



REPORT

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EDUCATION RENAISSANCE TRUST

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Since we last wrote...

- ❖ We've run a 7th international Teachers' Conference, in Lucca, Italy.
- ❖ We've supported Sanskrit@St James in spreading the study of Sanskrit around the world.
- ❖ Our educational advisers, Paul & Penny Moss, have visited St James family schools in Trinidad and South Africa.
- ❖ We've paid for one teacher in Johannesburg to train and qualify, and for another to attend an exam board conference in Singapore.
- ❖ ERT-sponsored gap-year students are volunteering in St James family schools around the world.
- ❖ We at the ERT have received many generous donations to help make these things happen. (We have just received £17,215 from HMRC, the Gift Aid reclaim for all your donations in the last financial year.) Thank you! Now read on....

Luciana back in London

Luciana Garate is a teacher from Buenos Aires. She wrote us an inspiring letter last year, about putting into practice, at the school where she teaches, what she had learned from an ERT-sponsored term at St James Junior School in London.

Now she plans to set up her own Montessori school in Argentina. To help prepare, she'll be spending this term at a Montessori School in London. We're delighted to be able to help with her travel costs.



Lucca lunchtime

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A CIVILISED EDUCATION

What does this mean?

This summer, nearly 50 teachers, from 20 different schools in 10 different countries, gathered to find answers to the question - in the light of 3 great civilisations: the Christian, the European pre-Christian 'Classical' era in Greece and Rome, and the ancient Vedanta tradition of India.

Of course, this was once more the ERT's International Teachers' Conference, living and studying in the beautiful Villa Bocella, in Lucca, Italy - near to Florence, where civilisation notably thrived and was revived 500-600 years ago. Included in the week was the regular 2-yearly meeting of the heads of the St James family of schools. And a particularly strong team of expert tutors.

The principles of education as taken from all 3 traditions became the focus of the work. And as usual, each teacher became a student in at least one of 5 specialist areas. This year, we had a top-notch team of Sanskrit teachers in Elena and Warwick Jessup from St James School in London - they are accustomed to teaching all age-groups, from the very young up to grandmothers, so teachers of all levels of Sanskrit expertise were helped and encouraged.

Classical Greek studies, Speech/Drama, and Sacred Geometry were the other special subjects, as usual, plus Art - taught by Sue Cooper, who has just 'retired' from teaching and is setting up her own art school in London.

'Best Conference yet!' says Paul Moss, who has inspired and led all 7 so far, spaced over 10+ years. Hundreds of teachers in total, both new and experienced, have found again the shared and universal inner spark that truly motivates their work, by coming to these Conferences from all the 'St James' schools, and from many others.

Best of all, to us in the ERT office in London, are the dozens of letters of appreciation that reach us, from governors and heads as well as the teachers themselves.

They write about '*Connecting with stillness...*' '*Fresh understanding...*' '*My sense of Self and Spirit were tested and examined wonderfully...*' "*Be still and know that I am God*" has been transformative: *I will be putting it into practice in my personal and professional life.*

So to all you **ERT 'REPORT'** newsletter readers out there, who give donations to ERT over the years, please share in our delight in making this amazing difference happen! Your gifts are appreciated by many, many people worldwide, all working for a truly civilised education.

At this point, too, big thanks to the admin and catering teams who have helped over so many years. These teams are almost always drawn from present and past St James staff/teachers/students/parents, and from members and friends and relations of the philosophy schools. Fresh volunteers are also needed, to join these working holidays in the sun of Italy and in great company.

ERT particularly gives financial help to the 'St James' schools from poorer parts of the world, who wish to send teachers to these conferences. Other school staff and heads and governors can ask for grants too, to help them with the costs of attendance and the travel.



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.

The Pentagram Dance of Earth and Venus

Tom Bree has been a star attraction at the International Teachers Conferences for many years. Teachers attending his Sacred Geometry sessions have been inspired to bring geometry back into their teaching.



At Lucca this year Tom gave a wonderful demonstration of sacred geometry in action, with the aid of two of the teachers. You can watch Jane Mason's film of it at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgp65HXsip8>.

Sanskrit@StJames

The teaching of Sanskrit has been a special selling point of the St James family since the beginning. 3 years ago publishing of the St James Sanskrit textbooks was outsourced to Motilal Banarsidass, an Indian publishing firm. Impressive to report that some 50,000 copies of the textbooks have so far been sold.

ERT recently made a grant to Sanskrit@St James to promote the adoption of international Sanskrit examinations.

New team

Since he retired as headmaster of St James Junior School Paul Moss has been a valued adviser to the ERT on education and teacher development. He has now been joined in this role by Penny Moss, recently retired from teaching at St James Junior School.

This year Paul and Penny have visited the Renaissance School in Trinidad to offer help and advice on the school's development.

They also visited St James Durban and St James Johannesburg, where they worked with the head teachers, governors and staff, and met parents.

The schools appreciate these visits. They help keep in touch with the St James ethos, keep up to date with current practice of governance, and benefit from the wealth of St James experience of our two life-long teachers.

The St James Durban Chairman of Governors later wrote *'the overriding benefit of the Moss' visit has been to raise the level of confidence of the teaching staff and the members of the board. They went about their analysis unassumingly with love but most of all with great care.'*

A gap year in New Zealand

Eleanor Mason had been a pupil at St James Senior Girls School in London, where her mother also teaches. She then started studying Japanese at the London University School of Oriental & African Studies. Then after a year she changed her mind – and decided to apply to do Classics, like her mum, at a university in a different city.

So she says it was a nervous and very last-minute decision for her, to set off for New Zealand and take up the ERT's invitation to spend a 'gap year' in between, to work at the St James's Ficino School, in Auckland, New Zealand.

ERT has been financing and arranging overseas school work placements for young people for many years, particularly for those travelling from one St James school to another in a different country. The young people work at the school, teaching and assisting in all sorts of ways, with an ERT bursary to support them, and often staying in the family home of one of the members of staff of the school where they work. For most, it is their first experience of teaching. And some decide eventually to train as professional teachers back in their home country.

Ficino School is one of the smaller members of the worldwide St James family of schools, so Eleanor found she quickly got to know everybody. With the younger pupils, she became an assistant to the classroom teachers. Her biggest nightmare, she says, was starting them on tennis, when she didn't know the rules!

For the older ones, she helped to teach Sanskrit – which we were delighted to hear about. ERT is helping to support Sanskrit@StJames and its worldwide campaign to get the subject taught and examined more widely, in the way that other ancient 'classical' languages like Latin and Greek are studied in Europe.

Eleanor soon became accustomed to planning and taking classes, and to wider activities like directing Shakespeare, and hairdressing and make-up for other school play productions, and hiking with older pupils and colleagues among the great mountains and hills of New Zealand.



The ERT grant that we gave her also allowed time off to trek further – she mentions horse-riding, green sulphur-lakes and steaming volcanic vents, all in the dramatic and cloudy landscape that many of us remember from the films of 'The Lord of the Rings'. And she made friends at the youth week run by the philosophy schools.

Eleanor tells us this ERT 'gap-year' has been a wonderful experience for her. So if you, or a friend, or a colleague or pupil, would like to be considered for this voluntary work abroad, do please contact the ERT office. We do particularly look for young people associated with one of the St James family of schools.

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 worldwide work of the ERT. The Chancellor kindly increases every donation from a UK taxpayer by 25%, via Gift Aid.

Contact us (see overleaf for details) and we'll send you a Gift Aid form.

One-off donations, large or small, are equally welcome, cheques or cash!

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.)