



REPORT

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EDUCATION RENAISSANCE TRUST

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Since we last wrote...

- ❖ We've helped four boys at St James Senior Boys School to take part in the school's annual Camino pilgrimage. Taking part in the pilgrimage is character-building and the ERT trustees strongly support it.
- ❖ We are supporting two gap year student volunteers at St James Prep School in London.
- ❖ We have made a grant to Sanskrit @ St James to cover exam fees for students in Nepal. It's vital for the continuance of the Cambridge Sanskrit GCSE exam that enough students take the exam.
- ❖ We continue to support Little Stars School for disadvantaged children in Varanasi, India. (And they send us lovely pictures – see below!)
- ❖ We continue to receive generous donations and legacies to help make all these things happen. Thank you!



Namaste from Little Stars

Marita Brewster has joined the ERT trustee board. Marita is a governor of Erasmus School in Melbourne. She has been the driving force behind defining the ethos of the family of schools.

St James Johannesburg closes its doors

Pupil numbers at St James have been falling for some years, and in January this year the board of governors decided to close the school. St James's neighbourhood has not helped. It has become increasingly violent and this understandably puts off parents.

The ERT has supported St James from its beginning. Support was not just financial, although there has been a lot of financial help. Experienced St James teachers visited from London to offer guidance, meet with parents and run teacher-training workshops. Among them Sheila Caldwell the founding headmistress of St James in London, and Paul Moss former head of St James Junior School.

For many years individual donors in the UK funded bursaries for pupils. These bursaries were valuable, as many parents struggled to afford the fees. St James sent us progress reports on the pupils, and these were much appreciated by the donors.

The governors are committed to reopening a school in a better part of Johannesburg, when circumstances permit.



Curtain call at St James Johannesburg

William Wooldridge, a former chairman of governors sent us this tribute to St James.

'Those were indeed halcyon days. We mingled with the finest educators in the country who willingly came to visit the school and spoke afterwards at public functions about the miracle that was St James.'

'Two of our teachers at that time were featured in a book about great South African teachers written by Prof. Jonathan Jansen.'

'Our children achieved unheard of academic plaudits and many went on to become exemplary and outstanding young men and women.'

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The Education Renaissance Trust promotes schools and supports teachers around the world who provide a spiritually-based education. This ERT newsletter 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.

Last time at Villa Boccella?

July 6-13 are the dates for the 2024 ERT international teachers conference.

The theme this year is 'What is Beauty?' It's likely to be the last ERT conference at the very beautiful Villa Boccella, near Lucca. The Villa is up for sale, alas.

Many teachers from schools around the world will have very happy memories of their time at this perfect venue.



Richard Elias remembered

Richard passed away recently. He had been a staunch supporter of St James Durban, organising fundraising concerts and galvanising fund-raising in the UK.

In the school's first few years Richard even took on chairmanship of the board of governors, timing the meetings to coincide with business trips. He is much missed.

Wise words from a Head Girl

The Head Girl at Ficino School, Auckland spoke these wise words at her first assembly.

'My name is Zia Ferdian, I started Ficino school right from year 1, and I must tell you, the 8 years of my time here will be remembered, even when I'm older. For my last year at Ficino, I am immensely grateful and honoured to lead my peers into a new year as the Head Girl of 2024.'

The roles of the head boy and girl are all about acts of service to the school. It teaches one the life skills of leadership, responsibility, and courage. This is why I sincerely desire to mirror the support I have received from many teachers, students, and parents.'

My advice to current and upcoming students is to always "Rejoice in the Present." A motto that will stick with me forever.'

Grand Opening at Erasmus School

One of the biggest grants the ERT has made went to Erasmus School in Melbourne. It was to help the much-needed refurbishment of the school building.

Now three years on the work is complete and pupils and staff are enjoying their new classrooms and improved playground. In February the building was formally opened by a Federal Government Senator.



We were pleased to see ERT's contribution noted on the plaque.

A delightful booklet about Erasmus School tells how the building was originally acquired. It had belonged to the Brigidine Association, a convent. To convince the nuns of the school's bona fides they published an impressive and costly brochure. What convinced the nuns was the sight of volunteers painstakingly cleaning the convent's 300 rusty fibreglass chairs – using toothbrushes! Then another sister reported seeing Erasmus children on a tram. They were well behaved, calm, talking to each other nicely, enjoying one another's company and beautifully dressed.



Erasmus School's fine new building – and occupants

The nuns were delighted that the school they and their predecessors had sacrificed so much to build, would continue in the same vein. No brochure was needed.

THANKS FOR READING! NOW CAN YOU HELP US?

Many readers now support our worldwide 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 details) and we'll send you a Gift Aid form. One-off donations, large or small, are equally welcome, cheques or cash! Or you can donate by bank transfer to our account at HSBC: The Education Renaissance Trust, sort code 40 11 58; account no. 90125105.

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 online.)