

Fund Raising for the SWSF

Over the years the work undertaken by the SWSF has had the tendency to outgrow the financial means to support it. This has caused us many dilemmas as to how we should prioritise our work and how to achieve our aims satisfactorily within limited resources. Currently the member schools contribute 2% of their educational income to support the work of the SWSF, while training courses, independent kindergartens, sponsored schools and registered initiatives make a modest contribution. We also receive annual donations from Camphill and Drayton Manor Trust, which are essential for our continuing work, plus smaller donations from other institutions and individuals. However, after much discussion, we have come to the conclusion that to really serve the movement well we need to look for other sources of income. To this end we are looking for a fundraiser to work with us. In the first instance this would be a voluntary position. So if any reader has the time, inclination and skill to assist us in this area we would be very pleased to hear from them. If you are interested please contact the SWSF office.

Christopher Clouder. SWSF

Hall Fire Hits the South Devon School

On the evening of April 27th, during a rehearsal of Shakespeare's Macbeth, fire broke out in the roof space of the South Devon school's Eurythmy Hall. Despite the rapid deployment of several fire engines it proved impossible to contain the fire and by late evening the roof had collapsed into the hall, leaving only the walls standing and a warped steel frame where the roof had been. The next morning it was school as usual. Pupils and parents gathered in stunned silence on the tarmac between the main school building and the charred remains of the hall. In a brief assembly teacher Paul Georgiardi gave an image of the phoenix tapping away inside its egg waiting to be reborn, waiting for our endeavours to release what the future wants. He also reminded us of the many assemblies, plays and performances the school had enjoyed in the open air in the years before the hall was built. The mood was reflective but up-beat. The hall was a beautiful space and very much the perceived heart of the school; but the etheric heart was clearly in evidence on the morning after the fire. Later in the day fire officers and school maintenance staff entered the building and emerged with the many strange relics of the disaster: the hall clock was still ticking happily away, eurythmy shoes were water-drenched but untouched by fire, a batch of exercise books emerged unscathed from a charred cupboard, expensive lighting equipment had also survived. The most striking survivor was the beautiful picture depicting a classical Greek woman, veiled, in graceful motion. She was a gift to the school from our former eurythmist Michaela Alton and the pupils had grown used to this figure presiding over their lessons. Some strange reaction in the picture to the heat and smoke had created scores of tiny cracks and given it the authenticity of an ancient relic. In the next few days action and reflection went hand in hand. A new venue was found for Class 8 for their performance of Oliver Twist, the cast of Macbeth picked through the remnants of their costumes and put out an appeal for lots of purple, eurythmy, watched over by the Greek survivor, resumed in a room vacated by a class away on a foreign trip and Open Day proceeded as planned, with performances by the children taking place outside in beautiful weather. The school's insurer's attended to the technical side of things and confirmed that the building must be completely demolished. In the meantime a second-hand marquee is being purchased and the school's development group is looking at the possibility of a rebuild that may even allow for some much-needed alterations and improvements to the hall-that-was. Initial bad publicity in the local press about the lack of fire precautions in the building soon dissipated once it was made clear that the hall was fully compliant with all regulations and expectations laid down by both the fire department and the insurer. As our eurythmist, Hannele Greenhalgh, reflected losing the hall is like losing a good friend, but as Macbeth also mused, what is done cannot be undone. The mood in the school is now one of curiosity: what phoenix will emerge from this particular fire?

Alan Swindell. South Devon

Appreciation. Lawrence Edwards 13/04/12 - 03/01/04



Lawrence Edwards taught in the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School from 1947 to 1979 and continued to lecture on the part-time Teacher Training Course, which he co-founded with Karla Kiniger, for several years after that, 'commuting' from Strontian in the western Highlands, whither he and his wife Barbara had retired. From childhood on his special interest was Astronomy and Mathematics and already at the age of 16, giving a talk on Astronomy to the pupils and staff of Sevenoaks School, he revealed his gift for clarity and enthusiasm in his presentation. War saw him serving at Dunkirk and later in Italy. Much though he might have wished to study Astronomy and Maths at University he had been required to enter the family's printing and publishing firm, leaving school without any exams. However the firm was bombed out and so after the war he was free to follow his own career. Having met Anthroposophy several years before the war, Lawrence joined the first post-war Steiner Teacher Training Course at Michael Hall and came north to teach in Edinburgh both as a Class Teacher and specialist maths teacher. Here he was instrumental in building up the Upper School and his enthusiastic maths teaching inspired pupils and student teachers. As one former pupil expressed it: "I'm not mathematically minded, but with Mr Edwards you couldn't help understanding maths!" Parents, too, were delighted at what they learned about maths at Class Parent Evenings. Lawrence worked with George Adams for many years on Projective Geometry and later published a book: "Projective Geometry" (Floris books 1980) from the many courses he gave on the subject. It was a question that arose in him in his teaching that led him to years of research. Having taught pupils about the wonder of the logarithmic spirals in cones, sunflowers, shells etc, he asked himself one day - "But is this really true?" and so set about to test it. There followed his years of detailed and painstaking research, into his nineties, photographing, measuring, calculating and discovering that not only did the shapes of buds, cones, etc, follow the so-called path curves but the fluctuation in the steady development of a bud synchronised with conjunctions of the moon and the planets. This work is contained in two volumes: "The Field of Form" and the "Vortex of Life". Lawrence lectured on his work in Europe, America, and Australia. He was indescribably modest and not a man who wore Anthroposophy on his sleeve - rather it had become one with his humanity and was the inspiration of his research and his lectures which spoke with deep veracity to his listeners who consequently felt inwardly nourished.

Shirley Noakes. SWSF

Event

On Saturday 18th September Human Scale Education will be holding its annual fair "Alternatives in Education" at the Industrial Museum in Bristol and as on previous such occasions the SWSF will be participating.

Summer 2004

NEWSMAN



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'Thinking Outside the Box'

On Friday 14th May a forum was convened at Edinburgh's City Chambers entitled 'Thinking Outside the Box'. The keynote speakers were in Edinburgh to attend a weekend meeting of the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education at the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School. Subtitled 'creativity and diversity in education: a European perspective,' the forum was an opportunity for interested parties to explore the contribution the Council believes Waldorf education can make to the promotion of common European values in the 21st century. Delegates represented a wide cross section of Scottish society. Educationists from the University of Edinburgh, and politicians from local government and the Scottish Executive, were assembled with charity workers, chairs of public bodies and several local Waldorf teachers. The event was chaired by Mike Pringle MSP. After some singing from Class 4 the first speaker, Geseke Lundgren, a member of the Swedish Waldorf Early Years movement, spoke of the importance of creativity and play in childhood. She compared the work of a teacher to that of a gardener tending seeds and warned delegates of the dangers of early years testing and formal, intellectual learning. In her analogy they are the 'chemicals' which prevent a child growing naturally and creatively. Next to speak was Walter Hiller, Geschaefsfuehrer at the Bund in Germany. He continued the theme of creativity, pointing out that freedom in childhood must be inspired by freedom and diversity in the curriculum. Teachers, he maintained, must be 'individual, free and unique'. Citing a report by UNESCO which emphasises the importance of creativity in learning, Walter Hiller suggested that Waldorf education is uniquely placed to offer today's children the necessary 'wide scale of different experiences'. In Waldorf

schools, he explained, arts and crafts are not just 'optional extras' alongside core subjects such as maths, but are themselves 'musts,' subjects that are a part of the core and that are fundamental to a balanced experience of learning. The final speaker, Chair of the European Council Christopher Clouder, drew together the themes of his colleagues to argue that in a Europe of 'common enterprise,' the diversity and creativity of Waldorf education has an important role to play. Childhood, he suggested, is the very source of 'morality' where 'creative' relationships could help Europeans to realise two of their common goals: tolerance and social cohesion. His speech left delegates with the impression that Waldorf education is not 'fairytale' idealism, but a set of principles that have something practical to offer Europe, especially as the community continues to grow and evolve. The questions asked from the floor showed clearly that delegates were impressed and wanted to know more. Asked about the possibility of progress on the political



Class 4 Edinburgh

front and after hearing Christopher's report on the situation in England, Mike Pringle expressed his support for state funding of Waldorf schools in Scotland. It was, he reflected, discomfiting to note that England had got there first. Undoubtedly, it is a balance that he and many other Scottish politicians would like to see redressed. In the mean time, however, while the issue of state funding remains unresolved, the forum was still an effective way to raise awareness of the forward looking spirit of Waldorf education in Scotland and Europe.

Alistair Pugh. Edinburgh

Steiner Waldorf Advisory Service & In-Service Courses

Due to a small increase in the resources available to the advisory service, we have, during the last few years, been able to increase the number of in-service courses available to staff in member schools. The Mentor and Advisers' Development Seminar was one of the first of these. This year has seen more such courses than ever before with a conference on combined classes at the Iona School, foreign language teaching at Wynstones and conferences for teachers preparing for Class 2 (Bristol) and one for Class 6 teachers (Brighton). In addition we are planning another of the regular "New Initiative Day" conferences at the Iona School including a workshop on governance and the organisational questions that are becoming so prominent in all our schools, especially the newer ones. Administrators continue to meet twice a term, with alternate meetings focussed on a training issue such as employment law, health and safety, or most recently, OfSTED inspections and the section of SWSF Code of Practice concerned with

admissions procedure. A second conference for teachers starting with Class 1 is also being prepared for the end of August and we hope this will now become a fixture in the Waldorf annual calendar. We are also hoping to be able to carry a second mentoring workshop, this time based in the north, to better enable Scottish, Irish and North of England participation. We would like to develop a strategy to address some of the thornier problems of work in Waldorf education so, if you have suggestions or better still proposals and offers to host in-service courses, please contact Kevin Avison 01384 393385, or k.avison@yescomputers.co.uk

One area that concerns many is that of initial writing, reading and literacy skills. Colleagues in the Steiner Waldorf Dyslexia Association have done sterling work in this area. However the need for more initial Waldorf-friendly reading material is one that many a teacher has identified. Jan Stebbing, of the South Devon School, has begun work on a project to meet this need and the first workshop will be held on Saturday 19th June at Kings Langley, with a further work day in the autumn. As planned the project should be research lead and involve a large number of colleagues as well as producing useful and high quality publications.

Kevin Avison. SWSF

Political Work in England

As reported in previous newsletters, the letter from the Minister we received last autumn set out very reassuring terms for a direct-funded Steiner school under Academy legislation. The shift to this route to funding has been agreed on the basis that this will avoid some of the problems we have encountered in the VA route and also set an important precedent for those LEAs that are interested but having difficulties in implementing the policy. With the history of ups and downs that has been a feature of this lobby over the last few years it will be no surprise to hear that progress on this Academy front is not without its problems as well, but these are not insurmountable.

The usual assumption is that the Local Authority provides the site for an Academy on the grounds that there is a basic need for more school places or an existing school needs to be replaced. This does not apply in our case and so we have to provide the site for this Steiner Academy. Unfortunately, our city Steiner schools that are keen to be publicly funded do not have the means to acquire a suitable site for an academy, although it is expected that a existent Steiner Academy will eventually assist them in making progress in their discussions with their own LEAs. We are looking at how this Academy opportunity might be considered for the Hereford Waldorf School where site/planning issues are much easier. Although the original site of the school is not big enough in itself the complex task has been undertaken to achieve an option to buy more adjoining land.

Now, at last, we have a situation where a school is in a position to go to the feasibility stage so that the detail and the concerns

can be thoroughly explored. However before we can go on to this next stage, the 'expression of interest' has to be submitted to the Minister, which will then release funds for the consequent feasibility study. This submission needs to include indication of where the £600,000 of sponsorship money will come from. This is a substantial sum for us to raise.

Having got this far the risk is that if we are unable to do so quite quickly we will lose ground and this project could be pushed further into the distance, perhaps even to the point where it falls off the Government's agenda. This would be very sad and would disappoint many who believe that through public funding the standing of Steiner education would be substantially enhanced and would become available to more children.

There are several approaches to big donors, however at this stage there can be no guarantee that they will produce anything. We would therefore like to appeal to readers for any financial contribution they may feel able to make towards the sponsorship for this first publicly funded Steiner school in the UK.

In the meantime, some of our schools are continuing to build bridges with their local LEA with a view to preparing the ground to establish a VA Steiner school. This relationship is already proving to be beneficial in the short term - in Cambridge, for example, because of these VA discussions the LEA is now prepared to help the Steiner school solve its immediate accommodation crisis even before it has become one of 'their' schools.

Sylvie Sklan. SWSF

The SWSF/University of Plymouth Foundation Degree in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education and Care

We are pleased to announce that the new Foundation Degree has been approved by the University of Plymouth. The Approval Event took place on March 12th. This means we can now begin formally registering applications and arranging interviews for the first phase of the programme which will begin in September 2004.

As a flexible degree, linked to learning in the work-place, the Foundation Degree can be taught in a variety of locations and structured to enable students to study at weekends, in residential and in the classroom. As a university degree, the FdA will also enable students to make use of the integrated library services and, where possible, distance learning facilities which are an important part of study in Higher Education. The York Steiner School and Elmfield School have both expressed their willingness to work with the Faculty of Education at Exmouth as approved centres for the new programme. The programme will begin in September with a residential induction in the Exeter/Exmouth area. Here, students will be enrolled onto the programme, have an opportunity to get to know one another and be inducted into study skills and library resources at the Faculty campus. There will also be an introduction to the fundamentals of Steiner Waldorf pedagogy for the Early Years. The Induction Residential will be followed by monthly weekend workshops led by a range of experienced Early Years tutors. Later there will be further Residential Weeks, held either at Exmouth/Exeter or near one of

the approved centres.

The FdA in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood, with its flexible delivery systems, is designed for early years practitioners, teaching assistants, parents and those specialising in early childhood to achieve a professional qualification. It aims to provide students with a deepened understanding of early childhood through a combination of reflective study, practice in the arts and work-based learning. The monthly sessions will be held over Friday evenings and all day Saturday, as a combination of public workshops, intensive study and practical elements. These sessions, which will be led by visiting lecturers, are designed to complement learning acquired through day-to-day experience in the work-place, either through the student's employment or work-placement. Students will be supported in their work-experience through trained and qualified teacher/mentors working with the tutor-team and visiting advisors.

The residential weeks will run during vacation periods. Here, students will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding and share practical experiences with colleagues as well as reflect on their progress. The course can be completed over two years, but students needing more time can take up to five years to acquire their degree. On completion of the FdA, it will be possible for a student to continue on the BA (Hons) degree programme at Exmouth which can be completed in a further year.

The FdA is also a progression point for other BA programmes offering a compatible area of study. The Foundation Degree programme includes:

- Philosophy, Anthroposophy, Educational Psychology in Steiner Waldorf Early Years Education and Childcare.
- Child Development, Curriculum Studies, Teaching Method and Culture
- Contemporary Early Years Issues, Professional Practice and Comparative Studies.
- Practical and Theoretical work, and Independent Research relevant to reflective practice.
- The Arts for Self Development, and in Practice
- Work-based Learning, Teaching and Observation
- Independent Study Projects.

For potential students who have previous experience of Steiner Early Childhood Education, it would be possible to apply for previous learning and experience to be accredited, where relevant. Students need to satisfactorily complete the requirements for APEL (Accredited Prior Experiential Learning).

Enquirers and applicants should contact:
Christine Dowling
Faculty of Education
University of Plymouth
Douglas Avenue
Exmouth,
Devon. EX8 2AT

christine.dowling@plymouth.ac.uk
Tel: 01395 255325

Puppets For Peace

On 15th May 2004 the 2nd annual PUPPETS FOR PEACE DAY took place around the world. The intention was for people to perform and tell stories that will honour and raise consciousness of different cultures and awaken hearts to peace, compassion, wisdom and non-violence; multicultural folk or fairy tales, transformational stories where good triumphs over evil, healing accounts of conflict resolution, old and new plays that offer a vision of harmony and give a sense of peace, stories that are always age-appropriate, yet touch children at a deeper level for the future.

The day was initiated last year (on U.S. Armed Forces Day) by the Puppets for World Change Institute, based in the U.S. and founded by Suzanne Down. In response to the war with Iraq, she envisioned a peace movement of healing whose power would come from

many people offering peace puppetry in different parts of the globe on the same day. Cambridge offered a morning of Puppet shows, provided by the Rainbow Puppet Theatre and supported by the local community and the Rosebridge Steiner Kindergarten. Donations went to a charity working with children orphaned by conflict and illness called 'Hope and Homes for Children', and another presently working through puppets for children called 'No Strings'. This is an International Relief and Development agency who use well-researched, informative and entertaining puppet shows to help children in war-torn countries.

The Rowan Tree Kindergarten, part of the Bristol Steiner School, performed four little puppet plays. "Any room for me?" was performed on the puppeteers lap simply using pieces of cloth knotted into the shapes of the animals. Another was an Irish tale called "The End of the

Rainbow". A little story from Afghanistan called "Nakhodak" was performed using simple marionette puppets, followed by a lovely story from Italy called "The Blessing" with beautiful standing puppets. A collection was taken for a charity that helps refugees in the UK. Approximately 37 puppet shows took place on this day throughout the UK.

In Cape Town, South Africa, the Rainbow Puppet theatre at the Waldorf School performed 'St George and the Dragon'. The show started with Granny puppet, who was joined by 8 other glove puppets carrying 'peace' placards (smiley faces). There was much banter and the Storyteller asked the children what they thought Peace was. The answers were glorious. Some mothers brought used children's clothes, that together with the entrance money was given to a home for Aids Orphans in the 'Township'.

Janni Nicol. SWSF

Peace Pole Planted at the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School



On the afternoon of Friday May 14th, pupils and teachers at the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School held a World Peace Flag Ceremony. This was followed by the dedication of an inscribed stone Peace Pole set in the school's orchard. The Flag Ceremony and Peace Pole dedication coincided with the visit to Scotland of the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE). The member

country representatives had arrived in the city to participate in a three day meeting over the weekend at the school. The ceremony began with the school's music and history teacher, Neil Mackay, speaking about how the school was founded in 1939 by Dr. Pelham Moffat, a well know Edinburgh, personality who had lost his left arm whilst fighting in the trenches and experiencing the horrors of the First World War.

Following this, every pupil came up onto the stage class by class each carrying one of the 194 national flags and peace was called for individually for each nation in turn. The final set of flags was carried by the European delegates of ECSWE. Christopher Clouder concluded the ceremony with brief address speaking about "the tremendous inner and outer effort needed to build peace both in ourselves and in the world". He then took up the "World Flag" and led everyone to the orchard. The Peace Pole was then dedicated to World Peace while a pupil from Class 1 and Class 12 jointly placed a large flowering crab-apple tree into the ground adjacent to the Pole. The Peace Pole itself has the words "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in English, Gaelic, French and Japanese carved into the four sides by Ian Newton, a school parent, who has also prepared a "twin" pole which is to be dedicated by the Dalai Lama at a Flag Ceremony in Dunfermline on June 3rd

David Cooper. Edinburgh. See - www.worldpeace.org

Introducing - www.steiner-teacher.org

This new web-site has been set up to provide news and information to people who are keen to explore possibilities in teacher education pathways that are inspired by Steiner's ideas, insights and indications for an 'art of education'. Here you will read about a number of new projects and initiatives that have applications on a local, national and European level.

Trevor Mephram. SWSF

Presidential Visit to Holywood



On Wednesday 11th of February 2004 the Holywood Steiner School was visited by the President of Ireland - Mary McAleese. She was received with words of welcome in Gaelic by Earl Castle Stewart and Lady Bloomfield -both patrons of the school. During her visit she met Class 3 and 4 who sang an Irish blessing to her and Class 1 and 2, who showed her some craftwork and also sang to her. She saw some Upper School children playing basketball and an exhibition of school work in a room where she

was serenaded by a small group of lyre players. President McAleese was introduced to members of the school corporate committee, the teachers, some Upper School students and many parents. She made a very generous and complimentary speech. On her departure she saw the whole assembled school and exchanged a few lighthearted words with the children.

David Urieli. Holywood

The Cynthia Chance Fund

Hermes Trust is holding £5,000 originally given to the Snowdonia Steiner School by Cynthia Chance. This donation was to help with music and horticultural provision, but after the school unfortunately had to close, the money was entrusted to Hermes to help other schools with the same subjects. Schools are encouraged to write to Hermes applying for grants from this fund. Applications will be considered in October, and should be submitted by the end of September to:

Hermes Trust, The Old Painswick Inn,
Gloucester Street, Stroud, L5 1QG
Tel: 01453 763900 hermes.trust@freeuk.com

Giving through Self Assessment Returns

There is a new scheme allowing individuals to nominate a charity to receive their tax repayments as a donation. This can be done on Self Assessment forms issued in April 2004. Our charity code is PAQ62VG and charity name and code are also on the Inland Revenue website. This scheme does not replace the Gift Aid scheme.

Jane Avison. SWSF