



LESSONS IN FEAR & BEAUTY Mathematics at Brockwood

by Lakshmi Dasari, a veteran maths teacher completing her first year at Brockwood

Krishnamurti wanted to have a school where students could be free of fear. I believe it is an important intention of the school to keep in mind as we go about our tasks, mine including the teaching of Mathematics. For some reason, of all the subjects taught in secondary schools, Maths seems to conjure up the most fear. In the bigger scheme of life, fear is a large and complex issue, and I think that within the confines of Mathematics, it is a more tractable manifestation of it that is well worth tackling.

A few subtitles come to mind when I think about the teaching of Maths: lessons in logical thinking, overcoming your fear of unsolvable problems, awakening to the beauty of the world of numbers and its abstractions. All three of these play a role in my Maths classes at Brockwood.

There is something in there being a right answer that is both daunting and thrilling. There is a tendency to think that if I don't see the solution right away then I might as well give up. And yet that is exactly when the interesting learning process begins. To not be afraid to try something, to be willing to take that first step and see where it goes. To not be afraid of being wrong, for that is exactly where the learning will happen. The willingness to find the mistake or the misunderstanding of some property or rule will then

allow progress to take place. And it is also what will help build one's mathematical intuitions.

There is often a great deal of fear of failure and a feeling of judgement about exams, which students typically bring with them when they come to Brockwood. A more constructive way to approach exams, however, is to see the learning opportunities they provide. For example, they are not only a way of focusing the mind to bring all the concepts that have been learned together and checking students' depth of understanding and appreciation of the material, but they are there also to remind us to learn to face our fears, which after all is a key aspect of a Brockwood education. In this way, a student here should be able to walk into an exam feeling that he or she has understood the concepts well, and feeling ready to take on the challenge of testing this out, either having as much understanding of fear as possible or being free of it.

While we are working on the foundations of Mathematics, it is hard to convince the student who does not like Maths why they should work at it, what it is useful for. At a basic level it is a lesson in logical thinking which can be useful for life. Young teenagers' brains are also not fully formed

CONTENTS

- 04** OUR LIVING IS SUPERFICIAL
J.Krishnamurti with Staff and Students at Brockwood Park, 12 June 1983.
- 06** THE PAVILIONS PONDERED
Construction Manager, Mike Davies, ponders what it is about our new Pavilions that makes them Green.
- 08** PARENTS WEEKEND
At Brockwood we seldom see the parents of students but once a year that all changes.
- 10** 'TO KNOW IS NOT ENOUGH'
Lionel Claris considers what it means for students to 'learn to learn in a way that they love'.
- 12** FOCUS GROUP
What happens when you bring together a group of eight former students for a day and fire questions at them?
- 14** ALUMNI NEWS
Former student Chanda Siddoo-Atwal reflects on being a Brockwood alumna.
- 16** BROCKWOOD IN BRIEF
What did the earthquake and tsunami in Japan mean for Brockwood Students?

Continued from Page 1

LESSONS IN FEAR & BEAUTY

and it can be a form of brain massage. When students are frowning over a Maths problem and exclaim, "My brain hasn't worked this hard before", I feel something expansive and good is taking place in the classroom.

At Brockwood we are lucky to have by comparative standards very small class sizes. It allows students to work at their own pace, get ideas and encouragement from one another, and develop their own methods of working. It gives them time to voice their concerns and their difficulty with certain concepts that need more time to process. It allows them to try different approaches and share their ideas.

What is most important for me, after the logical thinking and overcoming of fears, is that students be able to glimpse some of the beauty of Mathematics. The idea of the infinite and the infinitesimal, which are crucial in the development of Calculus are staggering concepts when one stops to think about it. There are so many small gems of ideas underlying the study, and worth discovering.

Mathematics involves more than solving problems and getting the right answer. It is a language of great beauty and elegance and is a worthwhile subject to study for just that. It is also an arena in which to work with fear, anxiety and "I can't do it" attitude. After all, the understanding of one's fears is essential for one to see the beauty of the subject. For most students, it is possible to overcome these, and then it is not just Mathematics, but some life lessons that are learned.

PAPERLESS NEWS

Please help us save money and energy associated with paper manufacturing and distribution. If you would like to receive our newsletter by email rather than on paper please email us at the address: observer@brockwood.org.uk Please include your contact information. Thank you. In addition, an interactive and pdf version of the Brockwood Observer can be viewed online on our homepage. Visit www.brockwood.org.uk



Elvin, age 16, Azerbaijan

CONTACT US

THE BROCKWOOD OBSERVER

Brockwood Park School
Bramdean, Hants. SO24 0LQ, UK
Telephone: +44 (0) 1962 771 744
Fax: +44 (0) 1962 771 875

Email: observer@brockwood.org.uk
Website: www.brockwood.org.uk
Blog: blog.brockwood.org.uk

Website: www.jkrishnamurti.org
Observer Team: Bill Taylor, Ray McCoy, Lionel Claris,
Petter Goldstine, Jennifer Kowalewski.

© 2011 Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Limited

IN SEARCH OF AN AUDIENCE

by Aristel Skrbic & Nicholas Hennell-Foley, *Students*

Student musicians Aristel Skrbic (marimba) and Nicholas Hennell-Foley (clarinet) started out improvising together and then thought 'why not go on tour...' so they did!

It all started with us improvising together. At first we would occasionally meet up in the Art Barn, without a real plan to our playing; this is amazing, forcing you to truly listen to the other player. It was so exciting that we began to play more regularly, soon playing at the Brockwood Winter Concert. From then on we started thinking of making our own project based on our improvising explorations. We often noticed how our improvising style would tend towards that of folk music (albeit of a rather exotic variety) and so the choice of folk songs created a nice symbiosis. Aristel's mum organised a few concerts in Slovenia and so we decided to bring the traditions of England, Ireland and Scotland to Slovenia in the form of folk songs.

After settling on a handful of pieces we began practising nearly every day. Some things worked and some things didn't, and the programme turned and tumbled until we arrived at something that felt right. By now the dates of our tour in Slovenia had been organised, so we were definitely going! Time to relax – oh wait! Time for a concert! We performed our programme twice for Brockwood before we left, once for the School and once for Inwoods Small School. And guess which was the more challenging? By far it was playing for the small children! They had so much attention, and in some ways were the harshest and most useful critics as they were always intently honest – you'll know instantly if you're becoming boring. We learnt a lot about playing for children, and how your entire attitude (including your physical stance) has to change; and lo-and-behold, two of our concerts in Slovenia would be for young children.

Then on the 29th March we set off for our tour. After a flight over the Alps we soon saw the vivid forests of Slovenia and then landing, we went to Ljubljana, the capital, to have a delicious pizza by the riverside. The next day was a day to practise and already on the 31st, we had our first performance. Over the next few days we played



Aristel, age 16, Slovenia and Nicholas, age 19, Australia

three concerts together – intense to say the least – for Primary School and Kindergarten, Leskovec pri Krškem, and for a Spa, Smarjeske Toplice. Each time we performed it was more relaxed and the music flowed more naturally. This kind of performing, for Nicholas at least, was a new experience, both in terms of performing and presenting oneself. On that note, for the primary school we both prepared a presentation of our instruments – their history, playing techniques and well known performers – and spoke about the history of the folk music we were playing and why we chose it. After the performance and in the next few days there were many positive comments from teachers and students who had attended.

Aristel also played for the opening and closing ceremony of World Book Summit 2011 in Ljubljana, a concert of Celtic music in Krsko and a solo concert in Crystal Hall of Grand Hotel Rogaska. Performing for the World Book Summit was a great experience because there was the chance to play with some excellent musicians at an important cultural event in Slovenia.

The combination of Clarinet and Marimba is a strange one no doubt, but one that works surprisingly well. Without all the playing beforehand the energy at the performance would not be the same, so the preparation was equally as important as the concerts themselves. The tour was successful from our point of view and most importantly, that of the audience!

OUR LIVING IS SUPERFICIAL

J. KRISHNAMURTI WITH STAFF AND STUDENTS

BROCKWOOD PARK, 12 June 1983

Krishnamurti: One of our difficulties is that our education, our way of living is so superficial. We never dig deeply into ourselves; we don't say, 'This is important, I must investigate this,' and keep on questioning, doubting, asking, so that we see for ourselves without being told that we are the result of vast programming. Programming is the cultivation of memory. The computer has vast memory; it has been programmed, as we are. Then what's the difference between that and us?

The computer can't look at the stars of an evening and say, 'How beautiful it is', but apart from feelings — feeling beauty, feeling tenderness, quiet — the computer can do almost everything that we are doing; probably better. Then what happens to our brain?

Questioner: Our brains will go to sleep and the computers will take over.

K: Yes, our brains will go to sleep. ... We are mechanical; we are programmed, therefore we are mechanical. Look at it a little more closely. Unless the brain is very active, it's going to become dull, it's going to wither. So what's going to happen for it not to wither? The entertainment industry is there: sports, football, rituals, religions — it's a vast industry of entertainment. So the brain is going to be entertained.

Q: So we just become observers.

K: Or what next? If you are not being entertained, and you don't want to be entertained, which becomes rather boring, then what? Suppose you don't pursue that, don't want to be entertained, what will you do?

Q: Go into the mountains and walk.

K: You can't everlastingly walk and go to the mountains. Find out, look, question this. The entertainment industry is going to entertain you. That's what the vast majority of people are going to live with, as they are doing now. If you don't pursue that, then what is going to happen to your brain?

Q: It will become like the computer.

K: Please answer my question. ... What is going to happen to your brain? Either it's going to be entertained for the rest of your years, or you turn in a totally different direction. Right? What is that direction?

Q: Krishnaji, I feel that what you are saying now is highly significant, because for the first time in history man has leisure.

K: Yes, sir, that's just what I'm saying. People may have to work two or three hours a day and have

long weekends. What will you do? Be entertained? Go off sailing? Play games with the computer? Watch football? That's all vast entertainment, isn't it? Is that what you are all going to do?

There are only two courses left for us. Either you pursue entertainment for the rest of your years or you turn in a totally different direction. That direction is the investigation into the psychological world, going to great depths, and going beyond all that. There are only these two paths left for man now. I am not depressing you or bringing doomsday, but these are facts.



Photograph by Mark Edwards - Krishnamurti in dialogue with students, 1970



Friederike, Paloma, Julie, Clive and Klara

THE CALCUTTA ACADEMY

by Clive Gray, *Staff*

In January four students from Brockwood Park School (Friederike, Paloma, Julie and Klara) had the opportunity to take part in the 2011 'Calcutta Academy'. The Academy is a four week learning experience which is hosted by Ashna and Brian in the house of Ashna's parents in Salt Lake, Calcutta. As a 'mature student' the artist Kevin Gray joined the group and for one month we lived and studied together in an environment that was to allow enquiry and understanding. Did this happen?

As this was the second time the event was taking place, there was the question if it would be possible to create the same kind of energy that had made the first 2010 Academy so special. Ashna, Brian and I were preparing the event and decided to keep the same open approach to the learning experience as in the year before and let the 'chemistry' of the students formulate the details of the classes. We had our prepared subjects: maths (Ashna), philosophy (Brian), history (Clive), and art (Kevin). However, this subject division was not rigid, and conversations about literature, music, film, and religious studies were in the air all the time.

We began every day with physical activity. Sometimes we went to the roof where Brian gave yoga instruction. On other days we would play football or just run in the park in front of the house. After our exercise we would have breakfast together and decide on what subjects we would study that day. The day was divided into movable blocks of about 1½ to 2 hours for any particular subject. If at the end of the first session we all felt that we wanted to continue with that subject, we would do just that and shift the other subjects to different times or days. There was never a feeling that we *had* to study. The study and the leisure time flowed completely naturally into each other and reading a book, learning how to solve maths equations, or doing yoga became equally important and at the same time unimportant.

When the students went back to Brockwood Park School, all agreed that it had been an amazing learning experience. For the participating teachers this month had been very different yet very similar to the 2010 Academy. The difference came from the students who gave the event its own particular character. The similarity we identified was that wonderful energy that comes out of true enquiry and deep understanding. We all agreed that something very special had happened.

PAVILION PROJECT

THE PAVILIONS PONDERED

by Mike Davies, *Construction Manager*

Green building techniques seek, amongst other things, to reduce the energy use in buildings through better standards of insulation, improving air-tightness, implementing heat recovery ventilation systems & using energy efficient lighting and heating systems.

Our Pavilions development is very highly insulated, well above that required by the Building Regulations, and by constructing it using SIPS technology – Structural Insulated Panel Systems for the floor, walls and roof – we are able to dramatically reduce the air leakage rates (draughts) compared to more traditional methods of open floor construction with exposed joists coupled with cavity wall construction and often draughty roof construction too. SIPS panels are built in a controlled, factory environment, pre-insulated with blown recycled newspaper fibre and delivered to site as sealed “cassettes” that are then slotted into place to completely envelop the oak structural frame to provide a virtually air-tight and highly insulated construction that has the added benefit of fast erection and the provision of a weatherproof, insulated building within which subsequent trades like plumbers and electricians can work more effectively. Heat losses are further reduced by incorporating heat recovery into the controlled ventilation to each Pavilion. Warm, moist air from bathrooms and toilets is extracted continuously, 24 hours a day and fresh

outside air is brought in to replace it, being pre-heated by passing through a heat exchanger that captures the warmth of the extracted air and transfers it to the incoming fresh air. The warmed fresh air is then delivered to all the habitable rooms, maintaining them at a positive pressure whilst the bathrooms and toilets are kept at a negative pressure. This pressure differential means that heat gained from occupants, lighting, underfloor heating can all be “recycled” as the warm air within the buildings is extracted through the bathrooms and toilets and the otherwise waste heat is used to pre-heat the incoming fresh air. In addition, all the lighting is to be energy efficient, with much of it low voltage; and the use of heat pumps coupled to solar thermal roof panels and solar thermal cylinders to provide warm water for underfloor heating further reduces the energy requirements of the buildings. Heat pumps employ sophisticated technology that effectively means that for every Kilowatt of energy put into them (electricity) they provide about three times the amount of energy back and are particularly suited to underfloor warm water heating systems which require much lower water temperatures than traditionally required by radiators. Underfloor heating also has the further advantage of allowing complete flexibility in furniture layouts that are often compromised by wall mounted radiators.



THE BARD AT BROCKWOOD

by Valentin Gerlier, former Brockwood student, now Staff



This has been a year brimming with Shakespeare at Brockwood. Whether through careful and attentive study of his texts in the English classes, or playfully bringing his words to life in Drama rehearsals, Brockwood has been ringing with the words of the timeless Bard. Doing Shakespeare with young people can sometimes be a little tricky; not least because of the received opinion that his language is too rich and difficult, his ideas too complex, and the cultural situation he wrote from too alien for people of today to understand. And in a place like Brockwood, where we try to nurture a different way of living and seeing, a stately, traditional figure like Shakespeare may appear out of place. Yet, it seems to me, Brockwood is exactly where Shakespeare is most at home! Few writers are better able to understand and depict the vast complexity and subtleties of characters' inner lives. Few better portray the beauty, depth and difficulties of human relationships with so much wisdom and so little judgement. Few better mirror so powerfully how the inner and the outer world are inextricably linked. And all this, of course, is often done with lightness, care and quite a bit of humour.

It is this indissoluble blend of poetry, magic and wisdom that the students seem to have really picked up this year. 'His

writing is so universal', says Catharine, 18, from Austria. 'In some ways, it's timeless, even though it is a kind of perception we've lost nowadays'. For Catharine, Shakespeare really brings to life how characters need to learn, understand and grow to perceive life more deeply and fully, for as she puts it, he asks audience and characters alike the same essential question: 'do we see or do we not see?'

Yet Shakespeare does not just write wise words and stories, and it is often by bringing the plays to life that his words begin to make true sense. 'When you act it you can properly understand what you're saying' says Betsy, 15, from England. Betsy is playing the part of Puck in the school's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and is discovering Shakespeare not through analysis but, as it were, from the inside: 'sometimes the words sound muddling, but if you can portray them in a way that makes sense, they come to life'.

Quite aside then from the great stages of this world, or cities such as London or Stratford, Shakespeare, it seems, has found a dwelling where he will always be welcome: not just at Brockwood, but in the hearts and minds of many of the students there. 'What I've learnt this year', Catharine concludes, 'allows me to understand any Shakespeare play, perhaps not every word, but through the spirit and the depth of it'.

A Midsummer Night's Dream was performed at Brockwood on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th of June.



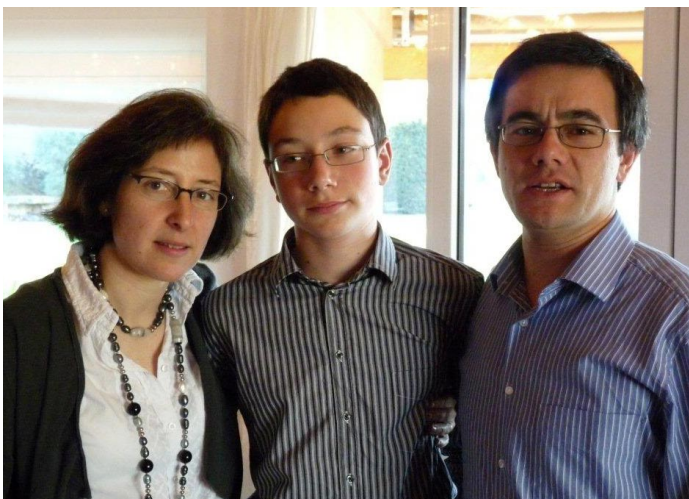
PARENTS WEEKEND

GETTING TO KNOW YOU BETTER

Every year, at the end of the Spring Term, Brockwood invites parents of current students to come and spend the last two days of term in the School, participating in classes, attending dialogues, joining in Morning Jobs, meeting with teachers and tutors. Parents who attended this year were invited to reflect on the event and the impact of a Brockwood education on their child.

'The meeting with parents, co-principals and some teachers allowed us to see different approaches of being at Brockwood: exams/no exams, best age to enter, years to stay, etc... We were impressed and interested to see how different the expectations and concerns of the families were. It made us think about our expectations towards our son: are they too academic? Are we giving him enough space to discover himself? We were very positively impressed to see how well all the staff knew the students. We really appreciated the chance to speak to all the teachers, to see how well they know our son and how they are working to get the best from him. It's really nice for a mother to know that her son is growing surrounded by people who love and respect him. It was wonderful to have these conversations in an informal way, sharing a tea, sitting on the grass...'

by Olga Valsells and Roger Brumwell, parents of Edward



Olga Valsells and Roger Brumwell with Edward



Beate Ruchatz-Halmer and Norbert Halmer with Malena

'Brockwood may perhaps not meet the needs of every student, but for our daughter, Malena, who was keen to learn and open to share living in a community, it has been the perfect place. She spoke about the possibility to know others and their attitudes towards life very deeply, to choose subjects she really was interested in, to learn to study and to organize herself and take responsibility on her own for the things she had to do. We are very glad to have sent her here, even though it was quite hard for us in the beginning, because her stay was planned for only one year. But after that year she wanted to stay longer and get more involved, because she felt it was the place where she could grow. That became true and despite the distance, our relationship grew even deeper and we became very easily reconnected every time she returned home. We are very curious to see what happens now, after Malena's time at Brockwood and we are happy that we have been a small part of the Brockwood community for three years. Thanks to everybody at this special place! We will meet again!'

by Beate Ruchatz-Halmer and Norbert Halmer

DEJA VU WITH DAUGHTER AT THE PARENTS WEEKEND

by Frances Orde, *alumna (1979-1981) and current parent*

When I set forth for the Brockwood Park School Parents Weekend at the end of March, I, for some reason, hadn't thought a great deal about how it might be, other than to hope that my daughter, Izzy, and her room-mate, Coco, would survive the experience of me camping on their bedroom floor for a couple of nights. I suppose if anything I felt a slight apprehension that I was about to set foot in my daughter's current world – an area for parents and their adolescent offspring that can be a sensitive one to negotiate.

Coming in that frame of mind I think only increased the wonder and sense of joy that I was to experience in participating in Parents Weekend, which began with the first sighting of Brockwood in the evening light, with its glorious hosts of daffodils in full bloom, and a wonderful sense of home-coming. When I was a student at Brockwood, Parents Weekend had not yet been invented. What a wonderful innovation! I now wonder how we managed without it for all those years. Sitting down among all the parents and staff at our first meeting it felt as though "Of course we should be here together" – it was as though a whole other dimension was added by bringing together the people from whom the current student body has emerged. There was also a great sense of warmth and of being among friends.

It felt like a very full weekend – an invaluable opportunity to talk to teachers; they were so generous with their time, and I felt moved to find the depth of care and consideration which my daughter receives from them in her life at Brockwood. Also wonderful to meet the students; are they just an extraordinary collection of young people, or is it that the

Brockwood is extraordinary and therefore enables them to blossom and realize their extraordinary-ness? What I really, really loved was participating in Morning Jobs alongside Izzy (and being sternly instructed by her how to do it!). I have to admit that when I was a student I can't say that I loved it with such intense passion. However, there is such a vitality about taking part in communal life.

I am grateful that my daughter is at a school where there are Morning Jobs, where there is 'Inquiry Time', and as happened when I attended Valentin's engrossing Religious Studies class, where a lesson can be disrupted for a moment when a student, who is leaving early, rushes in and exuberantly hugs her friends goodbye, and every one else as well! These are rare gifts.

Many people asked me how I found Brockwood now, compared to how it was when I was a student. My strong feeling is that the essence that existed then, exists still. Some things change, as they must and should – Brockwood cannot be a static place – but what is wonderful to me is how the intent of the place remains constant and present. And just an after thought – I needn't have worried about sharing my daughter's space because I was welcomed into it.



Frances Orde with Izzy

'TO KNOW IS NOT ENOUGH'

STUDY SKILLS & CRITICAL THINKING CLASS

by Lionel Claris, *former Brockwood student, now Staff*



The expectations behind this class are that if you learn to learn in a way that you love, that helps facilitate finding out what you love, which in turn positively affects your life, and so the world too. That is why, as I understand it, discovering what you love to do in life is a core intention of Brockwood.

In being encouraged to be self-reflective learners, students engage in such an active way that they start to appreciate that “to know is not enough”, and that this is true in two ways. Students explore the distinction between the outer knowledge of the world and the inner knowledge of themselves. They start to appreciate that in both cases knowledge is constructed and must therefore be critiqued as such.

I first engaged with Hampshire College’s motto, “to know is not enough”, a little over 10 years ago at Hampshire where I did my BA and where it originated around 1965. I am using this dictum here in a way that is partly faithful to its original technical interpretation. I am also intentionally departing from it by displacing it into a psychological reading, and bringing it into the new context of a Krishnamurti school.

In terms of outer knowledge this materialises in students realising that to learn content knowledge without knowing how to apply it is not enough. As for inner knowledge, the point is that to know something psychologically, say one’s fear in learning, does not suffice to make one change. Indeed to know is not enough, we must act out of being critically engaged with that fear.

Practically speaking, students learn the study skills and critical thinking necessary to be lifelong learners. Many of us go through school without ever having been taught how to study. Related to this, perhaps the one most important skill to learn is writing: in a very real sense, writing is the challenge where many of the things we learn come together and it is a great medium to learn the art of critical thinking. As it would be a mistake for students to see themselves as fundamentally separate from the object of their critique, in this class critical thinking is not taught as a skill to be applied but as a reflective practice.

This class came about in order to respond to the need to support students with exam classes. It has done so academically and psychologically to show students that when these two are integrated, learning is made exciting because it brings together as a whole the inner and the outer. At that point, taking an exam is a good option, but by no means the only one. What matters is that the learner has first become critically engaged with learning. In the ongoing process of Brockwood’s constant efforts to improve its academics it has been a fascinating dialogue to participate in during my first year as a teacher there. So much potential. I am curious to see where our exploration of bringing the emotional and the intellectual together even more than we teachers already do will take us. After all, it goes to the heart of what Krishnamurti wanted for his schools, and at least based on this class, it makes for good teaching practice too.¹

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

“Brockwood is a place for learning, for learning the art of questioning, the art of exploring.” J. Krishnamurti

Young minds are naturally questioning, naturally curious, and yet often education succeeds in destroying, rather than nurturing, these qualities. Krishnamurti’s vision for Brockwood remains central to all that happens here and you can help support us (and the arts) by donating to our Bursary Fund. This ensures that every year we can accept deserving young people from around the world, who otherwise would not be able to study at Brockwood. For further information, contact: accounts@brockwood.org.uk or telephone: +44 (0)1962 771744

¹ You can read a more developed version of this article on Brockwood Park School’s Blog: <http://blog.brockwood.org.uk>

STUDENTS ARTWORK

by Mary Heerin, staff member

When students at Brockwood come to a boarding school for the first time, it often takes time to adjust to being away from home, their family and friends. Most settle down quickly, feeling the school is their second home and may view the idea of leaving and going out into the world with a little apprehension. I asked my class to write a piece on what they would pack into a 'Home in a Bag' (thanks to Rishi Valley's 'School in a Box' for the idea). Here is a poem written by Sabia:



Carlota, age 16, Portugal

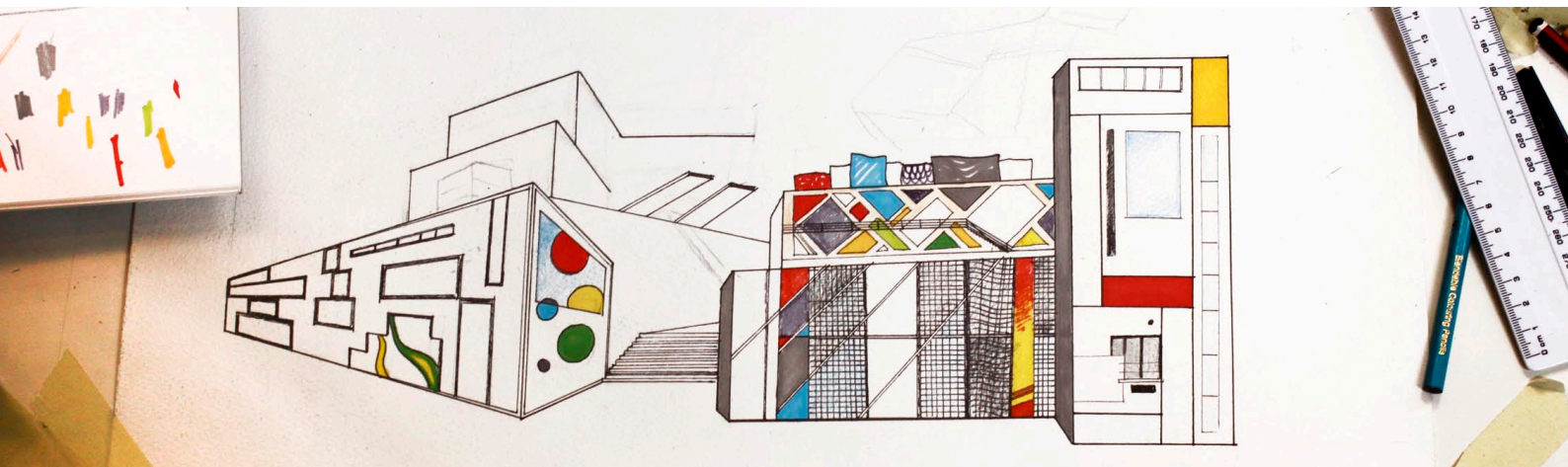
HOME IN A BAG

If I was packing my bag to go off to sea
In it would be the most precious things in life.
There would be mother's voice to soothe me when I'm lost,
There would be the infinite play list with all the songs to see me through
the days and nights wherever I am.
There would be photos of past lovers to store in a box and steal glimpses at
once in a while,
The sound of a burning log would be in my bag to listen to
on the coldest of nights.
I would take you, my love, whose arms I would hide in when the night tries
to envelop itself within me,
A snippet of my sister's laugh, to make me see the brightest side of life and
to know that I have a place to call my home.
I would pack a pair of vintage shoes, to help my feet find their way in
a world so full of pasts.
I would carry with me a compact mirror, so that I can always see who's
behind me
But most of all, I would take my heart and fill it with all the love
in the world and hope to find that someone along the way,
to travel the sea with me.

Sabia, age 15, UK



Paloma, age 17, Spain



Xiao, age 17, Spain

FOCUS GROUP

YESTERDAY'S STUDENTS TOMORROW'S BROCKWOOD

by Lionel Claris, *Development & Alumni Officer*

As a continuation to last November's successful Alumni Event in London, this past February 12th, eight alumni came down to Brockwood for an intense day of exploration. We wanted to spend more time talking about the future of Brockwood with a cross-section of alumni in order to learn from their ideas and better understand their feelings about the place. There were both women and men, and they represented a span of Brockwood years from 1978 to 2004. During lunch, alumni networked with current students in their last year at Brockwood, making it a rich experience for both leaving students and former students.

We ended up exploring three sets of interrelated questions to do with: views and feelings about Brockwood and what is happening here now; what Brockwood meant to them when they were here and what it means today; and finally how we can build the future of Brockwood together. They left us with much to reflect on, suggesting for example, that we should be more proactive in our fundraising efforts, because as one alum put it "The place does well with what it has but obviously depends on the goodwill of a lot of people who are paid less than normal." While another observed "Brockwood does amazing things with limited resources but requires the generosity of people who care for [it]."

As the exploration continued it became clear that everyone felt key tenets of Brockwood must be preserved, commenting: 'sustain the affection between students and staff'; 'maintain outside contacts through concerts and speakers'; 'preserve the important space for silence'. This was reiterated by someone else as "[The] affection shown by staff, the openness, the teas, the discussions". Additionally, we heard and took note of messages to the effect of: "The School needs to grow and radiate. Maybe a seminar series?" and "It is important to re-articulate what Brockwood is doing, how the education here is different – in the past it was K's quotes, but now you've got to find your own words." One of the things we are now in the process of designing directly as a result of this focus group is an online questionnaire for our alumni worldwide.

THE ONLINE ALUMNI DIRECTORY

As former students or staff you can reconnect with old friends as well as network with new ones by registering in the Alumni Directory. You may do so by going to:

http://www.brockwood.org.uk/alumni_directory

The Brockwood Alumni Directory is password protected, and the shared information is only available to other Alumni. The registration process has only a few mandatory fields; including 'your occupation', to enable work related networking.

ALUMNI NEWS

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by Katya Slivinskaya, alumna (2000-2003)

After eight years away, I came back to Brockwood this Spring for one week to share my work as an integrative nutritionist. I had it in mind to share my discoveries about health and wellness, especially the elemental role that care of our physical bodies plays in shaping our emotional experience. In a place that is deeply interested in looking at the mind, embodiment sometimes falls to the wayside as all of our inner work is delegated to the thinking process. But without the support of a healthy body, it is very frustrating to try to work with the mind; some integration is required. So my hope was to bring some awareness to this and share some of the tools I have learned on my own journey.

I found the School thriving. On the old grounds that felt so familiar to me, was bustling a new cycle of life. Students were busy doing the same things we did a decade before—going from class to class, juggling all their activities—and in all of this was a very fresh sense of vigour and thirst for learning. I kept thinking of Krishnamurti's vision of educating the "whole human being" and feeling like I finally, deeply understood what he might have

meant as I saw it reflected in the life of the School.

I had the privilege of teaching several classes and leading an Inquiry Time, which is a class for the entire school. We discussed how to support our learning through mindful nutrition, exploring the inner states in which we learn best. Most of all, I wanted to bring to the students a sense of empowerment about the way they feel, because at this stage of life we often feel totally governed by our inner states, and this can cause real despair. I don't think I'll ever forget the faces that looked back at me—some nodding in agreement, some craning their necks to hear every word, perhaps others skeptical—all of them completely alive with genuine curiosity. This in itself, I think, is a marker of great success for any school.

I hope I was able to share something of value with the Brockwood community, and especially the students, who are busy drinking in all the lessons in their surroundings and whose basic goodness is still so present, so alive. I know now that I will always be available to give back to Brockwood, for there is no more important work than what is being done there.



ALUMNI NEWS

UNABLE TO COMPROMISE

by Chanda Siddoo-Atwal, alumna (1981-1984)

My career in Krishnamurti schools began at the age of eleven when my Mother and Aunt (the Drs. Siddoo) started a school on Vancouver Island. From a provincial and restrictive Catholic school, it launched me into a whole wide world of freedom and possibilities. The climax was when Krishnamurti (K) visited the school to open it officially. Here was the focus of our adulations in flesh and blood talking and laughing just like other people, a shy and childlike man. This quality certainly endeared him to all the students as we had candid discussions with him complaining about 'Authority' and 'Discipline' (in the absence of the Staff, I might add) during his stay there.

Having been impacted so deeply by this initial taste of K's vision, my next move was to Brockwood Park and Dorothy Simmons. In those days, one might say that Brockwood *was* Dorothy Simmons, the Sculptress-Principal, who embodied all the vigour and vitality K espoused. For a young person, she was a monument to the ideal of living creatively, and everything about Brockwood was like a great work of art. Once she said to me, "Here was a man who was telling me to live my whole life as Art and, so, I just could not refuse when he asked me to be the Principal of Brockwood Park". At this point at Brockwood, K did not have so much to do with the students being in his late eighties, and it struck me that, perhaps, he was growing a little weary of his relentless mission. Nevertheless, we saw him regularly at meals sitting with Dorothy and enjoying himself with this living and dynamic bastion of his teachings. It made me glad to see that. Brockwood was the most seductive school I ever attended, not only because of Dorothy and the inspired Staff, but because it promised such beauty to its students. Being so international, it gave a true taste of what peace and harmony in the world would be like...because it was so easy there.

Later, I carried that experience with me when I attended University College London, where I managed to complete a degree in Biochemistry. Although there were academic challenges at Brockwood, it had never focused rigorously on the sciences, but I always carried that sense of excitement with me which made learning new things such a tremendous pleasure. K's insistence on questioning things was never far from my heart and made every acquired piece of knowledge



that much more tantalizing.

Things came to a head though, when I started my graduate work on cancer research, and began to realize the limits of that knowledge which I had admired so much earlier. It was just about at that time that Dr. David Bohm and his wife, Saral, had started conducting 'Dialogues' at the old K school on Vancouver Island which was an Adult Centre, now called Swanwick Study Centre. With K's passing, David had become very passionate about effecting a change in human consciousness through a forum which allowed some sort of shared meaning and shared spiritual experience. Therefore, we were able to have some wonderful discussions about my graduate studies when he visited us in the summers. I told him that I had become more interested in the process of experimentation and what lay behind it than in the experiments themselves and shared my journals on the subject with him. He was sympathetic, but suggested that I should also persist with the science as it would be so rewarding. This was a decisively transformative point for me and I continued as he recommended. As a result, pushing beyond the frontiers of knowledge has become one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Then, some time after my graduate studies and all the chaos that surrounded them, I had the great privilege of making the acquaintance of Professor Allan Anderson at Swanwick, which has resulted in a lasting and the most meaningful friendship of my life. As soon as we met, I knew that I had found a kindred poet and spirit with the same inability to compromise.

email: chanda@kapoorcompanies.com

BROCKWOOD in NEW YORK CITY

by Bill Taylor, *co-principal*

Sixteen former and current students and staff of Brockwood came together in central New York City on Saturday April 2nd. Alumni came from all over the US, as far away as California and as close as Manhattan. They wanted to reconnect with one thing they all shared: Brockwood people and their lives.

The alumni who gathered met old friends, made new ones, shared stories and made future plans. The atmosphere was that of fun, genuine care and possible engagement for helping sustain Brockwood. The NYC event started at 3.00pm and finished around 7.00pm. Those who could stayed back and went for a meal together.

We would like to thank everyone who made it possible and especially alumna Lauren Russell Geskos, for co-ordinating the event and Ajit Pai, for the use of his beautiful apartment in central NYC. If you wanted to make it but couldn't, we hope you will be able to come to a similar event in NYC next year; or elsewhere before then – cities and dates to be announced. Contact us if you would like to help organise a gathering in your area.



Back Row (from left to right): Arvind Pai (Rishi Valley alumnus and host), Jonathan Mitchell, Lauren Russell-Geskos, Eva Segou, Xana Vie, Sid Goyal, Joel Vall Thomas, Kara Taylor, Ajit Pai (Rishi Valley alumnus and host), George Matthews. *Front Two Rows (from left to right):* Hugo Mahabir, Dana Jané, Veronique Rignault, Tyler Davis-Mayo, Olga Gonzalez, Carole Starkes, Leila Taylor, Bill Taylor.

alumni events for autumn/winter 2011-12

We would like to hold the following events:

Brockwood in Barcelona

Brockwood in Paris

Brockwood in Amsterdam

If you are interested to help us organise and co-ordinate these events, please email alumni@brockwood.org.uk

. . . and BERLIN

by Adrian Sydenham, *co-principal*

On May 14th a warm and sunny Berlin provided the setting for an enjoyable gathering of Brockwood alumni, from the 70s, 80s, 90s and first decade of the 2000s. There were 24 of us in all, including some former Mature Students, Staff, and one or two partners and children too. We hope this will be the start of a more regular gathering of the clans, and perhaps others will be inspired to strengthen their BP contacts in other regions: don't be afraid – the first trepidations are soon overcome and common ground re-established.

Although everyone seemed to have fallen on their feet since leaving Brockwood, especially in the fields of marketing and massage, more recent graduates felt, with hindsight, the need for stronger advice and guidance at the age of 17 and 18, including from those who had themselves returned to Germany, when contemplating their re-entry into the education system of their own country.

As well as an update on what had been happening at Brockwood since their departure, other points of discussion related to the best means of supporting worthy but less well-off students from Germany, contributing to a bursary fund for the sponsorship of an individual for example, and ongoing help with the recruitment of students, mature students, and staff. We would like to thank Dagmar especially for co-ordinating the event and helping to make the arrangements and bring people together, and also Martin and Jan Janda for driving across from Prague to be with us.



By alphabetic order: Adrian Sydenham, Agnes Benoit, Andrés Nader, Anke Schmiedel, Charlotte Hermanns (He), Dagmar Albrecht, Daniel Celal Christoffel, Gregor Czimmek, James Griffin, Jan Janda, Jana Langguth, Jonathan Menz, Justine Hess, Kris Gorski, Lorena Wish, Ludger Fabian, Marc Schmiedel, Martin Janda, Moses Merkle, Natasza Smielowska, Pamela Ferchl.

BROCKWOOD IN BRIEF

TEACHING ACADEMY

- SUMMER 2011 -

Hosted by Brockwood Park School

Session 1: Re-envisioning Education

Sunday 10th July to Saturday 16th July

The intent of this session is for participants to question and make visible their assumptions about teaching and learning, and to start from scratch to practically design schools, classrooms and other learning environments.

Session 2: The Art, Science and Craft of Teaching and Learning

Sunday 17th July to Saturday 23rd July

In this session participants will engage in self-reflective and shared inquiry involving the close observation of school and classroom activities with hands-on and minds-on experiences of teaching and learning.

For information, call +44(0) 1962 771 744 or contact:

teachingacademy@brockwood.org.uk



Luke and Mary Heerin

AUCTION FOR JAPAN

by Mary Heerin, Staff

In March last year I was getting ready to take a small group of Brockwood students to Japan for a two-week trip and I remember them asking what we would do if there was an earthquake. Although there were a few occasions when I dived under the nearest table, having been a resident there for 22 years, one eventually learns not to bat an eyelid at the frequent little reminders that Japan lies on one of the most seismically active areas of the world.

However, despite having the most advanced earthquake-proof building techniques, tsunami warning systems and sophisticated nuclear technology in the world, nothing could have prepared Japan for the unimaginable devastation caused by the events of March 11th and the subsequent fight to prevent an even greater disaster. After the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War 2, Japan knows that catastrophes are not always singular, but the triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear emergency made the world wonder how on earth a country could cope and recover.

At Brockwood, many students were deeply affected and wanted to do something, however small, to help. We organized an auction with students' contributions ranging from unwanted clothes and accessories to swathes of cloth from India. Bidding was fast and enthusiastic and we raised £230 from the auction and some donations to send to Save the Children Fund Japan – a drop in the ocean in terms of what will be needed but a big expression of the concern and connectedness everyone felt.



Inquiry Time during the Parents Weekend