



www.bottonvillageschool.co.uk
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2.3.2009

A Spring Poem

Snowdrops we, petals three, you may see,
White, green, gold, we unfold, in the cold,
Words of cheer speak we clear, spring is near

Eurythmy Performance

On Sunday 8th March at 8p.m. there will be a eurythmy performance in the Joan of Arc Hall. This performance takes place to mark Rudolf Steiner's birthday (27 February). This year the Thursday morning adult eurythmy group will join the stage group and a villager group and show a piece. Please feel very welcome to come and support them!

Marie-Reine

Mystery Drama

The Portal of Initiation:

This is the first of 4 plays written by Rudolf Steiner. He said that if people worked with these plays he would not have to give any more lectures for the whole of Anthroposophy is in those plays. A group of Botton co-workers, schoolteachers and others have been rehearsing this play for the past 7 months under the direction of 2 professional directors. We will perform it on Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 March. The play is very long, from 4p.m., till 9p.m. There will be intervals, including one when one can buy refreshments in the coffee bar.

We are suggesting donations of £12
For reservations please contact the Botton Bookshop

Marie-Reine

Catering - please note these dates

Please note that Class 6/7 parents will be involved in catering for the NESTT students 4 - 7th April to raise money for their class trip. There may also be a further catering opportunity for general school fundraising on 21st and 22nd March (to be confirmed.)

Empathy for Sustainable (Human)

Development: a talk and workshop on 7th March at Totnes Natural Health Centre, TQ9 5DW by Yehuda Tagar for Parents, Teachers, Healthcare professionals and all those who work with people. **The talk** (11.30am - £4) offers a developmental approach to empathy, its importance in modern life and human sustainability. **The workshop** (2pm - £25) is an opportunity to learn and practise skills for listening to oneself and others at a deep level as a foundation for improved communication, team spirit and a positive human environment in the home and workplace using a Psychophonetics approach. To book a place a place on the workshop ring 01453 763866, email uk@psychophonetics.com, places limited.

Empathy and Active Listening Skills, Sunday 8th March, 9.30-5 at Hawkwood College, Stroud, GL6 7QW, £60 including lunch. Similar theme to above, please book in advance: contact info@hawkwoodcollege.co.uk , 01453 759034, places limited.

Master classes in Psychophonetics; an expression-based therapy demonstration for therapists and health professionals, Totnes 7 March, Stroud 18 March and 2 April. Contact uk@psychophonetics.com or 01453 763866 for more details.

Gabriel Kay

Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship Response to the Cambridge Primary Review Special Report on the Primary Curriculum

The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship would not normally comment on Professor Robin Alexander's Cambridge Primary Review, as our schools teach the international Waldorf curriculum and are therefore not affected by changes to the National Curriculum. However, we are very interested in anything that affects the quality of childhood and we are also, since the inception in September 2008 of the Steiner Academy Hereford, part of the state education system.

Were Dickens alive to rewrite *Hard Times* for our own hard times today, he would undoubtedly cast Mr Gradgrind in a senior education policy role: "Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!"

It would take a writer of the calibre of Charles Dickens to convey a full picture of what has happened to primary education over the last twenty years or so, but Professor Alexander does his best:

"In these severely utilitarian and philistine times, it has become necessary to argue the case for creativity and the imagination on the grounds of their contribution to the economy alone ... We assert the need to emphasise the intrinsic value of exciting children's imaginations."

That Professor Alexander should feel the need to remind government of these things is tragic, but he is hardly a voice in the wilderness. The report of a 10-month inquiry from the National Association of Head Teachers in 2007 said that tests and league tables are "deeply damaging" the quality of schoolchildren's lives and their education. According to the NAHT, the obsession with national assessment that has seen pupils in England become the world's most tested is putting

huge pressure on children, stigmatizing them as failures and forcing teachers to narrow the curriculum.

This report was hard on the heels of another report from the influential Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, which listed a series of "damaging side effects", including teachers drilling children to pass tests and the "unreasonable pressure" of continual testing.

The Cambridge Primary Review confirms these earlier findings and goes on to argue that the education of many primary school pupils has been "impoverished" because key subjects – such as dance, music, PE, history, geography and science - have been squeezed out of the curriculum. From the Steiner schools' point of view, it is good to see Professor Alexander's recognition that the aims of primary education should be grounded on evidence of children's development, in contrast to the Rose Review's alarming proposal that summer-born children should start school in the September term after their fourth birthday

Professor Alexander implies that micro-management by the DCSF and confusion between national agencies and national strategies have been deeply unhelpful. The net effect in some schools, though not in all, is that rigid concentration on the three Rs and teaching to the test for 11-year olds have taken away from pupils what should be a given – a broad and balanced curriculum.

Education doesn't have to be like this.

Steiner schools work with a model of child development which considers the period from birth to six years old as being of critical importance in establishing the learning attitudes that children will take with them throughout their lives. Only when a child is physically, mentally, socially and linguistically ready should he or she be considered properly ready for formal education. In many cases, children are not ready before their seventh year.

In Steiner schools, the teacher is allowed to be a professional, trusted to take each subject of the Waldorf curriculum and recreate it anew each day. There is no divide between "the basics" (protected) and the rest of the curriculum (viewed

as dispensable). Instead, education itself is seen as an art and each subject is taught in an artistic way, whether it be reading, writing, maths, history, science or languages. Teacher appraisal is done by one's colleagues, while formative and summative assessment of pupils is carried out by the teachers. Discussion on all aspects of teaching, the sharing of professional experiences, child study, curriculum development, subject research etc, take place in the weekly meetings of the College of Teachers. There is no head teacher, and "distributed leadership" is the norm.

Steiner schools believe that they have much to give to the maintained sector as well as much to learn. The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship wishes to develop workable ways of exploring mutual dialogue and learning between the Steiner and maintained sectors for the benefit of all our children.

HOLIDAY COTTAGE

Staithe, North Yorkshire coast, near Whitby
3 bedrooms, sleeps 4+, sea views, coal fire, small and cosy.

Old fishing village with shops, cafes, pubs, gallery, crafts.

From £220 up to £300 per week peak season, available all year for short breaks £40 or £45 per night.

Telephone for colour brochure 0115 9392353

Change of Address

Geetha and Sagara Karunathilaka have moved to Green Oak House, 2a West Lane, Danby, Whitby, YO21 2LY (tel 01287 669346.)

CALENDAR

Blitz Cleans

Saturday, 25 April - Class 6/7 Parents

Saturday, 30 May - to be arranged

Eurythmy class for adults: Thursdays 8.45
School Hall. Last lesson this term 5.3.09

Eurythmy performance: Sunday 8th March 8p.m.
Joan of Arc Hall

Parents' meetings:

Wednesday 11th March – Class 6/7 subject teachers available to meet parents from 1.30 until 4.30

Tuesday 17th March, Class 6/7 – 19.30;

Coordinators' Meeting: 10.45, Wednesday, 4th March

Eskdale Trust: Tuesdays at 20.00: 24 March, 19 May, 16 June

Anthroposophical Group: Fridays at 20.00: Mar 27th, Apr 24th, May 8th, Jun 19th.
see Mary for details.

Easter holiday: 4th April-26th April

Summer Term 2009

Mon 27 April to Fri 10 July

Holiday: 25 – 29 May

May Day 4 May

Calendar for 2009/2010

Autumn Term 2009

Wed 9 Sep to Fri 18 Dec

holiday 26 – 30 Oct

Spring Term 2010

Mon 11 Jan to Fri 26 March

holiday 15 – 19 Feb

Summer Term 2010

Mon 19 April to Fri 16 July

holiday 31 May – 4 June

May Day 3 May

Next Copy date: 12.3.2009

Please send handwritten articles to Marie-Reine Adams or to the school, and you can also email articles from the website or from the address at the top of the Courier.

Lee and Marie-Reine

Important: Fundraising and Letter Inserting

Fundraising is very important for the school's finances. Fundraised money pays off the loan on the new building and supports various annual costs – it is an important supplement to parental financial contributions. Last year we fell below the £10,000 per year we have come to expect as normal. This year I suggested to the Coordinators that we should be aiming for £15,000; so far, without letter inserting income, we have actually raised about £3,000. Letter inserting on behalf of Botton Village can produce several thousand pounds each year and is a vital part of fundraising. We expect every school family to participate. Prior to the November inserting round I mentioned in the Courier that Nick Poole was dissatisfied with our performance and was considering taking the letter inserting work away from the school.

Despite this a number of people who were on the November rota did not turn up with the result that the school will only receive payment for a portion of the sessions that were scheduled. This is very bad news. It would be a disaster to lose the work altogether. Please take a careful look at the rota Stacey has prepared for 13 and 14 March. **If you are listed, it is vital that you turn up on time at the Camphill Press. If you are listed and are unable to take part, please take the responsibility to find another *school family* as a replacement. Highlighted people, please remind your team now, and again shortly before the workday.** If there are any questions, please put them to me as soon as possible.

Michael Drake

Letter Inserting Rota – 13 & 14 March 2009 - Venue: The Press, Honey Bee Nest

	Friday 13th	Saturday 14th
9-12am	Shaw Karunathilaka Jackson	Jarvis Gross Fulton/Caradonna
1.30-4pm	Mary, Anthea Class 6/7	
7-10pm	Davis Barber G Taylor	

Please arrive in good time and arrange care for all young children.

Highlighted people, please remind your team in advance.

If you are unable to attend, please make arrangements for another *school community family* to replace you.