

Talking Trees

The newsletter for Norwich Steiner School

14 July 2016

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 15th July – last day of term
Monday 5 September – Autumn term starts
Friday 30 September – Internet safety talk
Workdays – see end of article

FROM OAK CLASS

Dear Mr Nowell,

It has been a pleasure being in the class that you have taught for 8 years. How time flies...Thank you for making us smile every morning. Here are some things we wanted to share...

The things everyone looks forward to in Mr Nowell's lessons are when he sidetracks and starts telling us crazy stories from his life – from his trips to Russia to his childhood on a farm, the tales are always hilarious (and time consuming).

We had French with him in class 3 and 'Monsier Nowell' as he was called, used to teach us the word 'il ya' which means 'there is' in French. He would use an outline of Ely's head with an A at the end. Before coffee his brain doesn't work, but afterwards he is very enthusiastic about everything, even maths.

Many funny things have happened in class while I have been in the school –random Lord of the Rings quotes and once even two cups of coffee, but what I remember most was when the picture frame fell off the blackboard onto Mr Nowell's head. We were all shocked but he just burst out laughing, allowing the awkward moment to pass.

He told us a story from class 1 about the golden acorn. He put it into all of the

different subjects and it continued all the way to class 5 when we had the last bit at the Olympics. Although Onyx seems to think that he hasn't finished it yet.

For all the constant coffee drinking, banana eating and eye of Sauron references,

For the picture frame that hated him, and the Oaks that loved him,

To everything he taught us, the mind boggling to the simple,

All the plays we spent crying over, but at least we made it to Dover,

The trip was great, the trip was fine, but Mr Nowell drank all the wine...

When we are playing the flute Mr Nowell counts us in and then starts talking randomly.

Why bananas anyway, why not apples or grapes?

Mr Nowell has been my teacher from my first ever lesson in school all the way through. I have been very lucky to have had a kind and smart teacher through most of my life. His skills range from some of the best storytelling to computer savvy geek. One day when he visited my house before teaching me again at NSS we went for a stroll down the end of our meadow. Mum warned Mr Nowell about the mud filled ditches, then she fell in herself. Mr Nowell had to pull Mum out of the swamp. I didn't laugh, I just found it embarrassing but they laughed hysterically.

Time spirals on. We continue to Upper School and nothing will be the same anymore.

The old Oak sighed and shook its leaves
And all at once a gentle breeze
Nudged a nut from out its nest
Which fell and fell and came to rest
Upon the earth forever blessed
Who will take this acorn new
Across the river straight and true
Who will climb the mountains high
Where....and eagles fly?

(Almost) remembered by Oak class from class One.

We hope you have a nice time. Thank you
Mr Nowell, love from Oak class x

TO OAK CLASS

By Jeremy Nowell, Class teacher

Two things have really stood out in this long and busy term: the class trip to France and Italy, and the Class 8 Projects. The class trip already feels as though it belongs to another time - and perhaps it does. Before climbing onto the coach, the class seemed to have one foot still firmly planted in lower school. By the time we got back, it felt as though it had one foot firmly in upper school. In this respect, the trip represented a threshold experience for the class, with many Oaks having to face significant challenges, whether in the shape of the activities themselves, being away from home, feeling exhausted and deprived of sleep, or simply having to put up with each other 24 hours a day! From my own point of view, it was an absolute joy to spend that time with the class, away from our usual preoccupations. It felt like a fitting way to bring my time with the class to an end - even though we still had a whole half a term to go.

The Class 8 projects presented a no less daunting challenge to many in the class - not simply in terms of the sheer magnitude of the task of producing a project, but then having to present that project in front of peers, teachers, students from other classes and parents. Even though I know

the children pretty well, and have seen what they are capable of in things like our class plays, I was simply amazed at how they rose to the occasion. As with the class trip, the issue isn't how 'good' we are at climbing, or how 'brave' we are in our canoes, or how 'good' we are at speaking in front of people: it is all about bringing something of our inner light out into the world. This reminds me of a little prayer that we used in our Whitsun festival one year:

*May the light that is within me be before me,
May I see it in all,
May the sound that I utter reveal the light that is within me,
And may I listen to it when others speak.*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Oak Class for the time I have had with them - for me it has been an extraordinary experience, and certainly the most rewarding eight years of my life. Oak Class taught me that joy is always around somewhere: sometimes veiled, but a given in our lives, if only we know where to look. Every day, over the past eight years, I have drunk from the deep well of joy that lives at the heart of Oak Class, and for that I am profoundly grateful.

I have also had the pleasure of working with all of the other classes over the years - some in Elder, Birch and Oak will probably remember when I was the school's French teacher! Last term I had the privilege of being Willow's class teacher for half a term - it was really lovely to get to know the Willow children, and to find out just what a wonderful group they are. Storytelling with Maple has been a somewhat scary highlight of my week this term, involving giant sea monsters, long-bearded hypnotic Frenchmen, ice dragons and ruthless pirates, who wouldn't think twice about making James walk the plank! I haven't seen very much of Sequoia of

late, but Mr Higgins assures me they are as wonderful and bouncy as ever...

I am so glad to be leaving the school at a time when I have never been happier to be here - if that makes any sense at all! Visitors to our school often talk about the warmth that meets them as they walk through the door. I too have experienced this warmth, daily, from my wonderful colleagues. I would not know where to begin in thanking them for all that they have given me - the love, the challenges, the laughs and the tears. But mostly the gift of sharing in something so utterly rewarding: the daily, unending commitment to the wellbeing of the children in our care. To those with whom I have worked most closely - Sandie, Sarah, Jeff and Michael - I can't say anything, because I am lost for words. So I shall simply bow very low, knowing that I have had the honour of walking beside some truly outstanding human beings.

Thank you, Norwich Steiner School.

SEQUOIA CLASS

By Mr Higgins, class teacher

This week, Sequoia Class embarked on a walk around the city of Norwich as part of their Geography studies.

The day before our walk, we had spent our Main Lesson marking out our route on a Norwich A-Z, which was then laminated so we could keep track of our passage through the city during our walk.

Passing by the Black Tower and the mediaeval city walls on Carrow Hill, we made our way down to the River Wensum, where we greeted the swans and were a little shocked to see a gull tearing at a pigeon carcass!

Crossing the river by the train station, we made our way to Cow Tower where we had a bite to eat before arriving, to the

sound of the 11 o'clock bells, at Norwich Cathedral. Walking through the cloisters, we found the exact point from which we had drawn and painted the cathedral earlier in the year.

As the class sat in the cathedral classroom for the introductory talk, they were asked if they could remember who it was that conquered England and built the cathedral. No hands went up. They were given a clue by our guide, - 'It was the Nor...' Caelem's hand shot up. 'The Norwegians!' 'Not quite,' said the guide, - 'The Normans'.

The class salvaged their self-esteem somewhat a few minutes later when Toby gave a mini-lecture to the guide on the intricate stresses and strains of how an arch self supports and the true function of the flying buttress.

Towards the end of our guided tour through the building, Victoria was dressed by our guide in a bishop's cope and able to sit in the bishop's cathedra (throne), - a rare privilege! So important did Victoria look on her throne that some members of the class felt impelled to bow down before her.

An unintentionally amusing thing was said by our lovely guide right at the end of our tour. The class were invited to lie on their backs, on the resplendent mosaic floor of the high altar, in order to gaze at the cathedral firmament's fan-vaulted ceiling. Right in the midst of our reverie, the guide said, 'When you get back to school, you can ask your teacher to download a brilliant app all about the cathedral bosses on the ceiling!'

After our tour, we spent a little while in the cloisters reading the various memorial stones before making composite crayon rubbings of the different words and forms we found there.

All in all, it was a lovely day out, the rain kindly waiting for us to return to school before unleashing a downpour, and we all are looking forward to our next trip, wherever that may lead us.

Have a wonderful summer!

From Mr Higgins and Sequoia Class.

MAPLE CLASS

By Mrs Higgins

Maple class have been listening to the long and detailed story of 'King of Ireland's Son' all year, and it is amazing to see them making connections in the plot over such a long period of time. They have made comments like "Oh is the blacksmith that the brothers are looking for the one that gave the King's son the sword of light?", and "Is the hag with the poison nails the one that brought up Gilly of the Goat skin?"

Even though I am telling the story I often forget who is who and what happened in the last chapter, but the children remember every single detail and they cannot wait to hear more. This shows just how strong their memory is at this age, and why the children have been able to learn such a huge amount of information over the year. From remembering individual letters and numbers from the beginning of the year, the class have repeatedly practised longer sums and have begun to read and write their own stories.

They have learnt so much this year... in their own words...

"I have learnt how to add up hundreds", "I have learnt how to do things better, like borders and stuff", "I made a hot water bottle case and can knit better", "I have learnt that if something is boring, just keep doing it".

I recommend 'The King of Ireland's Son' for all ages, not just because it is dreamlike

and entertaining, but to strengthen the aging memory too.

INTERNET SAFETY TALK FOR PARENTS Friday 30th September

On 30th September Victoria Rush from the Safer Schools Partnership will be at the school to present a talk for parents around internet safety.

We plan to start the morning in the same way as our school introductory mornings, with a tour of the classrooms, light refreshments and an opportunity to view some of the children's work and talk to school staff, before Victoria begins her presentation at 10.15.

All parents are invited to attend.

More details to follow in the new term...

PREMISES WORKDAYS

There is a lot happening at the premises this summer and we'd really appreciate a few hours of time from anyone who can spare it.

On 19 & 27 JULY – Maintenance workdays 11am–3pm, to clean, repaint walls and window frames and move furniture around.

If anyone is able to carry out the more specialised tasks of putting up shelving or doing plumbing, and these dates are not convenient please contact Trevor by email trevor.thorley@tiscali.co.uk, or phone 07884 937145, text or voicemail as he will be at the school on various dates throughout the holidays.

9th August & 1st September – painting & cleaning workdays (organised by Liz Cooker 07881 624748 or lizcooker@gmail.com)