

## WELL, I WONDER – Childhood in the Modern World

A Handbook for Parents, Teachers and Carers

AUTHOR – Sally Schweizer; published by Rudolf Steiner Press

This really is a handbook to inspire all those caring for children under seven years old. Full of fascinating detail of the young child's world, drawn from long experience, this book is easy for the busy parent to read. It is like listening to the advice of a wise and warm friend, calling on us to remember our own childhood and to become more observant and curious about our children. And Sally makes clear that it is our warmth and interest that supports their development.

The difficulties of bringing up and educating young children today (and tomorrow) are faced with such courage and imagination that we see how children too are all born with the courage and imagination that they need to live fruitfully in the modern world, if only we can give them the appropriate support. That support requires us to take up the responsibilities for providing firm boundaries in a child friendly environment full of love, beauty, creativity and fun.

Through the pages of this book, we meet so

many children striving to understand their world, and so many lively and loving ways to nurture them in their quest. Through anecdote and gentle questioning about our own childhood, we hear about imitation and example, the importance of gesture, music and speech, understanding children's needs in relation to modern media, stories, clothes, meals, sleep and illness. Suggestions are made about the everyday need for meaningful activity, playthings, and stories as well as for holidays, festivals and celebrations. A picture is given of the child's development between birth and seven, and an overview of development after that, in addition to practical and loving ways to support good behaviour and make parenting a pleasure.

This is a book for any parent of a young child, or a great gift for a parent to be. It will not burden you with guilt but it will inspire you in how to live creatively in a family with young children.

JILL TAPLIN – SOUTH DEVON



A Steiner inspired indigenous community school

### Living Education

The first two issues of our new journal Living Education which is the successor to Steiner Education, are available on the newly upgraded SWSF website [www.swsf.org.uk](http://www.swsf.org.uk) They can either be downloaded online or a printed copy can be requested from the SWSF office. The first issue has articles on school architecture for the lower school, the number of years that a class teacher accompanies their class and a comparative study of Montessori and Steiner education. The second issue looks at the matter of differing religious traditions, the link between personal development and school organization and Rudolf Steiner's vision for work related education in the upper school.

CHRISTOPHER CLOUDER – SWSF

## GATF Children's Fund Loans and Grants

We are grateful to those who donate to the GATF Children's Fund. This year we have helped families in 10 schools with loans and grants. In most cases these children would have been unable to continue their Steiner Waldorf education without this help. The Children's Fund is small at present and the number of families we can offer loans to is very limited. The procedure for giving loans is that a College of Teachers would recommend a family to us, we would then correspond with the family and if the Trustees agree a loan, the money would be paid direct to the school but repaid by the family concerned. We like to ensure that the schools recommend the families that we help. However, it is best for the school to check first whether we have funds available before

going any further.

When we have money available for loans or grants we write to all the schools. The Trustees of the GATF are keen to build up the Children's Fund so that more children can benefit. Donations to the fund are gratefully received. The Trustees give priority to families in need of short term help to keep the children in school for reasons such as poor health of a parent, loss of employment etc. and parents who cannot meet the lowest contribution/fee expected.

If you can help please send donations to: GATF Children's Fund, 2nd Floor, 11 Church Street, Stourbridge DY8 1LT.

### LOW-INTEREST LOANS available for Steiner schools

The Hermes Trust operates a loan fund for Steiner schools to assist with large, once-off items of expenditure such as building purchase etc. Interest is charged at just 4% for fully secured loans – a rate barely higher than inflation, and much lower than property inflation. An additional 1% arrangement fee is payable upon draw-down, and borrowers need also cover the costs of arranging security (e.g. legal fees, valuer's fees). For details please contact us on 01453 763900 or [hermes.trust@freeuk.com](mailto:hermes.trust@freeuk.com).

RICHARD MASTERS – HERMES TRUST

### GRAIL CONFERENCE

The second Grail conference will take place in Rudolf Steiner House on the 24th and 25th March. There will be a performance of newly commissioned work by Nigel Osborne, performed in eurythmy by Ursula Zimmermann, and three lectures on the theme of how human suffering can be equated with a Grail experience and lead to a more conscious experience of the spirit.

Further details on <http://grailtransformation.googlepages.com>

### Outward Bound® – for adventures that last a lifetime

Following a meeting with Kevin Avison and Outward Bound® staff, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship with the adventurous and reputable work of Outward Bound®.

In line with the SWSF vision, Outward Bound® aims to inspire young people to fulfil their potential through experiences in the outdoors. This in turn helps them overcome their fears, raises their self-esteem and prepares them to face whatever life throws at them with confidence, respect and compassion. It also aims to show them the meaning of the phrase "I can", the importance of respect for the environment and the need to get involved in their local community.

With Outward Bound®, desks and chairs become mountains and seas and it is this natural environment which has provided the outdoor classroom and an accessible form of experiential learning for a million young people to benefit from Outward Bound® since its foundation in 1941.

The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and The Outward Bound Trust are in the process of finding ways to integrate outdoor personal development courses within your school.

For ideas and suggestions, please contact Kevin Avison directly or, in the meantime, for further information on the Outward Bound® courses and programs, please visit their website – [www.outwardbound.org.uk](http://www.outwardbound.org.uk)

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# Newsletter

SPRING 2007



## NEW HORIZONS for teacher training in Scotland

One of the most significant challenges facing Steiner schools in the British Isles is the recruitment and retention of staff. While the modesty of teachers' salaries undoubtedly doesn't help, there is also a pressing need to develop the range and availability of teacher training opportunities.

With the potential integration of Hereford Waldorf School into the voluntary-aided sector, and with the likelihood that other schools will follow suit, it behoves us to explore in greater detail how teachers recruited into this new environment might be trained both to educate out of the Waldorf curriculum, and simultaneously to meet the government's criteria for state registration. Indeed, it is likely that in future teachers seeking employment in voluntary-aided Steiner schools may be required to have a form of state-recognised qualification.

It might seem paradoxical, but if prospective Waldorf teachers were able to join a course confident that their training was fully accredited—and perhaps even transferable to other schools—then I am convinced that the number of applicants would rise.

The training of Steiner Waldorf teachers in the United Kingdom is currently limited. There is only one course (at the University of Plymouth) which is fully accredited, allowing students to graduate with BA (Hons.) in Steiner Education. This course attracts, on average, a younger cohort than those at Emerson or Edinburgh, and produces a higher proportion of graduates who actually go on to teach. Among the handful of other courses that train teachers on a full-time or part-time basis, none is accredited by a higher education institution; nor are the qualifications awarded by these courses recognised by the General Teaching Councils.

However, the new era of collaboration between Steiner Waldorf education and the state has

Michael House School

emerged out of an understanding that education is beginning to embrace flexibility, diversity, individualisation and choice. At the Edinburgh Steiner Teacher Training Institute (ESTTI), based at the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School, we are working to develop our training course in anticipation of state funding. It must be stressed that as yet the Scottish Executive is not fully committed to following the Hereford model. Moreover, while many MSPs are sympathetic to the plight of Steiner Waldorf schools in Scotland, they have no direct influence over funding. This is ultimately a matter for the local authorities.

Nevertheless, our three-year, part-time initial teacher training course is exploring the possibility of validation by the University of Stirling. If successful, future graduates of the programme might leave with a qualification equivalent to a PGCE. If this could be achieved—and assuming Scottish Steiner Waldorf Schools achieve state funding in the future—then parents and local authorities could have confidence in both the validity of the training, as well as the academic status, of the teachers employed by them.

With these ambitions in mind, a project team was assembled consisting of academic staff from the University of Stirling, and members of the teaching staff of the (ESTTI).

New courses offered by higher education institutions are accountable to the guidelines laid down by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). These guidelines were established to maintain the consistency and rigour of academic courses. To this end, the project team applied to the higher education funding body ESCalate and was awarded £5000 to devise a written tool which would introduce the coordinators of similar programmes to the procedures for auditing their courses in line with the labyrinthine QAA criteria. This audit tool—or 'gateway document'—was

published in August 2006, accompanied by a report which described our initial, tentative audit of the ESTTI.

In the next phase, the project team hopes to complete a more comprehensive audit of the ESTTI training course before applying formally for validation by the university. In the meantime, the course will be modified in light of the audit. The team will need to pay particular attention to course documentation and assessment criteria. In keeping with the methodology of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum, the greater part of the work undertaken by students at the ESTTI is creative and artistic. As such, the prevailing assessment strategy might be described as 'individualistic'—or subjective. One of the challenges faced by the team as they reshape the course will be to retain the artistic emphasis while ensuring that acceptable, transparent criteria are in place for assessment, together with reliable systems for moderation.

This should be possible. At all levels of Scottish education there is a prevailing mood of change. The new Curriculum for Excellence (a less prescriptive version of the English National Curriculum) is now being adopted by maintained schools in Scotland. Its philosophy—an education based less upon content and more upon values—embraces a more human, more creative and more pragmatic vision for teaching and learning; one that will no doubt filter through to all levels of the educational establishment.

*If state funding of Steiner Waldorf schools is to proceed at all, then naturally the first question politicians and parents are going to ask is: where are the teachers going to come from?*

In the context of the Curriculum for Excellence, and in view of developments in England, the partnership between the University of Stirling and the ESTTI might herald the beginning of a new era in the way teachers are recruited, trained and then, hopefully, retained—initially perhaps only in Scotland, but later potentially throughout the United Kingdom.

ALISTAIR PUGH – EDINBURGH

### Also in this issue...

Steiner Academy Project news .....	2
Detoxing Childhood .....	2
Fundraising Conferences .....	3





## A spoke in the wheel

A headline in the local paper about the opposition to the proposals for the Steiner Academy triggered the national media interest in the project preceding the Planning Committee hearing on 24 January. In the event, the planning application for outline planning consent for the academy was refused, irrespective of all the careful ground work to ensure that every possible planning issue had been dealt with, despite the extensive consultation with the local community and despite officers' recommendation that outline planning consent should be granted. But this solid ground could not withstand Councillors' prejudice against the project. They voted against it. The grounds for refusal are that the site would involve a development on land outside the settlement boundary for Much Dewchurch, contrary to policy CF5 in Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 and accordingly the proposal is unacceptable, in that:

- The form, extent and scale of the development, together with associated activity and movement would not be appropriate to the scale of Much Dewchurch or reflect its character.
- The nature of the proposed Academy is such that it is not necessary for it to be located in Much Dewchurch.
- The proposed development does not provide satisfactory measures so as to ensure that the increased vehicle and pedestrian activity would be safe and convenient and not exacerbate the current operational difficulties arising from the existing school.

We are still reeling from the disappointment and the fact that the future of this nationally significant project, supported by government, can be derailed in this way. But a way forward will be found...

In the meantime, our schools should take note of the new Education and Inspection Act 2006 which got its Royal Assent in November. It requires Local Authorities to provide diversity and it also introduces a new 'responsiveness duty' for Local Authorities. The Act together with the regulations that accompany it are very relevant for a Steiner school that wants to become maintained - more detail can be found on the DfES web site.

You probably already know that St Pauls Steiner School has begun exploring maintained status under this Act. At this early stage it is clear that there is a lot of work to be done on both the LA side and ours to establish how in practice the new legislation will overcome the difficulties that previously prevented a Steiner school from joining the maintained sector. The school is in the process of completing the informal consultation before it publishes the proposals in the spring. The experience gained in this project will be very relevant to other schools that want to follow this route.

Sylvie Sklan - SWSF

## ELIANT – European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy

The European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy (ELIANT) was formed last year with the purpose of ensuring human rights and freedoms in the context of an ever-expanding and regulated European Union. It advocates the right of every parent to choose a school in accord with their educational convictions, as well as access to medical care and type of diet that corresponds to his or her way of life. ELIANT wishes to promote basic social and legal policies that safeguard and support these freedoms and a fundamental recognition of social pluralism. A pluralism that guarantees freedom of scientific methods, research, professional training and teaching that contributes to the further shaping of Europe in the interest of its citizens.

A group of ten organizations as core members,

including the European Council for Steiner Education (ECSWE), have signed a solidarity pact and committed themselves to mutual collaboration. We are seeking further partners as well as associate members who also wish to actively support this endeavor to influence European policy making and legislation, as well as maintaining contacts with all the relevant European institutions. In order to have some impact in Brussels and beyond we have instigated a signature campaign across Europe. School representatives on the Council of the SWSF have further details and signature lists that can be distributed widely and returned by fax to our acting ELIANT office in Dornach. More information is available in many languages on [www.eliant.eu](http://www.eliant.eu)

CHRISTOPHER CLOUDER - ECSWE

## Childhood, wellbeing and a therapeutic ethos

This discussion forum was organised at Roehampton University in December 2005 in response to the Daily Telegraph Open Letter on Toxic Childhood, which sparked a national debate. Professionals, policy makers and signatories of the letter engaged in a dialogue in the hope of opening up avenues for future research and collaboration on the state of childhood today, and healing for the future.

Presenters Sue Palmer, (Author of Toxic Childhood) and Dr Richard House (Conference and Open Letter organiser) opened the conference, and spoke about developing a common view based on research and taking into account social changes today. Sue made the case that children are entitled to first hand experiences with real people, not be pressured or moulded into what would be good for either economics, commerce or political expediency. Further speakers in the first section were Christopher Clouder (Alliance for Childhood) who gave an overview of the present concerns around childhood in the Anglo-Saxon world, what children are expecting of us and the need for a more active and continuous advocacy for their wellbeing. Bob Reitemeier (Children's Society) spoke about the 'Good Childhood Enquiry' bringing together an independent panel of experts and influencers working together with children, parents, professionals and specialists to collect evidence and research in an aim to renew relationships with children today 0-18 years.

Concerns were addressed by researchers who gave evidence to back up their findings. Margot Sunderland, Centre for Child Mental Health, London, spoke of her research on the effects of physical/emotional development of the brain (Chronic relationships cause cell death in the growing brain!) Sir Richard Bowlby is seeking a way extend knowledge of attachment theory to the public. One quote which struck me from another of the presenters was 'Attention deficit Disorder (ADD) is a result of deficit of attention in children's lives'.

The third part of the conference addressed therapeutic ethos and/or cultural healing. Dr Kathryn Ecclestone spoke of the links between politics and educational, cultural and emotional well-being - that we project our aspirations onto our children. Dr Richard House spoke of the Steiner approach and its central image of what it is to be a human being, addressing the spiritual, emotional and educational well-being of the child. Professor Samuels spoke of therapy in education and Professor Thorne spoke of the vocation of the teacher and adult, working with trust, empathy and relationships.

After much interesting discussion between participants, outlining work for the future, the conference ended with Professor (Lord) Richard Layard, who spoke of the lack of a universal picture of childhood and the fundamental values which should be instilled - stable loving relationships with trust, caring and well-being being paramount. He left us with the thought, 'do we have more difficulties than in the past, or is it a change of perception of childhood?' before introducing the responses from Annette Brooke MP (Liberal Democrat shadow spokesperson for Children), Naomi Eisenstadt (Head of the Social Exclusion Task Force) and Tim Loughton and Anne McIntosh MP (Shadow Minister for Education).

Further information:

[www.allianceforchildhood.org.uk](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org.uk)  
[www.goodchildhood.org.uk](http://www.goodchildhood.org.uk)  
[www.mediamarch.org.uk](http://www.mediamarch.org.uk)  
[www.childmentalhealthcentre.org](http://www.childmentalhealthcentre.org)  
[www.suepalmer.co.uk](http://www.suepalmer.co.uk)

JANNI NICOL - SWSF

The Alliance for Childhood website has been upgraded where you will find information about alliance activities as well as a broad survey of news and research concerning childhood over recent years.

[www.allianceforchildhood.org.uk](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org.uk)

## The Teacher's Voice

It may well not be common knowledge even among teachers that 2005-2006 was called by the International Centre for Voice the 'Year of the Teacher's Voice.' It was called this because national attention has been drawn to the plight of the teacher.

It is clear that a teacher's voice is the most important tool in the art of teaching. If the voice through strain and stress suffers badly, quite simply the teacher cannot teach. Recent research undertaken by Jemma Rodgers (Journal of Voice 2005), has shown that children being taught by teachers without a healthy voice (dysphonic) have less comprehension of the material taught. These two elements reveal the necessity for a certain level of vocal care so that the teacher can survive and the child can learn. This must be the bottom line.

However, beyond this bottom line is the fun part. Speech is an artistic medium. This means that teachers who work with stories, poems, and dramas can begin to develop some of their artistic potential with a little guidance. And of course the more the creative self emerges, the more joy is generated. This is clearly of untold benefit to the children, and in this process the presence of the teacher naturally grows.

We at Artemis (School of Speech and Drama) can teach you the basic exercises to create a healthy voice. For example, by rooting the breath in the diaphragm, the throat and vocal cords cease to be a bottle-neck, (which can create hoarseness, strain, and emotional drainage). The shift of breath to the diaphragm links the voice to the whole body which thus becomes the instrument of speech. Now the voice is full-toned and powerful. By doing speech gymnastics exercises, we become aware of the flow and rhythm of the breath and awaken to new sound experiences. These enliven thoughts,

## Fired Up for Fundraising!

I returned from the Fellowship's Fundraising Conference with Sir Christopher Ball head buzzing with ideas, plans and excitement! I had been truly inspired by the last two days and my efforts on behalf of Brighton Steiner School re-energised, honed and focused. Sir Christopher promised that what he would teach us was simple and easy, and that he was engaging in transformational learning, transforming our poverty consciousness into a clear, workable strategy for raising the much needed money for our various schools. And he delivered what he promised. Initially he had asked us all how much we needed; the figures ranged from £60,000 to £2,000,000 but we all came away feeling our targets were achievable.

The conference was surprisingly poorly attended, given the financial issues that all Steiner schools are facing. However I can guarantee that all those who did attend would thoroughly recommend it. As well as the Fellowship and the two of us from Brighton, Derby, Cambridge, Somerset and Cardiff schools were present. Those interested in hearing more detailed

making them more vivid and imaginative. When supported by appropriate gesture, they have the power to capture the child's interest and relieve the teacher of that burden of pressure to be heard and understood.

Beyond this, we can help release the artist within you. This is restricted in a variety of ways through inner and outer conditioning. Telling stories can raise ordinary conceptual communication to the imaginative level. Reciting poetry inspires fluidity and mobility of feeling. Acting strengthens and expands character by identifying with the character of others. We need not be victims of our habitual vocal patterns but rather speakers of the living moment. We can play the speech instrument, not be imprisoned by it. The first step is to realize that you do have a choice. The task is profound but simple and enormous fun. Qualities that you may have sought to access such as power, clarity, and fine feeling now can come within your reach. This art of speech helps unlock the creative artist within you and allow free-flowing self-expression.

In September 2007 Artemis is offering a course for teachers, not just Steiner teachers, but also teachers from maintained and private schools. This course will be held over ten weekends at Peredur Centre for the Arts. If you are a parent or indeed anyone who feels thirsty to join in such work, don't be shy of applying. Teachers on sabbatical seeking artistic renewal may well want to join our one-year full-time foundation course. If your school is interested in this work, I would be very happy to visit and give a short workshop, including discussion of the issues and questions that you may have.

CHRISTOPHER GARVEY  
*Artemis School of Speech and Drama*  
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*Tel: 01342 321 330*  
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*Website: [www.artemisspeechanddrama.org.uk](http://www.artemisspeechanddrama.org.uk)*

information about what we learned might consider contacting one of us: one of the conclusions of the event was the value of information sharing.

**We focused on these principles of fundraising:**

- believe it's possible
- remember to ask
- follow up and say thank-you

along with loads of hints, tips and suggestions about who to go to, how to approach them, what to say, what not to say, what sectors of funding were available and the relative merits of each, how much work might be needed and what timescales you need to be working towards. Whatever your fundraising project, attending this course will equip you with the tools you need to achieve your goal. The good news for those who missed it, is that we all agreed the course should be repeated, and I urge all of those involved in Steiner fundraising to attend.

Before we all get carried away with how we'll spend our new-found millions, it has to be said that there was a tougher aspect to the course.

## Join Wynstones School in the Building Experience of a Lifetime

After four and a half years of fundraising and preparation, Wynstones School has begun the first phase of building its new school hall. With ground works already completed and foundations being laid in the spring, the high point of this first phase will be next summer's New Hall Building Camp, when the construction and erection of the main frame will take place. Starting in the last week of term, the camp will run for 4 weeks, from July 2nd to the 27th.

Timber frame makers, pupils, parents, staff, Old Scholars and friends from far and wide will come together in what will be one of the biggest self-build projects ever undertaken by a Waldorf school. Seven teams will build most of the frame components, including 18 metre long roof trusses, using locally sourced timber from the Forest of Dean. Once assembled these will all be lifted into place by cranes and joined together ready for the roof to go on, the final step of this first phase.

In addition to 60 woodworkers, there will also be a large supporting cast to provide a full catering service, entertainment, first aid care, crèche, health & safety advice and much more. The school's hockey field will become a tented village where a warm welcome will await those wishing to join in the building experience of a lifetime. Opportunities exist for people with differing skill levels, from trained carpenters to DIYers, cooks and washers-up, musicians and masseurs, anyone who feels they have something to offer this unique and exciting project. *Please come and join us!*

Further details can be seen in the 'New Hall News Issue 6' on the school's website: [www.wynstones.com/newhall.htm](http://www.wynstones.com/newhall.htm). Alternatively contact: New Hall Project, Wynstones School, Church Lane, Whaddon, Gloucester, GL4 0UF. Tel: 01452 813739. E-mail: [newhall@wynstones.com](mailto:newhall@wynstones.com).

CLAUDIA WILLIAMS - WYNSTONES

For all of us, there were major issues holding up the fundraising projects and, as every single school represented reported similar problems, it is worth looking at them in more detail.

**Sir Christopher stated repeatedly that there were a number of pre-requisites for effective fundraising:**

- a clear and viable project
- a concise mission statement
- an accurate 3 year business plan
- a dynamic and effective project leader.

For most of us, there were a number of plans potentially on the table, unhelpfully shrouded in indecision and conflict from within our school body. Throughout the weekend we bemoaned a management structure that restricted the kind of openness and forward thinking we were all beginning to take on board. We had realised that major fundraising was possible for us, but that we hadn't gained agreement on what direction our schools should be taking, or how that should be achieved.

SARAH JAMES - BRIGHTON STEINER SCHOOL