



Welcome to our winter 2015 Newsletter.

JOAN MARCUS - 13.5.1918 – 15.3.15



She was my Mum. The richness of her life was rooted in her family upbringing. Her father Jack Bucknall, was a Church of England priest. With her sister Morwenna she went to a Church of England School in Warminster where they were bullied by the headmaster who disapproved of their father's campaigns on behalf of the working classes.

She first met anthroposophy age 17. She wanted to go to a lecture and asking for her father's opinion he replied, 'I was reading Steiner before you were born!' Determined to be a Steiner school teacher after visiting the Streatham school, she travelled to Germany to learn German with William Mann; returning after being an au pair in 1938. She helped feed people in the London East End shelters; and completed her Waldorf Teacher training at Michael Hall School. Back in London she studied music at Trinity College. A teaching post followed at the Edinburgh Steiner School. In 1952, with her husband Rudi and 2 year old Christopher, she started a new life in Stourbridge. I was born shortly after they moved. Twin boys Michael and Paul arrived in 1956.

We led a very rich and varied family life, we all went to Elmfield School where my father, Rudi Marcus (1918–1984) taught and later where Mum saw classes through their early years, before running the Kindergarten for many years.

She had an amazing memory, almost everything had a person and a story attached to it from the long distant past to the present day. It is as if the house and garden had in essence all these memories and all her giving and forgiving character imbedded there. Her remarkably strong respect and a loving spirit towards all of nature showed in the abundance of plant life not only in the garden but on practically every windowsill in the house. In nurturing her garden she received back an abundance of growth and strength of spirit. She gave out joyously to people in every possible way she could and listened

intently to everyone's lives, loves, joys and hurts. This seemed to nourish her as well as to worry her at times. When her thinking failed, prayer was her silent resolve and retreat, with a strong Christian faith and commitment to the Christian Community. She was masterful at keeping in touch with people through letter writing and remembering birthdays.

Mum was sometimes kind to a fault, always considerate towards others. She found it difficult to say what she really felt or needed which made looking after her in her later years sometimes very difficult indeed. A great deal of understanding and interpretation was required. And when, near her end, the paramedics arrived after she had fallen in the bathroom and broken her hip, she was more concerned about providing the paramedic with a cup of tea than the comfort of herself.

Mary Rawson ne Marcus

Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Studies -A new accredited qualification:

We are delighted to announce that a 'Level 5 Diploma in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Studies - Leadership and Management' has been accredited by the Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE) and is now on the Ofqual list of recognised early years qualifications. This qualification now joins our Level 4 Diploma in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Studies (Early Years Educator) which became a CACHE award last year, and is also on the Ofqual framework. As the name implies we have given an emphasis to the qualities and skills required for effective leadership in our Waldorf kindergartens.

The level 4, acquired through a two year part time training, is a pre requisite for entry into the Level 5 programme, which requires a full year as an assistant in a recognised Steiner Waldorf kindergarten. Both levels are offered in London and York based courses. Together the two levels offer a comprehensive and rich preparation for teaching in the sensitive early years of childhood, whilst meeting government regulations. A great achievement for all concerned in the development of these recognised qualifications.

Lynne Oldfield, Course Leader, London.

News from Steiner Academy Frome:



Under a cloudless, blue sky, at the end of September, the *Steiner Academy Frome* opened its doors for a public house-warming and celebration. 50 guests from across the local community and education sector joined with staff and the 238 children now on roll for an afternoon of pupil presentations, speeches, tea and cakes and a tour of the buildings and facilities.

The school has just begun its fourth year and following the building and refurbishment programme on the site of the former Victoria Hospital, this autumn heralds the start of the school's first full year in Frome. The guests were treated to a programme that included movement, music and song; a sprinkling of Mandarin and Spanish and some poetry recitation.

Now the school is able, at last, to move on to its full site, the teachers and children are benefitting from being able to access the facilities. Circus skills, woodwork, ceramics and gardening have been added to the curriculum. At the same time, *Frome Weavers and Spinners* have rented two classrooms as a home for their heavy plant and a place to hold workshops, while an independent parent-child group, *Meadowsweet*, has begun on site two mornings a week.

Founder member and Chair of Governors, Guy Marson said: *'This has been a long, difficult and exciting journey. And now, here we are in this wonderful school, with a tremendous band of children, parents and staff all pulling together. This is a proud moment.'* The Principal, Trevor Mephram thanked the guests for coming and said that, *'the advent of free schools and academies has provided opportunities for Steiner education to broaden its appeal and welcome families on the basis of choice, rather than income. This school offers a different*

curriculum and programme of learning and for some people, it is an attractive option. We are committed to an approach that focuses on the celebration of childhood, the importance of creativity and the need to develop positive relationships with each other and the world.' He added, *'Every school in the land operates in a complex and demanding environment and teachers everywhere are working their socks off to care for their children and foster their learning. In that sense, we are all in the same boat, working hard for children and their families.'*



Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship Trustees:

Full member schools send a representative to our termly Council meetings. This person is then appointed as a trustee. Over the years we have had many trustees, who are doing this work voluntarily on top of full time roles in school.

This year three long standing trustees have resigned and will be greatly missed:

- ✚ **Richard Moore**, founder teacher at the Iona school has been a trustee since 2001. He was active in the Personnel Team and a great support to the work of the Executive Group. His calm approach to problems will be missed!
- ✚ **Angela Martinot** from the South Devon School has served since 2009, she was dedicated trustee who always asked important questions and had all the schools at heart.
- ✚ **Denis McCarthy**, teacher at Kings Langley has been a trustee since 2010 and often chaired meetings. He has a huge ability to calm troubled waters and to see the wider aspect of things.

The Saturday of our meetings is an Association meeting and is open to the wider group of schools. Our recent meeting looked at the diversity of our movement.

Jane Avison

News from Canterbury Steiner School:



Canterbury Steiner School has won the national 2015 Good Schools Guide Award for Boys taking Art & Design (3D Studies) at GCSE.

Canterbury Steiner School has been presented with this award by The Good Schools Guide for out-performing all other English schools in its category. The prestigious annual awards, which are in their 9th year, are based on a detailed analysis of the most recent examination results, and are designed to highlight consistently good teaching.

This is great news and celebrates the hard work of students and teachers here at the school.

School Events:

You can find details of events open to the public on our website

[See School Events page here](#)

SWSF Earns Endorsement for EU funded Erasmus+ project

This project provides **€423,000** over three years for work in three areas:

- Curriculum research and development
- Professional development and training
- Establishing an innovative qualification pathway at Levels 2 and 3 (equivalent to GCSE and A Level or Baccalaureate qualifications).



Experienced upper school specialists will work in these areas over the next three years. Their task will be to develop an integrated approach to formal, non-formal and informal learning, one that enhances and makes explicit the creative thinking skills so highly prized and sought after at this time.

The first transnational meeting of this European Union, Erasmus Plus project, Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills (ACTS) has taken place at the Vidarskollen, Copenhagen, Denmark. The project, proposed and led by the UK Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship and facilitated by the Crossfields Institute also includes the Steiner school associations for Denmark, Finland and Norway. The event brought together teachers of students aged 14-18 from across the four nations for a week of intensive study and critical dialogue. Former students of the schools and colleagues from other education settings joined the meetings.



Erasmus+

The ACTS project is due to run for three years. Transnational meetings for research are its first stage. This is restricted money; it can only be used as laid down by the European Union for travel and substance for the agreed meetings.

PR News:

We have been working with Liquid Creative Communication to support the schools. We have had several positive articles in the media and have produced a new brochure for the schools [see brochure here](#). We are grateful for the donations we have received for this work.

Artful Sustainability:

Has anyone heard of Children's Scrapstore? There are a number around the country, details of which can be found at www.childrenscrapstore.co.uk

In the summer I was invited to visit the Bristol Scrapstore, by its Chief executive Officer, Jeff Hill. The visit was an eye-opener in all sorts of ways and that included the joy of meeting Jeff, who is a practical enthusiast and advocate for children and their need for free play. Scrapstore in Bristol includes a host of activities and initiatives, 'Parents 4 Play', which hosts activities for parents with their children supported by Play Leaders, Playpods for Primary school playgrounds, Artrageous and the eponymous Scrapstore itself.

Scrapstore Bristol collects off-cuts and other left-over material from business around Bristol: wood

and bits and pieces from IKEA and other such companies, factory remnants and huge quantities of cast-offs from clothing manufactories, upholsterers, or anyone willing to part with unwanted items that can be used safely by imaginative children. This is the 'cardboard box theory' of play in action. Selected items of scrap also go into 'pods' provided to Primary schools in the area for break time play. They also train playground supervisors because, as we know, not every child knows how to bring their imagination into play! The Scrapstore warehouse, stuffed with collections of different items that would otherwise be destined for landfill or waste incinerators, is truly impressive, the more so to hear that they have one major problem: they need more 'scrap' than they can get! – a throng of gatherers were at work choosing items as I was shown around.

Schools in Bristol and others within reach of a Scrapstore would also be well advised to take a look at the art shop, Artrageous. Although I did not have time to explore this closely the (new) art materials I saw were of good quality, including paper and brushes that well suit Waldorf classrooms - and at very reasonable prices. I recommend anyone interested in and wishing to support sustainability and children's play to find their local store. One warning, however, be prepared for puns: the little group of parents and children I saw busily engaged in sticking, painting and making generally was called, Art-Attack. Word play apart, Children's Scrapstore, which has its roots in an initiative of Friends of the Earth, should be much better known. Readers of this Newsletter will recognise that here are allies in the important business of protecting and promoting the essential right of children: to be allowed to play!

Kevin Avison



Statistics:

We have 22 full member schools and 13 associate schools (those working towards full membership), 4 of these are state funded schools in England, one of which is a full member, 4 schools in the Republic of Ireland, 2 of which are state funded – quite a diverse picture. We have 5,547 pupils in our schools (last year it was 5,429).

We have 15 independent kindergartens and a number of Steiner Inspired Childminders, as well as numerous Parent and Child groups.

Hand Gesture Games Workshop



Over 70 Early Childhood staff and students have recently enjoyed a rich day of learning some of the *Hand Gesture Games of Wilma Ellersiek*, together with Jacqueline Walter, a Swiss kindergarten teacher who is one of the original members

of the Hand Gesture Group in Europe. We met at the Kings Langley Rudolf Steiner school last Saturday, and spent the day learning a few of the games, which were developed by Wilma Ellersiek in order to integrate speech, gesture and touch. Through learning the specific gestures to accompany the songs or musically spoken rhymes, the participants in the conference practiced them with Jacqueline, trying them out on each other so that they understood how to bring it to the children. Jacqueline explained how the games moulded artistically and creatively what is discovered in the powerful realm of nature, and that finding the fitting gesture gives voice to what nature presents. She said that finding the pure gesture to accompany the pure sound is creative, and through experiencing them, the child can form the basis for creative, imaginative play with language.

We found the day rich and nourishing, and went home feeling refreshed.

Janni Nicol