

## Welcome to our spring 2017 newsletter.

### Goodbye to Sylvie Sklan.



Back in 1997 Sylvie approached Christopher Clouder, then Chair of the Executive Group, offering help and support to try and get state funding for schools. She worked initially on a voluntary basis. She was especially interested in creating a state funded school in London.

Sylvie was a pupil at Edinburgh Steiner School, a parent at the then Hereford Waldorf School and Wynstones. She was an ex civil servant and had been active in the Labour party. The work with lobbying grew and she became a self-employed consultant until 2002 when she came onto the payroll full time. Over the years she worked with many schools and local authorities. She set up an All Party Parliamentary Group in 2002, and even had an office in the Houses of Parliament.

Sylvie never gave up on anything. There were many pitfalls and setbacks over the years until the Hereford Waldorf School offered to be the test case as the first funded Steiner School which opened in September 2008 with the Fellowship as sponsor. The Steiner Curriculum was protected thanks to Sylvie's untiring work. Following this the free school system was introduced by the government and, with Sylvie's input, the Steiner Academies Frome, Exeter and Bristol opened without the need for a sponsor.

In 2014 Sylvie went part time and was sponsor lead for Hereford, a role she has held since their inception. [She continues to support them as a governor.](#) The Executive Group will miss her enthusiasm and loyalty and wish her all the best for her future. She has loved her work and has appreciated working for an organisation which has allowed her the freedom to do what was necessary.

**Steiner Academy Hereford:** The league tables, published in January 2017, confirm that the Steiner Academy Hereford's overall Progress 8 score places this school in the first rank of schools nationally and SAH's score was in fact the second highest score in England.

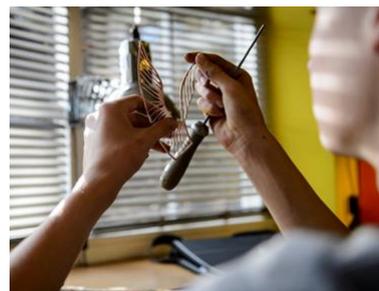
The Progress 8 score is one of two headline measures of school performance (along with Attainment 8) introduced by the DfE last year, which aims to capture the progress pupils make from

eleven years old to the end of secondary school and to give an indication of whether pupils in a particular school make above or below average progress compared to pupils in other schools. The fact that SAH's Progress 8 score places the school second in the League tables is affirmation that the slow burn approach works.

Analysis of the data from the same official source also shows that a) the value added score (EBAC) was the highest nationally; b) that the longer a pupil has been in the school the greater the progress they make compared to similar pupils nationally. This relationship between time spent at the school and pupil's enhanced progress may be an indication that the Steiner approach does indeed lead to greater accelerated cognitive development. We may believe this already, but to date we have never had the evidence to support this claim. When we have this official evidence / data from more than one year we will be able to say this with any real certainty and this will be a significant step towards official affirmation that Steiner education works.

**Canterbury Steiner School** held an **Open Art Exhibition** at The Fish Slab Gallery in Whitstable last month. There was a wonderful display of Fine Art, Textiles, 3D and Photography from Upper School Pupils and a lovely display of main lesson folders from the lower school.

There was very positive response to the display and a very keen interest in the Education from all the visitors who came to look at the work.



Our 3D Art and Design has already gained the prestigious 'Good Schools Guide' award 2016 for being the best in the UK. Under Chris Chalk's excellent tutorship, several pupils have in recent years gained places at the Goldsmith's Centre in London. This college is linked to Goldsmith's Hall, which belongs to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

Will Sullivan, who left in 2015, is now in a full apprenticeship there. Three pupils from last year's (2016) Class 11 were also granted unconditional places at the Goldsmiths Centre. And were accepted before taking any GCSEs onto a Foundation course taught by masters of the trades.

For these pupils, it is a fantastic opportunity, opening up the possibility of full apprenticeships or further employment in the jewellery or silversmithing fields. A recent update on their progress from the Centre reports that all three students: 'continue to show a professional and dedicated attitude towards their studies and are becoming excellent ambassadors for us all'.

Many congratulations, to teacher and pupils alike.



### **Glasgow Steiner School**

The sad news may have reached you that as from the start of this term - January 2017 - the Glasgow Rudolf Steiner School has had to close.

Founded in 1988, the school has been struggling since the loss of its lovely home at 52 Lumsden Street in the huge fire in March 2013. The School had then just reached 100 pupils from Kindergarten to Class 6. Since that date, Parents and Teachers have worked valiantly to enable some pupils to continue with Steiner Education. Three class teachers, Dave Riddell, Cecile Richardson, and Gemma Strickland carried small double classes for three years, home schooling them in rooms which the Glasgow Theosophical Society kindly rented to the parents for a modest amount. The Kindergarten under Marzena and Johanna, Parent and Toddler with Mira, were able to continue in premises rented from helpful Scoutmasters. In the meantime a parent worked hard achieving charitable status for the Glasgow Steiner Community and Cecile was the main mover in achieving the new registration with the Scottish Government, as the Glasgow Rudolf Steiner School, which came through in July last year and was composed of Kindergarten and Class 2/3. Alas, such a small venture which managed to support a very modest income for the teachers, could not maintain the extra required for the compulsory manager's post, and closing was the only option. But, we will be back! The Registration can remain for a year, possibly longer, and the Glasgow Steiner Community will continue to hold Steiner events.

Meanwhile we would like to thank the Fellowship schools for all their support over the years. The Parent and Toddler Group is already planning to restart in February!

**Elmfield School** is expanding and has cleared the space for two beautiful new wooden classrooms to be ready for use by September 2017!



### **The Rooster Comes to Town! Chinese New Year Celebrations at the Steiner Academy Frome**

On the 1st of February parents and children at the Steiner Academy Frome were joined by some local Frome residents to share Chinese songs, music, stories, crafts, and culture. The pupils, who learn Mandarin at school from age 6, celebrated the dawning of the year of the rooster.

Through the week, the children made Chinese New Year decorations to decorate their classrooms. To mark the year of the Rooster, one of the parents made a huge seven-foot rooster lantern from local willow and tissue paper. Parents and friends worked with pupils from the older classes to make 350 authentic vegetarian and pork steam buns. These were shared with all the children and parents who attended the Festival. And for the whole week, the children found that the school snack-shop had extended its range to include Chinese fruit, party food and fortune cookies.

On the day of the Celebration the children performed two traditional Lion Dances with drumming support from their class mates, a ribbon dance from the circus skills after-school club, storytelling, and a local Kung Fu group demonstrated their amazing skills. Every class contributed a song or



verse in Mandarin. The festival helps the Chinese culture come alive for the children and is a natural complement to their Mandarin lessons. Mandarin is a wonderful language with a rich tradition, which the children initially learn through singing, poetry and story-telling, before moving on to learn to write and understand some of the more than 50,000 characters that make up the alphabet.

Yuan Hollingsworth (Lower School Mandarin Teacher) said: "Learning about Chinese culture is at the very heart of learning Mandarin. It was a really lovely day with so many of the children wearing red and taking part with such enthusiasm."

Local resident, Yanlin Lu, who helped the community with preparing and making the steam buns said: 'Being part of the Festival brought back wonderful memories for some of the Chinese community here in Frome, and helping make the steam buns really brought back the flavour of home. Some of the pupils' singing touched us very deeply and brought tears to our eyes.'

## Inspections!

Many colleagues will have read, and/or discussed recent briefings about the way Schedule 109 inspections are bedding in. As you will know there have been a number of glitches and this has led to considerable concern as to the coherence and health of some accustomed practice, especially in the way management and governance is structured. Colleagues meeting last term to discuss this produced an action plan list, which many are working with (see meeting notes to "Crisis in Management", December 2016). Meanwhile, every independent school in England needs to ensure that it is fully compliant to the letter of the Independent School Standards. The School Inspection Service "Self-Evaluation Tool" lays out what each school needs to cover and the SIS inspectors reporting form alongside this provides criteria for judgement and gives indispensable indications as to how inspectors will look at what is happening in the school. It is of the utmost importance that the SET document is regularly updated - used for "self-evaluation" - and that school governance teams (trustees) review this regularly. Janni Nicol and I send out briefings as regulations change or new guidance is issued: please ensure these are read and, where relevant, recommendations included in your ongoing development and improvement planning.

## September will see class 11 open at South Devon Steiner School



Imagine secondary education without the focus on passing exams. Ponder what students could achieve, if the emphasis was on the journey, the curriculum and

the joy of learning, and not on the number of GCSE / A Level passes an individual can get.

What is education after all? A means to an end or a process of the unfolding of the developing human being? If you lean towards the latter, South Devon Steiner School's new Upper School expansion could be just what you have been looking for. The school will open the doors to its stunning new 'Hood Barn' building in September 2017, to welcome new and existing students to its post 16 Steiner program.

Chair of the Upper School Christine Cook says "We offer our students the chance to develop a love of learning and the opportunity to really get to grips with what they are passionate about. During Classes 9 through 12, students study a broad curriculum covering the Humanities, Arts and Crafts and Sciences, supported by foreign exchange 'cultural experience' programs, extensive school trips, class sponsors to mentor and guide each individual and much more. As the student progresses, the timetable provides for personal study time to permit students to pursue a year-long project in Class 12; this could be in any chosen area from textile design to developing a philosophical idea through research. All of this work is assessed through the Steiner School Certificate framework which at Level 3 (Class 12) allows direct access to university".

With this possibility, it is finally possible to value education for what it can be, and not what it has become. South Devon Steiner School welcomes all enquiries / applications from students interested in the Upper School. As a registered Boarding School, South Devon Steiner School can offer host family placements for students outside of the immediate area.

## Tracking Pupil Progress/Effective Assessment Practice:

Colleagues will not have to look very far to find that this - part of the Independent School Standards - is a continually re-emerging question for schools of all types. In the context of our schools, the issue is particularly acute, partly for historical reasons, but mainly because we have sought to find methods holistic appreciative appraisal, often shying away from more limiting and restrictive forms. There have been a number of initiatives attempting to resolve the dilemma and currently schools and colleagues have been working intensively on modifying and developing more satisfactory schemes. In essence there are two fundamental requirements:

Any system must be flexible and simple to use while reflecting so far as possible the all-round capabilities and development of individual children from school entry to when they leave (through kindergarten to, in principle, upper school)

The system must be open-ended enough to be used in a variety of contexts and to lend itself to enabling older pupils to become increasingly active in self-evaluation

Any system would also need supportable software, or means to link it to a school's data system as well as the option to use it manually in hard-copy format.

Colleagues concerned with this theme, who will be at the Easter conference, are invited to join Kevin Avison outside the main programme to share their experience and work on the subject. I am planning to hold a research workshop early in the summer vacation to advance this and expressions of interest are welcome. Contact [swas@steinerwaldorf.org](mailto:swas@steinerwaldorf.org)

## European Parent Meeting – Latvia



Please see here the programme and registration form if you want to take part in the annual conference of European Steiner Waldorf parents. We in Latvia hope very much you will accept our

invitation to visit Waldorf schools in Latvia. The on-line registration form will be available on our website [www.waldorfpayers.net](http://www.waldorfpayers.net) and on our facebook page ENSWaP as well.

We would like to remind you also that a parallel program for youngsters will be prepared, so your teenagers are also welcome!

We will be very grateful if make your registration by the end of March, 2017! It will help a lot to organize the conference according to the highest standards.

If you have any questions concerning the conference, please, do not hesitate to ask them!



The **Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills project (ACTS)** has entered its second phase. The first meeting in this part of the project took place this year, 4th-10th March, at Emerson College. The purpose of this phase is to build expertise in evaluation of student work. Fourteen colleagues from UK schools and our partner Waldorf associations, Denmark, Finland and Norway facilitated and led by the friends from the Crossfields Institute engaged enthusiastically in exploring student work generated by in-school trials of ACTS modules, ranging from language teaching (expressing and sustaining a mood with the help of a wheel of adjectives) to planning a class trip to Paris.

Other evaluation work involved creating learning outcomes and appraisal based on a presentation on a historical event (the contrasting qualities of the Celtic and Roman Christianity and monasticism at the time of the Synod of Whitby), paper-folding and the making of "apple-swans" (see picture). Between the intensive working sessions, participants heard from researchers and educators on themes such as "human-centred assessment", innovative education, dialogic pedagogy and "flipped learning". Another inspiring and productive week of energetic discussion, occasional (friendly) disagreement and collegial endeavour: international Waldorf at its best.

## The Fellowship say Goodbye to Elaine.



Elaine Holt from Ringwood Waldorf School has been a trustee of the SWSF since February 2003. She became Chair of trustees in March 2013. We are very grateful for all the work she has done over the years, especially during the restructuring of

the Fellowship and initiating and following through with the Erasmus project. She resigned as a trustee at our recent meeting. She will be missed!

**Making Maths Meaningful:** Many colleagues will already know Jamie York's work. For example, South Devon colleagues hosted a workshop with him and his books have been available from the United States for some time. All the more welcome, then, that Floris Books are now publishing Making Maths Meaningful here and with UK spelling, weights and measures. The book is offered individually and in "classroom packs" of ten workbooks with teacher's book. The latter gives essential tips and prompts about teaching mathematics generally along with important warnings as to how much can be realistically covered during a school year. All the books have been published in a clean unfussy format appropriate to the subject.

We are fortunate that Jamie will be present at this year's Easter conference, so colleagues attending that will be able to meet him there. For information on the Easter conference\* please go to our website [www.steinerwaldorf.org](http://www.steinerwaldorf.org)

## The SWSF Natinal Early Childhood Conference:



**Puppetry in Space and Time** took place at Kings Langley school in February. We had the joy of seeing wonderful puppetry in practice from kindergarten teacher and master puppeteer Janene Ping, from Hawthorn Valley N.Y. who delighted us with her many different puppets. We explored the magic and mystery of this art, and worked on 'ensouling' puppets. The 5 workshops were fascinating, whether making, handling, playing with or thinking about puppetry

and story. The whole day was magical, inspiring, enriching and nourishing for us all.



**SWSF Easter Conference** will take place at the Steiner Academy Hereford. 10-13th April 2017

'Telling our story' isn't about self-advertisement but an attempt to draw together the threads of what constitutes GOOD EDUCATION and to set that in the context of the

21st century. What stands in the centre is the child- in other words, our human future whose healthy unfolding and development is under attack from the kinds of challenges we meet today.

The focus of this Easter Conference (2017), is to reaffirm what we understand good education to be about, to gain collective inspiration and encouragement from this and carry it forward to a wider public [see Easter conference details here](#)

## Supporting Parents: the Joys and Challenges of Parent and Child Work.

This conference for Parent and Child Leaders will take place at the Greenwich Steiner School on the **29 April 2017**



[See P&C Conference here](#)



**National Children's Day UK** is taking place on Sunday 14th May. We hope that once again, our schools and kindergartens will use this opportunity to reach the general public by running an event. This year, the events are focusing on child health and wellbeing.

<http://www.nationalchildrensdayuk.com/>



We hope our schools and parents, and the children in our lives enjoy **screen-free time** in the week of **May 1-7** imagining, creating, playing, reading, daydreaming, exploring, and spending uninterrupted time with loved ones by celebrating [Screen-Free Week](#).