

The St Michael Steiner School

Newsletter



Michaelmas 2023



A Michaelmas Story

We have heard stories of how Michael fought the dragon and put him to work, but perhaps you don't know how there came to be dragons in the world in the first place.

When God created the world, he created the sky and the oceans, the plants that grow on the earth and the animals that walk and swim and fly upon it. But we hear nothing of dragons. That's because he did not put dragons into the world. They came to be in quite a different way.

When the world was made, God sat on his throne in heaven and smiled at his work. He and his host of angels watched over everything, in peace and harmony, and in the world below, the people also lived in peace and harmony with one another.

All of the angels were wonderfully beautiful, but of all of them, one shone more brightly than all the others. His name was Lucifer, which means "Bearer of Light".

All of the angels served God but of all of them, one was the truest of all. He was tall and noble and carried a long spear of light. His name was Michael, which means "One who is like God"

Michael and Lucifer sat on the right and left of the heavenly throne, ready to take on any task that was needed to help and guide the people of earth.

Michael brought them courage when it was cold and dark, and helped them to work together, to create communities and to bring new impulses into being in the world.

Lucifer brought them the arts and helped them to fill the world with beautiful things, beautiful words and beautiful ideas.

And so it was, for longer than anyone knows.

But one day, as Lucifer approached God, out of the corner of his eye, he caught sight of his own reflection in the burnished gold of the heavenly throne.

He marvelled at his own beauty, so that he could hardly turn his eyes away. He crouched beside the throne and was transfixed. Now whenever he approached God, he looked only for his own image, and as he gazed at the vision of himself, a question began to form in his mind:

"All this beauty cannot be for nothing. How is it that I, the most beautiful of all, am not the supreme power in Heaven? Why do I not command the angels to do my will? It is an outrage that I am ordered about like everyone else."

And the idea took hold, so that whenever he looked upon God a deep, deep feeling of terrible jealousy filled his heart, until he could bear it no longer, and began to whisper to others that God was not all-powerful, but that he, Lucifer, was greater.

And so he planted the seed of the thought in the minds of the other angels, and some of them were dazzled by Lucifer's brilliance and began to believe him and took his side against God.

When the seed of the idea came to Michael, the bravest and most faithful of all the angels, it found no place to take root. He straightaway took up his spear of light, called the good angels to him and told them that they must fight to overcome the evil that had entered heaven.

And this is how it came to be that there was a war in heaven; a war between the good and evil angels.

The war raged for longer than anyone knows, but at last the good angels were victorious, and Michael cast the evil angels out of heaven and onto the Earth.

Lucifer himself spread his great wings and flew swiftly away, but Michael saw and flew after him. With his spear of light, he touched Lucifer on his foot as he fell, turning over and over. Instantly, his bright, beautiful wings fell in tatters, his beautiful golden eyes turned glassy, and over his body grew glittering, silvery scales like a snake.

He opened his mouth to cry out, but Michael touched his spear to Lucifer's mouth and instead of a cry, flames shot forth.

On the earth below, it was night. A child was looking out of his bedroom window at that moment and saw the sky filled with glitter and flames in every colour. He clapped his hands in delight.

"How beautiful!" He cried

Lucifer crashed to the ground, no longer an angel, but a serpent. But Lucifer's beauty was so great that it could not be completely hidden, and so he was no ordinary serpent. Lucifer had become a magnificent, glittering dragon.

So the dragon made his home among the people of earth, and we have heard how Michael tamed him and put him to work in the world, and here he remains, attending to his task.

But still sometimes he cannot contain his fury against God, and he lets out a stream of fire, or a streak of glittering colours, to lure people towards him. Perhaps he is planning another rebellion.

But Michael is watching and whenever that happens, he waits for us to call on his help, and even Lucifer's fiery breath is no match for Michael's spear of light.

Combining Classes



Some children from
Classes 5, 6 & 7 in their
Gardening lesson

Many of us have been in social situations where we are called to answer the question: What is a Steiner school? We can characterise what we see happening: the children draw with wax crayons; they do not wear uniforms; they are allowed to climb trees; they learn to knit and play the recorder; they celebrate festivals.

These answers, and many others, can build a picture of a Steiner school, but we do not reach a definition like this, because a Steiner school could be all of these things, or none of them. For us at least, a Steiner school is not a fixed thing; it is constantly changing in response to the times in which we live, and the needs and interests of the particular children we have in our classes. This is as it should be. Steiner Education is not a method or a prescribed set of practices, it is a way of looking at and understanding children and their development that enables us to see what they need from us.

One of the challenges we are called to address at this point in time is a shortage of qualified Steiner teachers who can work in this way. Opportunities for Steiner teacher training in the UK have diminished, and Brexit has made it more difficult, and less appealing, for Steiner teachers to come to the UK from Europe. When our job vacancy adverts for a Eurythmist didn't bear fruit, we were faced with the possibility of some classes not having Eurythmy at all this year. Our lovely Michèle Hunter is but one person and could not continue, as she has been doing for so many years, teaching all the classes in the school, from Kindergarten to High School, on her own.

At the same time, we faced the economic crisis that followed the Covid lockdowns. This has made paying school fees a real struggle for some people. We have sadly lost several families for financial reasons in the last year in spite of the support we are able to offer through bursaries. As a result, we now have three classes in the lower school that have fewer than ten children.

When we discussed what we could do to manage these things so that the children's wellbeing and education did not suffer, we saw that it would be socially and educationally beneficial for the children in these classes to sometimes find themselves in larger groups. And we wouldn't need more teachers. So we decided to put classes together for Eurythmy in the Lower school, and also combined some for Music, Handwork, Games and Gardening.

We have witnessed the children adapting to the timetable changes very well, playing together in mixed age groups at break time, and the whole atmosphere in the school these first few weeks has been joyful.

There are challenges indeed, there always were and always will be, but looking at the children and the way in which they engage with their lessons, we feel encouraged and inspired. Perhaps more than anything else, a Steiner school is a place where teachers look at the children and find their answers there.



A Tuesday break time
in September.
Classes 1 & 2





Michaelmas
workday 2023



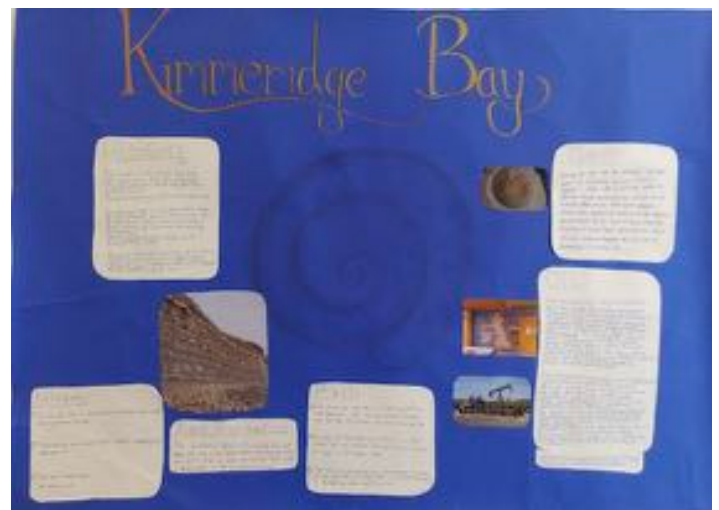
Lunch, and the Dragon Game



Geomorphology in Class 9

We started the academic year off with a trip to one of my favourite parts of the UK, to some stunning geology on what was one of the hottest days of the summer. We journeyed to the south coast for a field trip to Lulworth Cove, the Etches Fossil Collection, and Kimmeridge Bay. Here we studied the geomorphological formation of these areas and their palaeontology and geology and we did indeed have a paddle in the sea to cool off. On our return to the classroom students prepared in groups, 3 posters to show their understanding of these two areas and the museum they visited. This field work led further into a study of the phenomena of earthquakes, volcanos (both acidic and alkali) and mid-ocean ridges around the world to lead us to an understanding of the development of the theory of plate tectonics.

Sarah Houghton



Class 12 have started the year with a cross curricular block in art, literature and music. By listening to pieces by several 20th century composers we have engaged will, feeling and thinking in order to create impressions of these pieces in oil pastels, clay and creative writing. So far the students have encountered the music of Arvo Pärt, György Kurtág, Krzysztof Penderecki, Benjamin Britten, Philip Glass, Steve Reich and Terry Riley, and we are pleased to share with you some of their initial works in oil pastels and clay. The block will continue for another three weeks, during which time the students will be invited to choose a piece to work on in more depth, and we very much look forward to sharing full sculptures and creative writing later in the year.

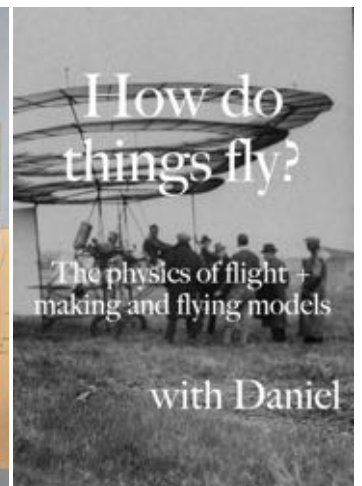
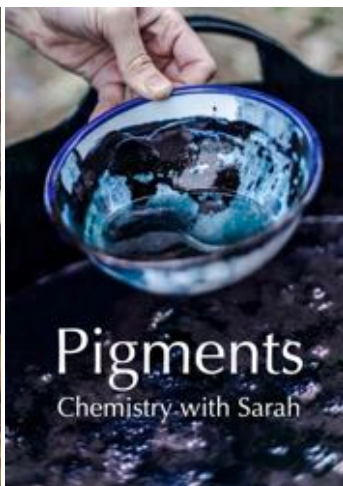
- Stella Ottewill & Kilian Voss

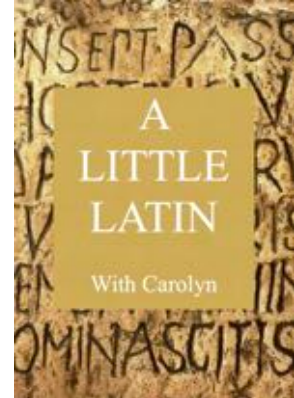
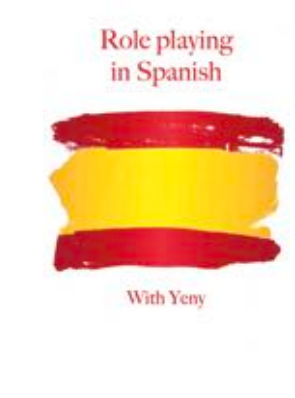
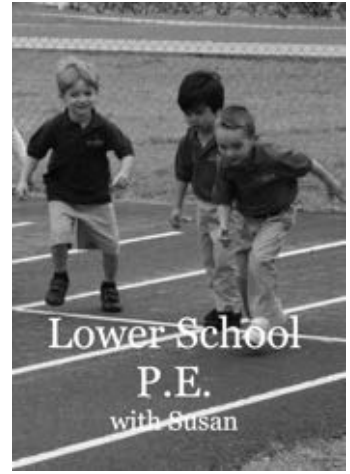
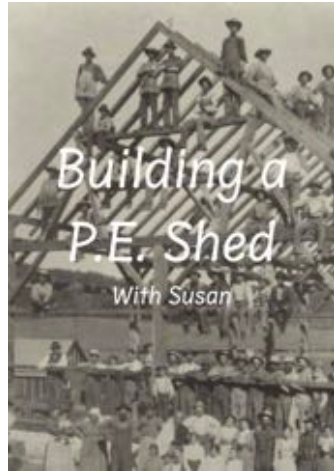
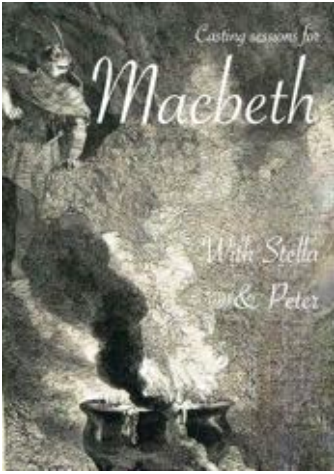




High School Intensive weeks

In the High School this year, we have four intensive weeks in which the students from Classes 9 - 12 can choose an activity and work together in mixed age groups. During the week leading up to Michaelmas, these were their choices.





The Student Council

The Student Council was set up last year and is made up of representatives from classes 9-12. The purpose of the council is to be a voice for students, bring issues to college, raise money to improve the quality of life at school as well as to contribute to our chosen charities.

As we begin the new school year, we'd like to share our vision for the upcoming year as well as our successes to date.

This is our second year of operation and our main achievements have been helping Susan arrange the hugely successful Sports' Day, and raising approximately £400. We raised money through our pancake day bake sale, Sophie and Walter's 10km run, and Walter's 123km 4-day canoeing trip. Thank you to everyone who has supported us with our fundraising efforts.



Money raised by the Student Council this year will go towards providing more activities for students at school, as well as towards our chosen charities. Specifically this year, we'd like to help set up some extra-curricular clubs as well as help to organise another Sport's Day.

We would also like to continue supporting the local food bank; the box is still located at Reception, and food donations would be gratefully appreciated.

Thank you for your support,

Sophie Mair and Walter Kelly, on behalf of the Student Council

Kindergarten fridge needed

Kindergarten are kindly seeking a large fridge to replace existing. Ideally industrial size or tall to fit the space. If you have an unwanted fridge or you think you could help us to get a new or second hand one please contact Keesha from Kindergarten by email:

keeshamalcolm@stmichaelsteiner.com

Delivery can be arranged.

Student Council Initiative

Feltham Food Bank



Feltham Food Bank is a charity run by volunteers, supporting residents living in Feltham, Bedfont and Hanworth. They help around 90 adults and children each week.

The Student Council has chosen Feltham Food Bank because we want to give back to the local community. We feel that helping the increasing number of families that can't afford to buy food, and have to rely on food banks, is an important cause.



We would greatly welcome donations of all non-perishable food - there is a collection box at Reception. We need:

Tins of tuna
Tins of chickpeas
Tins of vegetables
Basmati rice
Red lentils
Cooking oil
Chocolate spread
Fruit squash
Shower gel, toothpaste
UHT milk
Tins of fruit
Instant Coffee

Thank you

COMMUNITY PAGES

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

✨ Cake and Crafts ✨

Please join our wonderful cake and crafts group, taking place on Thursdays between 8:30am - 11:30am and longer if you wish to! We will be around the corner from the school in the new cafe at 63 Hounslow Road, where Le Cassa Cafe used to be. We make beautiful handmade pieces in preparation for the upcoming school fairs! No experience needed! We all learn from each other!

Thanks to everyone who helped make the crafts stool so successful at this year's summer fair! Our winter fair is fast approaching and what a wonderful opportunity to eat some home-baked cake and craft for the school!

Those who are unable to attend are welcomed to craft from home and send us pictures! Closer to the fair, we'll be running the group on Fridays too. If you have any questions about Cake and Crafts you can contact me on 07903476037 or Kyung on 07423459119.

Judith Earey



Allotment Share

We are wondering if anyone would be interested in sharing our allotment?! Based at Hatherop allotments in Hampton. It's quite a large plot and we are struggling to keep up with it for various reasons- but would also be really sad to give it up. dm if interested/know someone who might be and we can discuss :)

Please contact Carmelita on 07856147225

Eurythmy4you invite you to "Join their eight-week online courses featuring Rudolf Steiner's daily exercises to combat nervousness, paired with enjoyable eurythmy sessions.

You will explore seven practical exercises that can bring miraculous benefits:

- Refraining from criticism
- Practicing decision-making
- Refraining from indulging in small wishes
- Self-observation and habit-changing
- Thinking in reverse order
- Changing handwriting
- Misplacing objects

Eurythmy is a mindful movement practice that focuses on the relationship between outer movement and inner experience, fostering subtlety and deepening the breath.

They aim to demonstrate that combining these practical exercises with eurythmy can significantly reduce stress levels, promote joy in life, and even help overcome cancer-related fatigue."

Here are some of the courses on offer:

"Cancer-related Exhaustion

Participation free of charge

Stress Relief for Working Mothers!!!

Simple exercises to recharge yourself

How to reduce stress in (challenging) relationships...

with romantic partners, family members, friends and professional colleagues.

Stress Reduction with Eurythmy for People over 50

Receiving Strength for the Week

Real Men with Heart

Dissolving stress through living one's inner power"

Please see poster below for all details and to find what best suits you.

Warm regards,
Michèle Hunter - Eurythmy teacher

Stress - Trauma - Cancer

For a joint online research project with the University of Bern in Switzerland, Eurythmy4you is looking for participants to demonstrate the highly effective nature of Steiner's exercises from "Overcoming Nervousness" in combination with eurythmy online.

There are courses for overcoming cancer-related fatigue, for teachers, for people with a trauma background and on many other issues that cause stress and anxiety.

Cancer courses are free, all others can be attended for a symbolic price.

www.absr.international/registration-research-2023





CONTEMPLATIVE & DYNAMIC GEOMETRY

WITH SABA KAFIL AND KATHERINE BEAVEN

Saturday, 14 October 2023

10.00-16.00

The Children's Garden Steiner Kindergarten

Woodville Road, Ham, TW10 7QW

Come and experience the art of sacred geometry and raise money for The Children's Garden Steiner Kindergarten. The day will explore the patterns created by five-ness in wild flowers, the five pointed star & Venus's dance around the earth. By weaving the traditional practice of drawing geometrical forms with movement in space through eurythmy, we tap into the rhythm of 'the five' and deepen our relationship with one of the most beautiful geometric patterns.

The day will include refreshments, a light lunch and snacks.

Early bird tickets: £65 (book before 1st October). Standard tickets: £75.

Places are limited so don't hesitate to book your spot.

Contact Emma emmabchase@gmail.com to book your space.

Katherine Beaven MA
is a eurythmy therapist, working in
Sussex and online in China. She
teaches eurythmy for health on a
variety of courses and co-carries the
Eurythmy Therapy Training in the
UK.
katherinemove2heal@gmail.com
Eurythmy Therapist
Integrative Health Online
www.integrativehealthonline.uk

Saba Kafil Bsc finished her
Architectural studies in Baghdad,
Iraq, where she was inspired by a
rich and diverse architectural
culture. She completed further
studies in geometry at Schools of
Traditional Art at The Prince
Foundation and has recently been
focusing on the philosophical
aspects of space, the built
environment and symbolic
language.

All materials included, no prior
experience needed. Movement is
gentle and suitable for all abilities.

✨ Traditional, handmade Colombian bags ✨

All profits go to school!

I warmly invite you to discover a beautiful Colombian community known as the Wayuu community. The Wayuu community is Colombia's largest indigenous ethnic group, and one of 115 ethnic groups of Colombia who have inhabited the country since before the European colonization in the 16th century. The Wayuu are known for their strong weaving tradition, which includes their unique mochilas (the traditional, handmade bags). The Wayuu consider themselves to be the protectors and custodians of an ancient culture based on maintaining a harmonious alliance with nature. They consider natural elements such as mountains, trees, and animals as their kin. The art of making Mochila bags is seen as a symbol of wisdom, intelligence and creativity, and the bags are a vital part of their economy. It can take up to three weeks to make just one!

Over the summer break, I bought many of these handcrafted bags, which sold out at this year's summer fair! However, this time, I visited the department of La Guajira (home to the Wayuu) myself and bought them directly from the natives themselves. This way, there is no middleman and the money goes straight to the tribespeople who make them. You will be able to purchase the bags on Thursdays at the Cake and Crafts group (taking place around the corner from the school in the new cafe at 63 Hounslow Road, where Le Cassa Cafe used to be), as well as at the winter fair, or directly from me on 07903476037 or Kyung on 07423459119. All profits from the sale of the bags will be donated to the school!

Judith Earey

