appear in the robes of a Chinese spirit-being of compassion, moving (as well as speaking and singing) in quite another way than a "traditional" Eurythmist in white. Our Mandarin teacher, Yuan Hollingsworth, revealed a world of grace and formal gesture we wanted to watch again and again.

As to the hall: well, it was exciting for the children to carry chairs down and keep their coats on – but we hadn't allowed for the fact that we were performing in a large echo chamber. It's quite possible that most of the audience couldn't distinguish between Mandarin and the three shepherds speaking Yorkshire, Somerset and (maybe) Old Mercian. At the point where Crispin entered, speaking Welsh, we were well on our way to Whitsun.

The abiding impression, though, was of the magic of show-business. And every school knows this, too: a disparate group of tired individuals rolling a rock up a hill becomes a band of brothers and sisters holding a drop of light.

## Good news from Ireland:

As colleagues may remember the two Steiner Waldorf schools in Co Clare, Ireland, have been 'provisionally registered' National Schools with the Irish Department of Education since just before the Hereford Academy opened. A huge amount of work has been put into making room in the Irish school system for Waldorf education by colleagues at Raheen Wood and Mol an Oige Steiner National Schools. The system of inspection and recognition in the Republic brings interesting complexities and the two schools have had to weather often contrary advice and some misunderstanding. We had the news just after Christmas that following the most recent inspection, Mol an Oige had received full registration. Congratulations to them and we wish Raheen Wood a similar outcome. They are expecting to be inspected again during the current term.

**Kevin Avison**



## Ringwood Waldorf School:

Parents of Class 8 hand made this quilt for their Class Teacher as an end of year gift as a reminder of all the pupils. Each block is 30cm and represents a child from the 8 Class years; 6 pupils had left over the period but when contacted the parents were happy to participate! One block is by a Brazilian Waldorf student who visited for 2 terms. Much of the hand sewing was done in groups of various sizes and venues so it was a social activity too. None of the parents had ever done appliqué or quilting before so it was a new challenge. The project was lead by parent, Jackie Carr-Jones, who had the idea from her church who made a "quilt as you go" fundraising quilt. It is all natural materials and filled with bamboo, silk and wool batting.

**Vanessa Innes**

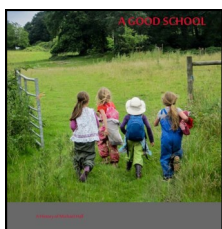
## Childminding in a Yurt:

Leah and Peter Findlay are SWSF registered Steiner Childminders who recently had a two page article in Nursery World Magazine. They run their childcare in a Yurt which is in a wonderful woodland setting in Hebden Bridge. Their setting is perfect for exploring sustainability, as they say "We don't play at The Good Life, we live it!" Children from two years upwards grow food, fetch water, play and cook on real fires. Much of the time is spent outdoors, and the solar powered Yurt provides shelter, comfort and a warm play space when needed. You can find out more about this sustainable childcare model by contacting them on 01422 647102 or [leahfindlay@rocketmail.com](mailto:leahfindlay@rocketmail.com).



**Janni Nicol**

## A History of Michael Hall



This newly published book describes the development of the school, from the founding of the school in Streatham, London, to Minehead during the war and then to Forest Row, it shows how the school has grown to what it is today. It shows plans for development, covers the traditions of the school, and in the final part, it looks back at the lives and work of the founding teachers.

You can order copies online, or from Michael Hall for £25.

Or [order on line here](#) or [www.michaelhall.co.uk](http://www.michaelhall.co.uk)

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