

The St Michael Steiner School



September 2021

The St Michael Steiner School, Park Road, Hanworth Park, London TW13 6PN

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MICHAELMAS TERM 2021

October

Monday 4th - Class 7 parents' evening
Wednesday 6th - Class 8 parents' evening
Thursday 7th - Class 9 parents' evening
Thursday 14th - Class 1 parents' evening
Friday 15th - Class 12 parents' evening
Monday 18th - Class 5 parents' evening
Thursday 21st - break for half-term
Friday 22nd - INSET DAY

HALF TERM — 25th-29th October

November

Monday 1st - back to school
Thursday 4th - Class 10 parents' evening
Thursday 18th - Class 11 parents' evening
Saturday 20th - OPEN DAY, 11am - 2pm
Monday 29th - Off (long weekend)

December

Friday 17th - end of term

St Michael's at 20

This month, quietly and unassumingly, our school passed an important milestone: it is twenty years since The St Michael Steiner School first opened its doors.

In September 2001 I was eleven, a pupil in the first Class 6, and very close with all three of the school's founders: my class teacher, Brian Jacques, my godmother, Leigha Hipkin, and my mother, Amanda Bell. In many ways I still look back at that year as one of the happiest of my education. Although it was not without its difficulties—as many of you will know, being eleven is no mean feat—I found myself amongst wonderful friends, in beautiful classrooms, and taught by teachers with the enthusiasm and innovation of pioneers.

Of course, the school at that time looked very different from the school we have now. Before we settled at Hanworth Park The St Michael Steiner School enjoyed its infancy up eight flights of stairs, in the topmost corner of the West Hill Primary School in Wandsworth, and the door that opened twenty years ago was a heavy blue door at the back of an imposing Victorian school building.

Brian, Leigha and Amanda met whilst working at The Waldorf School of South West London (now The London Steiner School). I was in Brian's Class 5, Leigha held an off-site Kindergarten—The Cresset—down the road in Balham, and Amanda's class was coming to the end of its eight years. All three felt it was time for something new.

By Leigha's account Brian and Amanda were already imagining how they would run a school.

'Well, we had these meetings every week at Brian's flat,' Amanda says. 'We envisaged this school, and we actually got quite far with it, I mean we had quite a good picture of it. We wanted a way that could ensure the teaching was good. A school that was not dogmatic.'

As the imagination began to turn to reality Leigha told me that 'After meetings we used to go for a curry at the Indian caf on the corner and then we'd get in Amanda's car and drive and we'd sit outside West Hill, looking up. That's where we did a lot of our planning and a lot of our chatting.'

The staff at West Hill were very welcoming—especially the caretaker, Dan, who was a supporter and friend to St Mike's (as Roy Allen affectionately calls us) throughout our time at West Hill—and when I ask Amanda about setting up the school she says 'It was all so easy. It must have been meant [to be] because we left school in July and in September we were in a new school.'

‘We were only in [the building] three weeks before the school opened,’ Leigha says. ‘And so it was madly hectic, but wonderful. It was a wonderful thing. We were all painting and Class 6 came along, and I remember Daniel’—Leigha’s son, and my classmate and good friend—‘and Hanry’—another of our friends—‘painting those brown victorian tiles in the Kindergarten pink and white. We were getting deliveries of desks, painting chalk boards, and parents were coming in and helping.’

But although the stars were aligned, on 11th September, the day before the school was due to open, everything was interrupted by events more than three thousand miles away. In those days none of the founding teachers had mobile phones, but one parent volunteer—Greg Cottle—had a work phone. He was painting the corridor when he got a call; he had a relation in New York, and it was Greg who broke the news to Amanda, Leigha and Brian.

No one knew how to react, and so preparations for the school continued, everyone pitching in, while bits and pieces of information came in. Eventually, Leigha recalls meeting with Brian and Amanda. ‘We went and stood in Brian’s classroom and at that time we knew that one of the planes had come out of Boston [very near Brian’s hometown] and we said to him, “Look, do we open tomorrow? If you think we should delay it, we will.” We were very quiet and I just remember the three of us standing together and he said “It feels like something good has to happen in the world tomorrow, and this is a tiny thing that’s good.” So we said yes, we’ll do it.’

Although I remember well the hectic days of preparation—painting classrooms and carrying locker desks to the top of the building—and I remember the year that followed—French lessons with Michèle Hunter, fundraising to go to Hadrian’s Wall, and playing ‘Office Chair Quidditch’, a game invented by Daniel, my brother Billy, and me, while we waited for our mothers to take us home at the end of the school day—I do not remember 12th September 2001.

‘Each of the three of us asked someone to be a trustee.’ Leigha told me. ‘And I thought [these people were] so honest and true and good that if [they] agreed to be trustees, then we were definitely doing the right thing. And they did. They agreed.’

‘On the first day [the pupils] were all sitting on the ground and Sally Jenkinson [a trustee] brought a puppet, a lamb, and she sat on the floor with the Kindergarteners and the Class 1, and she did a puppet show. Then Brien Masters [who led the London Waldorf Teacher Training Seminar at the time, and taught Amanda, Michèle, Leigha and many of the other teachers who have worked at our school] spoke about Michaelmas as a time of power and a time of truth. He talked about how good will shine through across the world. It spoke to [the pupils] in one way, but was also solace for the adults in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. And then he said ‘Stand!’ and we stood to speak a Michaelmas verse, addressing the fact that we had chosen to call the school ‘St Michael’s’.

‘I do remember it being joyful, full of promise, and this kind of out breath... and now we begin.’

Towards the end of our conversation I asked Leigha, if every Steiner school in the world has a particular purpose, a particular role, what is our role?

‘It’s that we’re an urban school, in London, and we’re striving to be there for everybody. The fact that we’ve now got a High School and we can provide for people from birth to eighteen—for me it’s alive, it’s current. And my wish is that it will never be stuck.’

‘At St Michael’s there’s ample opportunity to deepen your understanding of anthroposophy if that’s what you want. But the first school was not specifically for the children of anthroposophists. It was for the children of the workers at the Waldorf Cigarette factory. In that first school the children of Emil Molt [the factory’s director] were sitting beside the children of the factory workers, and so in one fell swoop they addressed the divisions of class. They were immediately co-ed, all religions were welcome and had their religious teachings there. It was all there in the very first school.’

From the handful of teachers who were there on 12th September 2001, we have grown into a strong collegueship of nearly thirty individuals; in the intervening years many wonderful families have joined us—and graduated!;—Amanda and Brian opened the first Steiner High School in London for almost seventy-five years; and the school has moved to the beautiful greenery of Hanworth Park, where classes work their own garden plots, and year after year pupils build new structures for the school’s use.

There is—and always will be—work to do, to be more inclusive, to build better premises, to develop as educators, to grow as a community. But when I think of the school in this moment, one picture rises.

Since the beginning of term, as the warm weather has lingered, most of the teachers have found ourselves outside at break time, eating and talking, and watching; and whether it is class one setting up little shops, or class three building dens, or class six whispering and wandering in tightly-knit packs, or the High School boys playing manhunt in amongst the forest—it is clear to see that the heart and soul of our school is alive and thriving in our children.

Stella Ottewill

Michaelmas

On Wednesday 29th September the school celebrated the festival of Michaelmas. The festival comes each year at the end of harvest time and marks the beginning of the farmers' year. The story that stands behind the celebration, as the days get shorter and colder, is St. Michael's battle in heaven against the dragon, the casting-out of all that hinders us - laziness, deceit and fear. It is a call to wake up and have courage and has become a festival of new resolutions and of the will to carry them out; to bring attention, effort and order to one's life, one's surroundings and one's community; a perfect celebration for a new school year, in other words!

This year, following an assembly, pupils and teachers worked harder than ever in the Autumn sun to look after our school grounds. We were then treated to bread and soup prepared by classes 1 and 5, which was followed by the much anticipated 'Dragon Game'.

Here are some photos from the day.













Class 9 building project



Our new Class 9 have been feverishly working away for the past 4 weeks in their building project. Using 360cm lengths of 9.5x4.5 planks these industrious students have been able to make 5 benches, 2 picnic tables, 3 balancing beams of varying difficulties, 2 cross frames for log cutting, 2 personalised coat racks themed on day and night and a see saw.

Thank you for your hard work Class 9!



Jiu-jitsu Champion



Congratulations to Yaseen Morris in Class 8, who won double gold in the The Brazilian Jiu-jitsu European Junior Championships on Sunday 19th September. He won medals in both his category and the absolutes category.

Yaseen is now looking for competitions to further his experience and then will be looking for sponsorship to help him to the next level, he has his eye on training camps and competitions abroad in the future in his passionate aim to pursue Jiu-jitsu professionally.

Previously Yaseen won gold in the World junior Championships and in the The Northern American grappling association he won the Naga championship belt in 2019.



Copper bowl workshop

16th October



Dear parents and friends of the community! Join us for an amazing copperwork workshop to create a beautiful copper bowl with your own hands.

The workshop will take place at St Michael Steiner School, Hanworth Park, TW13 6PN on 16th October 2021.

You will be safely guided through the journey by the School's woodwork and metalwork teacher, Killian Voss.

Each workshop is limited to 8 people, there are only 4 spaces left. All tools and materials will be provided.

Cost: £120 per person. The cost includes materials (copper), use of professional tools and fully kitted out workshop. Bring one meal to share. Drinks will be provided.

All profits go to St Michael Steiner School.

For more details please contact Jane Davis 07555308855.

Kind regards,
Jane Davis

Community, notices and adverts

Please note that the school does not endorse or recommend, either in general or in particular, anything offered in the community pages and readers are advised to check the qualifications of practitioners or people offering services here.

Hello!

I am **Calia Sophie Otto** and I am looking for a **host family** to stay with while I join Class 10 in the **Spring term** from 7th January to 8th April 2022.



I am 16 years old and live with my parents, my brother and our dog in Bochum, **Germany**.

I am from the Widar Schule a Waldorf School in Bochum.

My hobbies are climbing and the school circus of our school.

I am really interested in royal families, especially the British one. I am a huge fan of Her Majesty The Queen.

I am a neat and clean person.

I would like to help you, for example with babysitting, German, other homework of younger children and cleaning.

If you think I could live with you I would love to get in contact with you.

Calia.Otto@web.de

Looking for a baby-sitter?



My name is Rose. I'm a 17 year old student currently attending The St Michael Steiner School and I have been in Steiner education since kindergarden. I love children, and I am dependable and responsible when it comes to work. I am currently looking for babysitting jobs for Friday evenings and the weekend. Rates are negotiable, I am happy to look after children of any age, and can travel within reach of the Richmond area.

Contacts - you can text me at

+44 07432 582 320

or send me an email at

rose.dowse@outlook.com

House Share

Dear St Michael's community,
My name is Beatrice Cianchi. My two young children and I would like to move closer to the school in December or January and are looking for another family or single parent to share a house with.

I am a freelance personal stylist and trainee waldorf teacher. My eldest child, who is five, is about to join the school. We have one dog, Sabrina.

If you are interested or know someone who is, please get in touch:

beatrice.nowhere.cianchi@gmail.com

Many thanks,
Beatrice

Hanworth Park Litter Picks

Since Easter Friends of Hanworth Park House have been organising monthly litter picks. We had a summer celebration at the rugby club in August with a BBQ and music which was attended by 100 people including the mayor, leader of Hounslow Council and various local councillors as well as local residents all getting to know each other and celebrating the work done on the park.

Our next litter pick is Sunday 21st November with our AGM straight after.

Sunday 19th December there will be a litter pick followed by a Christmas celebration.

Both are based at the rugby club starting at 10am.

All are welcome to join the fun!



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Cabbage Kimchi



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For enquires please contact: ben@bouncetennis.org

JUNIORS

TUESDAYS

Mini Tots - 3-4yrs - 3.30-4pm
Red Group - 5-7yrs - 4-5pm
Orange Group - 8-10yrs - 5-6pm
Yellow Group - 11-14yrs - 6-7pm

THURSDAYS

Youth Start - 7-10yrs - 5.30-6.30pm

SATURDAYS

Mini Tots - 3-4yrs - 9-9.30am
Red Group - 5-7yrs - 9.30-10.30am
Orange Group - 8-10yrs - 10.30-11.30am
Yellow Group - 11-14yrs - 11.30-12.30pm

ADULTS

WEDNESDAYS

Adult Beginner Group - 6-7pm
Adult Intermediate Group - 7-8pm
Adult Free Social - 8-9.30pm

THURSDAYS

Adult Cardio tennis - 6.30-7.30pm

