

YSGOL NANT-Y-CWM

A RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL

"Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings, who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction in their lives"

Newsletter Issue 1

A warm and light filled welcome

A warm welcome goes out to all friends, new and old, as we introduce our first edition of the new termly Nant-y-Cwm Newsletter!

Our wonderful school, which focuses upon enabling the holistic development of each individual child, is entering an exciting and enlivening phase of its own development. With two new teachers joining within the past year, alongside continued support and participation from our strong parental community, our small school is moving forward with high spirits and enthusiasm!

This edition, which coincides with Michaelmas and a turning point in the year seeks to provide you with a glimpse into the life of our school.

Jessica Moraity.



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balance? One way is to consciously review our brighter moments alongside the difficult ones.

There is help too. Celebrating the festivals provides a path. When our energies are low the nobility and light of Martinmas lifts us. And then, the weekly light filled preparations of Advent are golden when outside seems dark.

Can we be bothered to go out in the cold; is the inconvenience of arranging what needs to be arranged too much?

Behind the obvious celebration the essence of any festival is effort.

The months ahead offer us freely the opportunity to kindle inner light and energy - the gift of a festival is the strength it can offer.

Michaelmas to Advent thoughts

When we look at images of Saint Michael we see two powerful pictures: a courageous fighter with sword held high and a balancer of souls – scales in hand.

If we ponder these images we feel our struggles with our own inner dragons whatever they may be. We can feel

with the falling of the leaves the weight and heaviness of nature at this time of year – nature's scales have tipped.

The challenge with both of these images is to action. To ignore the challenge is to follow nature's depression.

How can we regain the



Class 3 & 4 - the year ahead



During the last two years class 3&4 have learned the basics of writing, reading and arithmetic. Now they are ready to develop their skills further and embark on the amazing journey of the class 3&4 curriculum.

Around the age of nine, the children enter a new stage of development where they begin to differentiate themselves from the world around them. The Wadorf curriculum has been designed to support children during these important times of change.

This year, the children will learn about Mankind's relationship to the world through the Old Testament stories, Farming and Building lessons. This rich subject matter will allow them to develop their literacy and mathematical knowledge.

Throughout the year my class and I will be looking at how the land around us is used. We have already watched a local farmer* harvesting a field of barley to feed his cattle during the winter. Further studies will take us on visits to mixed, dairy and livestock farms. We will

also put into practice our studies by sowing and then harvesting the fruits of our vegetable garden as well as a cereal crop.

After having learned how Man works the earth to feed himself, we will study how he protects himself from the outside world. We will be visiting an iron age round house, a modern straw bale building and a conventional construction. We will also learn about the different trades that come together in the building of a house. Throughout the year we will be getting our hands dirty and applying what

*“Four seeds in a hole:
One for the rook,
And one for the crow,
One to rot,
And one to grow”*

Country Wisdom

we've learnt in a building project for the school grounds.

Maths this year takes us into the world of measurement of space and time. From the days of the week, months and seasons, imperial and metric we are led to the sequences in the building trades and units used in food production and cooking.

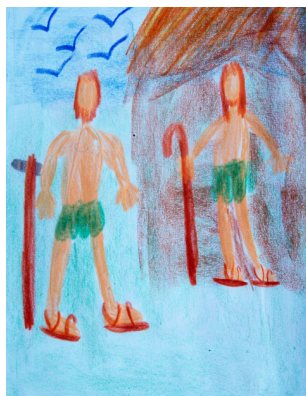
The children will keep a record of their studies in their Main

Lesson books, developing their literacy skills, using their neatest handwriting and drawing beautiful pictures. At the end of the year these will be carefully bound into a very special Year Book that they can be proud of and cherish for a long time.

** Diolch yn fawr Howell, for letting us know when you were harvesting and making us welcome.*

Wendy Pattinson

From the creation to creating



Advent

From ancient times festivals have marked the natural rhythm of the year. Rudolf Steiner describes the earth's seasonal cycle as a rhythm of inhalation and exhalation. The mid-winter period is like the midnight hour of the year, when nature has become dormant as the earth inhales.

As human beings, we have the opportunity at this time, to experience our inner-most being and to kindle the light of an inner fire.

Festivals play an important part in the life of a Waldorf school. The passing of the seasons are natural rhythms which

we can help the children experience in ways that will speak to their natural feelings of reverence.

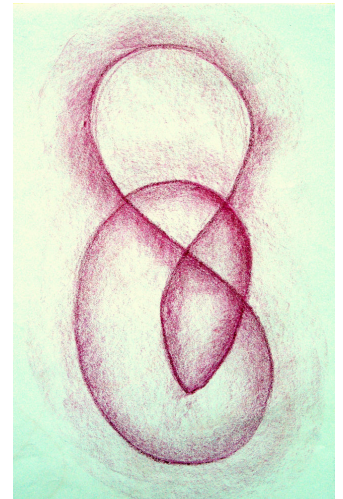
The Advent Spiral is celebrated in the first week of December, beginning the process of looking forward from the dark days of November to the light of Christmas.

The Advent garden is a spiral pathway formed with greenery. At the centre of the spiral a large candle is lit. One by one the children take their candle and walk the spiral path to the centre. There, they light their candle before walking back along the path and placing

their candle along the way. In a darkened room the beauty of the spiral unfolds in candle light.

In school children make Advent wreaths from evergreen branches. Four candles representing each Sunday of Advent are lit as Christmas approaches. The children experience the growing light and the essence of Advent. An Advent garden is made in the classroom on the nature table. Stories are told and songs are sung. Advent calendars make each day special and support the mood of anticipation.

John Davis & Niki Hurst



"Shine little light and show us the way to Christmas day."

H.St John

Make your own Advent Garden

During Advent, a time of anticipation and preparation there are many things that you can do with your family to bring the spirit of Christmas into your home.

A lovely family craft activity is to make an Advent Garden.

Use a brown cloth as your foundation and lay it where your children can see and touch it.

At one end of your garden build a shelter (bark is a lovely material to work with). Leading back from the shelter create a path laid with beautiful stones for Mary and Joseph to journey along together. The Mary and Joseph figures can be simply made with felt or teased wool.

A dark blue cloth, behind or above your garden, adorned with straw or felt or paper stars will support the mood of your creation and make the scene whole.

Every evening after story time your children can move Joseph and Mary a little further on the stone path towards the shelter. Finally, on Christmas eve, they settle in the shelter, ready to

receive the child on Christmas morning.

During the first week of advent, with Mary and Joseph at the start of their journey and the beginning of the path, you can add stones or crystals to beautify the garden.

In the second week gather some moss and other plants and lay them in the garden – the scene is being developed.

In the third week add some animal figures, a different quality is now revealing itself.

The final week for the Advent garden is when the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms are ready to welcome more human presence, perhaps shepherds – four kingdoms.

Building and living with an Advent garden engages both the will and imaginative faculties of young children – a gift.

Lucy Infray



Book suggestion:

The Christmas Story Book, collected by Ineke Verschuren, Floris Books.

The Light in the Lantern stories for an Advent Calendar, Georg Dreissig, Wynstones Press.

Mary's Little Donkey and the flight to Egypt, Gunhild Sehlén, Floris Books.

The Christmas Craft Book, Thomas Berger, Floris Books.

"Make your house fair as you are able... trim the hearth and set the table.... people look East the time is near...of the crowning of the year"

Traditional Carol

Class 1 & 2



2011-2012 will unfold as a year of adventure and discovery for the children of class 1 & 2! From the first few days at school we began this process; hearing stories rich with mystery and enchantment. From the basis of such stories, our children began to draw beautiful pictures with vibrant wax crayons and coloured pencils. All are encouraged to express individuality, whilst learning how to develop skills of observation and artistic technique. Forms and figures within these pictures are later picked out and revealed as letters within the alphabet during our first 'Main Lesson' block of the year.

Jessica Moraity



"It is a strange thing that an age which has discovered so many marvels in the universe should be so conspicuously lacking in the sense of wonder"

A.C.Harwood



Support and Inspiration for Parents



The parent and toddler group aims to provide a place where parents and children under three and a half can communicate through play, songs, artistic and practical activities. It seeks to provide a peaceful environment free of pressures, **where children can find the time, space and equipment** for creative play.

Parents might also find some

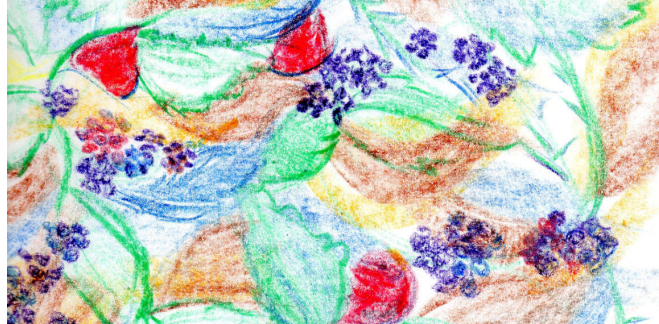
stillness, support or inspiration from each other for everyday parenting .

Sessions have a rhythmic structure and the seasonal songs and stories are repeated for each half term, so children and parents may learn them by heart!



Kindergarten - Blackberries and Apples

Picking blackberries, filling the basket, eating them too. Then to the orchard to find the apples first on the floor; it doesn't matter if they are bruised we can use the rest. Shake the branches, more fall down, busy little children. Now up the tree, can you reach that one? Off to the woods across the slippery bridge, take care, then through the puddles. The water runs high with all the rain. Home to Kindergarten with our harvest of the good things that the earth has given to us, that the sun has shone upon and made ripe and sweet. Pulling the stalks out of the blackberries, peeling and chopping the ap-



ples, boil until soft then add the sugar, heat the jars and pour it in. Make the covers and labels. At last we have a harvest gift fit for a King. The process from start to finish, appreciation for the food that we eat and the turning of the year. This is what

the children experience in Kindergarten. Each day, week, season and year has a rhythm that makes the children strong and healthy.

Janet Brackenbury

"...to the orchard..."



Drama - language in classes 6-8

In the English curriculum from class 6 to 8 there is a strong emphasis on discussion and the exploration of language. Shakespeare is a fitting vehicle for children to go deeper into grammar and experience poetry and literature.

A Midsummer Nights Dream, performed this summer, a hap-hazard farcical tale of the futilities, joys and pains of love, a dream where strange things happen by magic stretched the children emotionally and vocally. Whether colloquial, polite, slang or proper the classes were exercised fully in their use of language.

Explorations of Shakespearian insults - 'You bead! You acorn!' as well as the affectionate lines of the lovers, 'Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood' appealed differently to each cast member.

Was Bottom really trying to help Quince, or was he enjoying finding ways to persuade everyone to do what he wanted to do? Is Lysander a Casanova or was he a love struck romantic?

Is Puck feared, adored or both? Did Thisby secretly want to upstage Pyramus with his overly dramatic death?

These are questions that live long in the soul.

A big well done and congratulations to all the children for all their efforts, laughter and talents that shone through as they took to the stage.

"You could really see the children, really see who they were and how they felt through the language. They brought something of themselves to the show" Audience Member

Leila Abuhilal, Drama Teacher



Spotlight on a past pupil - Xander

Only 15 years old and Alexander Fox-Robinson has already exhibited his work publicly. He has sold drawings and paintings for several years and after his first solo exhibition this year in Haverfordwest Xander has a second planned for January in Fishguard.

Xander says, "I have been drawing from the day I could hold a pencil and still do every day. With every drawing I have

done, I can see what I should do better in the next one. Talking to people gives me ideas and seeing other people's sketches and paintings inspires me to try something new."

Xander is particularly inspired by Manga art and Venetian masks.

The Blitz

by Alexander Fox-Robinson



Contact Nant-y-Cwm

If you are interested in a Steiner education for your child, would like more information about anything that you have read, or are interested in getting involved, we would love to hear from you!

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Parents Diary

Festival Celebration Information for Parents

Martinmas – Fri 11th
 November 2011
 (3.45pm)

Advent Spiral – Mon
 28th November 2011
 (3.45pm)

End of term festival –
 Wed 14th December
 2011

Epiphany – Friday 6th
 Jan 2012

St David's Day Cele-
brations – Thurs 1st
 March 2012

End of term festival –
 Fri 30th March 2012

Mayday – TBC

St John's – Mon 25th
 June 2012

End of term festival –
 Friday 13th July 2012

Noticeboard

Advent Fair - Saturday 19th November – 11am

This fundraising event is also your opportunity to buy Christmas gifts from the craft stalls and sample the culinary delights of dishes donated by the school community, and exchange news with friends, old and new.

For more information or to have a stall contact:
 Natasha on 01437 563991.

Orchard Management Workshop – Sat 12th November – 10am to 4pm

Come and learn the art and craft of orchard management with Paul Davis, expert in fruit trees, particularly varieties local to SW Wales. Subjects covered will be where to plant orchards, varieties, grafting, root-stocks, planting, manuring, aftercare, pruning, pests, diseases, picking and storing. Practical work will involve planting and pruning of many mature trees in our school orchard. The cost will be £20 per person (we need 17 to cover costs). Bring lunch, energy and enthusiasm! This should be an enjoyable community event and will give our orchard some TLC.

Please contact bryanwasson@hotmail.com on 01994 448872

Open Day Sat 5th May 2012

Fundraising event Summer Fair – Sat 23rd June 2012

Work Days

The school relies on volunteer help to maintain the school and grounds. These are fun, community events. Please bring food to share, tools and children. Saturdays, 10am start. For more information, or if you have a particular skill to offer, please contact:

Tom Barrow on 01437 532890

The next work days are: **5th November (followed by a bonfire, warm soup and lots of fun), 10th December, 14th January, 11th February, 10th March, 14th April, 12th May, 9th June, 14th July.**

Volunteering

If you have a particular skill, or simply energy and enthusiasm to offer, please get in touch.

"The proper content of education is something you carry with you, not something you leave behind."
Rudolf Steiner

