



## Welcome to our summer 2016 Newsletter



### SWSF Quality Mark:

We designed the process used to award the quality mark in response to requests from SWSF trustees (see SWSF website for document). It had long been recognised that accreditation whereby newer, Associate Member schools become full members should be augmented with a means to recognise and thus help to share high quality school practice among SWSF members. We saw this as additional to formal inspection, conducted by the School Inspection Service according to the common inspection framework, as agreed by the Department for Education. The SWSF quality mark recognises a union of requirements to achieve the good standards expected for any school with the fundamentals of Waldorf principles, ethos and development intentions. The latter, distinctive features, are what gives a Waldorf education its extra dimension.



We are delighted to announce that the Iona School, Nottingham, is the first SWSF member school to receive the SWSF Quality mark.

*(Photo: Rob Strafford and Elaine Holt)*

**Congratulations to all our Nottingham colleagues!**

### Class Preparation workshops - thanks:

To Jane Luxford, Marcus Johnson and Rob Strafford for leading the Class 2, 3 & 4 workshops this year. Colleagues attending have responded with great positivity and enthusiasm towards what these three teachers contributed from the experience of working with their classes this year. There was a strong request for longer workshops – which may not be feasible, although we will explore the possibilities - and a particular request for a Class 5 workshop next year. If this is a genuine and practical wish, I would be pleased to hear from any of next year's Class 4 teachers with thoughts about this. We would need some sense that there is a genuine will and intention to attend.

### Raising Compulsory School Age?

Colleagues will be interested to know that the idea of raising the compulsory starting age for full-time education in UK is not reserved for Waldorf educators only. Over the years there has been a great deal of research to suggest that starting at age 6 or 7 would benefit many children. It has been noted that some key processes of maturation in the neurological development coincide with this period and campaigns such as the "Too Much, Too Soon" campaign continue to press the case for a later start. The education union, Voice, has also picked up on this, considering the question "worthy of debate" and pointing out that this "should not be delayed if we want the best for our children":

[www.blog.voicetheunion.org.uk/?p\\*13610](http://www.blog.voicetheunion.org.uk/?p*13610) and the blog is open to contributions from readers who wish to add their views. A parallel discussion for Scotland:

[www.blog.voicetheunion.org.uk/?p\\*13457](http://www.blog.voicetheunion.org.uk/?p*13457) is also active. Take a look and add your say while



you still can. A book on the subject : **UPSTART: The case for raising the school starting age and providing what the under-sevens really need**, by Sue Palmer. Floris Books.

## Conducting staff assessment for early years and class teachers:

A small group of colleagues met during the Christmas break to look at mentoring practice. During this conversation, the point was made that, while formal assessment has become a norm in most schools, the procedures used are not always clear, or well-enough known. Appraisal of teaching and learning has become one of the touchstones upon which judgements about "Leadership and Management" are made under the Common Inspection Framework in England, and other inspectorates are increasingly looking to examine this aspect of how schools are run. If sufficient colleagues are interested in following up this theme, I propose a practical session in Stourbridge on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July**, starting at 10.30 (for 11.00) to 14.00. If you are interested in taking part, please let me know (the meeting will only go ahead with sufficient support). Bring copies of any procedures you currently use with you, or, if you can, send them in advance for circulation to participants. Contact:

[kavison@steinerwaldorf.org](mailto:kavison@steinerwaldorf.org)

## Trade Marks:

We are pleased to announce that, after a great deal of work, with the help of Dehns (Intellectual Property Attorneys), SWSF now has the term, "Steiner School" as a collective mark registered with the UK Intellectual Property Office: UK00003069952. This is in addition to the original "Rudolf Steiner (Waldorf)" mark, dating back to the 1980s and the more recent registrations of the SWSF name and logo. The "Steiner School" is a collective mark. This enables member institutions to identify themselves through their membership of the Fellowship. The mark indicates the mutual recognition of which accreditation procedures and the SWSF "quality mark" are a part. It is a major step towards enabling members to show objectively that Steiner Waldorf education in the UK is a genuine "movement" developed around collegiality and shared principles.



## Official Opening

Bright sun, a roaring bonfire, a new school bell, the Lord Mayor and a range of visiting dignitaries all featured in the Steiner Academy's official opening ceremony on Friday. Although almost three years old, the school only gained access to its permanent site four days before the start of this school year. Guests, including the Lord Mayor, local and national educationalists and representatives of contractor who had developed the site were treated to scenes from Year 9's production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* before touring classrooms and seeing a range of lessons. 'It was a delight showing this wonderful site to our guests and seeing how impressed they were by the children and their hard work.' said Lena Marvao, chair of the board of governors.

Principal Alan Swindell unveiled a new school bell to mark the occasion. He commented that 'Steiner schools have a role to play in ringing in the changes that are needed for our children's future.' Many of the guests stayed on for the school's annual St. John's Festival, although



most were happy to observe the children making the traditional leap over the fire rather than try it for themselves!



# Erasmus+

## ACTS 2016 in Norway

In June, the third meeting of the *Acknowledging Creative thinking Skills (ACTS)* project was held in a delightfully sunny Oslo. This EU funded Erasmus+ project is enabling the transnational exchange of good practice in upper school teaching, while developing Level 2 and 3 secondary qualifications that make visible and recognise those complex habits of creative thinking so highly prized today. It will also develop the associated Teacher Training.



Delegates from Norway, Finland, Denmark and the UK took part in the latest event in Oslo in a variety of locations including the charmingly unchanged room where Steiner gave his Norwegian lectures. Speakers included Godi Keller who runs a successful program that rehabilitates and re-engages disaffected young people who have been failed by the current exam-driven education system. Delegates also heard from Bernard Daub, Rektor of the Oslo City Steiner School which currently has a staggering 1500 Upper School pupils each of whom he greets at the gate every day. Aksel Naerstad, the Senior Advisor to the Development Fund in Norway explained the global issues facing this and future generations of young people, which will require creative solutions. Associate Prof. Roger Antonsen who specialises in Logic and Intelligent Data, provided great insights into creative mathematics.

During the week, representatives from Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, Crossfields Institute and the Norwegian Steiner Schools Association met with Johan Raum, the Norwegian Director

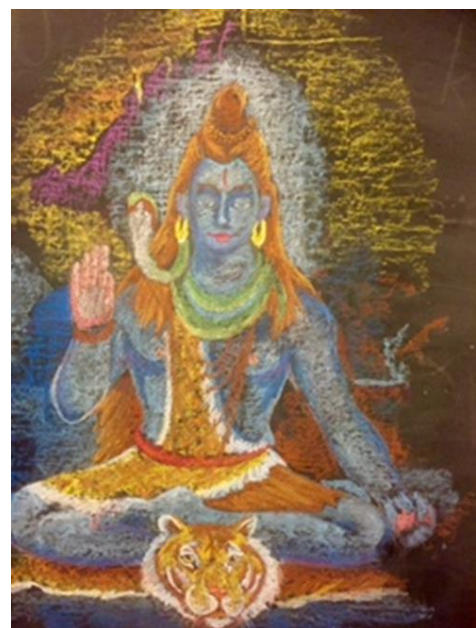
General for Education and Training, for a fruitful discussion of the potential for the ACTS diploma in Norway. This follows a similar meeting with Education Ministry officials in Finland in February.

Promoted by the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics and Waterloo University, Ontario, through their Waterloo Global Science Initiative 2030 (WGSi2030), the ACTS project is now attracting interest from across the World. <http://www.wgsi.org/blog/423000-awarded-program-inspired-learning-2030>

The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) will be attending the fourth transnational, due to be held in the UK later this year.

With the international collaboration involved in this project growing, delegates in Oslo felt sad to think that it would come to an end when this part of the project is completed in October. Inspired and energised, the Norwegian Association has now proposed to continue an annual ACTS conference for Upper School teachers, in Oslo. There will also be a one day UK conference in the autumn to bring new teachers who are interested in ACTS, up to speed.

Teachers or schools interested in participating in this work are warmly invited to contact SWSF at [admin@steinerwaldorf.org](mailto:admin@steinerwaldorf.org).



*Blackboard drawing by Rob Trafford – Iona School*



## NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY, PLAY DAY, UPSTART and SCREEN FREE WEEK!

Some of our early childhood settings have taken part in the national events outlined above. They have used this to highlight the importance of PLAY in the life of a child, and to include parents and public!

**St Albans Kindergarten** took part in 'Larks in the Park'. It is a community event in the park in front of the kindergarten sponsored by the council, and they were joined by Delrow Camphill community. In August they will be holding a bring and share picnic Play Day.

**The Singing Tree** in Falmer (part of the Brighton Steiner School) celebrated outdoor free play session for National Play Day.



**Brighton Steiner School's** kindergartens celebrated Walking Week. Kindergarten teacher Kim

Harris explained why the children are delighted to be walking 'on top of the world!'

Children from our three kindergarten classes and playgroup walk every day, whatever the weather," said Kim. "They leave within a few minutes of each other and each group has a different route, but we cross over and greet each other. The local park ranger was so impressed with their daily walks that he and his colleagues have made a fantastic log picnic/story circle for them!" She added that once a week, the children have a longer walk, staying out for the morning, learning about trees, plants, birds and insects, visiting the sheep, climbing trees meeting dogs and owners and doing roly-polys down hills! "The children have also seen the park change with the seasons. It's a wonderful experience for all of them."

**Bristol Steiner Academy** celebrated Screen Free Week by sharing ideas with parents for avoiding screens, and what to do as a family instead!



**Canterbury's Secret Garden Outdoor Parent and Child group** had fun in the sun while the

**Canterbury Steiner School** celebrated National Children's Day with a May Fair in their beautiful grounds with dancing round the maypole, crafts, puppet shows, food, stalls and much more!

The **Edinburgh Steiner School kindergartens** supported the UPSTART initiative in Scotland, where educators throughout the country are supporting a play based curriculum and later school start! Their shining example was a Whitsun garden festival where the whole community came together, each one having a stall celebrating their culture and heritage. Charlotte Wilson, kindergarten teacher said 'families from many cultural backgrounds each had a stall to celebrate their heritage; we shared in a rich and diverse experience.

Some stalls had food to try (Chilean, Hungarian, Scottish, Polish foods) while others were craft based



(German spinning songs and wool work carding and spinning little balls of white wool with the children, Japanese dip-dyeing, African musical instruments, fire work – lighting fires to cook oatcakes) as well as music from Norwegian singers and Scottish fiddle playing'. Hannah King, kindergarten teacher, described the festival as a 'little drop of gold, a balm for our beings, as festivals often are!'

**Future Conferences** - Please click on the links below:

**Preparing for Class One 12-14.8.16:** [Preparing for Class One](#)

**Enhancing Professional Relationships October 10<sup>th</sup>**  
[Professional Relationships Conference details](#)

Registered Office: 11 Church Street, Stourbridge. DY8 1LT

Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship Ltd ®. Registered in England 519230, Registered Charity 295104