Since we last wrote...

- The ERT has a new website.
- We’ve decided to run a 6th international teachers’ conference in July 2016, in Lucca, Italy.
- Five more gap year students are volunteering at our family of St James schools.
- We’ve made grants of £20,000 each to St James Johannesburg and St James Durban, South Africa.
- A 2nd grant went to the Pumpkin Players, actors who introduce primary school children to Shakespeare
- And we’ve transferred to St James Durban over £24,000 in donations made since autumn 2015.
- We at the ERT have received many generous donations to help make all these things happen. Thank you! Now read on….

New St James Heads
Dr Declan Kelly has been appointed headmaster of John Scottus Senior School in Dublin. And Conall Clancy has been appointed head of the Primary School. Julian Wilcock is the new headmaster of John Colet School, Sydney. (In the last issue we reported that Christine McLintock was appointed head, but that was a holding appointment pending the search for a permanent head.)

- We wish them every success in their vital roles.

New partner organisation
Last December, two teachers from St James Junior School in London were invited to visit the Swami Dayananda Education Trust, in Tamil Nadu, South India. The visit was a great success. That Trust has a lot in common with the St James ethos and the ERT. So they are sending two of their teachers to the international teachers’ conference in Lucca, this July.

- We look forward to a fruitful relationship with this impressive organisation, and we’ll tell you about it.

A NEW ERT WEBSITE IS WOVEN
The ERT’s original website was much admired when it first saw the light of a computer screen. That was c.2001, and since then it has become increasingly out of date.

So we’re delighted to report that the website has been re-designed and re-written from top to bottom. You can inspect it at www.education-renaissance-trust.org.uk.

- Guillermo Berardone at Metacreativa in Buenos Aires, Argentina, did the redesign. A long-term friend of the ERT, Guillermo has been maintaining the website for years (and urging us to update it). He has done a wonderful - and amazingly economical - job of giving it a new look. It now works for tablets and smartphones as well as PCs.


The film is at https://vimeo.com/141599354 if you’re reading this on line.

Then on the same page read Carey Dickenson’s terrific review of the conference for the Independent Schools Association magazine. She says: ‘There is nowhere else in the independent sector offering training of this sincerity and depth.’

Fifty years on
To mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of the first St James School in London, we’ve included on the website Laura Hyde’s lecture to parents, given last February. Laura was headmistress of the Senior Girls School for 19 years and is now Director of Education for the three London St James schools. Her lecture is a beautiful synthesis of the philosophy which inspires our whole family of schools, and also the Education Renaissance Trust. Well worth reading: on the ‘About Us’ pages of the website.

St James Johannesburg
You can’t have a good website without great images. We’re very grateful to St James schools around the world for sending some of their own favourites. A couple of them adorn this page. Happy browsing!

Learn and Teach
This year’s International Teachers Conference is called ‘Learn and Teach’. It runs from 7-14 July at the beautiful Villa Boccella near Lucca. So far we have participants from schools in South Africa, India, Hungary, Trinidad, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the UK. These conferences usually run every other year.

But there has been such demand that the ERT trustees agreed to run an extra one. So if you are, or know of a teacher who would like to attend, email Kim Brown (k.brown@stjamesschools.co.uk) who is the administrator. She may still have a place for you!

The Education Renaissance Trust promotes schools and supports teachers around the world who provide a spiritually-based education. REPORT is published twice a year to keep friends and supporters in touch with our work. If you no longer wish to receive it, please contact the editor, Hugh Venables.

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Where are they now?
In 2016 we have been sponsoring five gap year students at schools in the St James family
Eleanor Mason is about to return to the UK from Ficino School, Auckland. James Crompton (son of Ficino School headmaster Peter) is at St James Junior School in London. Sophia Wormald is following in her sister’s footsteps at John Colet School, Sydney.
Wade Bredin, a student from the USA, is helping with the boarding pupils at St James Senior Boys School, London. And Hugo Rimmer is on a ‘gap term’ at St James Johannesburg (where they would like to keep him!).

Legacies keep coming
Three new legacies to report. Catherine Munnion left the ERT £1000, and Hugh Stewart left us £6000. And we’ve just heard that Claudine Fricker has left the ERT £10,000. Wonderful for the ERT’s work to be helped in this way.

Talking of fund-raising...
Many ERT Friends now support our work through regular standing orders. Some sponsor bursaries for children at St James Johannesburg or help with the development of St James Durban. Others donate to the wider work of the ERT. The Chancellor kindly increases every donation from a UK taxpayer by 25%, via Gift Aid.
Contact us (see overleaf for contact details) and we’ll send you a form.
One-off donations, large or small, are equally welcome!
You can now support us via PayPal!
There’s a button on the ERT website – go to the How You Can Help page and then to Becoming a Donor (or click http://www.education-renaissance-trust.org.uk/help2.htm if you’re seeing this online.)

A proud moment
Lisa Welthagen, Headmistress of St James Durban, recently reported: “I am so pleased and proud to announce that every single class received an A+ for their choral verse at the annual South African Speech and Drama Eisteddfod. Over and above that we received the highest number of A and A+ results for individual poems in the school’s history.
The adjudicator was so impressed by our level of competence as well as by the behaviour of all the children and their manners.
All in all a very proud moment for St James”

One good teacher can change the world
In 2011, we paid for Luciana Garate, from Argentina, to teach (and learn) for a term at St James Juniors in London...
What happened next is inspiring us all at ERT...and inspiring all you kind donors who give us the money to get started.
Luciana went home to teach in a bilingual Catholic primary school, taking boys and girls for English and Spanish This February she wrote to us about the influence the St James philosophy can have.
“I applied the philosophical principles: I greeted every child individually, we paused before and after every activity. We took time to reflect on our virtues, and I encouraged applying them. I chose the best material for teaching, and I even encouraged healthy eating, swimming hard against the current!

Over the years, the impact in my class was very positive. The head and most parents were very happy with the effects. Children paused spontaneously at home with family, before playing sport, and even before surgery for a broken leg!
A couple of other teachers tried my ideas, but the impact in the school was, I thought, insufficient. I wanted the whole school to join in.
But that seemed impossible.
And so I decided to quit. I would find something new. One day I hope to set up a school myself.

But the Head said ‘Please don’t leave,’ and he put me in charge of two weeks of pre-term training sessions with all the teachers...head, deputy, secretary, 19 Spanish teachers, 16 English teachers, five RE teachers, five art teachers and 14 PE teachers.
I usually hate the limelight! But I presented my alternative methods from St James, to inspire the teachers to renew their work in the school and with each discipline, with the welfare of the children in mind. We rediscovered our principles together.

So the school has adopted the initial greeting, the pause, providing a good environment, and teaching according to the children’s potential. Teachers now see teaching as developing children’s qualities in all directions, instead of merely transmitting information. They have worked as a team, meeting all together for the first time, and deciding together what they want to do.
The response and the feedback are really positive. One teacher said ‘For the first time in 25 years, we are considering the teaching of our students from every possible angle.’ Some teachers have asked if I can continue to run these meetings with them throughout the year.
In Nature Study, they decided to teach in a more practical way, so children learn from experience and in contact with nature. For syllabus, they chose to focus on ‘man in creation’. They selected themes almost forgotten by some – the elements, the origin of life, evolution, the environment, care of nature...
All of this is the effect of the powerful teaching and the many committed people making efforts for children around the world.

Thank you to ERT for allowing this to happen!”

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