



# Michael House School

Newsletter

A STEINER WALDORF SCHOOL IN THE HEART OF ENGLAND

DECEMBER 2017

As we approach the much needed and awaited Christmas break, here are some important dates for us all to keep in mind.... or write in our new shiny 2018 calendars ..... or type into our electronic calendars.

## **Dates for your Diaries**

### **December / January**

**2017**

**14<sup>th</sup> December** – Kindergarten Festival and end of term

**15<sup>th</sup> December** – Main School end of term

**15<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas Plays - Paradise Play 7.00. p.m.  
Shepherds Play 8.00 p.m. (General Public Performances)

**25<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas Day, School open for Carol singing 4 p.m. till 5 p.m.

**2018**

**8<sup>th</sup> January** – Policy Day; Main School and Kindergartens remain closed

**9<sup>th</sup> January** – School reopens

**22<sup>nd</sup> January** – Guided Tours

**3<sup>rd</sup> February** – Nearly New Sale

### **Recurring:**

**Thursday** lunchtime – Hot dogs available to buy at lunch, please pre-order; this is raising funds for the class 8 trip.

**Fridays** – Gardening Club - 8.30 till lunchtime, refreshments provided

**Friday** mornings – singing 8.45 – 9.45, Eurythmy room

**Fridays** at 3 p.m. – Friday Teas - coffee and cake in the main school

## Advent As An Expression Of Preparation For One Who Will Transform The Earth

### MARY'S CLOAK AS A SYMBOL OF 'SOPHIA', THE ANCIENT WISDOM

Every year Michael House School celebrates Advent in a variety of ways. One of these is by preparing for performance the Oberufer Mystery Dramas, the Shepherds Play and the Paradise Play. The former particularly features the Shepherds' role in the Nativity of Jesus of Nazareth. The latter is all about the story of Adam and Eve and their fall from Paradise.

Many people would wonder why this story is featured particularly as representative of the season of advent. In traditional Christian terms, it is not so difficult to explain or to remind people, whatever their background, that Jesus is born to be redeemer to all human suffering under man's inherited sickness of sin, which commenced in the Garden of Eden. But Spiritual Scientific research has shown that the celebration of an ancient time of wisdom and anticipation of a Messiah is very apposite to this festival time. Our songs and stories tell of a cloak of heavenly blue inlaid with golden stars prepared for Mary, as she travels towards her destiny to give birth to a heavenly babe. This cloak is a symbol of ancient mystery wisdom, in those times only revealed to initiates in the sanctity of temples and mystery schools. This wisdom is, however, an open secret in our times - albeit in a rather garbled and profane way. What was once intended to reveal the wisdom of the divine world as manifest in the constellations of the Zodiac is now just another secular aid. Self-development is proclaimed in daily tabloids' horoscopes, dividing humanity up into twelve predictions according to astrology, no doubt determined by a computer programme in our age. It goes without saying that Advent can only be understood in terms of a preparation for a Christmas event. But without the act of redemption of the very earth celebrated at Easter, Christmas would have remained the celebration of the Winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. Christmas is in fact also an anticipation of a momentous occurrence in the history of the Earth, namely the alteration of the earth leading to an essential change in creation at Golgotha, as Christ's blood and very physical essence is taken up into the earth.

### WHY AN IMMORTAL BECAME MORTAL

Many of the first Christian sects could not accept that a God had allowed himself to die in the crucifixion. They invented all manner of 'smoke and mirrors' explanations to have Jesus coming away still alive, not having actually died at all. But in the ancient world, human beings represented a stain on the otherwise perfect world of creation. The universe was a manifestation of celestial wisdom, of the cosmic music of the spheres. Gods were, by their essence, immortal, unlike mere mortals. How could man ever hope to reverse this fall from perfection, ever compounding its self, as, over the years, we became ever more ensnared by the bonds and limitations of earthly existence?

But this secret of human destiny was even hidden from the spiritual world, whose beings, at the death of Jesus, were completely baffled by the destination of this revelation of the Godhead, Christ Jesus. For God, the All-father intended humans not as a pale imitation of divine wisdom, but as a fulfilment of it. The universe, as an embodiment of wisdom, was to become the universe as an embodiment of love. This could only happen if humans received a blueprint of the divine freedom, which is a pre-condition of selfless love. To enable this turning point, it was necessary for a human to find redemptive power in a physical body, as opposed to the purely spiritual members of angelic beings. As death is most acutely experienced by one in a physical incarnation, so powers of

resurrection from death had to be accessed by someone undergoing that death. It is not enough to be a puppet, merely rising again through a 'deus ex machina' as in the less satisfactory ancient tragedies, where the Gods rescued those they favoured in the eleventh hour by descending 'out of the Gods' on strings to raise up their favourites away from mortal peril. In providing an antidote for man's destiny of death, Jesus Christ was using human forces only made available by severing his being from the divine world in the process of a human death.

## **THE PREPARATION FOR THIS INCARNATION AMONGST THE HEBREW PEOPLE**

The history depicted in the Old Testament is that of the development of a physical body capable of becoming a vehicle for such a fiery spirituality. This is why the New Testament Gospels begin in two cases with a genealogy of Jesus.

Modern human beings are each a species unto themselves. The highest member of our being, our ego, (not in the narrow selfish sense) is now plain to see, by contrast with ancient people who identified with their tribe or nation. Christ's mission was, among other goals, to prepare humanity for this derivation of authority from each one's own individual sense of values. A being which attains to this freedom needs a real sense of its own physical body. This dense and demanding member of our being prevents us from becoming drawn away into our own intellectuality. By contrast with the ancient Greeks, the Hebrew people were not drawn too strongly into a realm of aesthetic and philosophical ideals. Their incisive intellectual powers were clear right from Moses, being applied to lifestyle. Nor were they given over too strongly to sensual delights, like the Romans, who, while so adept at transforming the earth, were too inclined to give themselves over to slavish enjoyment of it. The disciplines of prayer and purification among ancient Hebrews were not intended to lead them away from the physical world in renunciation, as were those of the Brahmins of India. When Noah lies uncovered outside his tent after consuming wine, his sons cannot understand what they see. But Noah is letting them see that the physical body should not be eschewed for the sake of higher members.

So this preparation of a Messiah is not so much of an earthly king to realise Zion on earth, but to provide a vehicle into which the Godhead itself can descend. This process entails him uniting with the human physical form in such a way as to trail-blaze our own latent resurrection forces. Met with such blank incomprehension at the time, this preparation for a first Christmas event takes on ever more significance in the light of the first Easter. These self-sacrificing deeds at Golgotha build the bridge from a universe formed by cosmic intelligence, as symbolised by the twelve-fold zodiac, to a universe transformed by love. This love, although cosmic in origin, requires humans, in the full resistance of our physicality to own that love and apply it in freedom to all on earth.

Have a lovely loving Christmas!

**An Eventful Run-Up to Christmas at Michael House, from Ana**

What a rollercoaster of a half term we have had! The last few weeks have been packed so full, that it feels as though we need a couple of weeks' recovery time before our break can begin. It would not be right not to make a couple of mentions...

We held our yearly Lantern Walk in November. Parents and pupils arrived in unprecedented numbers – the punch had run out before we set off, indeed before some even arrived!



It was still just about light as we started, which was great for our smaller ones to get into the swing of things before it got pitch dark.

Almost everybody had a lantern, some made at school (this year or indeed from several years back), some made at home.

It was wonderful to read something about each child from the look of the lantern and from the way it was carried, as everybody sang the traditional song,

I'm going with my lantern,  
My lantern goes with me.  
And up in the sky the stars shine,  
And down below shines me.

My light goes out, I must go home,  
Abim alabam alabim  
My light goes out, I must go home,  
Abim alabam alabim



As we went on, we were taught a beautiful new song. I have included below the words for all of us to learn in time for next year's walk...

The evening was, as always, rounded up perfectly with a sit-down around the fire, with everybody leaving when the time was right for their family.

Glimmer lantern glimmer  
Little stars a-shimmer  
Over meadow, moor and dale  
Flutter flutter elfin veil

Glimmer lantern glimmer  
Little stars a-shimmer  
Over rock and stock and stone  
Wander tripping little gnome

CHORUS

Pee Wit, Pee Wit, Tick-a-Tick-a-Tick  
Roo Coo, Roo Coo



Thank you so much to Julie and Max Wyer for the beautiful photographs above taken that evening.



And also not only for driving the school Christmas tree in for us all, but for sharing its arrival with this great photograph, too.

This term there has been much building work done. Class 3 and 4 worked fantastically to construct a Geodesic dome (see photo). The pupils cut the triangle sides to a very exacting tolerance level and were involved in the assembly of the complete dome. This is now awaiting covering to become a usable indoor space.

At the same time Class 9 and 10 were digging out a Fire Pit which was then used to fire pots made by them and Class 7 and 8.

There was much trepidation to see whether the pots would fire successfully and much to the pessimists' surprise almost all the pots emerged unbroken having been fired in the traditional way.



Geodesic Dome completed by Class 3/4



Fire Pit completed by Class 9/10

Our Michaelmas Celebrations were as usual greatly appreciated by the pupils, particularly the younger ones.

The traditional dragon (see photograph to the left) came through the school hall weaving its way amongst the children. In time-honoured fashion the dragon was then confronted by St Michael and promptly vanquished.



The usual busy run up to Christmas has seen the School preparing for the festival of work, the Heanor light switch on (at which we had a stall), the Christmas Plays (Paradise Play and Shepherds Play) and of course the Advent Fair on the 9 December.

Our advent fair was, as always, wonderful, magical, busy and successful, an amazing credit to the organisers who have put heart and soul into it and worked flat out for the last few weeks to make it possible. It gave us a tremendous celebration of the coming end of the year, whilst also raising important funds for the school.

### **MICHAEL HOUSE SCHOOL ADVENT FAIR 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2017**

The Advent Fair takings this year currently stand at £4,160. In addition, the School has made around £150 from the Christmas card sales. It was an excellent Fair – takings being up by around £200 from last year and everybody commenting on the fantastic atmosphere. Many congratulations especially to the food hall which beat the £1000 barrier.

Of particular note was the fact that the number of adult admissions was more than 50% up on last year at 231 as opposed to 145 last year. If we include children and non paying admissions (helpers etc) then nearly 400 people were through our doors and many of them completely new to the School. Our advertising was much better and this seems to have succeeded in boosting the numbers.

Thanks are due to all those who put in hours of effort to help but special thanks to Sarah Pollard and Rachel Middleton for their co-ordinating roles.

## Report on Richard Shaw's Talk on 25<sup>th</sup> November

Thank you to those of you who attended the talk on November 25 and apologies to those who would have liked to but for whom the date or the time was not convenient.

The main point, really, was that anthroposophy is, in many ways, an extension or particular intensification of the way human beings naturally think, feel and act today out of the consciousness of this time. Education offers a particular development and cultivation of this for the child. To the extent this is so, it can really help for the parent also to know something about it.

Outside of the educational field itself, and more generally, Rudolf Steiner emphasised, particularly towards the end of his life, how a real knowledge of anthroposophy arises most strongly from working with our normal consciousness so as to develop particular aspects of this. This can enable us to grow the capacities for experiencing for ourselves the things that Steiner otherwise wrote and spoke about. This requires a degree of effort of course, or of particular application, but it also helps us to meet in groups. This can also help to alleviate any inherent difficulties encountered in Steiner's books and lectures.

A particular focus of any group would be to work with the relevant concepts and experiences and to support one another, whether as generally interested individuals, teachers or parents. An excellent book to study in all these respects is 'Anthroposophy an introduction' - written at the very end of Steiner's life and immediately more challenging - but also rewarding - than the title itself might suggest.

Richard Shaw

## A Weather Warning from our Collegiate

Dear Parents, guardians and friends of Michael House,

A gentle reminder as the weather gets more wintery by the day, to take care on the roads and paths to school. We share our roadways with close neighbours, including the Shipley care home and the nearby stables and our groundsmen friends at Amber Valley depot next to the Shipley Parish room, to name but a few. Please take care to slow your speed when driving in the vicinity, not only for the sake of our school children on foot and on bikes/scooters but for our neighbours too (both human and equine!). The speed limit on The Field and alongside the Nutbrook trail is 20 mph. Take good care and drive with caution ESPECIALLY in this slippy weather. Watch out for black ice.

Many thanks.

With festive good wishes from Collegiate.

## Mamma Lou – from Huw Morgan, former parent

There is a wonderful lady who goes by the name of Mama Lou who cooks the most lovely Vegetarian and Vegan food, and then delivers it to your door!

Have a look at her website

[http://www.mama-lou.co.uk/vegan\\_vegetarian\\_food\\_nottingham.html](http://www.mama-lou.co.uk/vegan_vegetarian_food_nottingham.html)

Enjoy!