



Welcome to our winter 2016 newsletter.

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS:

We have a new provisionally registered Early years setting – **The Ark at Steiner Academy Exeter** <http://www.exwickark.co.uk/> this is an independent kindergarten operating out of the Steiner Academy Exeter.

Moray Steiner School has amalgamated with the Drumduan Upper School to become the Drumduan School - <http://www.drumduan.org/>

St Michael Steiner School: Four Class 12 students completed their Level 3 SSC. Two of them gained their certificates at the highest level, with Distinction, meaning they had received more than 35 out of 50 points at Excellence. One gained her certificate with Highly Commended, meaning she had received more than 35 points at Merit or higher. And one gained her certificate at Achieved.

Out of the 4, two of them chose to apply to university (through UCAS) and both received conditional offers from their first choices. Both succeeded in fulfilling the conditions required. Although one of these applicants chose to defer entry in favour of a gap year, the other will be taking up her studies this September. So one student will study Art History at University of East Anglia (she was also offered a place at the University of Warwick) and the other Computer Science (Internet Security) at Royal Holloway in London.

Edinburgh Steiner School, exam pass rates 2016

Higher: 88% (A-C)

Advanced Higher: 'A' grades only (100%)

National 5: 93% (A-C)

GCSE: A*-B = 58% A*-C = 76%

Michael Hall had a 100% pass rate with 89.4% attaining 5 GCSEs A*

Ringwood Waldorf School has been involved in a three year **Erasmus +** project 'Achieving Together', which has now entered its final year. Together with its partner schools in France, Germany, Hungary and Turkey, a number of workshops have taken place. Students from the schools have taken part with the aim of giving young people of different cultures the

opportunity to meet and work together. The response after each arrival home has been a lot of enthusiasm for the country visited, new friendships made, and a treasure trove of memories.

In January 2017 we will be welcoming around forty pupils to our school for a 'World of Work' workshop. A week of exciting activities and trips are being planned.

Running parallel to these, other pupils have been able to spend time in either France or Germany to improve their language skills and gain experience of another country. Staff training is also part of the project and a teacher training event is being held in Germany in February 2017.

An additional aim has been identified: that of international brotherhood. At each workshop's final celebratory event, there has been an opportunity for each school to sell handmade items to raise funds in support of a German the project for the integration of young migrant refugees in Germany. Ringwood Waldorf School is working towards making its final event a resounding success.



Kings Langley: In May 2016, 22 children and 4 accompanying adults from the school ended their Class 7 voyage on the high seas, sailing from Cardiff to Portsmouth. Joining the amazing voluntary and permanent crew of the Stavros S Niarchos, it was a steep learning curve as we learned many new things, like tying knots and being at the helm of a ship as well as facing our fears - climbing masts, dealing with stormy seas, sea sickness and very little sleep.

The majesty of the sea, breathtaking in all her hues, but perhaps most of all the gift of being together as a small community of 47 adults and children bobbing about together on the ocean. The tall ship's trip was a rite of passage that at times felt as if to enter into the world of Sir Francis Drake and the 16th century.

It was never dull. It was also a real privilege to be part of such a wonderful expedition - ideally suited to the spirit of adventure that is the Steiner Waldorf curriculum for Class 7, but most of all to bear witness to the children's steadfast determination, their indomitable and joyful spirit and sheer resilience. Life at sea is both incredible and challenging and a journey unlike any other.



The Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills (ACTS) project which launched in September 2015, is progressing well, and is on track as far as the stated goals for this stage of the project. It is attracting growing interest across Europe and globally, and we have had expressions of interest from South Africa and South America. A representative from the American Association of Steiner Waldorf Schools asked to attend the most recent Transnational Event as a visitor and left very enthusiastic about exploring ways of incorporating ideas from the project into the schools in America, Canada and Mexico. Interest is also growing among academics and national government agencies have responded well.

Teachers, teacher educators and educationalists representing all four partner countries gathered in Brighton in October, for the fourth of our international events. We were again researching and exploring ways of enhancing and accrediting creative thinking skills, and of being able to integrate non-formal and informal learning into the more formal elements of the Diplomas.

The core content of each main curriculum strand was agreed, and the Independent Project aims and parameters were finalised.

The Norwegian Association of Steiner Schools has offered to run an annual ACTS Conference week starting next year, which would be open to UK Upper School teachers. The Danish Federation has instigated the development of an international Upper School Teacher Education programme which will be developed with Crossfields Institute, and will be certified by Alanus University, in Germany. Norway and Finland are currently taking on the professional design of the interactive ACTS Information Hub.

The qualification development is progressing well, and there will now be a phase of detailed qualification writing over the next 12 months by staff at Crossfields Institute.

SWSF will be hosting a conference in the autumn for schools, higher education and employers, presenting

the need for a change of emphasis away from the test-driven education and looking at the essential qualities needed for life as well as for the best HE potential and initiative in the workplace or business. Referencing the twelve senses, it will present the diploma and Creative Thinking Skills as outlined in the forthcoming book, through lectures and practical transdisciplinary workshops. These will be augmented by presentations from world renowned educationalists and thinkers on the subject of creativity. The conference will be opened to interested parents and students.



A remarkable gathering of leading thinkers, authors and early years specialists are coming together to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas about modern childhood at the first four-day **International Festival of Childhood (IFC1017)** that will take place in Bath from the 29th June to 2nd July 2017. The event will consist of a multi-disciplinary seminar, surrounded by an extravaganza of playful events and activities.

The Festival is the result of collaboration between the Save Childhood Movement and the Bath-based cultural organisation 5x5x5=creativity. Event partners include Forest of Imagination, The National Trust, the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and Bath Festivals. The City of Bath is hosting the event as part of its commitment to becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly City.

If you are interested in the nature of modern society, the importance of family and community life, the need to build cultures of lifelong learning and how we can address some of the pressures currently impacting child and family wellbeing, we hope that you will join us.

<http://www.festivalofchildhood.com>
[/www.savechildhood.net](http://www.savechildhood.net)



National Children's Day will take place on the 14th May 2017. Many of our settings participated in 2016 by holding events in the park, going for walks, involving communities and parents in May Festivals, organising play-days and more. They have had some

wonderful publicity around this event, helped by the SWSF agency LIQUID, who organised newspaper coverage, both locally and nationally. The events provided an opportunity to raise the profile of our settings in the local community, and we hope that many more will participate in 2017!

www.nationalchildrensdayuk.com

NEWS FROM OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS



What a year this has been for our early childhood settings, which includes mother and baby and parent and child groups, nurseries

childminders and kindergartens.

Inspections have been in the main good to outstanding in the early years! Well done to our kindergartens for all their hard work in making this happen. Next year the challenge is to focus on the new 5-7 curriculum which will be the focus of inspections. We are hopeful that this will happen without too many changes to normal kindergarten practice. You can find out more about this by contacting JanniSteinerEY@aol.com

TEACHER TRAINING

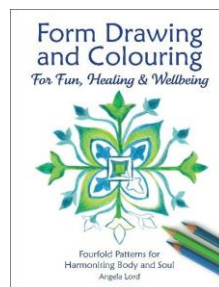
Many students have graduated with a level 5 qualification, and all have found jobs in schools! The new intake for students is healthy once again, and both the London and North of England Course have begun. You can find further information on [Teacher Training courses](#)



THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STEINER WALDORF EARLY CHILDHOOD

The last meeting took place in October in Estonia, where the council of IASWECE worked together with ECSWE (The European Council www.ecswe.org) on subjects such as Assessment from kindergarten through school, Digital and Media, school readiness and other issues. It was good to work with our school colleagues.

The focus of the study during the council meeting was on **SLEEP** an important subject for adults and children. Following on this subject, the SWSF will be holding a national conference on the subject in the Autumn, and we are hoping that our UK teachers will use this also as a focus for study. IASWECE are encouraging early childhood teachers around the world to use this as a focus for conferences and study. www.iaswece.org



Form Drawing and Colouring for Fun, Healing and Wellbeing - Fourfold patterns for harmonising body and soul: by Angela Lord published Hawthorn Press

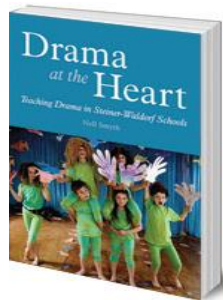
Once a diversion for children with few claims to be serious or educational, colouring-in has become respectable enough to be taken up by adults. Often this is explained as a form of "mindfulness practice". Indeed, one such book is called *The Mindfulness Colouring Book*, and, for example, Hephzibah Kaplan, director at the London Art Therapy Centre, is quoted in the Independent newspaper saying: [colouring-in]... "requires a relaxed focus where the outline is containing and the mark-making repetitive and smooth...a bit like repeating a mantra where repetition is a means to relaxation, colouring-in is also a type of mediation....Meditation, whether secular or otherwise, has known benefits to mind, body and spirit. When focusing deeply on a simple yet safe task, other anxieties become less present, less pervasive."

So, colouring-in has become a "thing"; newspapers, such as the Independent, publish lists of best buys, while Amazon's website includes seventy-five pages of books and colouring materials. Angela Lord's book is, however, a little different, offering a cleverly thought-through sequence of patterns to help users practice and be enabled to create a variety of fourfold patterns, both guided and individually-designed. Someone working with this book will thus experience a "breathing" between concentrated linear form drawing and a relaxed colouring-in process. Needless to say, Angela Lord provides examples for the latter as well as step-by-step help to produce the forms. Someone who did not attend a Waldorf school can use this book with confidence and produce beautiful results. Those involved in the education will also enjoy these books and teachers will certainly find them helpful alongside the same author's *Creative Form Drawing* for class teaching. A further book for adults is promised, this time with fivefold patterns.

The book is nicely produced, although the binding can be restrictive and the user might be advised to break the spine - which is a pity to have to do - so that the book can be opened flat (a spiral-bound format, or some other system of the sort, would work better). It is a little pricey too compared to other books of this general type. On the other hand, the unique qualities of this book make it particularly attractive and potentially creative. The claim that working with it will harmonise "body and soul" may depend as much on the user as the evidently deeply-

considered patterns themselves. However, I rather imagine that the sound of colouring might well become a feature of some school meetings: perhaps for the better!

Heartfelt Learning!

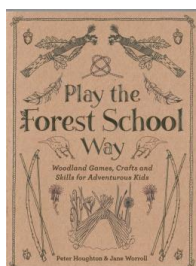


Drama at the Heart by Nell Symth, Floris Books 2016

Class teachers *do* plays - right? Why? - because any teacher can sense that plays benefit groups of developing children. The activity is highly social and challenges young people to adjust towards and support one another, and it involves spatial and physical capability along, potentially, all other arts: there can be a role for everyone, however, shyly retiring and many different qualities. Yes, plays develop communication skills and boost self-confidence alongside mutual "can-do". But doing plays also has dangers. The production can take over in such a way that product overtakes process: teacher and class can become fixated on the vehicle rather than the journey. It picks up and deepens as well it extends the activities the same author set out for the youngest children in her *The Breathing Circle* (Hawthorn Press, now, unfortunately out-of-print).

Step forward Nell Symth! This is a book for the journey. Nell places the activity of *drama* to the forefront, whether that ends in the production of a play or not. Here, conveyed with all the directness and warmth of a practical teacher, there are games, exercises and narratives for group-building and play-making to help even the least confident of teachers. Most of all *Drama at the Heart*, explores ways and means to engage children and young people, not simply in acting, directing etc. but in the *act of learning*.

It may seem odd to express things that way, but every teacher must have the feeling that over-emphasis on *teaching* can undermine *learning*. What this book does is to show drama as a process, as work-in-action, in which learning is embedded. Nell Symth offers a great gift to learning-teachers and to teacher-learners and their classes.



PLAY THE FOREST SCHOOL WAY – Woodland Games, Crafts and Skills for Adventurous Kids by Peter Houghton and Jane Worroll.

This new book is the ultimate guide to woodland fun with your children whether at home or at kindergarten/school. It is based on the Forest

School philosophy of nature-based play and learning which encourages children to develop confidence and self-esteem – and we all know how important that is in our generally nature deprived lifestyles!

Filled with helpful ideas, and useful sketches to illustrate the crafts and activities, this book will help get your children making and building, playing and crafting - such things as a working bow and arrow, headdresses, jewellery and more gathered from the forest. It teaches survival skills on a basic level, how to make a fire, build a shelter or forage and cook food. It is full of games and activities, including how to map the woods or countryside or using a journey stick and going on scavenger hunts. Suitable for all ages from 3 years upwards, and fun for all the family. Teachers will find this a useful aid, particularly the group activities and games. It is available on Amazon.

Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship is looking for a part time early year's adviser. This post would suit a newly retired experienced kindergarten teacher or one working in a school willing to free the teacher to make visits when needed. Steiner Waldorf training and at least 8 years teaching and management experience essential for this post. To apply contact admin@steinerwaldorf.org

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas

