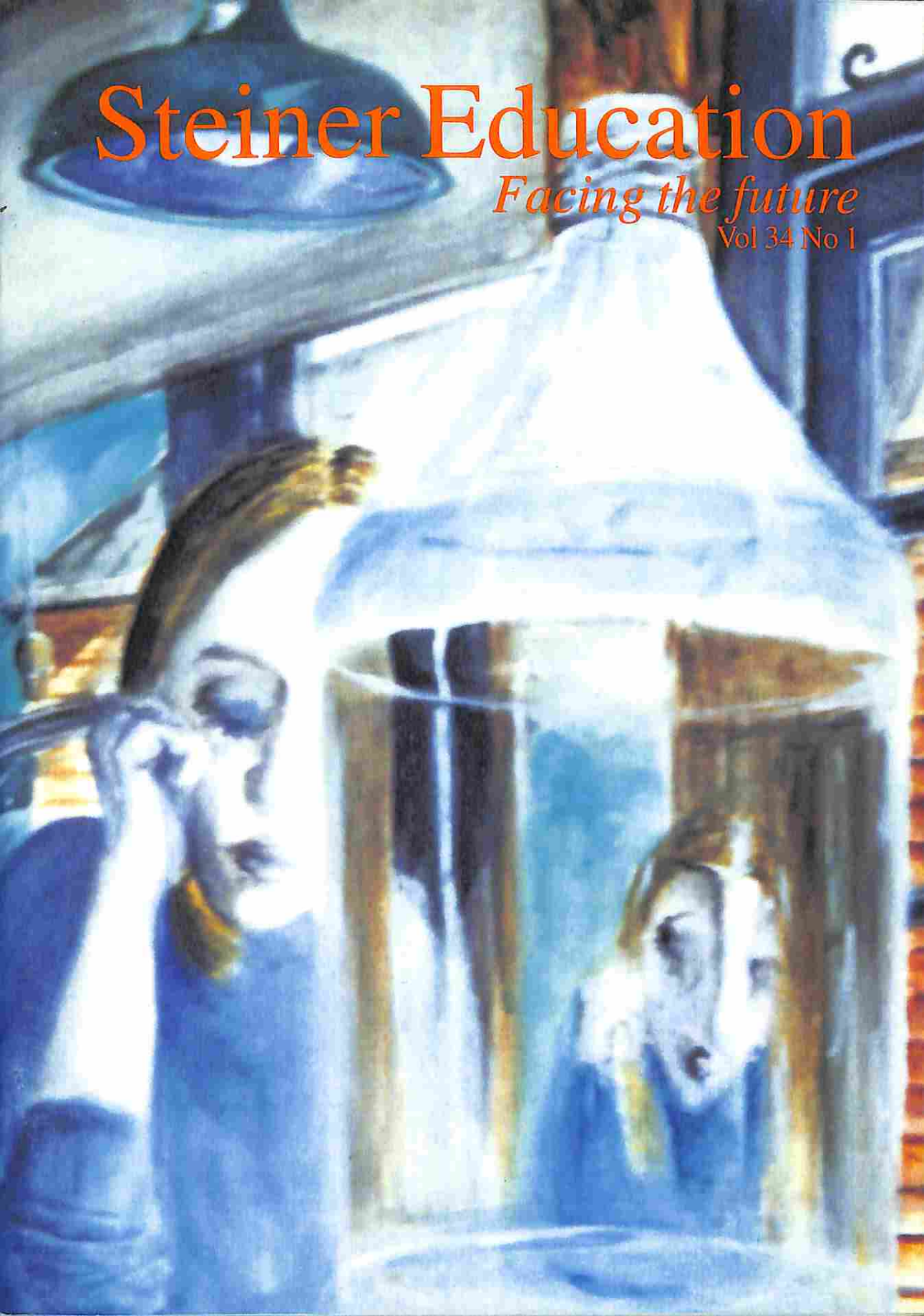


Steiner Education

Facing the future

Vol 34 No 1





Steiner Education

ISSUE THEME:
Facing the Future

"What will be the result of modern mistaken education? Forces seated in the [soul] will burst out elsewhere if they are not brought to the surface in pictorial representation. [This will result in] rebels, revolutionaries, dissatisfied people . . . This is because they want something . . . that they only picture to themselves . . . that should have entered their fantasy but did not; instead it entered their agitated social activities."

Rudolf Steiner, 11 September 1920.

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The Sprig, Ashdown Road, Forest Row,
East Sussex RH18 5BN.

Editorial: Telephone (0134282) 2758.

Advertising: (0134282) 4564.

Individual copy price:

UK £3.30, USA \$6.60,

Canada \$8.70

Subscription Price (2 copies per year):

UK £5.10, USA \$11.10,

Canada \$14.25

Prices include postage and packing. Countries not listed pay
in UK sterling, covering their own bank charges. Cheques
payable to: Steiner Education.

© 2000 by Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications.

ISSN 1361-7400 Charity No. 295104

Typesetting and printing by

The Devonshire Press Ltd, Barton Road,
Torquay, Devon TQ2 7NX

Front Cover & Inside Front Cover: *The introspective painting
by a 17 year-old (front cover) taken along with the elated
expression on the face of the 'young chemist' (opposite—
photo: Alik Sapountzi), serve as an introduction to the theme
of this issue: Facing the Future. To do this with confidence,
young people ideally need to be able to step from their
schooling into the next stage of life, having been given a firm
connection both with their own inner being as to the outer
world. Further inner and outer steps are illustrated on pages
9 and 13.*

Journal for Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Education (formerly 1930–1995 *Child and Man*) January 2000 Vol. 34 No. 1

Steiner Education is a focus for ideas, insights and
achievements in Waldorf, Steiner and all truly human
education throughout the world.

Contents

Editorial: Facing the Future	2
But What about Childhood? Increasing State control erodes autonomy in British Early Years Learning	5
<i>Richard House</i> Work Experience in East Africa	10
<i>Sarah Cheffings</i> Steiner Education on the Masai Plains.....	12
<i>Deborah Fletcher</i> Environmentally Friendly Giving the child confidence to "know and love the world"	16
<i>Liz Braun</i> Running Round in Circles: the Teacher or the Children? Devising exercises to channel children's energies and to prepare them for the future	20
<i>Dafydd Griffiths</i> Planning Ahead: The Waldorf School in Riga	24
<i>Sandra Dislere</i> Preparation for Life The Mt. Barker Waldorf School's Year 12 Program and its outcomes.....	28
<i>Tom Stehlik</i> Open Youth Education in Denmark	32
<i>Troels Ussing</i> Facing all that Future—Still! A Former pupil reflects on 'a life on the fringe'	35
<i>Peter Dodwell</i> Something to Live For Thoughts about Logotherapy on the anniversary of the death of Viktor Frankl.....	39
<i>Miron Barak</i> Book Reviews	44

*Opinions expressed in this journal attach to the respective
authors and are not necessarily those of the Editor.*

Editorial: Facing the Future

We are always facing the future. Fearing the worst: eyes screwed, as the felt ball we have just lobbed to our grandchild goes off course and makes its inexorable way towards our prize begonia—or hoping for the best: eyes drinking the elixir of mutual trust on that photo in great aunt Maud's wedding album. Immediate: hand poised over a door handle—or long term: filling in an emigration form in triplicate, in readiness to cross the world. In desperation: Rembrandt's *Lucretia* (in Washington's National Gallery of Art)—or with confidence: you need one more trick for rubber and you are holding the ace of trumps. With apprehension: wondering what to wear as you are about to meet a friend, in the hopes of making up a serious quarrel—or with flying colours: the burst of enthusiastic applause that follows the last note of the performance of Tchaikovsky's violin concerto you have just given. Down-trodden: the beggar shuffling home with barely a couple of coins to jingle in his cap—or with relief: a stranger gives us a lift after a full bus has trundled nonchalantly past the stop where we had been standing waiting. Right-brained: I've checked my passport, visa, ticket, terminal for departure and traveller's cheques—or left-brained: instead of the bone-freezing -10° that entrenches us for most of the Swedish winter, our thoughts leap high with plans as the sunshine-filled air from the Tel Aviv runway wafts into the cabin after the plane has come to a standstill and the cabin door is opened. With more than a pinch of consciousness: spending our last ten pesetas, eked out till we have arrived at the airport before returning home—or 'in the dark': probably a lot of the time for the average house-holder!

The above are random and not particularly symptomatic cross-sections of the more significant concept that is implied when we use the expression 'facing the future'. The educationist's task is deeply tied up with the future: that of each child in their care. One educationist may be far removed from the situation—the semi-retired lecturer marking a

batch of German A-level papers. Another may be totally immersed in it—the Kindergarten teacher singing summer songs during ring time. The decision of the former, conceivably, could make just that bit of difference between whether the candidate goes to the university of her first choice or another—or not at all, with consequences that are unmistakably traceable. The latter, as he takes his four year-olds by the hand on that radiant summer's day and sings about the bees humming on the contented 'faces' of the sunflowers, may have no way of knowing whether the ideas that are in his mind as he does so will affect the future of his charges.

It was Steiner's view that young children *are* affected by all that takes place in their environment, however intangible that 'taking place' might be. This may seem paradoxical: an A-level grade, potentially no more, if not less, consequential for the biography of a person than the thoughts of a Kindergarten teacher (or the atmosphere created at mealtimes, if we extend the principle back to the diaper-bulging toddler sitting in his highchair at home)! How can one understand such a seeming contradiction?

An approach that sheds light on this question lies in appreciating the part played in child development by the *human ego*. Someone who has 'got away' with manslaughter rather than being convicted of murder may have done so because of being deemed to have acted out of *reduced responsibility*. Whether we are clad in imperial ermine or lice-infested rags, society ultimately (though sometimes, too late) holds our ego accountable. By contrast, when we shoot the lioness that we suspect of having dragged her victim from his tent to his death (the recent tragedy of David Pleydell-Bouverie in the Zimbabwe safari park), it is not because we hold her accountable.

The Waldorf view of child development sees the growing child as giving a home to the incoming (incarnating) ego. But not all at once. A medically average birth will be 'head first', one of

the educator's hallmarks of the human condition: physical growth takes place from the head 'downwards', while psycho-spiritual development moves in the opposite 'direction'. The baby uses its limbs first. They are considerably active, while the head remains comparatively passive. Child development constitutes the *whole* human being. While the ego is intimately involved in the building of the human frame, it doesn't finally 'move in' until the building—and in particular the psycho-spiritual 'finishes' to the building—is inhabitable q.v. the franchise, the age of consent, sex shop licences, Borstal etc. Hence *accountability*. Before this the indwelling ego is only fractionally present. Not enough to count on.

The fraction, of course, increases as time goes on. Sand-glass-wise. Though again, it was Steiner's contention that the 'space' from which the 'sand' came as the ego incarnated was not a negligible factor. The Kindergarten teacher (and any carer/educator) can cultivate—as opposed to a reduced responsibility—a sense of enhanced responsibility. Indeed, for a Waldorf teacher, to chip quietly away at this becomes a professional matter.

Not that doing so gives cause for aloofness. The tight-rope walker's professional discipline requires a more heightened (no pun intended!) sense of balance than you or I would normally reckon to acquire—or care to be forced to exercise, no doubt. But this does not qualify him to regard us as second-class citizens. Not that it is quite as straightforward a corollary for the teacher, for she needs to cultivate professionally an enhanced ego awareness vis-à-vis the children in her charge, notwithstanding that her ego *and* that of the tight-rope walking parent are both first-class citizens. She is only a second-class tight-rope walker—or maybe a non-starter!—whereas her tight-rope walking parent, even if he doesn't aspire to be a professional educationist, cannot really afford *qua parent* i.e. carer-ego to be a non-starter.

Getting back to the child. As the future decreases (the German A-level student's death certificate is, by definition, closer to being issued than when she was born—not intended as macabre)—so the *facing* of that future in the child's awareness *increases*. Not that the yard stick begins with birth or conception and ends as

the A-level results tumble in their envelope through the letter box onto the front doormat. One of the Gordian-knot absurdities of our present system is that, having got her best German A-level grade, the student probably still has some ten years to go before her journeyman footsteps lead her to her task in life—which as often as not will be as void of any whiff of Bockwurst or any umlautish debate as a coffee bar in Liverpool.

Arguably, the educator's primary aim must be to prepare each of the youngsters for facing *their* future. Working in the dark indeed. What conditions will obtain when these four year-olds are at the 'height' of many of their powers forty years on—and when I, as their teacher, am no longer standing with two feet on this planet? What faculties will become of paramount



Throughout this issue, there are reproduced portraits sketched and painted by nearly a whole class of Upper School pupils (aged 17/18 years). They are either self-portraits or of one another. They represent a strengthening of the lengthy process of 'identity-seeking' as a vital prelude to stepping into life, finding one's way and applying oneself to the tasks that life presents. (No further captions, essentially, will accompany these examples of portraiture.)

importance in each pupil? The answer to the first question, of course, lies beyond the teacher's ambit—and would have done so even in a slower-moving age than the giddy one in which we breathlessly pant along. And yet, to a small degree, it is related to the second question insofar as the future isn't a monstrous something down whose gullet are gorged the products of the education system (*tabulae* that are no longer pristinely *rasa*, but dendritically inscribed with chemical formulae, the dates that tribes and nations settled their differences on the battle field and other Gradgrindery). No, monstrous though the future may at times seem, it is clearly the product of *present-day* humanity. And the further forward into it that we project our thinking, the more the unborn of the present-day will have become the executives that 'call' it into being or the groundstaff that never fail to ask you if you are carrying weapons.

So how we look upon these unborn, these just-born and these nine year-olds ... actually does count. Are we going to be some stony-hearted minister of education in a yet-to-devolute third



millennium European State, ignoring the extant body of research on emotional intelligence? Are we going to be some wooden-headed inspector of schools appointed, say, by a yet-to-be-formed, volatile African democracy, ignoring the extant body of neuro-psychological research on the dangers of early learning? Or will we, while not being oblivious to accountability, bear fully in mind the vital part that love plays in a child's upbringing; and the enlivening part that *imagination* plays in all aspects of pedagogy?

It was Steiner's view that the greatest gift education can give to the individual, is on the one hand, 'freedom' to discover his or her own being and, on the other, as wide a range as possible of faculties in fair process of development, that will enable the ego to give appropriate expression to that freedom. Moral ideals and a thorough sense of orientation within general knowledge, too, of course. Education will not do this by a frenzied, league-table-driven, blue in the face delivery, of a blueprint of a curriculum; but by achieving the end result through an enhanced consciousness that creatively forms both lesson content and teaching method.

In this issue of *Steiner Education*—serial date, January 2000—happily through a multi-colourful gathering of the Waldorf clans (Australian, Canadian, Danish, English, German, Kenyan, Israeli, Latvian and Welsh), rare even for our journal but just the right tone for a global celebration of the millennium, we take a look at how the above works out in practice: the child at various nodal points of its development (Kindergarten, approaching the ninth-tenth year, and, from Class 12, striding finally over the last stepping-stones of school into life). Other features include (1) how a new school, in post-Soviet Riga, faces the future with inner confidence and, despite slender resources, an unremitted zest for work; and (2) a school doctor's thoughts on the work of Victor Frankl—a beacon of conscience, faith in the best of human nature, moral bearing, and the inner courage to stand against evil—shining timelessly from one of the last (i.e. 20th) century's darkest hours.

B.M.

But What about Childhood?

Increasing State control erodes autonomy in British Early Years learning

by RICHARD HOUSE

I remember spending the greater part of my childhood wondering about adults. Were they ever children? From their behavior toward children it seemed to me quite clearly that they could never have possibly been children.

Ashley Montague

Introduction

At first I thought I was only dreaming that Radio 4's 'Today' programme was announcing that the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and Mr Woodhead were taking over responsibility for Britain's early years education! But after hearing it for the third time, I realised it must be true. Not that such a development should have been in the least surprising, for despite the increasingly overwhelming research and anecdotal evidence that 'too much formal learning too soon is bad for you'—as Rudolf Steiner pointed out so convincingly nearly a century ago—the government simply ploughs on with its tunnel-visioned agenda, caught up in its own populist 'control-freakery', and seemingly impervious to any evidence that contradicts its chosen 'modernising' ideology.

The changes and their media presentation

In essence, the changes mean that OFSTED is now to take over the inspection of all childcare facilities, with local authority social services departments being stripped of their current duty of monitoring standards of care and safety. Thus, all play groups and nurseries will henceforth fall under OFSTED's remit. Furthermore, "Inspectors will use a new set of early learning goals, which form a foundation stage of the national curriculum, to assess provision for the under-fives".¹

On the day of the announcement, education

minister Margaret Hodge was parading through the media studios giving interviews (there were at least three separate ones within the space of a few hours—and almost certainly more). On BBC1's 'Lunchtime News' (2 August) she said: "This is a new and distinct arm of OFSTED which will combine both care and education. We want purposeful play... there will be a curriculum for the 3–5 year-olds for the early learning goals." And on BBC Radio 4's 'Woman's Hour', she mentioned several specific areas of concern—for example, the ability to engage in "structured play", to work with others towards a "desired objective", and to learn to concentrate. Margaret Hodge's carefully spun attempt to distance the changes from the Woodhead 'empire' sat very uneasily with Chris Woodhead's own comments: on BBC1's 'Lunchtime News' (2 August), he said rather chillingly: "[OFSTED] is a very fine, sharp instrument... we will be exposing inadequate provision wherever we find it. And where provision is inadequate, we will be reporting it loudly and clearly." The kind of "adequate provision" Woodhead was talking about had been documented by him elsewhere: for example, earlier this year he said: "Many four year-olds are forging ahead happily on early reading and writing."²

It is also very noteworthy that the changes were announced at a time when most teachers were away on holiday. Very carefully managed 'spinning' by the DfEE?

The newspapers' responses

In the face of this horror show I was stung into action! At 7 a.m. the next morning, I bought all of the day's broadsheet newspapers, with a view to reading their reporting of this event, and faxing letters to all of the 'Letters to the Editor' pages

with an appropriately robust response. I faxed off six letters in all, and four made it into print—*The Independent*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Eastern Daily Press*, and the *Times Educational Supplement*. It seemed to me that, for the most part, the newspaper reports were disappointingly complacent and uncritical. The reports in *The Times*, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* concentrated on, respectively, early years adult/child ratios, the self-interested response of local government leaders, and levels of government spending on education. *None of the reports placed any emphasis on questioning the wisdom or appropriateness of the changes themselves.*

By far the most impressive coverage was in *The Independent*—not least because of an excellent and highly perceptive article by Diane Coyle, ‘What our children really need is a regime of benign neglect’. Diane Coyle was really on the ball, critically referring to “our increasingly controlling and utilitarian vision of childhood”, and to the “micro-managing [of] every detail of children’s lives”.

Uncritical leaders appearing in the *Eastern Daily Press* and the *Times Educational Supplement* were actually *welcoming* of the changes. The *TES* editorial argued that “small children need both care and education” (my emphasis); that the French “Structured programme of learning and play is based on a sound understanding of child development”; and that it is appropriate to stimulate young children “intellectually”. In my published letter (*TES* 20 August 1999), I pointed out that the editorial failed to distinguish between “education” and *learning*; that the “sound understanding” of the structured French system is merely asserted, with none of the available countervailing evidence being referred to; and that, again, the value of early “intellectual” stimulation is merely asserted by definitional fiat, as if it were an unchallengeable fact (which those involved in Waldorf education, of course, know to be very far from the case).

Prime Minister Blair’s ‘Moral Crusade’

Coming hot on the heels of this latest extension of central government intervention in education, in

early September, Prime Minister Tony Blair launched a high-profile media offensive against the moral degeneracy of the nation’s youth, the goal being to “stamp out teenage pregnancies, restore order and recreate a sense of national purpose”.³ Blair’s campaign was a response to the widely reported pregnancy of a 12 year-old girl which had seemed to shock the nation a few days earlier. At this juncture I want to highlight just one aspect of this latest state-inspired moral crusade—namely, the massive contradiction between state education policies (particularly for the early years), on the one hand, and on the other, its public hand-wringing and moralising about the behaviour of young people.

In the course of this ‘moral crusade’ interview with *The Observer* newspaper (5 September), Blair “seized on concerns about the number of youngsters having under-age sex”, and said: “The issue is how you could get to a situation where you have 12 year-old girls becoming pregnant with 14 year-old fathers... *We should be asking: why?*” (my emphasis). And, of course, rather than making the crucial link between the growing “adultisation”, or “death” of childhood (as Neil Postman called it) and the woefully inappropriate educational policies of successive governments, Mr Blair predictably cast around for the usual scapegoats and largely irrelevant ‘solutions’—namely, the role of parents, and the need for more state intervention. Thus, Mr Blair “demanded that police and local councils make more use of the powers his Government had granted to impose curfews and keep children off the streets”; and he said: “Parents have got to take responsibility for their children... There’s got to be... a partnership between Government and the country.” And in a highly revealing conflation of the economic and the educational spheres which spoke volumes about the prevailing *Zeitgeist*, Mr Blair added, “the economic imperative is to develop what we call *the knowledge economy*... [we want to make Britain] a real 21st century model country” (my emphasis).

Overworn clichés about deck-chairs and the Titanic, or Nero and fiddles, immediately spring to mind. The government’s glaring lack of any overarching, holistic, historically aware vision about society and its current malaise contrasts

very markedly with the insights into the so-called “three-fold social order” offered by Rudolf Steiner, to which I now briefly turn.

Steiner’s Three-Fold Social Order

I’m sure it was no coincidence that in the very week when the OFSTED story broke, I had been researching a paper I was writing on the Europe-wide drive to regulate the psychotherapy field, and I was drawing upon Steiner’s inspiring work on the three-fold social order in marshalling my argument against regulatory state incursions into the field of psychotherapy and counselling. It was immediately clear to me that the news about OFSTED was yet another example of the unwarranted incursion of the polity into what Steiner called ‘the spiritual-cultural sphere’. For Steiner, the ‘social organism’ as a whole worked best when the three spheres (the economic, the political and the spiritual-cultural) operate mutually respectfully with, and relatively autonomously from, each other.

For Steiner, then, it was a grave error for the polity to become embroiled in trying to influence or control the activities of the spiritual-cultural sphere; and he therefore argued passionately against the state’s involvement in education.⁴ For Steiner, “free spiritual life can only [stand in its own separate essence] when it is... *self-administered* and free” (my emphasis).⁵ Steiner wrote further of how the insidious infiltration of state influence into the spiritual-cultural realm has become so routine that we scarcely notice it, such that in general, people “neither see nor feel how... the state is bringing life into a dependence



on state requirements” (1972 p.32). The pretty much uncritical response of the media (as described above) to the news about OFSTED’s take-over of early years provision provides a stark testimony to Steiner’s analysis—which in turn makes it all the more crucial that those of us with a very different world-view make our views known at every possible opportunity, whether in private conversation, in the professional journals or in the media (both written and broadcast) more generally.

I believe there is a very strong need for a fully

articulated and sociologically sophisticated critique of the state's colonisation of education, which draws upon Steiner's vision of the three-fold social order, very much as Charles Davy achieved in the *Three Spheres of Society*, written in the aftermath of the Second World War. A few choice quotations from Davy's thought-provoking text might be apposite here, as the social renewal that was required after the war may well have many parallels with the kind of renewal that will be needed when the current obsessive, State-inspired 'madness of modernity' has run its course. Thus, we read that: "education is always likely to suffer from the interference of any authority... with the personal relationship between teacher and child" (p.170); "the amount of independent initiative allowed to teachers will usually be limited by a framework of fixed rules [and] it will not be easy for adequate attention to be paid to the individual needs of children" (171); "a child's... educational needs..., since they differ in every child, call for an intimate personal judgement which no State... authority is competent to exercise" (176); "to recognise and reverence the human archetype in every man... is a lesson that cannot be learnt in an atmosphere impregnated with doctrines approved by State authorities, but only in an atmosphere where spiritual freedom is a respected right" (181); "we must look on the best educational activity, not as something to be coerced or prescribed, but as one of the gifts which a free spiritual life... will make freely out of its own resources" (186).

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, I want to stress that it would be crassly oversimplistic to lay all the blame for our educational and social malaise at the door of government; for inappropriate state policy-making is but one manifestation (albeit an important one) of the obsessive and uncritical 'control-freakery' that is rampaging through our

culture. Thus it is the ideology of modernity and one-sided materialism that surely lies at the heart of our difficulties, and the government and its members are merely the elected standard-bearers of a far more pervasive, society-wide ideology.

There exists a diverse range of organisations and tendencies who share a profound dis-ease at the relentless centralisation of state control in education (e.g. free schools, the home education and small schools movements, and the Education Now co-operative), and there is surely great potential here for developing a wide-ranging and authoritative critique and alternative, which it would be very difficult for the educational and political establishment to ignore. It seems to me that Steiner Waldorf philosophy has a central role to play in any such project; and a start can be made by writing to newspaper editors and ringing into phone-in programmes whenever we see the opportunity to argue our case.

Certainly, my experience with the OFSTED incursion into the early years shows that newspaper editors are often refreshingly open to publishing letters that are highly critical of established norms in this field.

Richard House is a graduate of the London Waldorf Teacher Training Seminar, and currently runs the Steiner 'Fir Cones' Toddler Group in Norwich. Dr. House is soon to 'retire' after a decade of working as a counsellor and psychotherapist, during which time he has been a frequent contributor to the professional literature in that field.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Quoted in the *Times Educational Supplement* 6 August 1999.
- 2 Quoted in the *Daily Mail* 23 June 1999.
- 3 *Daily Mail* 6 September 1999.
- 4 See his *Threefold Social Order* Anthroposophic Press, 1972 pp.xiv-xv; cf. Charles Waterman (Davy), *The Three Spheres of Society*, Faber and Faber 1946 Ch.23.
- 5 *Anthroposophical Movement* 5 (29), 15 July 1928 p.226.



(above) A long way to go! A 4 year-old, during creative play, gathers and affirms his growing forces in an environment filled with natural substances—plenty of time before contemplating entering the market place (see portrait below). The Kindergarten photographs in this issue appear by kind permission of the independent Steiner Kindergarten in Latvia situated in the suburbs of Riga. See also pages 18, 19, 33.



Work Experience in East Africa

by SARAH CHEFFINGS

Ten little children stood in two orderly rows facing each other, clapping their hands and singing:

*Pease porridge hot,
Pease porridge cold,
Some like it in the pot,
Nine days old.*

The children are in the Kindergarten of a pioneering Steiner school just outside Nairobi, East Africa, where I was privileged to spend three weeks.

In the summer of 1998 I finished Class 10 at the Rudolf Steiner School of South Devon, full of plans, anticipation and a chosen motto for the year ahead: to make the most of every opportunity. In the autumn I joined Class 11 of the Rudolf Steiner School of Dortmund, Germany and heard that the last three weeks of the spring term were to be spent at a place of our own choice, doing social work experience.

Where am I going?
What am I going to do?

I wanted to do something different, interesting, that would broaden my outlook on the world, and so I had the idea of going to this small Steiner school near Nairobi. In March I set off to spend three weeks helping in the Kindergarten of this wonderful school.

The very first morning I walked in, I felt at home; the room and the activities reminded me so much of the time I spent in Kindergarten, and of my mother's Kindergarten in Devon. There were of course many differences too: the wooden animals in the baskets not only included cows, sheep and horses but also elephants, giraffe and

buffalo; at snack time we ate porridge made from maize meal rather than Scots porridge oats; after painting time we would put the paintings outside in the sun and within half an hour they would be dry and ready to bring indoors.

Many of the Kindergarten children stay at school all day (8am–3.45pm) so in the middle of the day each child would settle down with a little mattress and pillow to sleep for about two hours. I was impressed by the way all the children lay down quietly and peacefully to go to sleep, and when they woke up, lay quietly again until it was time for the next activity.

I was surprised that all these young children were bilingual or even trilingual. They learnt their parents' tribal language as babies, Swahili (the national language of Kenya) as they began to socialise and communicate with children from other tribes, and then English, as it is the teaching language. Several of the Kindergarten children do not yet understand English but it is amazing the ability they have to listen carefully, quietly and respectfully at story and circle time, joining in many of the circle games through imitation.

The school had an Easter outing to an animal orphanage. Almost every child in the school wore their best clothes, without being instructed to do so. Every child (approximately 60) and about twelve teachers, squashed into an estate car and the school's thirty seater mini-bus, started to proceed down the very bumpy road to the animal orphanage. On arrival the children burst out of the car and bus, and were taken to see two young rhino and two baby elephants. These children, ranging from Kindergarten to Class 8, were so excited and interested in seeing these native animals. This surprised me, as I would have thought that living in Kenya, surrounded by these

An artist's impression of the school 'house' and, on the left, the area set aside for further development.



animals all the time, the novelty might have worn off, but it seemed not.

The majority of pupils are native Kenyans, and their view of school contrasts to that of a Western child. Kenyans feel themselves very privileged to have the opportunity to go to school and receive an education. The children are open and receptive to new ideas and are keen to behave well and learn. This makes them a joy to be with and to teach. I found Kenyan people generally very open and warm-hearted: both parents and pupils at the school came to welcome me on my first day, and many of them often spoke to me during my stay, and were very interested to hear about my experiences of other Steiner schools.

In Kenya, there are many European and American style schools, to which the white children go, and many run-down crowded city schools, to which the local children go. This Steiner school was the only one that I found that bridged this terrible social gap. The school had pupils from many different cultures and backgrounds, and even more impressive is the way that all these pupils are treated in the same manner and with the same respect.

This trip has really broadened my outlook on the world, as well as on Steiner education. To observe and be part of this school, and to contrast and compare it with the schools in which I have grown up was a very interesting and nourishing experience.

Currently, Sarah Cheffings is studying at Exeter College.

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Steiner Education on the Masai Plains

by DEBORAH FLETCHER

Winding down the bumpy dirt track, Masai Lodge Road, along the southern edge of the Nairobi National Park, one feels suddenly transported to another time. After only a few moments, the paved road seems far behind and the medieval world of the African village ever closer. A few multi-storeyed apartments buildings give way to small kiosks, wooden stalls selling fruit, vegetables, paraffin, sodas, bread and milk—the essentials.

Everywhere one sees people. They talk, walk, bicycle, drive donkey carts, lead camels, joke, laugh and watch everyone else. Drums are seldom heard on this road, but music over the radio carries a mood with it—of pseudo-modernity—to mix with the thick dust that inevitably coats the plants along the side of the road. Even the rap music can waft toward the heavens more easily than the particles of dried dirt which flutter momentarily behind a passing vehicle and then settle.

The hub of activity eases as the road dips down over rocky ground to cross a river and then up again to the plains, dotted with acacia trees and mostly expatriate homesteads. Here, along this part of the road, our schools lies. The horizon stretches out far in the distance. Much of the land is owned by the Masai chief who lives in town, though some of his poorer relations still live nearby, tending their herds of cattle and goats.

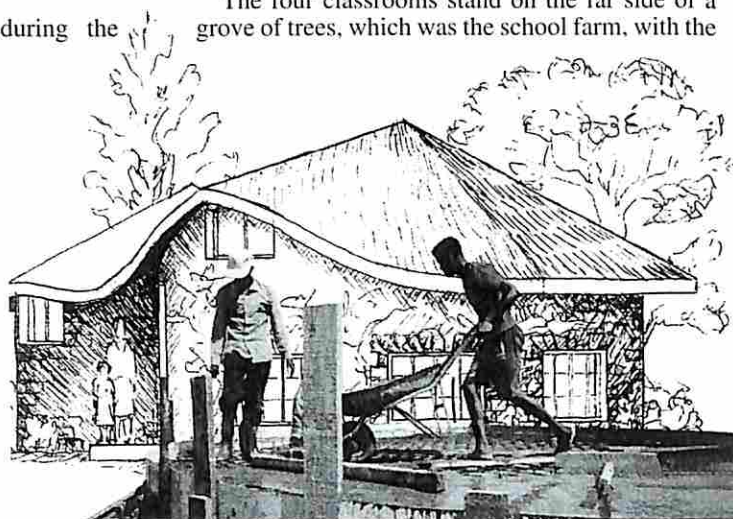
Green during the rains, brown during the

droughts, along the path of stray giraffes, lions, impalas, zebra and buffalo, and within commuting distance from Nairobi, the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi Nairobi currently educates children aged 3–15 years. The children learn eagerly and with an innate religious faith in the world. We have Kindergarten and combined Classes 1/2, 3/4, 5/6 and 7/8. The Kenyan people, a mixture of some forty tribes, wish to see an alternative to their tough educational system, though they often fear trying something new. Yet they would like to see a Secondary School here as soon as possible and we hope to be able to provide this in the future. At present, we have close to 70 children and are happily mixing together ancient African wisdom with the life-giving forces of Steiner education.

The school lies 25 km south of the city. We have 20 acres of land on which have been built one large residential building, four classrooms, an office, a teachers' room, several huts, a woodwork room and a cow shed. The Kindergarten is located in the residential building with its own play area. The children benefit from being close to the kitchen where their meals are cooked. They are greeted by the older children in the morning, arriving to begin their school day with forty minutes work on the school farm or in the kitchen.

The four classrooms stand on the far side of a grove of trees, which was the school farm, with the

Illustrations of buildings (see also pages 11, 14 and 15) previously published in Ngoma, the school magazine of the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi Nairobi—here a hut built for a member of staff, with work in progress in the foreground.



(above) There's more to physics main-lessons in Class 5/6 than just hot air—the class with their class teacher celebrating the success of the 'experiment' high on the Kenyan plains.

(below) The 'building bug'—Inuit use snow: 'we' do it this way, which is just as cosy psychologically!



office, teachers' room, library and storeroom. This block curves in an arc inward, and will be complemented eventually by a mirroring row of four additional classrooms. Then each class will have its own room. Presently, each class has about thirteen children. Efforts are being made to publicise the school, to draw in more children and to receive grants for building from abroad. Recently, the school has been part of an exhibition on education which generated several newspaper articles. Slowly, the school is becoming known.

At present, six boarders stay at the school during the week, going home by the sturdy Mercedes school bus for the weekend. Other children travel on the school bus daily. Three children currently board through the weekends as well, going to their home in Marsabit, at the edge of the pastoral lands of Northern Kenya, only for holidays. These children were orphaned and brought to the school by a Western couple wishing to help them. A number of children amble through rain and shine in groups of tall and small, from their homes up to 3 km away. Since petrol and vehicle repair costs are high, we can only take children on the school bus whose parents contribute to the costs.

The school farm includes three milking cows that supply fresh milk to the school, a heifer, a bull, three donkeys that work on the farm, chickens that supply eggs and an organic garden. Other than office help, the staff at the school includes four farm workers, a cook, a cleaner, a driver, a maintenance man and two watchmen who stay awake at night and protect the school with their bows and arrows. Five dogs also guard the compound fiercely against intruders—and two cats try to stay out of their way!

The parents of the school work on the compound

if they have not funds enough to pay a significant portion of their children's school fees. They sew, clean or work one day a week in the kitchen garden alongside the farmers. Other skills which are needed by the school can also serve in lieu of payment.

All parents are encouraged to become involved in the school community, lending a hand, participating in school festivals and attending parents' mornings. The school's Open Day has quickly become a tradition enjoyed by parents, children and visitors. The Christmas Play, performed by teachers, brings joy in sunny December and marks the end of the Kenyan school year. It is wonderful to see the diversity in race when a group of parents sit in a circle at a parents' meeting. Some have walked from down the road; others have driven from Nairobi; some have a European background; others display tribal costumes in honour of the occasion. A translation into Kiswahili is offered when necessary, though most parents speak and understand English.

Currently, the teachers from abroad live on the compound. Recently, a small hut-style house was built as an additional residence for a teacher and her daughter. A solar-heated shower block, a bell tower and woodwork room are being built, and a large pond is slowly filling with rainwater to be used during the dry season. The bell tower, built by Nani Croze's glass studio, Kitengela Glass, is a marvellous steel frame to be decorated with stained glass and cement-covered canvas. Nani is a trustee and was an inspiration in starting the school. The large residential building is equipped with solar electricity. The smaller huts use candles, paraffin or pressure lamps for lighting. Water is supplied to the school by a windmill operated borehole just outside the compound and by rainwater collected from the

roofs of the buildings. The solid rock layer not far below the volcanic black soil makes digging pit toilets difficult, and despite a dependable water source, water remains a precious commodity. Hence, efforts are underway to test a compost toilet. If successful, this model will be applied to future buildings.

The digging of foundations, the constructing of stone walls and pillars sometimes involve the children directly, especially Class 3. The children love to watch their school grow and change before their eyes. One child expressed the beauty of this experience with great enthusiasm: "Buildings seem to sprout up. The school is always growing and we always get to be involved somehow." She lives on the compound and remembers when the resident children swam in the foundation of a hut flooded from the El Niño rains.

The Kenyan education system was designed to teach chiefly to be successful in the world of economy, many Kenyans having become quite affluent; yet are they freely choosing their fast-paced, Western life style? When children are taught to read at the age of three, and then become burdened in their later years and unable to cope under the pressure of an unimaginative system, they often undergo crises. Parents turn to our school and watch as their children relax and blossom into self-assured beings. The practical work, the creative skills, the study of local history and many other aspects of the Steiner curriculum, help the children to develop fully, to know their past and to envision holistic progress for their country.

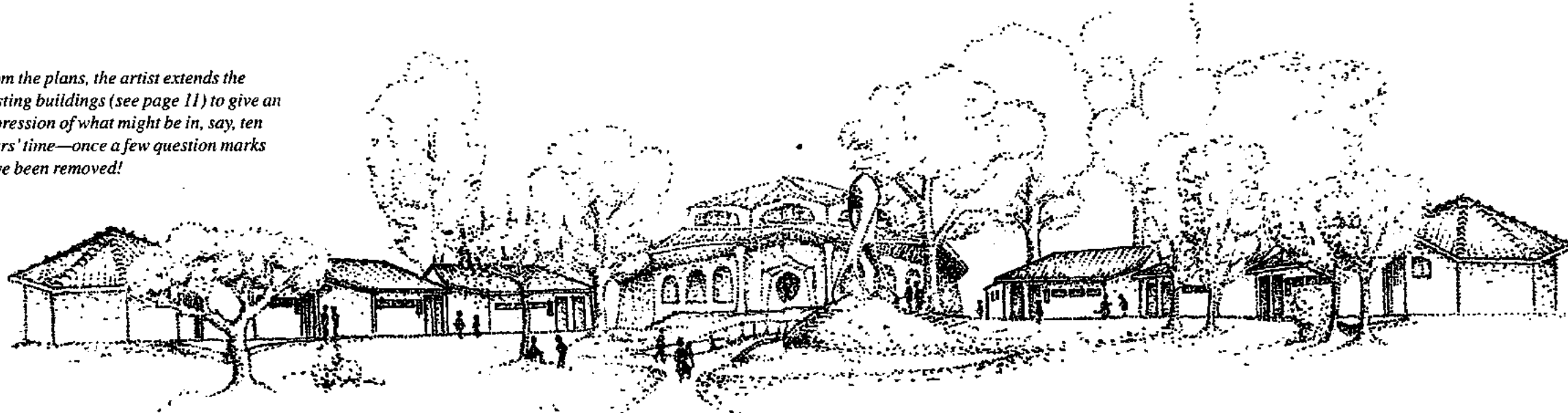
The Steiner curriculum is continually being adapted by each teacher to fit the environment of Kenya. Traditional songs, dances, music, crafts and stories are being brought to life in the classes.

Children learn Kiswahili and German as foreign languages. The main-lessons and other classes are taught in English. The mother tongues of the children are numerous and varied: they include the many languages of Kenya's Nilotic, Cushite and Bantu tribes, as well as those of Zaire, Rwanda, Malawi and Zambia, not to mention English and occasionally another European language such as Finnish. Kenyan, Rwandan, Tanzanian, Asian, American and English children attend the school at present. Their religions include Bahai, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim. Children become involved with the animal life; and have many adventures while at our school, which enrich their understanding of the world around them. Recently, the school visited an animal orphanage located nearby. There the children were able to pet two one-and-a-half month-old elephants and watch two year-old rhinos have a mud bath. Just in our compound, the school has observed two calves and a baby donkey being born. The children inspected the female donkey after she was gashed by a stray lion. They have leapt with joy during a lesson when they spotted giraffes on the horizon; and they have been saddened when a sick calf had to be slaughtered.

To teach the beauty and appreciation of the natural world, to help children grow to be stewards of the rare and abundant wildlife of East Africa, remains an aim at the school. Another aim is to educate them to be free thinking, able to stand on their own, take care of themselves, help others and choose their destinies in the world.

Deborah Fletcher, originally from the United States of America, teaches Class 3/4 at the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi Nairobi.

From the plans, the artist extends the existing buildings (see page 11) to give an impression of what might be in, say, ten years' time—once a few question marks have been removed!



Environmentally Friendly

Giving the child confidence to “know and love the world”¹

by LIZ BRAUN

Enmeshed in a latticework of brown and cream, caught in a tangle of unbelievably long necks and longer legs, we were unheeded in the school bus as the giraffe limbed and lolloped around us...

Taking a break from preparation for the Easter 1999 Conference for Steiner Teachers in East Africa, a group of teachers, including visitors from abroad and also some children, had crossed Mbagathi River which forms a natural boundary between the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi Nairobi and the Nairobi National Park. We found ourselves in the midst of the largest herd of giraffe I had ever witnessed, more than twenty of these mighty beasts in playful mood. These were Masai giraffe, every patch a golden-brown starburst, with ‘feminine eyes’ reflecting back our own startled wonder. An hour easily could have passed, till the light, like honey spreading over the plains, reminded us that evening was approaching and the sun would soon set. A last glance before returning to school at the movements of the giraffe now in the distance, like water flowing in slow motion; the distance let us see how fast their long-legged gait really was, how much of the hard-baked soil of the African plains was consumed by each effortless step of the giraffe (‘the one who walks swiftly’).

One of the workshops in the Easter Conference was about writing our own stories. ‘Stories: Seeking, Creating, Telling’, was its title on the programme. Small groups each chose another character from the plains to join with the giraffe; and so we began to look forward to hearing the stories of ‘The Giraffe and the Warthog’, ‘The Giraffe and the Butterfly’, ‘The Giraffe and the Zebra’. My group, two teachers from the Nairobi School, one from Kampala in Uganda and one from Hoima, Uganda, decided to tell the story of ‘The Giraffe and the Acacia Tree’.

Our workshop leader explained to us how, in the nature story, the characteristics and qualities of the animal or plant in focus can be brought out by another—the acacia by the giraffe—for example, and how the mysterious facts of the natural world breathe a life of their own when they can reveal themselves in the clothing of conversation and drama. Twelve groups filled the room with busy noise as the normally mute giraffe spoke with warthog, butterfly and tree in many different accents, trying to understand each other’s secrets. The rest of the week brought daily dramatic presentation of nature stories which just would not stand still. Here is ours.

The Giraffe and the Acacia Tree

Once upon a time, long, long ago, a lone acacia tree stood on the African plains. All around was as dry as could be; no rain had fallen for months and months. The grass was shrivelled and brown. There were no green leaves on the trees or bushes. No water gathered into a welcome pond for the animals.

Indeed, all the animals had left the acacia tree in search of food and water. The fat zebra, the slender gazelle, the warthog, the wildebeest, all had wandered away and left the acacia tree quite alone.

Suddenly, the acacia tree noticed a cloud of dust on the horizon. It watched uneasily as a giraffe appeared and swiftly came up to the acacia.

“Hello,” said the giraffe to the acacia. “Where are all the animals who used to shelter under your far-spreading branches?”

“Oh, they have all gone away in search of food and water and left me alone,” said the acacia sadly. “It is so quiet without my

friends, I only hear the wind as it rustles up the dust and stirs the dry grass.”

“I, too, am hungry, so hungry,” said the giraffe, eyeing the acacia’s topmost branches longingly.

“Oh,” squealed the acacia, “don’t eat me!” And in her terror, she pushed out sharp white thorns along her branches.

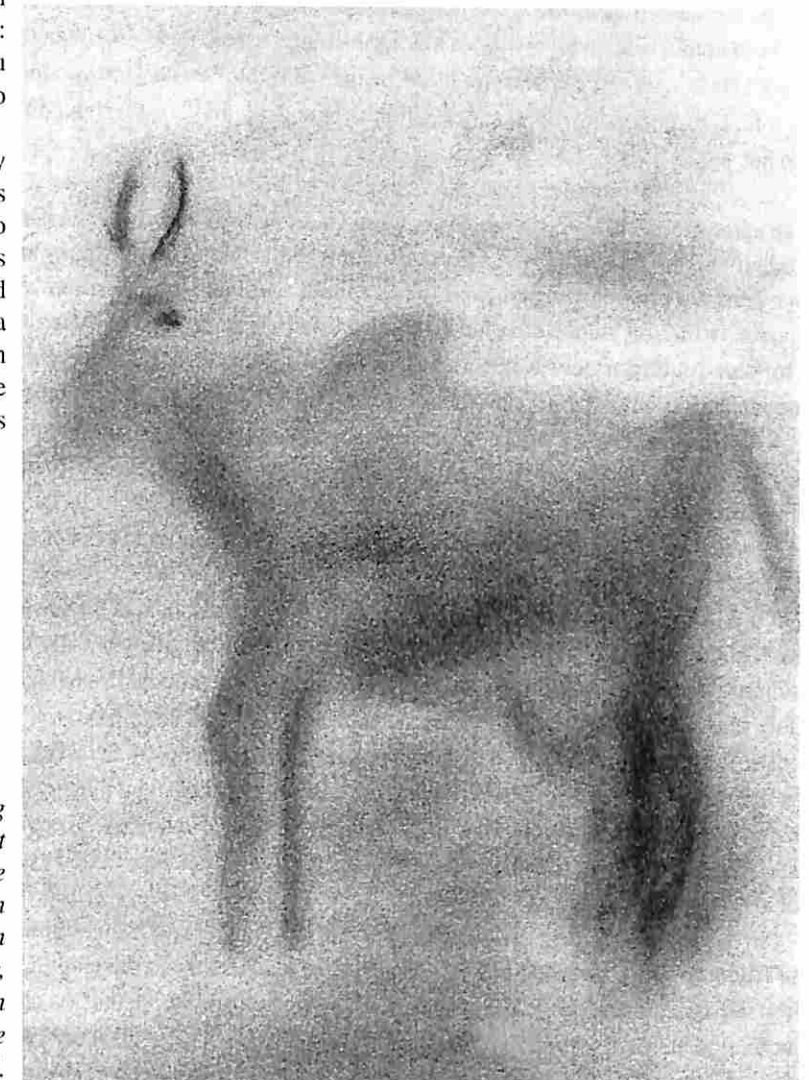
“No, no, I wouldn’t hurt you;” said the giraffe, “—only, just a small mouthful?”

The acacia began to tremble and the hungry but kind giraffe spoke again: “I am so lonely, too,” he said. “You who are the home to so many animals, won’t you just be my friend?”

The acacia tree in her great compassion put out many small green leaves. “Here, my friend: something small for you to eat, but don’t take too much!”

The giraffe gratefully ate some of the acacia’s new leaves and the two became the best of friends as they are to this day. And ever since then, the acacia tree bears small green leaves in the heat of the dry season when all else is bare.

A 13 year-old’s drawing of one of the magnificent ungulates that graze across the vast open country bordering on the African Rift Valley, which is less than an hour’s drive from the Nairobi school.



After qualifying as a trained Steiner teacher, Liz Braun taught for some time at the Rudolf Steiner School of South Devon. At present she combines raising a sizeable family, administrative responsibilities and part-time teaching at the Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi Nairobi.

FOOTNOTE

¹ From the last verse of A. C. Harwood’s ‘The Sun is in my Heart’.



(above) Meaningful work in the adult environment here being more than just imitated in Kindergarten play; all of which metamorphoses into the idealism of youth and (below) the will to find ways of working associatively later in life.



(below) All children are 'aboard' as the train of engaging play gets under way in the Kindergarten. (above) The young person sees herself stepping from the platform of the past towards the direction beckoned by the future



Running Round in Circles: the Teacher or the Children?

Devising exercises to channel children's energies and to prepare them for the future

by DAFYDD GRIFFITHS

It was during a long car journey that we fell to chatting about Rudolf Steiner's keenness for teachers to make their own observations of the children and to share their experiences with their colleagues (an ongoing teacher training academy). Out of this I described some 'floor movements', for want of a better expression, which my Class 1/2/3 had been carrying out.

It had occurred to me for quite a while that the practice of lining up the children outside the classroom and expecting them to keep still and quiet whilst we said 'good morning' (*bore da*, in our case) and shook their hands, was contrary to the ethos of accepting where the children are 'at' and gently moving them to where we feel is best for them.

Even here in peaceful North Wales, children come to school having watched breakfast TV, having been late to bed the previous evening, and having been over-stimulated by their siblings, the car journey to school and the early morning rush. When they arrive at school they are in the worst possible condition for being still and quiet.

I therefore began the practice of skipping to times-tables in the hall at the start of school and only afterwards, on returning to the classroom, did I welcome the children and proceed with the verses, songs etc.

During a visit by Ann Tandree, a valued advisor, she suggested that the children might enjoy 'mirror-image' floor patterns (as in form-drawing). This went very nicely, developed into circles and ellipses and, eventually, lemniscates.

On reviewing my day and coming to the question: Why did I do this with the children? I came to these conclusions: (a) it strengthens their

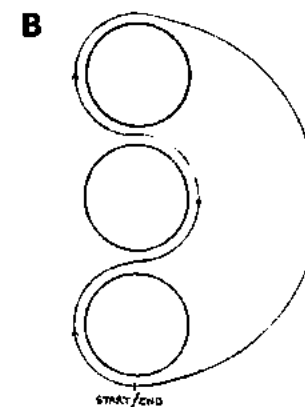
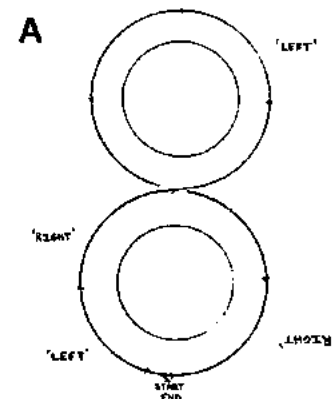
inner feeling for form as well as its outer expression; (b) it helps them with spatial orientation; (c) they are constantly involved in 'dynamic' thinking; (d) it educates all three soul qualities of thinking, feeling and willing; and (e) they *enjoy* it!

At that time, what with the unusual Class 1/2/3 combination, I felt the social cohesion of the class and their awareness of each other needed strengthening. Also, certain children still weren't sure which was left and which was right.

Starting at the end of two chalk-drawn floor circles [diag. A], one child would first of all walk to the left, holding out his left arm and calling out "left, left, left...", then following the lemniscate would hold out his right arm and call "right, right, right..." and so on, back to the beginning.

Some started to the right instead of the left; some plodded along, hands in pockets; some tripped along; some slid; one went around twice, then ended up spinning in 'discarnated' circles etc.

Later in the week, the two circles became three [diag. B]. I drew the walking pattern on the chalkboard. Again there were plodders, trippers, sliders etc. and those who, instead of forming the large semicircle at the end, went back around the smaller circles the way they had come. Shouts of



today, was more anxious than usual and unable to pay attention. 'C' is sanguine and also expresses all of the A.D.D. symptoms, but this exercise, as well as being diagnostic, proved to be therapeutic.

'F', who often pops up from her desk to 'borrow the pencil sharpener' etc., seemed to have very poor spatial orientation. She was also weak at arithmetic and pipe-playing. It occurred to me that these 'practices' had one thing, at least, in common—the will process needed in order to move from one stage to the next in correct order. In other words, to walk the floor-circles in the correct order, to follow the inner mathematical processes in order, to play the notes on the pipe in order. The other factor, of course, is memory, and I decided on the spot that 'F' should recall yesterday's story for us later on, and do memory strengthening exercises that involve reversing the words of a sentence and the direction of walking the rhythm of the sentence simultaneously. The floor exercises also proved therapeutic for 'F'.

At this stage, I felt I should be telling the children: "Take your hands out of your pockets; walk properly—don't slide" etc., but as it happened the *natural evolution of the exercises brought about the correction*.

After a few days, all of the children could walk the circles 'correctly'. At times they would call out to each other, "No, the other way!" Teacher became concerned. After all, he is the authority in the class, the children shouldn't be allowed to call out willy-nilly! But, hang on, this is also a social exercise—they're trying to *help* each other. Teacher condescended to the inner voice.

The next stage [diag. C]: one child at each end of the three circles, walking the same pattern

wrong way... from the rest. And some embarrassment: "Who has been chatting instead of watching?" Yet inwardly, teacher was aware that 'A' was still thinking about her new pet goldfish and 'B' for some reason,

though from opposite starting points. This is rather more confusing because now you become aware of the other walking towards you and always on the opposite side. 'F' immediately became disorientated and failed to accurately walk a 'circuit' which she had managed alone throughout the whole of the previous week. By the time the 'trippers' had reached the end, the 'plodders' were only half way round.

This was the opportunity to raise their consciousness of themselves and each other. The same shape was walked, one at each end, but now, if it happened that the partners were exactly opposite each other across the middle circle, they were to clap simultaneously.

Now, the whole class urged the skippers and sliders to slow down and the plodders to speed up. Already some partners were taking pride in their simultaneous clapping.

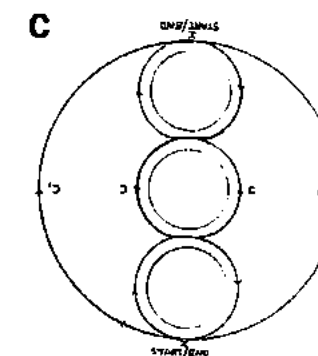
Next stage: to clap both on the inside circles and the outside semi-circles, if opposite each other at the middle circle (C₁ and C₂). Improvements were made from day to day. Teacher changed the partners—now the children had to become

aware of someone else—the choleric immediately accused their phlegmatic partners of being too slow! But the exercise continued to work. Adjustments were made until the new partners became more and more synchronised.

Next stage: if the partners were simultaneously at the end of the small circuit (pos'n X), they clapped. Now they had their backs to each other and they couldn't see where their partner was. A new 'sense' awakens. How do you know where your partner is without seeing her? Remarkably many of the partners managed this. Thus in each circuit there were three claps.

Review: What had been achieved over 1–2 weeks?

1. Left-right and general improvement in spatial orientation on the horizontal plane.



2. An urge on behalf of the whole class to improve the 'performance' of each child.
3. Self-awareness (especially of the sense of cohesion, and discipline within the class).
4. Awareness of 'the other' in general.
5. Sensing the position of the other without being able to see him.
6. An unforced sense of cohesion and discipline within the class.
7. 'Dynamic' thinking.
8. Pride in one's ability to co-operate with the other for the sake of the whole (which becomes evident in the beauty of the exercise).
9. A diagnostic and therapeutic process. Child 'C' was much more in control of his body and aware of his comrades than at the beginning and this was true of all the children.

Of course, there were pitfalls. The choleric, once having found a movement easy, looked for distractions. On repeating each exercise for the sake of the 'weaker' children, the melancholics would moan: "Oh no, not again." The chalk would be inadvertently erased from the floor by the 'sliders'.

Next stage: two teams, one at each end. When partners '1' reached the middle circle, partners '2' began. Similarly when partners '2' reached the middle, partners '3' began. This was much more satisfactory as the whole class was now in flow—no queues at either end. A new factor has now entered the picture—the possibility of collision exists. A new rule: give way to your right. But see how fair this is: if you give way at the first intersection, you find that you take the lead at the second. Inherent fairness—in movements!

The other consideration here is that, although a particular pair may be in tune with each other, they now have the possibility of catching up on the pair in front or of being caught up by the pair behind. This was becoming too complex for the class (and for me!) so I changed the shape. First, introducing it one by one, then in pairs, opposite, then with four at 90° to each other. Then at 45° to each other! Instead of calling out "Team 1" etc. I would clap: once for team 1, twice for team 2 and so on, so that the children really had to listen. The order of teams would vary each time: 1-2-3-4; 2-4-3-1 etc. Eventually they also carried out this shape simultaneously and once again had the

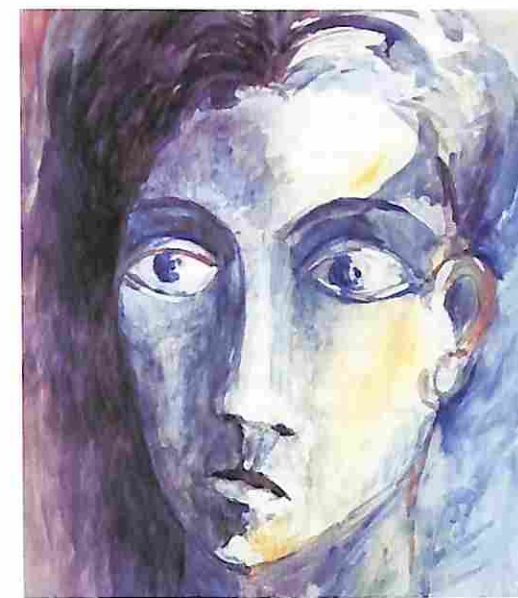
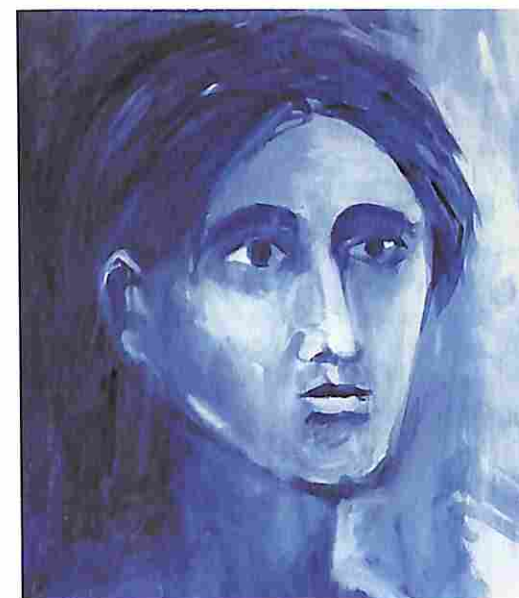
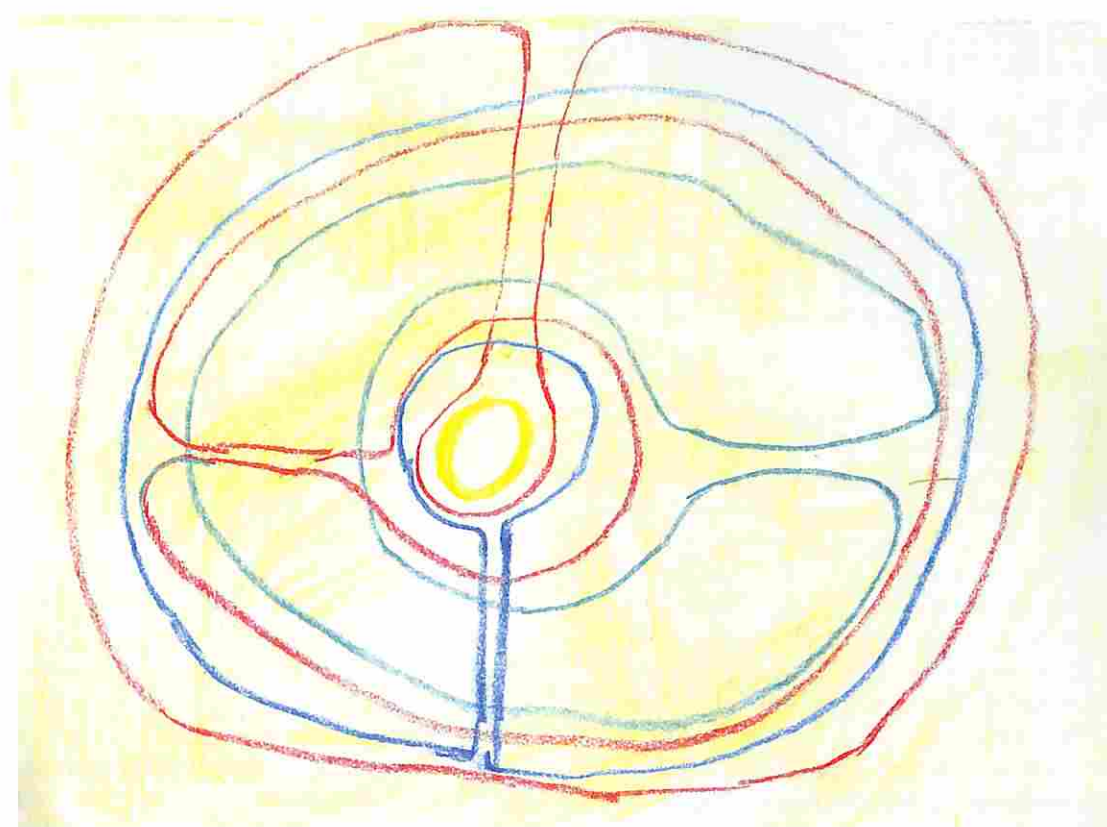
delight of experiencing the whole class in flow. Of course, new rules had to be brought in. This new shape became a one-off main-lesson, with the shapes drawn in their main-lesson books.

I would like to emphasise that the evolution of the exercises was organic and quite often (as we've all experienced) with the next stage becoming apparent during the exercises themselves. Not being a eurythmist, I found myself nevertheless having to think eurythmically. The process of bearing in mind the reason for doing the movements in itself led to their evolution. It was most satisfying to have not only an evolution in the main-lesson subject (*The Lord of the Rings*) but also in the movement period at the beginning of the lesson. In becoming engaged in the development of the movements and the inner experiences of the children, I found myself becoming enlivened and more interested in the pedagogy. Daily I was surprised to find an unexpected quality in the individual children and in the class as a whole.

In my short experience as a class teacher, and from conversations with other more experienced teachers, two things have become apparent: 1. The opposition to lively, joyful teaching can lurk within the 'recipes' of school and college life. 2. It takes courage and faith to 'be' (or continue to become) a teacher, some of which can also be derived from sharing such experiments as the above with one's colleagues.

This leads me to my final word, that is concerned with the interplay between what takes place in the classroom and what takes place in teachers' meetings—a lemniscate of a different nature. The occasions when a teacher has 'listened to' and engaged with the soul of a child are certainly the most stimulating and edifying in college discussions. Without this kind of shared experience, school life can deteriorate into a parody of its real nature—the realm of the stones instead of the bread of life.

Dafydd Griffiths trained to be a Waldorf teacher after a career as a radiographer. One of his main concerns, apart from the classroom itself, is to introduce Welsh as a medium for Waldorf education, something that he has recently discovered finds an echo with some members of the newly devolved Welsh Assembly. He teaches Welsh, as well as carrying the responsibility for his class, in the Ysgol Plas Tan yr Allt in Snowdonia.



(above) An 8/9 year-old's form-drawing of the movement, arising from the exercises described on pp.20ff. At this age the balance of right and left form part of the child's feeling more oriented within physical space. (below) Portraits that display a consciousness of light and dark as part of the awareness of, awakening to, and exploring of the young person's psychological/spiritual 'inner space'.

Planning Ahead: The Waldorf School in Riga

by SANDRA DISLERE

Founded in 1997, the Waldorf School in Riga is situated in the rooms of a former 'Soviet-type' Kindergarten building, which have been adapted for the purpose. At present, classes in the school cover the first six years (ages 6–13), but the aim of the school leaders is to organise a full Secondary school, with specialised teaching classrooms (physics, chemistry, biology and their laboratories, language rooms, computer suite etc.), workshops (wood, metal, ceramics, gardening, handiwork), eurythmy halls, sports hall and 'Aula' (auditorium).

At present both the school and its new Kindergarten are located in the former Kindergarten block. As an intrinsic part of the reconstruction and extension, we plan to create a specialised space, devoted to the Kindergarten.

In order to help us better understand the specific requirements and qualities of a Waldorf school, the way of teaching, the conformity of the building to the needs of the school and also to be able to compile a better programme of the reconstruction and extension of the Waldorf school in Riga, in October 1998 the leader of the North Rhine-Westphalia office, Mr J. Weiss, invited the director of the school Sandra Dislere and architects from the company 'A plus Architects' to visit several purpose-built Waldorf schools in Germany—in Bonn, Wuppertal and Münster.

After the visit to Germany, the Collegium here in Riga, together with the architects, analysed the existing situation in the school and formulated a concept for the gradual (step by step) reconstruction and extension, together with a development schedule. This programme was made on the basis of the existing site, while retaining the main fabric of the school, all within a 'low budget'.

Reconstructing and Extending the existing space

Nevertheless, to adapt the Kindergarten, and then

extend it to a full-sized Waldorf school, will necessitate not only changing the internal plan: the capacity of the building will also need increasing. We plan to cater for this through adding two further wings where it will be possible to house workshops and Kindergarten. The classrooms are envisaged as being in one wing of the school (south-east)—on the ground floor, first to sixth classes; on the first floor, seventh to twelfth classes. In order to provide separate entrances to the rooms, we plan an additional hall in front of the classrooms. In the north-west wing of the school will be a teachers' room, workshops and canteen (on the ground floor); with physics, chemistry and biology labs, music rooms and library (on the first floor). In addition, we plan to build a second floor—a lighter construction with a raised roof—for painting studio, storage rooms, computer suite, physiology room and guest rooms. The existing structure of the school will be extended north-west, as much as the site allows. In this wing will be specialised workshops with sheds. In the south-east wing, the Kindergarten will have a separate entrance.

The visual image of the reconstructed part

Due to the fact that the existing school building is very four-square in its shapes, one of the main tasks of reconstruction and extension is to transform it. The building of the second floor in a light wooden construction and a new, organically formed roof will offer an opportunity to do this. The fabric of the school is already considerably altered. In addition, we plan to replace the existing windows with insulated glass windows, while at the same time modifying their rigid shape. All the main features of the converted school will be highlighted with colour—in particular, warm colour tones on the façade and in the roof surface, which will harmonise pleasingly with the garden.

A snapshot of the future? Steiner education seeks to prepare the young person as thoroughly as possible for his or her life and career. But it is not seen as a vocational structure built in reinforced concrete, from which only a life-changing earthquake will liberate the adult individuality; rather it is seen as providing a range of master keys with which the individuality is empowered and at liberty to use to open doors.



New buildings—gymnasium and Aula

A Waldorf school would not be complete without its Aula and gymnasium. Since it is impossible to integrate these into the existing building, they will have to be built new. The layout is limited by and somewhat determined by the site—which stretches along the Ranka Dambis, parallel to the Uzvara Bulvaris. However, unlike the school itself, the gymnasium and Aula can be constructed from the outset in organic forms, corresponding to the philosophical background of the Waldorf school and according to anthroposophic principles in architecture. Nevertheless, in view of our very restricted financial circumstances, it is not possible to embark on both spaces at the same time. We therefore plan first to build the gym, which could also be used for different festival and social functions, and only later build the Aula.

Landscaping the school grounds

Parallel to the reconstruction and extension of the school itself, we plan extensive reorganisation of the school site. This is envisaged in several zones—a decorative garden, a study garden, playgrounds for the Kindergarten, areas where one can relax, and playgrounds for the children. We plan to enlist help from the parents and the oldest pupils in carrying out the landscaping.

The interior and colour

In reconstructing the school, we also plan fundamental changes to the interior and its colours, pulling down a certain number of walls in order to give more space for the children. Leaving the main fabric intact so as not to make the reconstruction process unnecessarily expensive, will, however, mean retaining rectangular shaped classrooms. But to soften this, we will put in wooden ceiling panels, as well as using those colours that correspond to the age of the children in each class (in the earlier years—warmer colours; in the later years—cooler colours). We plan to retain the existing staircases, while changing the handrail; but we will build new stairs to the second floor. As with the landscaping of the exterior, so with the interior finishes, we plan to draw in the older pupils and the parents as part of the workforce so that the benefit of their own input into the reconstruction and aesthetic image of the school is gained.

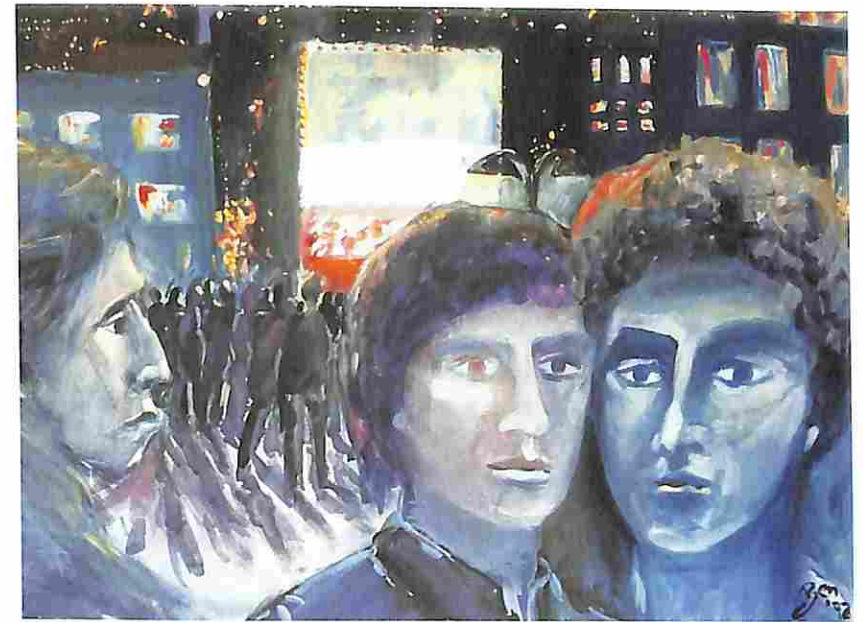
More information about the Riga school's plans, the school's status within the State system, and—for anyone wishing to give material support—how the costs of building relate to this, may be obtained from: Sandra Dislere, Director, Rigas Valdorfskola, Ranka dambi 3, Riga, Latvia.



(above) 11/12 year-olds playing a traditional Latvian instrument, in front of an 'old' twentieth century design. The experience of discord and its resolution into a new harmony is an integral part of education, preparing for life where the 'laws' of how to resolve what is discordant in society may frequently have to be created.



Folk song and folk dance have been central to the salving of Latvia's culture (see 13 year-olds, below, demonstrating a dance in the courtyard of their school in Riga). Limbs and voices in unison, as part of the child's educational experience, can be significant forerunners to the tough tasks of steering opposing views towards consensus in a world that increasingly needs to act globally and ethically.



Preparation for Life

The Mt. Barker Waldorf School's Year 12 Program and its outcomes

by TOM STEHLICK

The Mt. Barker Waldorf School is situated on the outskirts of a town in the hills near Adelaide, South Australia, in a rural setting but within commuting distance of the city. Established in 1979, the school grew steadily to the point where it has been able to offer a full Steiner-based curriculum since 1990. There are two Kindergartens, a Lower School comprising Classes 1–7, and an Upper School comprising Classes 8–12, with a current student enrolment of around 370.

When committing to the development of a High School program, the school made the decision to offer a school-assessed qualifying year that would be an alternative to the externally assessed or publicly examined South Australian Certificate in Education (SACE) which produces a tertiary entrance score and is seen as the recognised university entrance qualifier in this State.

The brave course of action by the school involved considerable work in developing the curriculum, as well as negotiating with education and accreditation bodies and the tertiary sector. However, the outcomes so far seem to have been worth the effort, as Mt. Barker Waldorf School is now considered as a model of best practice among Australian Steiner Schools, with some seeking to develop a similar Year 12 program based on the students undertaking a major project.

For many years now, Mt. Barker has been the only Steiner school in the country to offer a project-based Year 12, and over the last few years many families have moved to Mt. Barker from other States so that their children can attend the school. In 1998 Glenaeon School in Sydney—the oldest Steiner school in Australia—introduced a school assessed Year 12 based on the Special Project, in addition to continuing to offer the State Higher School Certificate. The Orana School in Canberra is also introducing a Year 11 and 12

program, due to come on stream in 2000, which will also base its assessment on the Mt. Barker Model.

I have three daughters who attend the Mt. Barker School: the eldest has been completing Year 12 this year (1998) giving me the opportunity to observe the process at first hand. In addition I also supervised another Year 12 student in her major project. Finally, as an academic in a university faculty of education, I am in a position to assess the standard of work attained by the Year 12 students against the benchmark of first year university students.

This article gives some background to the structure and process of the Mt. Barker Waldorf School Year 12 program, and discusses some of the outcomes for graduates, particularly in terms of performance in tertiary education.

The Mt. Barker Waldorf School Year 12 Program

The program is centred around a major project that each student undertakes over the course of their final year, in addition to main-lesson and other coursework. In Years 11 and 12, students undertake a course of study that is a culmination of the previous ten years of school work. Year 11 involves coursework in the core subjects of maths, history, English, geography, biology, physics, chemistry and social studies as well as the supplementary subjects of eurythmy, physical education, visual arts, music, drama, bookbinding, German or Japanese, technical studies and work experience. Towards the end of Year 11 each student has to decide on a topic for a major project and identify a supervisor who will provide guidance and advice during the process. The supervisor is generally a member of the school community—a teacher, parent or friend, and sometimes a professional from the particular

field of practice. Some examples of past and current projects are given later in this paper, but in general the students are expected to identify a topic that will suit their interests and also challenge their learning in a deeper way.

The coursework in Year 12 includes the core subjects of maths, history, English, geography, biology, physics, chemistry, comparative religion and the special project, as well as the supplementary subjects drama, music, eurythmy, visual arts, foreign language, physical education and additional electives where appropriate. It is worthwhile quoting from the school's Parent Handbook to convey an overview of the Year 12 curriculum from the point of view of the teaching faculty.

All the subjects at the Mt. Barker Waldorf School are taught in the context of a curriculum which is integrated from Class 1 through to Class 12. Each subject is *presented* in a way which meets the developmental needs of the students in the school. The developmental needs are recognised and integrated in the cognitive, emotional and practical emphasis of our teaching.

This leads on to an education which focuses on the subject content as leading to the development of an individual's full potential, not on the teaching of specific vocational skills. Needless to say, an integrated, mature young person with an overview of human learning and practical abilities will be well suited to finding a vocation which enthuses them and at which they are able to excel.

As a result of this, our Year 12 students study a comprehensive curriculum with a good balance of science, arts and humanities, as well as developing a variety of practical skills. This comprehensive curriculum fulfils a process of development within each subject. The subject content allows for extensive discussion, exploration of ideas and their implications for modern society, and personal expression. It does not aim to prepare students for a major exam, although students are regularly examined, hand up written assignments, complete practical projects and produce substantial (high quality) main-lesson books. The main-lesson books produced

are volumes containing comprehensive documentation on each of the main subject themes. A total of twelve volumes on different main-lessons is produced over the four terms of the year (these books need to be seen to be appreciated).

The requirements for the special project include meeting a series of deadlines: e.g. Literature Review (2000 words in March), Progress Report (3000 words in June), Oral Progress Report (June), Preliminary Thesis (September), Final Thesis (October), Final Presentation (November).

The project allows the teaching faculty to develop a very realistic assessment of a student's abilities in expression, creativity, endurance and the practical skills involved in bringing their project to completion, writing about their methods and results, discussing what they have learned in perspective, and defending their thesis at an oral presentation to a public audience.

To quote again from the Handbook: "There should be no misunderstanding: the Year 12 year is demanding. It requires personal initiative, research skills and a high level of commitment, to be completed well. The result of our program, we believe, is a graduate student with a unique relationship to learning; one which we feel will enable them to participate conscientiously and enthusiastically in any further study or vocation." However, the demanding nature of the program also means that many students do not last the distance. The 1998 Year 12 class started with 26 students, 21 of whom made it through the year to present their final report in November. It is always a difficult experience for the changing dynamic in a group of students who have grown together over twelve years when individuals disengage from that group.

Because the subjects at Year 12 level are comprehensive, the time allocated to single subjects is less than at other schools. This is particularly relevant to the maths/science area. The students will have explored most of the areas encountered in any science curriculum; they will have worked with the content phenomenologically in a very intense way; however, they will not have spent the same amount of time at more formalistic quantitative



aspects of the subjects as their peers in another school might have done. For those graduates seeking to enrol in some science degrees, a bridging course may be required.

However, experience is showing that what the students lack in practice of some areas of the curriculum, they make up for in their application to learning and the overview that they bring with them from the Waldorf School.

Pathways to Higher Education

A number of universities have accepted our students on the basis of the internally-assessed Year 12 curriculum. Here in South Australia, these include the University of Adelaide, the

University of South Australia, and Flinders University. As of 1998, the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre, which administers entry to courses for these three universities, has changed its admission procedures to a



computerised nation-wide system, which now recognises the Waldorf Year 12 program (as long as the school translates their assessment of each student into a numerical score) as being a qualifying entry pathway into any of the 37 universities in Australia.

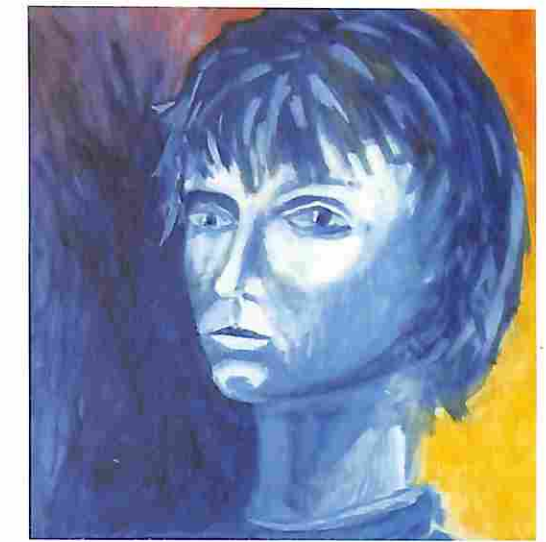
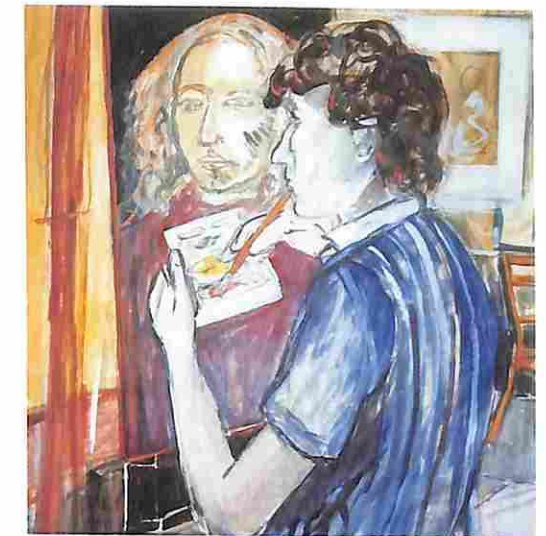
A relationship between the school and Flinders University has been particularly developed as a result of the successful performance of the first

cohort of Waldorf graduates to enter this institution on the basis of the alternative Year 12 program. Since 1991, Flinders has admitted 25 students from the school through a negotiated internal agreement into a variety of courses including arts, commerce, education, medicine, nursing, science and speech pathology. The university is very interested in the performance of this cohort and has been tracking their progress from the start, supplying the following statistics which show that the performance of our students has been well above average. Of a total number of 306 subjects studied by these students to 1997, the grades achieved comprised 29 high distinctions, 111 distinctions, 105 credits, 55



passes and 6 fails. Flinders University has confirmed that "they will be happy to continue considering applications for admission from students from the Mt. Barker Waldorf School".

While many Mt. Barker Waldorf School



graduates obviously go on to other things apart from tertiary education, those who do enter university seem to have a better founding for tertiary study than the average school leaver. For one thing, they are a year older, but there is increasing evidence to suggest that the nature and depth of the learning process they have

continued on page 43

Open Youth Education in Denmark

by TROELS USSING

In 1995 a very special form of education was introduced in this country.

The background: a number of adolescents were dropping out of the educational system too early to find a personal way for themselves. This may have been due to personal and social difficulties, lack of capacities for academic studies, little will and a lot of resistance to be in 'the system'. After a long debate, a political majority wanted to evolve and support a new way of thinking about youth education.

A new law resulted: Open Youth Education. This form of education for Danish youth gives the participant the right to governmental student subsidy. To qualify, the education plan must be created on an individual basis and must contain several activities. A diploma is issued when the plan has been completed, which may serve as a qualification for further education.

During the entire period of education, each young person is connected to a State-recognised institution and its adviser. There, adviser and young person in collaboration must work out a plan for the whole period of the young person's continuing, formal education. The plan may consist of a wide range of activities—such as study periods, periods of practical training, and a personally developed project. Periods abroad are also permitted as part of the plan. When the education plan is being set up, the individual goal is considered to be as important as the personal involvement in the planning of future activities, right down to small details. This way of helping adolescents to engage themselves has proved to be successful.

Before this new law was passed, the Rudolf Steiner schools in Denmark had been struggling to get attendance in Class 12 and Class 11 subsidised, to the same extent that it was in Class 10—i.e. fully supported by the State. One of our

difficulties in getting full recognition and subsidy in Denmark is the fact that we operate a 'free school' system, without examinations. The students in Class 12 finish their school with a project year, after which they receive a profile which contains a detailed description of the work they have done during their school career. With the new law, the Steiner schools got the very mechanism they had been longing for. Now advisers could be employed to follow and support the young people after they had left school—while Class 12 could be subsidised as being part of the individual education plan.

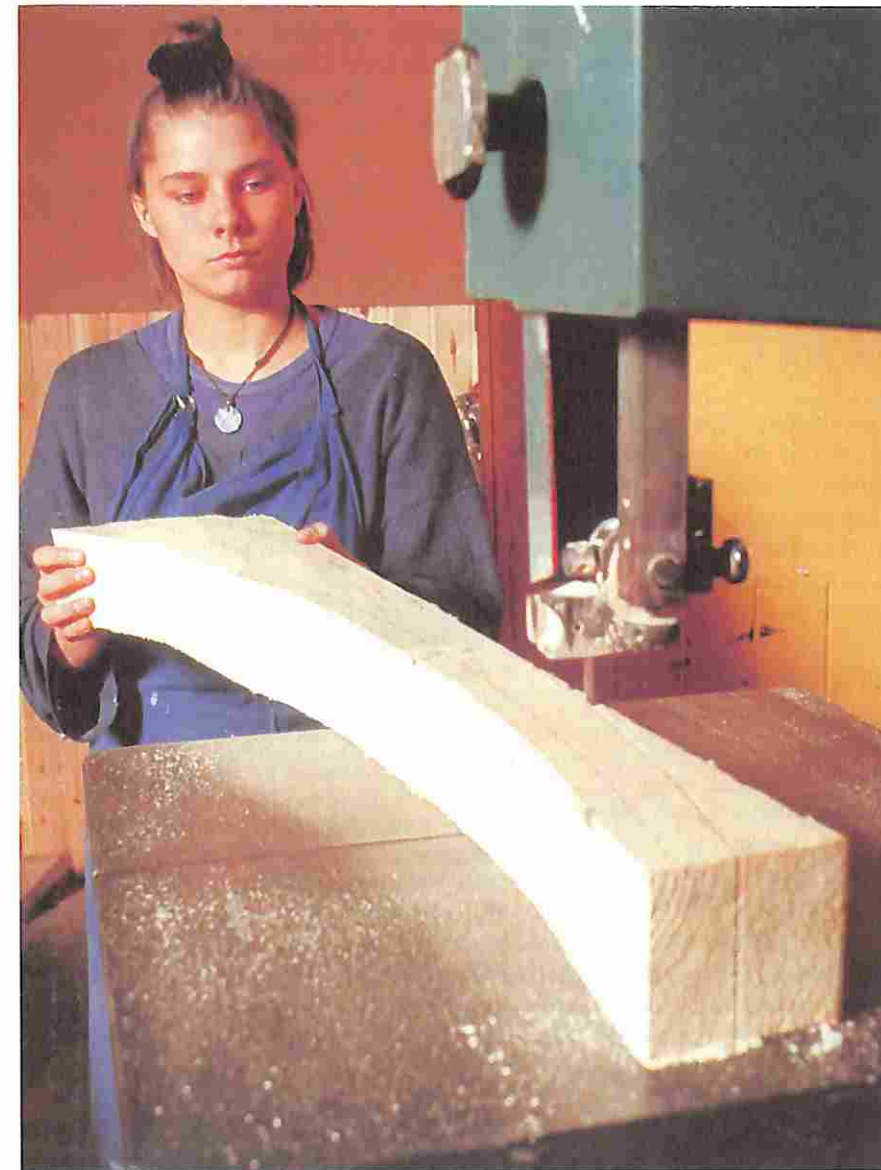
A description of how we are handling the situation at the school where I am an adviser will give an impression of the way the education plan is dealt with in practice.

During the last months before the school year ends, I visit Class 11 with the purpose of establishing the individual education plans. A conversation thus starts, which includes the broadest aspects of leaving school. Questions such as the following may arise:

- How do you imagine yourself in a profession in the future?
- What would you yourself like to develop personally?
- What kind of qualifications are you likely to need?
- Would you like to let your education plan serve a specific aim for further studies—or would you rather place emphasis on developing leadership capacities—or both?

Questions of that type are discussed in order to raise to consciousness what it means to leave school and find a path in life—and also to develop confidence in the new situation and in that which can not be foreseen.

A 5 year-old whose head is getting a good 'hand-start' (above). And (below) a 16 year-old gains invaluable work experience as her hand (and power-saw) are directed by a clear-cut, woolly-thinking-free head-start. Photo: Alik Sapountzi.



Later in the process, the parents of the youths concerned are brought into the picture so that they, too, are involved in the discussion. Often the focus is on 'dreams' and ideals versus earning money to make a living. It is very helpful if the basis of advising the students can be carried in an atmosphere of warmth, confidence and enthusiasm—in the belief that ideals can be of help in finding one's individual task in life.

The next step is counselling of the individual student. Some conversations are short—the aim is clear from the outset and the plan can be worked out fairly quickly. Others not so. For some youths there is a great need to look at their own situation fundamentally and in considerable detail. Often it transpires that there is an innate difficulty in discussing the future with adults, and it may take some weeks before everybody is on track so that they can start engaging themselves. By the time Class 11 draws to a close most students have their education plan in place. The year in Class 12 is the first stage, with the subsequent stages incorporating a variety of activities. A typical example could be:

1. Class 12: 40 weeks.
2. Folk High School: 20 weeks.
3. Studies abroad: 20 weeks.
4. Practical training: 20 weeks.

Many activities can be included in the plan, and all plans are designed to suit the individual student's wishes and needs. When the students have finished Class 12 they may make changes to the plan. Such changes often reflect the fact that the work in Class 12 has developed new interests and directions. However, such development of new ideas is considered as an integral part of the process—it has proved to be more encouraging to change an existing plan than not having any. When the students leave school they keep in contact with the adviser for one or two years; and the adviser will follow their work and progress according to the plan. The student can be in different parts of the world. Last year six of them took part in a study and project period in South Africa and Kenya, two were in music schools in Norway, one was in an art school in Russia, two were involved in social work in Great Britain, one was in theatre in Ghana and, of course, a number

did their study periods as well as practical training in Denmark itself.

When the education plan has been completed, the student and the adviser evaluate the whole period and together work out and formally record an assessment, whereupon a diploma is issued. The whole education plan can then be the stepping stone for further studies. But as often as not it is used as a basis for developing leadership rather than aiming at any specific, vocational goal.

Looking back at the few years that this form of youth education has been in existence, it is amazing to see how well it has been serving the need. Its success is clear. The students are responding positively to society, and, one may affirm, in a new way, with a feeling of not being under pressure, but being thoroughly involved in the shaping of a personal way of life—all in the fullness of time.

Before becoming engaged in advisory/counselling work in Open Youth Education of the kind described, Troels Ussing was a class teacher for many years at the Rudolf Steiner School in Aarhus, Denmark. He also energetically supports Waldorf education in several places in Africa in various ways.



OWEN BARFIELD
A Waldorf Tribute

Owen Barfield:
The Last of the
Inklings

In this *Steiner Education Monograph*, published in the centenary year of C. S. Lewis and Owen Barfield, some of the spotlight falls on a third associate, not the other well-known 'Inkling'

R. R. Tolkien, but Barfield's life-long friend A. C. Harwood, a founder teacher in the first English-speaking Steiner school in the world. Fascinating threads are drawn between the century's most influential writers of literature for the young and the Waldorf Movement.

Price £4.80. Sole Distributors: Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications, Kidbrooke Park, Forest Row RH18 5JA, ISBN 0 9530101 1 2.

Facing all that Future—Still!

A former pupil reflects on 'a life on the fringe'

by PETER DODWELL

New York City, 1933: my first experience of Waldorf education, in pre-Kindergarten I suppose, for I was only three years old. My father was on a Fellowship at Columbia University. Memories of that time are naturally quite patchy, although still vivid: the Statue of Liberty, skyscrapers, the Hudson river with its boats, fierce cold and snowstorms, the little black girls with their tight pigtails, the bucolic charm of Spring Valley, aggressive advertising and electronic entertainment. I saw my first film there: Walt Disney's *The Three Little Pigs*, as I recall. Perhaps all this gave me a foretaste of what to expect of life in North America, where I ended up for most of my adult career.

Proper schooling, however, started in Kindergarten at the New School, as it then was, in South London, later to become Michael Hall. Except for an interlude at Wynstones early in World War II, I spent the rest of my school career there. After Kindergarten this was divided neatly into three-year packages; 1936–39 in London, 1939–42 at Wynstones, 1942–45 in Minehead in the West country, where Michael Hall was evacuated because of the war, and 1945–48 in Forest Row, its post-war home. [These are Steiner schools in Britain. Ed.]

These were all happy times, quite diverse in lifestyle as well as education. I count it a great blessing to have lived for three years on a working farm on the Cotswold escarpment at a very impressionable age, while at Wynstones. This was living very close to nature, at a time when draft horses were still the only means of pulling the plough and mowing the hay; tractors were almost unknown! My particular contribution to the War Effort was to raise chickens and ducklings, selling their eggs, mostly to my mother. Boarding in Minehead and Forest Row also had its special pleasures, an amazingly rich and varied social, personal, as well as educational experience. Memories of teachers, and of their teaching, are curiously uneven. I remember little of the main-lessons of Frank Bircumshaw (Classes 7&8) but his music teaching was a joy.¹ Margaret Bennell at Wynstones, on the other hand (Classes 4–6), left a lasting impression, whether in Norse myths, Greek and Roman history, geography, or physics. In the Upper School the science lessons of Francis Edmunds were gripping, even though he sometimes got his units of measurement mixed up (!); mathematics was latterly my main love, so Arthur Sheen and Hans Gebert were important. On the negative side I have to say that natural science was presented rather historically, not as an ever-developing cultural activity to which one might one day aspire to make contributions. William Mann's history of art main-lesson was a *tour de force*. I can't give perspectives on all the teachers, but the one who stands highest in my admiration and affection was Cecil Harwood—even if he was the only one (so far as I remember) to whack me over the head for misbehaviour! His teaching of the classics, history and English literature were truly outstanding.

After National Service I went up to Oxford to read mathematics, something for which, I should note, I was not too well prepared, but the degree of specialisation expected of Oxford freshmen in those days was perhaps excessive. I ended up with a B.A. in philosophy and psychology, followed soon after by marriage to Hanna, an old scholar from the original Stuttgart Waldorf school, followed by a doctorate in experimental psychology—of which more later. In my mid-twenties I was appointed to teach in London University, and we decided to live in Forest Row. A clear path seemed to open up: to join in anthroposophical activities there, to send our children to Michael Hall, and perhaps eventually to switch careers following a taste of success in the outside world, like my friend John Davy. It was not to be.

In 1958 (at 28 years of age, be it noted) we decided to take a look at the world beyond our small but comfortable surroundings. Academic life afforded me the opportunity to take a leave of absence; we planned a year or two in Australia or New Zealand, parts of the world which, in those days, we thought there was no other realistic chance of visiting. That was in the days before Jet travel. But a colleague had just emigrated to

a position at Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, and suggested we go there instead. Canada seemed like an excellent alternative, so we went, expecting to stay a year, two at most. No-one could have convinced me then that I would spend the rest of my career at Queen's, and the rest of my life in Canada. The reasons for not returning to Britain were complex, but certainly that decision was a defining event in my life, perhaps *the* defining factor.

My academic career took off in splendid fashion (to say nothing of skiing, sailboat racing, and other pastimes!). Before too long I became a full professor, department head, visiting teacher at Harvard, and winner of several prestigious awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, and election to a Fellowship in the Royal Society of Canada. At one time or another I was editor of two international research journals, President of the Canadian Psychological Association, and active in research and on government advisory panels. I had the opportunity to travel to conferences in many parts of the world, and on Sabbatical leave lived for a year in Australia, another in the United States, and three times back in Europe. This sounds like the foundation for a successful life, right? Dig a little deeper, however, and matters take on a rather different colouring.

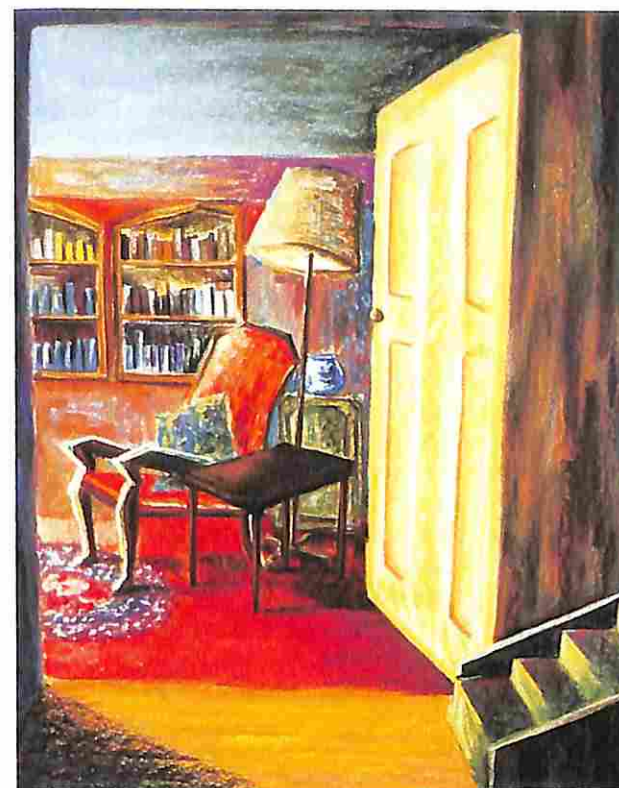
My first marriage ended bitterly, my second more amicably, but both divorces were very turbulent experiences, the more so because marriage and a close family had been a pre-eminent early ideal. At least the third time was very different! With my present wife Elizabeth I now live in retirement in Victoria, BC, almost the westernmost city in North America. So, from several points of view, I would characterise my life as one lived 'on the fringe': geographically (I was born in India, incidentally), careerwise (away from my spiritual 'home base'), also in terms of marital commitment, and of family. My children are scattered, from Western Canada to Germany—where my eldest son teaches in a Waldorf school—so there has been considerable uprooting there too. An even deeper schism, however, has affected me ever since leaving Michael Hall.

Rudolf Steiner often pointed to the Universities as seedbeds of intellectualism (obviously) and materialism. Probably they are not as relentlessly doctrinaire now as in his day, especially in North America, and particularly on the West Coast. Nevertheless, they are scarcely places where anthroposophy is cultivated or given a comfortable home. In biology, psychology, and many branches of philosophy, materialistic Darwinism is dominant. Having been brought up in such a different culture, how was it that I could comfortably go sup with the devil? Well, to do that I needed a long spoon...



Like many young people brought up in an anthroposophically oriented home (my mother was an Oxford-trained biologist, but later in life a priest in The Christian Community) and school, I needed to break free, strike my own pact with Old Nick, find out for myself what the modern scientific world had to offer as an Image of Man. I plunged with enthusiasm into the academic world, but always aware that its materialistic assumptions are at least open to question, even though I was far from knowing how to refute them. Once again, a marginalising position to be in. In my teaching and research such questioning played no role, until very late in my career, a matter of cowardice, one

Interior metaphors: a source of light, an inner space, and the personal realisation of something beyond—pictures by 17/18 year-olds.



might judge. Perhaps, but it was equally a matter of circumspection; to flout the conventional wisdom is to court indifference, and there would be no point to presenting a controversial point of view that would simply be ignored. Rather, I had to establish myself as a recognised orthodox scientist, one whose voice carried some weight in the relevant circles, before cashing in on my Faustian pact. So, my long spoon turned out to be temporal, and only recently have I started to work to undermine the orthodox doctrines of what is now known as cognitive science—the contemporary science of mind.

There is no space here to go into that; my book on the topic will be published on Christmas Eve 1999. I will just say that it aims to show, from *within* the Western intellectual tradition, that consistent argument leads to the refutation of materialism, even the strongest variety of it that stems from ruthless Darwinism. Want to know more? Keep an eye out for the book! It is titled *Brave New Mind*. This is not a book about anthroposophy, and is certainly not just a rehashing of Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*, although it does serve similar aims. It is an attempt to resolve the mysteries of mind presented by

modern science, many of them as yet unknown in Steiner's day, beholden to no authority or creed beyond the powers of normal reasoning, pointing the way to a more abundant image of Man, and thence to a less materialistic basis for all sciences. It took a long time to get there, but I trust the outcome will be worthy of the labourer's toil!

Any reader might ask: What has a Waldorf education meant for the lives of its pupils? For those who have gone into anthroposophical lifework the answer is obvious. For some there may be no discernible biographical result at all, but for many others the answer is not so straightforward, and I include myself in that number. The fringe I have lived on may be like the rim of a circle, that has come full around, or nearly so. It is perhaps premature to judge whether this adds up to a satisfactory life, or what might have been the case without that Waldorf start.

Some years ago I read of an interview with William Golding, in *Child and Man* I believe. (Incidentally I remember him teaching us singing before the war, probably in Class 2 or 3,



long before he attained any sort of literary eminence.) Asked what he made of anthroposophy, he answered—but perhaps not in these exact words: “Fascinating, even exciting: I wish I could believe in it.” My response would have to be: “Profoundly interesting: I almost wish I could *not* believe in it.” Why so? Because it has certainly steered my life in unanticipated ways, has presented me with challenges and questions I could not easily answer, and has left me to contemplate and live life on the fringe, not always a comfortable place to be.

Put it another way: one can play a ‘What if’ game, as I have occasionally done. For example:

What if my mother had not been told of Rudolf Steiner’s educational inspirations on the boat ‘home’ from India? I would no doubt have followed the Winchester-Oxford route planned for me, and ended up a mathematician or scientist in the conventional academic mould. A fate worse than death? Hardly, although perhaps not as challenging and on the edge as the life I’ve lived.

What if I had been given a good cello and an excellent teacher in my teens? I would very likely have ended up in a musical career. Something like a compensation happened in my late 30s, during a year at the Stanford University Institute for Advanced Study. By chance—or not?—someone there put me in touch with Margaret Rowell, a superb teacher, also a friend and pupil of Rostropovich, the world’s greatest cellist of the times. She took me on and, already a fair player, I was ready for her. Music has always been central to my life, especially chamber music: since that time I have also taught cello with enthusiasm to a few students, including recently some at the Waldorf school near Victoria.

What if I had not gone to that Youth Conference and met my future wife, a few days before she was due to leave for Switzerland? The chances of meeting again would seem slim. But again, who is to know that for sure? My wives have all been of Central or Eastern European stock, and not by any conscious or deliberate choice. Why could I not settle on some less exotic, i.e. English, mate? I even tried; the chances are, life would have been a lot calmer!

What if my colleague had not gone to Canada in 1957, and urged me to follow him? I might have spent a year in Australia, and returned to an academic career in Britain—or perhaps not. I loved Australia and Australians (for the most part)

and can imagine that a life there would have been more than tolerable. Incidentally many of my oldest and best friends have been from the ‘Old Commonwealth’: an Australian, a New Zealander, a Brit who emigrated there, a South African living in England, several Canadians, and British immigrants here. All chance encounters? Who can say for sure?

What if I had not felt the urgent need to visit Elizabeth (whom I had known for years) in California days before leaving for a year in Scotland? What was all that about? I introduced her to Steiner’s teachings then, but it is she who has spearheaded our subsequent devotion to his work. That’s what I meant by saying the wheel has come nearly full circle.

So, life has presented a series of challenges and puzzles, as well as joys, many of them related to my Waldorf education. Here is the main conundrum for one steeped in the traditions and faith of empirical science: Many events in life appear to be random, some are evidently the result of deliberate choice, yet others seem to be thrust upon us, let us say by destiny. How is one to sort out which is which? That first unhappy marriage, which steered me away from an expected path, one would like to attribute to bad luck; that third so successful one, which brought me back, to benign destiny. The fact is that either attribution lessens the weight of individual responsibility which should inform such important decisions. Choice of spouse, of career, of homeland, of spiritual path, are the great determinants of life, but how they come about is indeed shrouded in mystery. One is tempted to settle for the advice of the Scottish philosopher David Hume, given more than two hundred years ago, to reach for a good book, settle down by the fireside, and let the world go by.

So, was that Waldorf education a positive influence in my life? Undoubtedly Yes. My five children all experienced some Waldorf schooling, and, I’m happy to say, six of my ten grandchildren are currently enrolled!

Professor Dodwell would welcome correspondence, and may be contacted at 1975 Crescent Road, Victoria BC, V8S 2G9, Canada (email: pdodwell@uvic.ca).

FOOTNOTE

1 Though the names of these Waldorf teachers, now all deceased, will mean little to many readers, it seems relevant to mention them in the context of these reflections.

Something to Live For

Thoughts about Logotherapy on the anniversary of the death of Viktor Frankl

by MIRON BARAK

“The one who has something to live for, can endure almost any ‘how’.”

This quotation from Friedrich Nietzsche was chosen by Viktor Frankl as the opening of his discussion on the subject of the ever growing frequency of the various neuroses in our times, presenting Logotherapy as a possible way to treat these neuroses. A brief acquaintance with Frankl’s personal path and with his psychotherapeutic approach (Logotherapy) can enlighten one as to the reasons why he chose this particular powerful statement for the introduction of his psychotherapeutic approach. At the age of 38, after completing his specialist training in psychiatry and working as a psychiatrist in a hospital in Vienna, Viktor Frankl was taken to the Auschwitz concentration camp. He was forced to leave his parents, his brother and his wife, then in her final months of pregnancy, all of whom were taken to another concentration camp, where after some time they were murdered. When he entered the concentration camp, Viktor Frankl carried in his coat pocket the manuscript of what he conceived to be the major work of his life: his new psychotherapeutic approach with its essential points, which he had developed in his first years of work as a psychiatrist. Like the rest of those who were taken into the concentration camp, he was forced to surrender all of his personal belongings, when, despite his desperate entreaties that the manuscript be saved, it was brutally destroyed.¹

Logotherapy as a psychotherapeutic approach is centred around the endeavour to discover the individual meaning for which each person chooses to live—the meaning which each person tries to express through his actions and activities during his life on earth.

Viktor Frankl’s *theoretical* approach turned for him, during his three years of battle for survival in

the Nazi concentration camps, into a living reality of suffering, cruelty and degradation. He was forced to treasure the essentials of his lifetime’s work within his soul while constantly yearning for a termination of the camps and to continue to develop his work and to publish it. During his life in the concentration camp, Frankl experienced personally, and in a particularly cruel manner, the challenge posed by Logotherapy: despite the atrocities he experienced, he was determined to find meaning in every situation he encountered, be it as hard and cruel as it may. The concentration camp became thus for him a kind of a cruel living laboratory, where he put to practise the essentials of his psychotherapeutic approach on his own flesh.

The vacuum experience as described by Viktor Frankl

Frankl maintains that the central reason for the increasing frequency of neurotic disorders in our time is the special *vacuum* experience which develops in the soul of Western man. This vacuum experience stems from the threshold experience in which man stands today. As religious traditional frameworks, which were external and based on authority, fell apart, man lost the spiritual meaning which used to be a central driving force for his actions in life and for his creativity (a force which expressed itself in the most prominent way through the three main monotheistic religions). On the other hand, man was provided with new possibilities which kept increasing in number, and which provided him with numerous opportunities for satisfying his physical appetites and for amassing economical (in the form of money and possessions alike) and social power (by creating positions of power and

*An 18 year-old looks ahead.
Not only through the sciences
and humanities but also
through the world of art,
valuable inner resources can
be tapped and enlivened with
which to face the future.*



control over other people). Frankl claims that, on the one hand, the materialistic radicalisation which takes place nowadays in Western society, awakens man to search with ever increasing passion for opportunities for physical experiences, accumulating money and social power; whilst on the other hand, the absence of spiritual content within, awakens in the unconscious strata of man's soul a great experience of emptiness ('the existential vacuum'). This experience gives rise to the occurrence of the manifold well-known symptoms of anxiety and depression disorders (neurotic depression), or, as more generally termed, 'neurosis'.

Why is it that the symptoms that appear as a result of the vacuum experience in the soul are those of the neurotic kind? Frankl does not penetrate to this level, and chooses instead to move directly to the psychotherapeutic healing process, which he names 'Logo-Therapy'.

The experiences of 'the End', the 'Threshold' and the 'Vacuum'

The 'I' lives within body and soul; but the spirit lives in the 'I'. And what there is of spirit in the 'I' is eternal. "For the 'I' receives its nature and significance from that with which it is bound up. In so far as it lives in the physical body, it is subject to the laws of the mineral world; through its etheric body to the laws of propagation and growth; by virtue of the sentient and intellectual soul to the laws of the soul world; and insofar as it receives the spiritual into itself, it is subject to the laws of the spirit. That which the laws of mineral

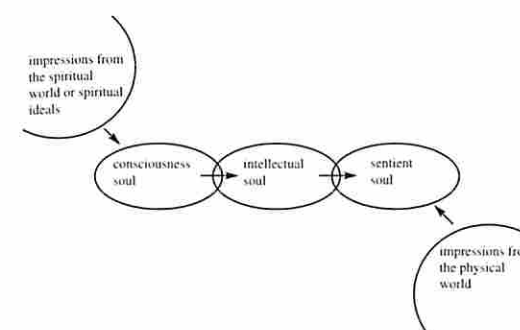
and of life construct, comes into being and vanishes; but the spirit has nothing to do with becoming and perishing."²

From the anthroposophical viewpoint regarding the structure of the soul, it is possible to see how, in many of those neurotic conditions arising from an intensive and one-sided absorption of sense impressions, the astral body and the sentient soul of man are flooded with their typical stream of nourishment (sense impressions from the physical world), whilst the spiritual stream of nourishment, which is meant to flow via the consciousness soul, does not manage to make its way into the soul and thereby balance the intensive and one-sided influence of the activity of the sentient soul within the entire soul.

The intensive and one-sided flow of sense impressions from the physical world into the soul (especially in individuals after the fourth seven-year period in their lives), on the one hand, and the absence of impressions of a spiritual quality, on the other hand, can gradually establish the unconscious experience of man regarding his own total finality. When the feeling of *eternity* (belonging essentially to the 'I' which lives in the soul) does not flow from the spiritual world via

the consciousness soul into the entire being of man, it is then that the un-conscious experience of 'the End' (as total irreversible death) becomes ever stronger. This End experience of man regarding himself and the world around him becomes such a dominant and one-sided force in the soul, that it may lead man to the Threshold experience³ and to the great vacuum which opens up before him.

The 'I', endeavouring to find space within the soul's stormy sea, and meeting so forcibly the great vacuum which opens up on the *unconscious level*, is forced in the first stage to retreat from its activity in the metabolic system; for it is in the metabolic system that its activity at the *unconscious level* takes place. The process of retreat of the 'I' from the metabolic system (especially in individuals with an hysterical constitution) leads on to the second stage, in which the astral body freed from the hold of the 'I', begins to act in a one-sided way in relation to the nerve-sense system in the organism, causing thereby the chaotic and unbridled activity of the latter.⁴ This process can bring about one of the anxiety syndromes described in I.C.D. Classification, such as: Phobic Anxiety Disorder, Panic Attacks, Mixed Anxiety and Depressive Disorder, Somatoform Disorders and Depersonalization-Derealization Syndrome. The states of health and illness in the soul, which Frankl refers to, can be further understood through the following model.



In a healthy condition, it is essential that a dynamic balance exists between the spiritual and the sensory streams of nourishment flowing into the soul. This dynamic balance changes chronologically according to the age and the developmental stage of the individual.

The healing element in Logotherapy from an anthroposophical point of view

The central healing element emphasised in Logotherapy is the process created between patient and therapist, in which a common effort is made to discover and identify the unique individual meaning of the crisis situation in the patient's life with regard to his destiny, and/or the deeper meaning for which that person chooses to live. In other words, this can be seen as an endeavour to identify the unique spiritual ideal which that individual wants to express through his soul and body during his life on earth. The process of uncovering this unique spiritual ideal (whether in a temporary crisis situation or in a larger context of the entire life of the patient), is the first stage in the psychotherapeutic process, and it can be called 'the stage of Consciousness'. A more advanced stage in the process is the stage in which the person connects himself with the ideal which he identified and tries to fulfil it in a concrete and practical way within the reality of his life. This stage can therefore be called 'the stage of Will'. In the background one can notice the unfolding of a third stage, a middle stage, which begins already during the 'stage of Consciousness' and grows stronger on its way to the 'stage of Will'. This soul-spiritual event may be called 'spiritual enthusiasm' (in German: *Begeisterung*).⁵ This stage can therefore be called 'the stage of Enthusiasm'. This middle stage is a central motivating force in the psychotherapeutic process in Logotherapy, and it enables the person to direct himself from the stage of Consciousness to the stage of Will, in which he already fulfils his vocation in reality. The therapist has therefore to be alert to the awakening of this feeling of enthusiasm in the soul of the patient, for without it he cannot be confident that the right process is actually taking place. Thus can this therapeutic process be conceived as a process of *filling up*, in which the person, through an activity of his 'I' which lives in him and is carried along on the wings of the feeling of enthusiasm, fills the empty space which had evolved within his soul with a spiritual counter-force which balances the one-sided direction of the soul, caused by the sense impressions. In his lecture of 18th December 1920 (the second of 'The Bridge' lectures),

Rudolf Steiner spoke about the special role of enthusiasm and about the strong healing force which lies in the activity of ideals in the human soul. In this lecture, Steiner presented side by side two models of opposite natures, which can also be understood as models of illness and healing:

1. Moral Ideals:

stimulate the warmth organism;
producing in the air organism sources of Light;
producing in the fluid organism sources of Tone;
producing in the solid organism sources of Life (etheric).

2) Theoretical Thoughts:

cool down the warmth Organism;
paralyze sources of Light;
deaden the sources of Tone;
extinguish Life.

From here one can penetrate deeper into the healing quality of the filling-up process mentioned above: the penetration of the spiritual substance (the spiritual ideal) through the warmth organism into the soul, fills up the vacuum created there. This spiritual substance can penetrate deeply into the physical body and create life forces in it, which will be set free from the physical body only after death, at which time they will serve as creative life forces in the world in which we live:

“Moral ideas, or ideas of a ‘moral’ religious character, which fire us with enthusiasm and become impulses for deeds, work as world-creative powers.”⁶

The healing process acts at first on the individual level by filling the empty space in the soul with the fiery warmth organism; but its influence is carried further, beyond the span of time between the individual’s birth and death, and becomes universal after death. The seeds of the life forces are set free from the physical body after death and join the life forces which form and shape the world. Thus, by virtue of their joining the world’s etheric forces, they serve as a counter-force against the tendency of the materialistic forces working to

turn the development of the world and of humanity in the direction of materialisation and death.

It is indeed difficult to find complete identity between the principle laid down by Frankl in his search for the individual spiritual ideal, or, as he chose to call it, “the search for meaning”, and the moral ideal which Steiner referred to in the above mentioned lecture; yet one may be impressed by the identical therapeutic element which exists in both approaches, and especially by the fact that Frankl succeeded in imbuing a concrete and practical psychotherapeutic approach, which is active today in many places in the world, with an important spiritual element. One may be especially impressed by Viktor Frankl’s personal path, in which he succeeded in withstanding forces of evil of the worst kind in human history (such as he encountered in the concentration camps)—forces which strove to powerfully destroy the human and the spiritual element in man—and to develop a kind of counter-force, an essentially modern spiritual-human impulse, which flows within the present-day world of psychotherapy as a healing force for many people in our times.

Miron Barak lives in Kibbutz Harduf in Israel. Apart from his General Practice, Dr. Barak is medical doctor for the Harduf Waldorf School, whose top class is now Class 11.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Frankl, Viktor E., (1959) *Man’s Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* Boston: Beacon Press.
- 2 The quotation is from Steiner, R., *Theosophy* London: Anthroposophic Publishing Co., which also see for the following terms: etheric body, astral body, sentient soul, intellectual soul, and consciousness soul.
- 3 It is interesting to note the similarity between the words ‘end’ and ‘threshold’ in the Hebrew language. The word for ‘end’ is pronounced SOF; whilst that for ‘threshold’ is pronounced SAF.
- 4 What is meant here refers to the variety of well-known neurotic symptoms which are expressed in a one-sided way through the activity of the nerve-sense system, such as: restlessness, tremor, dizziness, lack of concentration, palpitations, tachypnea, insomnia, tightness in the chest and other autonomic symptoms.
- 5 As to the concept ‘spiritual enthusiasm’, it is interesting to see the difference between these words in Hebrew and in German, as well as the way in which both words complement each other. In Hebrew the word enthusiasm stems from ‘flame’, whilst in German it stems from ‘spirit’ (*Geist — Begeisterung*).
- 6 Steiner, R., Lecture of 18.12.1920, GA 202.

Continued from page 31

experienced in developing a project and producing a thesis prepared them for the more self-directed approach that university demands.

A classics lecturer at Adelaide University (who is a parent of a child in the Primary School) told me that he had some “ex Waldorf kids” in his tutorials and was impressed by them—“I’m not saying they’re all brilliant but they’re very lucid and they’re very at ease. One I just picked... ‘Are you Waldorf?’... ‘Yeah’... and it’s because I think they come with a confidence because they have done something for themselves.”

Developing confidence seems to be a key outcome of the Waldorf curriculum, and one that is built into the special project process in the final presentation, where the students present their year’s work to an audience of teachers, parents, supervisors and other members of the school community. This occurs over two full weekends, and provides an opportunity for the community to share the struggles and achievements of each student as they talk about their projects and present their final work. For some students it is a real challenge to stand up in front of such an audience and reveal their own strengths and weaknesses, in particular to be able to identify what it is they have learnt and how they have learnt it. It is truly a rite of passage for the students in their eighteenth year—and one that the whole community can participate in and celebrate. It is particularly gratifying to be able to share in this as it gives something back to the community which has nurtured the students through school—a stark contrast to the anonymity and isolation of externally assessed examinations.

Examples of special projects

Finally, the range of topics chosen for the special projects also indicates something about each student, as well as the particular class group. The Year 12 class of 1997 included some large-scale projects that produced visible and lasting structures. For example, one student constructed a walled sense-garden within the school grounds that featured a fountain, a sculpture and interactive installations. Another constructed a series of holding ponds with reed beds at the

bottom of the school grounds to provide a natural filter for the school’s waste water. The most spectacular project was the construction of an outdoor amphitheatre on a hillside on the property of a student’s family outside Mt. Barker. This was completed in time to be used as the venue for the class’s end of year play, another tradition in the Year 12 program and one that the whole community can enjoy.

By contrast, the 1998 Year 12 class seemed to feature more introspective pursuits. While there were some practical projects including boat building, furniture making, costume design and instrument making, there were also many projects which explored art, music, photography, sculpture and creative writing. The student that I supervised, for example, explored the concept of synaesthesia—the relationship between sound and colour—producing a series of paintings and sketches in response to various pieces of music, some of which she had composed and recorded herself. This was an intensely personal creative process, yet the thesis which accompanied the music and art work was an outstanding piece of academic writing which analysed the process objectively as well as eloquently; in fact the standard of writing was far better than many of the papers that I see as a university lecturer. Supervising this project was a learning experience for me as well, which leads me to a final observation about this method of preparation for life beyond school.

In my opinion, the depth and breadth of this particular learning process extends beyond the individual student to encompass their class group, their families, their teacher and the wider community, and provides an opportunity for the individual learner to really come to terms with who they are in that context. This may not even be a conscious realisation at this time of the student’s life, but it has the potential to create a firm foundation on which to launch their identity and individuality into a world of lifelong learning.

Tom Stehlik is a former school teacher who now lectures at the University of South Australia where he teaches a specialisation in Steiner Education as well as subjects in adult education. He has been involved with the Mt. Barker Waldorf School since 1984.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Ring of Secrets by Alexandra Valentien, Minerva Press sb 176pp £5.99.

A ripping yarn this. *A Ring of Secrets* is the kind of summer holiday that 10 year-olds dream of—mysterious castles, treasure and shipwrecks. The two girl protagonists may exclaim: "Corking isn't it?" but Enid Blyton it's not. The story is interspersed with atmospheric descriptions of the weather, land and seascapes around the island of Rousay, Orkney. They leave the reader with a tangible sense of having been there and breathed the cold salt winds. The wild and stunningly beautiful settings help build up the mystery and suspense that runs through the book, and also convey the great joy of simply being alive in nature. A few line drawings accompany the text.

The reader, however, is never allowed to linger anywhere too long before being swept off into the next episode of what is essentially a girls' adventure story. The pacy narrative makes it perfect (wet) holiday reading, though the final twist at the end may be a bit hard to swallow for older readers—a search for treasure ends up revealing the true, aristocratic birthright of one of the girls.

Characters, including a large and lively female cast, are thoughtfully drawn. The contrasting temperaments, physiques and inner lives of the girl heroines are nicely pointed up and we see them rubbing the rough corners off each other during the course of their summer sojourn. There's an exciting hint of romance in the grown-up subplot. Adults also provide some nice touches of local colour—crusty old sea dogs, motherly landladies and several wonderful tales of selkies and Fin Folk. Occasionally, the author goes overboard with the dollops of local history, but all in all, *A Ring of Secrets* is a corking good read!

Rebecca Hubbard

Gandhi: The Truth Can Fight by Ann Lee Finkel, Ti-Jean Press sb 88p \$9.95.

Gandhi is undeniably one of the greatest historical figures of the twentieth century. He led India out of the British Empire through his non-violent struggle for Independence. Beyond his great achievements, what made Gandhi such an exceptionally inspiring figure was his ability to teach through example how to lead a highly moral life. This short biography is aimed at young people aged 12 to 16. It combines vivid anecdotes about important events in Gandhi's life and well picked quotes of his great thoughts. It clearly presents Gandhi's strong belief that social reforms needed to come hand in hand with India's struggle for Independence. It shows how Gandhi started these reforms by working on himself, transforming his character and his way of life to the highest degree.

The context in which the biography is set will give the young reader a good perspective on the culture and customs of India. It will indeed convey information about India, Hinduism, Islam, multi-cultural understanding and conflict resolution. Written in a simple and enjoyable style, this book deserves to be read.

Kati Marchant

Rhythms of Learning: Selected Lectures by Rudolf Steiner, Edited and introduced by Robert Trostli, Anthroposophic Press pb 366p £16.95.

This enjoyable, chunky volume consists of a number of

Steiner's lectures on education, selected and arranged so that, after an introduction to Waldorf in general, about two-thirds of the book follows the development of the child from Kindergarten to the High School, with a final chapter entitled 'The Arts in Waldorf Education'. The book's flow of thought will be familiar to readers of secondary Waldorf literature: it enables the serious enquirer to embark on the journey of childhood with an anthroposophical understanding of the child's nature and the aims of education in relation to it, as its port of embarkation. What Trostli has done is to present Steiner's own flow of thought in this respect and canalise it in a form that Steiner never did—though he was closest to it in his first major literary statement: *The Education of the Child in the Light of Spiritual Science*. This is not identical with secondary literature. It is a formidable task and results in a formidable yet engaging read, a read in which one can feel the tension between Steiner's exhortation to teachers "to reinvent the art of pedagogy and to make it their own, [challenging] them to do their own research and to develop their own approach" and the editor's endeavour to muster "a measure of selflessness [that] did not interfere or detract from Steiner's words" (from the Preface).

Inevitably, in the extraction of one lecture from this cycle and one lecture from that, what Steiner refers to as the symphonic structure of his lecture cycles becomes inaudible. However, finding in one volume hitherto separate themes—eroticism, Froebel, the musicality of the Jews, what is vital in teacher training, and dozens of others—does make for fascinating quodlibets, such as one might have heard in Steiner's day on the streets of Vienna as the student population processed through cobbled streets, say, on a Shrove Tuesday.

Yet it is not only the serious enquirer that will find the book an engaging read, even though its format and its considerable index suggest that it is the comparatively new-comer that the editor had in mind as his readership. Teachers and parents of pupils at Waldorf schools intent upon widening and deepening their understanding of the education may well be stimulated by discovering Steiner in this new context. Random examples follow (not intended as a quodlibet!).

"... A farmer understands the word nature to mean something very concrete... A whole wave moving towards abstraction crashed in upon humanity with the rise of book printing." (p.248) "...[T]he primitive ideas of socialists are threatening to flood our culture. (This will not happen if we succeed in achieving our aims.) Nothing will be beautiful in our civilisation any more, only utilitarian... We should not be sparing in our efforts to create a genuine feeling for the dynamic element that finds expression in architecture." (291) "If you give a child a doll made from a handkerchief [as opposed to a so-called beautiful doll] ... sculptural creative forces quietly move into the brain. (110) "Today we grow up in a social order in which we are tyrannised by the prose element in speech. A delight in music and poetry, as well as a yearning for them, should be encouraged in the growing child." (294) "People have become more nervous since the arrival of rail travel... We must aim at compensation for any weakening of people's constitutions due to outer influences by strengthening them from within." (138)

One could go on covering pages—as books are wont to do!

And the reviewer's nit-picking postscript? Perhaps the faces of gremlins *do* appear upside down when they smile victoriously (see diag. on p.147)!

B.M.

For World List of Waldorf Associations, see Steiner Education vol.33 no.2 p.44.

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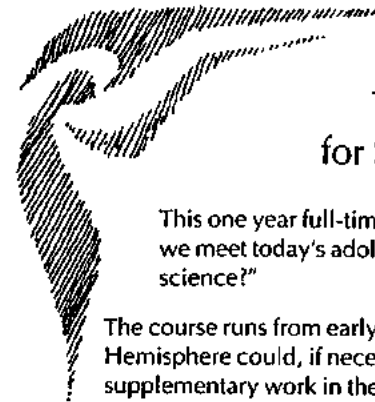


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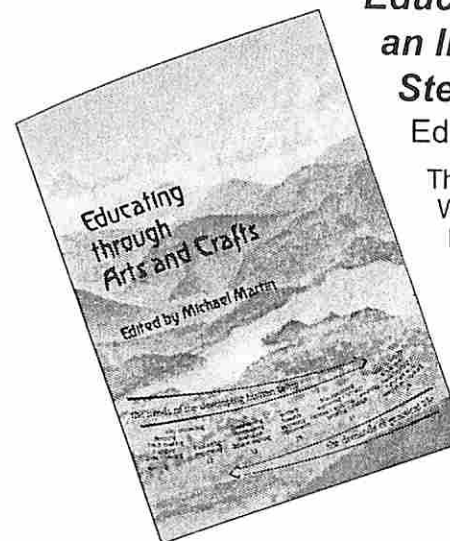
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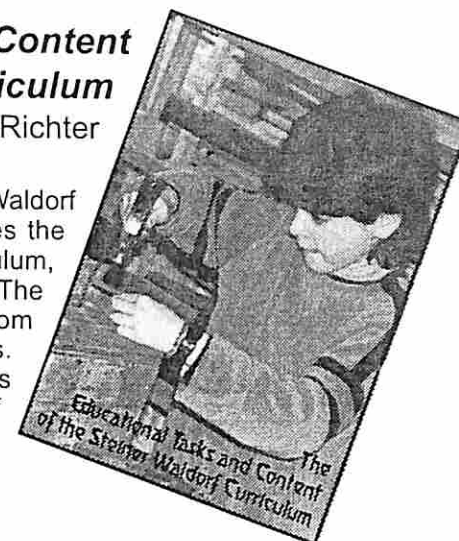
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Charity Number 295104

Park Attwood Clinic

An individual approach to health care.

Park Attwood is dedicated to working with anthroposophical medicine. Whilst recognising that not all illness is curable, one of the main aims of anthroposophical medicine is to stimulate natural healing processes. It has developed from Rudolf Steiner's pioneering work with Dr Ita Wegman, exploring how man's spiritual nature relates to the health and function of the physical body. The main function of the clinic is to give medically-directed therapy aimed at helping patients return to independent life.

Anthroposophical medicines are prescribed, in conjunction with conventional medication when needed, to treat a wide range of illnesses* including cardio-vascular diseases, life crisis and associated medical complaints. Patients also come to Park Attwood for convalescence and rehabilitation.

The therapeutic team at Park Attwood is multi-disciplinary one, consisting of qualified physicians registered with the GMC, state registered nurses and therapists qualified in their own professional fields.



Park Attwood is set in 7 acres of mature, landscaped gardens, overlooking spectacularly beautiful countryside.



Available at Park Attwood.

Massage & Hydrotherapy.

For all patients as part of a weekly timetable.

Art Therapies.

Including sculpture, painting or drawing.

Eurythmy.

Movement therapy derived from the element of speech and music.

Social & Cultural Activities.

Gardening, archery, spatial dynamics, poetry and music.

Outpatients services.

Consultations with doctors and therapists.

"Patient Plan" subscription scheme.

Please contact us for further information.

Please contact the Admissions Administrator to arrange a visit in order to experience first hand Park Attwood.

*The Cancer Act 1939 prohibits the release of information on the treatment of certain diseases to the general public.

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