



Moana Bowron (on the right) in a photograph of all the children in the Canterbury School at the end of its first year 1976.

Appreciation. Moana Bowron

Founder Teacher, Canterbury Steiner School
(formerly Perry Court School).
Died on 6th August, 2004.

I first met Moana in 1976. She welcomed our family to the new Perry Court School, showing us around, highlighting conversions of cow byre and Oast houses in their various stages of development. Moana's ability to share enthusiasm was obvious as was the wealth of knowledge and wisdom she carried with her. Subsequent workshops held for parents were inspiring.

I joined the school's teaching staff in 1978 and got to know Moana better - by then, Moana had already done a lifetime's work. She was many-faceted, determined, eloquent, persuasive, farsighted and fiercely protective of the children in her care. Her abilities as a teacher were wide too - she was never stuck for lesson content in any subject. We all affectionately referred to Moana as Mobo (but never addressed her as such!) but no one escaped the occasional bout of being put in one's place if it was thought necessary. Moana would welcome each visitor to the school with equal warmth and consideration, enjoying the many and varied encounters and challenges.

Founding a school is a huge responsibility and Moana embraced this task with customary dedication and vigour. One example of this resourcefulness occurred when space became very limited on site: off she went into Canterbury, supposedly on a shopping trip, only to come back with a disused council building, which she had 'found' in the Dane John Gardens. Suddenly, even though the rebuilding took time, the school was 7 rooms larger and numbers grew to fill them. "If the space is there, the children will come" she used to say. Celebrations were always high on the school's agenda and the tradition of 'ice creams all round' on reaching 50, 100, 150 pupils was Moana's idea and enjoyed by all.

On another note Moana's ability to help others cannot be forgotten. When I had questions, concerns and worries Moana would always be available. After listening she would quietly begin "Well, you know" and the clear and thoughtful way she could explain and reason helped to put things into perspective and to be dealt with more easily. "Mobo's words of wisdom" was a phrase used.

After 'retiring' (and a big party) Moana energetically continued her work further -afield. She did, however, return regularly unannounced to Canterbury for Festivals to catch up on news and progress. We always looked out for her, expecting an appearance, we all valued this link. Moana was proud to open our new Kindergarten building and at last our new Theatre.

When it became too difficult to travel, Moana still kept in touch and I last saw her at King's Langley Advent Fair. Although no longer in such good health she seemed never to change. Her mind was always clear and active and she remained concerned about her school. Moana always kept us in mind, and those bright eyes were as enquiring as ever.

Beryl Chalk, Canterbury Steiner School

Austrian Lobbying for Public Support

The Austrian Waldorf School parents worked together with Montessori and Network schools, a total of 4000 pupils of which 2600 are Waldorf to ask for financial support for their chosen education from the Government. The Government publicly recognizes the valuable contributions alternative schools make with their innovative ways of teaching. In October 2004 parents of all Waldorf Schools in Austria wrote applications for financial support to the Minister of Education. In November EFFE (European Forum for Freedom in Education) was invited to an open discussion with the Government.

This took place on 24th November. Unfortunately, apart from many articles in the newspapers, it did not bring the results that were hoped. One of the reasons the expected result was not achieved was the unofficial announcement of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results appeared the day before the meeting. The results for Austria were very shocking, so the discussion in Parliament was about the disappointing PISA results. On 2nd December, the Green and Socialist Party took up the application to Parliament for the financial support for free schools, but the liberal and conservative parties rejected this. The exemplary country in PISA is Finland and now Finnish experts are being invited to share their success and advice coming from the Finns sounds like a promotion folder for Waldorf Education, so now the next task is to take part in discussions wherever we can.

Rosmarie Bluder, Klagenfurt Rudolf Steiner School, Austria

The Music Manifesto

On 3rd March 2004 David Miliband MP publicly introduced the Music Manifesto, a document expressing the philosophy that music is a vital part of the educational matrix, in particular its creative nature. It is heart warming to know that the British Government, specifically the DFES has not only recognised the intrinsic value of music, but has agreed to fund a music programme within mainstream education, which will be seen as central to the development of the 7-11 year old children.

"... I make no apology for saying that the enrichment that comes from the creative arts, including music, is important in and of itself and for its ability to spur achievement in the basics. We live in a country of wonderful music and wonderful musicians, of outstanding artists and outstanding artistic heritage of all kinds. That is the birthright of young pupils too.

I have never understood why creativity and enrichment on the one hand, and high standards on the other, should be seen to be at odds. High standards and creativity go together. Creativity spurs higher standards - creativity in teaching, creativity in the curriculum, creativity in staffing. I want to put music at the heart of this drive for higher standards. Music offers children the joy of discovery and creativity; it builds self-confidence and teamwork; it teaches a new language and new discipline. It has the capacity to make a special contribution to education." David Miliband MP.

The Music Manifesto in its entirety can be found on the Internet by typing 'Music Manifesto' into any search engine.

Eric Klein,

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Eric Klein will be speaking at the Cambridge Heart Conference: 17-21 July 2005. www.musicoftheheart.co.uk

South Africa

News has just come in of an arson attack on the Imhoff Waldorf Community School in Kommertje, which is situated in Cape Town on a 250 year old farm. Five buildings were gutted including four of the ten classrooms and the office. The school, which has had to live with previous acts of vandalism, had been built by parents and teachers and currently has 140 pupils in classes one to seven, two kindergartens and a playgroup. It is in the vicinity of deeply poverty stricken areas, has had no electricity and little water. All maintenance is done by parents and children and it runs on very little income. It will now need a security guard and a perimeter fence. 25000 rand will be required to rebuild and if anyone would like to make a donation it can be sent to the SWSF who will ensure that it gets there. Christopher Clouder, SWSF

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2005

Newsletter



More Progress Towards Public Funding in England

I recently heard someone refer to an old Chinese saying: 'The fruit takes a long time to ripen but a moment to fall'. The idea of government funding becoming a possibility, and the Hereford Waldorf School paving the way, has certainly taken some time to ripen. We, the community of parents and teachers, are moving on from cautious interest to optimism and are starting to feel quite excited, in fact impatient for the next step.

We have been through quite a process already in getting the Expression of Interest prepared and presented to government in collaboration with the SWSF. Numerous open forum meetings and talks have taken place. Many of us have a deep mistrust of government and potential interference. We have needed much information and reassurance, however we have come to see that this as a unique opportunity.

The more we understand where Government is coming from the more we realise that we could hardly have written the script better if we had done it ourselves; our own wish list would include: being left alone to follow our own curriculum, not appearing in league tables, the College of Teachers still able to

work as it does, Council of Management strengthened, deep involvement in planning a new ecological built-environment, paying our teachers much better salaries, strengthening teachers' development, evolving a full upper school, allowing our community spirit to grow, being accepted as part of 'mainstream', being able to offer the education free at the point of delivery so that more children can benefit from it and adding to the wider educational debate. Amazingly, all this seems to be possible, thanks to input from the SWSF Executive Group on behalf of our schools movement and the sharp focus of the lobbying work by Sylvie Sklan.

We are hoping, indeed expecting, the Minister to give the go-ahead for the next stage: a properly funded in-depth Feasibility Study while we, as a whole school community, will be exploring the fine detail of all the issues dear to us. We may be laying the first brick (or straw bale, or bamboo pole or cob or...) as early as 2006. The fruit may be about to fall. At the Hereford school we welcome direct contact from anyone in the wider Waldorf world (www!) and we would love to hear your worries, queries, or encouragement. We will be glad to share any of the lessons we have learnt along the way.

Michael Phillips, Chair of the Academy Focus Group, Hereford Waldorf School

Glowing Ofsted Report for Meadow School

We were rather nervous about the impending arrival of the Ofsted inspectors at the Meadow School last summer, as we were to be only the third Steiner school in Britain to be inspected under the new regulations. Michael Hall School at Forest Row was the first and we are grateful to Ewout Van-Manen for all his help and advice.

As it turned out the inspectors were open and interested in the Steiner philosophy and teaching and were most helpful and pleasant. However, most

importantly they gave our school a fantastic report of which we are proud.

In summary of their main findings the inspectors said: "This is a school with many strengths. It meets its aims successfully. Teaching is good with planning and assessment having very good elements. The broad and distinctive curriculum which gives pride of place to the expressive and creative arts, prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. Close relationships develop between staff, pupils and their families in this small community. Pupils are valued and they flourish in the supportive ethos. A former pupil reflecting on her time at the school wrote: "I will always carry the Meadow School in my heart."

On the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils the inspectors found "most pupils are eager to come to school and are enthusiastic about their work... pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong and



Kindergarten work in Meadow School.

become increasingly aware of how their behaviour affects others. Stories, poems, songs and festivals reinforce recurring themes of truth, kindness, consideration and harmony.... From the nursery pupils learn to form close relationships and grow used to taking some responsibility for themselves and for their immediate environment. Pupils increasingly learn to be aware of their responsibilities to each other within the well-established routines and, for the most part, to respond with growing sensitivity and understanding to each other...their confidence in speaking and readiness to listen to each other is a strong feature of the positive relationships they share".

The report also came at a very fortuitous time in the Meadow School's history as it highlighted the many shortfalls of our existing, run down building. We are currently working towards getting planning permission to build a new school in Bruton which we hope to start work on this year. It is going to be an exciting though hugely expensive project and we would be most grateful to anyone who can help us with ideas, particularly for fundraising. Any advice would be appreciated - please contact Sally at the school on 01749 813 176. The full Ofsted report is available on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Kathy Bower, The Meadow School, Bruton, Somerset

Exploring Partnership Between a Steiner School and a Primary School

About two years ago, the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School, while exploring avenues towards state funding, was advised by the Scottish Executive and COSLA (Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities) to take part in a FLAT (Future Teaching and Learning) project. This would involve a partnership with a local authority school and would explore whether some of our methods could be successfully applied in a mainstream school.

We decided to accept this challenge and found a local primary school, Balgreen, who were willing to embark on this venture. The help of Dorothy Baird, our development leader, in setting up the project and steering us through it has been indispensable as has the support and commitment of the primary school. After initial contact, the first phase of the project consisted of several Balgreen teachers visiting us, some of our teachers visiting them. A one week pupil exchange, of 4 of our class 6 and 4 of their P7 children. Out of this experience grew the wish from Balgreen Primary School to learn more about two aspects of our education, namely what they term "kinesthetic learning" (rhythmic work) and the applied arts (painting and drawing). Through this we developed a project that would explore how elements from the Steiner approach to multi-sensory learning and creativity might be integrated into a mainstream curriculum. In so doing the project would aim to address the different learning styles and needs of pupils and raise attainment and achievement. This led us to phase 2, which first of all involved securing funding for the project. This funding was to include payment for cover teachers, materials and for the producing of a video as evidence of the whole project. Funding of £15000 was granted by the Scottish Executive, and

with that the second phase went ahead, starting in September 2004. This phase involved 5 two-hour sessions in which 7 of Balgreen's teachers, who had volunteered for this as part of their CPD, came to our school and we (Anne Fleming our Class 2 teacher and I) did rhythmic work, painting and drawing with them. The next step was that each of them visited our classes for 2 mornings to see the things they had done, in action in the classroom. The final part of this phase was that Anne Fleming and I visited Balgreen to do 2 sessions of rhythmic and artistic work with each of the classes of the teachers that had visited us: P1, P2 two P5s and P6. All these different aspects were videoed by Aliki Sapounzi, a parent at our school.

After this second phase there was the option for everyone to pull out if wished. However, when we had our review meeting in early December, all concerned were very enthusiastic and wanted to continue. Not only had all children greatly enjoyed the experience, those teachers, who had started to implement some rhythmic elements into their numeracy work, had found a marked improvement in their pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables! It has been a fascinating process. The Balgreen teachers are wonderfully dedicated people, incredibly open and enthusiastic. Teaching in their school has been a privilege; the children loved what we brought to them. We did two 1½ to 2 hour sessions in each class, starting with some rhythmic exercises, then a story and finally either a painting or a drawing. (A kind of mini morning lesson). Part of the funding for the project included Balgreen being supplied with sets of 30 beanbags for each class, painting paper, boards, wax crayons and water colour paints. At the review meeting it was decided that the next phase should include the aspect of

story telling, as they had observed the benefits of 'telling' rather than reading stories to their classes. Particularly the older classes had begged their teachers to "tell them more of these kinds of stories". I have now been invited to do a two-hour session on story telling in January, which all staff can attend. The rest of phase 3 will be Anne and myself helping their teachers to plan rhythmic sessions (which they all feel they want to do on a daily basis) and painting and drawing sessions, be present when they teach them and then give feedback. It is intended to share this work with the rest of their colleagues on a future in-service day and perhaps more teachers will choose to take part.

The project will be evaluated in June and we hope that time will be granted us to present the findings to Scotland's Directors of Education at a COSLA meeting. As far as we are aware this is the first time a Steiner school has worked in such close partnership with a mainstream school in the UK. Its success so far is proof that Steiner education has something to offer and that it can be well received.

Astrid Maclean

The Rudolf Steiner School of Edinburgh



A Balgreen Primary 6 pupil shows his drawing to Astrid Maclean.

Photo: Aliki Sapounzi

European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education

As readers of previous issues of this Newsletter will know, as well as our work with the Government domestically we are increasingly involved with the European Commission and the European Parliament in an attempt to increase understanding of Steiner education, find means for greater support and create a dialogue around mutual concerns. This also provides an avenue of influence to policy makers and politicians in the constituent states of the EU where the practice of "open coordination" is affecting all realms of education and life long learning and allows us to have voice in the increasingly important "European Educational Space".

Currently our strategy is fourfold. Firstly to find proper recognition for Educational NGO's (Non-Government Organisations) to be enabled to have a voice from within civil society as to the best way our children should be educated and creating diversity of provision Europe-wide. Secondly to stress the possible negative effects of early formal learning at a stage where children are neither biologically nor mentally equipped. Finland, that has consistently excelled in all PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results over the last four years, starts formal learning at the age of seven, other countries who do not do so well start the formal learning of reading and writing as early as the age of three. This has to be highlighted in order to develop European policies that are age appropriate and child friendly. We have also developed a European strategy and working groups to look at the whole issue of leaving exams. Students in Swedish and Norwegian Steiner schools do not take state exams but are able to enter further and higher education on the basis of their teachers' evaluation and their own self- evaluation of their upper school period. We would like to see this practice extended and to this end have created expert groups looking at the competencies we seek to help the young people develop and how this can be evaluated in a publicly credible manner. This also involves working with legal advice and intense lobbying activities.

Lastly we have found that working on this level does have considerable effect on the domestic and local educational environment and have succeeded in saving some of our schools from hostility and miscomprehension. National political and policy decisions in the area of education are becoming more and more influenced by European trends and the Lisbon Process is accelerating this.

Just as we have been successful in the our dialogue and aims of closer integration into the UK educational provision on the terms of keeping our integrity and principles so in Europe we have a similar task and are increasingly asked to articulate these ideals and inspire the future education of children both within our schools and without.

Christopher Clouder. SWSF/ECSWE www.ecswe.net

Foundation Degree in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education

The first group of students, who began this exciting new venture in September, are now well on the way through their first year. Their work takes a number of forms - observing/working in Kindergarten settings, studying on their own and in groups, working on essays and keeping diaries. The weekends at York Steiner School take place once a month during term time and cover both theoretical and practical aspects of Kindergarten work - everything from studying Rudolf Steiner to making puppets; with painting, drama and eurythmy all playing an important part. The first longer residential, largely a very practically based 'Arts for Self Development' session will take place at Elmfield School in the early Summer. We are now preparing for a new intake of students this September, and enquiries and applications for this are now invited. The course takes place over two years, but the modules can be completed within a five-year period. The venue for the next course will largely depend upon the whereabouts of the enquirers however it is likely to be again based in the North.

Further details and preliminary application form to register interest: Margaret Hiley-Payne, Faculty of Education, University of Plymouth, Douglas Avenue, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2AT
education.enq@plymouth.ac.uk
Tel: 01395 25532
www.steiner-teacher.org/foundation.htm

Steering Group at Botton Village School

As part of its policy to keep close contact with schools the SWSF Executive Group has now had two of its meetings away from London. In September we met at the South Devon School and in January at Botton Village School which is situated in a Camphill village setting, giving it a rather special character, with half the pupils being children of the village's co-workers. A short tour of the village was included in the itinerary and there was also a stimulating meeting with local Camphill co-workers. This had a 'meeting of minds' feel about it and matters of common interest and concern were discussed with warmth and mutual appreciation. The group included those working in Curative Education, Eurythmy and Architecture, as well as those concerned with buildings and finance. The school's staff and Council members were also able to spend some time talking informally with members of the Executive Group individually. These conversations, sometimes general and sometimes very specific, brought an extra sense of life to the whole event. There was plenty of life in the meeting itself, enhanced by the opportunity of spending these two days eating, sleeping and working together in a converted barn. Botton's rural environment was on form, with travel difficulties, North Yorkshire weather and power cuts all adding to the experience. However, with a little initiative all went well and the hard work by members of the school community in making it all possible was appreciated by everyone.

Andrew Dyer, SWSF

Embarrassed by your Mandate?

Unusually no member school is able to host this year's Easter conference. While this is unfortunate, a group of colleagues have taken the initiative to organise a different type of SWSF conference. A weekend conference will take place on 1st - 3rd April at the All-Saints Pastoral conference Centre, a former monastery near St Albans, part of the Diocese of Westminster. The theme is "Self-administration: from fairy-tale to reality?" Dieter Brüll subtitled his book on The Waldorf School and Threefold Structure the Embarrassing Mandate. Rudolf Steiner's insistence that those who work in a school should take responsibility for it remains a practical question we all struggle with. While we have teacher-training courses, an increasing number of in-service courses and a predominantly pedagogical advisory service, there is little or no coherent support for school communities in managing themselves. Yet these are things that, unless learnt from prior experience, cannot be adequately covered by initial Waldorf teacher training. Past Easter conferences have been predominantly pedagogical, though intended for all staff. However this year we invite all school staff - Trustees and active members of school communities to a working weekend to examine and learn new approaches to the very things without which no school can operate.

Details from the College Chair, Chair of Trustees or Administrator of your school or from k.avison@yescomputers.co.uk
Kevin Avison, SWSF on behalf of the organising group.

Information about all conferences and Professional Development Courses can be found on www.swsf.org.uk

Early Years, Play and Information Technology: A Debate

The Alliance for Childhood has organised a colloquium on the above theme to take place in Sheffield University's Ranmoor Hall Conference Centre on the evening of Friday 8th and all day Saturday 9th April 2005. Sally Jenkinson who served very successfully as our Early Years consultant on the SWS Executive Group will be one of the main speakers. Details available on the Alliance website www.allianceforchildhood.org.uk and from the SWSF office.

The International Waldorf Kindergarten Conference - 29th March - 2nd April 2005.

This conference takes place every seven years at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. Everyone working in the spirit of Waldorf education with children from birth to school entrance is welcome including an invitation to class teachers and colleagues to strengthen our common work on behalf of the young child. The theme of this conference has arisen out of the questions expressed by Waldorf Early Childhood educators worldwide:

'What does it mean that children today have so little time to play, or even seem to have forgotten how to play?'

This absence of play needs to be taken seriously in terms of its impact on later development. There are many contributing factors to the disappearance of play - one is the growing concern that children are introduced to academic learning at earlier and earlier stages of development. Contributing factors include tremendous social and parental pressure for academic achievement and increasing stress in the lives of very young children.

How can we demonstrate the influence of play on the child's linguistic, cognitive and social development and its significance

for society as a whole? The most important support for the child is not the 'curriculum' of the kindergarten, rather the adult who cares for the child and the attitude of this adult:

'The child forms his or her being not only according to what we say and what we do, but according to our inner attitude, the quality of our inner thinking and our inner feeling... we need no other method than this: to become a human being worthy of the child's imitation...' Rudolf Steiner.

This conference will address the question of how we prepare ourselves for this experience with the young child, to be able to perceive each child's unique way of being and to find a way to strengthen our heart forces so that we truly meet one another, children, parents and colleagues. The lectures, workshops and discussion groups at this conference are intended to offer opportunities to cultivate strength, courage and joy, which we can bring back with us into our daily work.

For further details of the conference, please contact direct; Goetheanum, Conference Office. Tel: 0041/61/706 44 44, email: tagungsbuero@goetheanum.ch, or email me on: JannisteinerEY@aol.com

Janni Nicol Early Childhood Representative, SWSF.