The beautiful range of colours in the landscape which started to emerge gradually during these past weeks was a great joy to the senses for all of us at Brockwood. As luck would have it, mild temperatures and numerous sunny days also graced us this past month, although Winter is fast approaching. The Workshop Week and the Half-Term break shape the month of October, making it different and exciting. Another way of learning during the workshop week is added to the numerous learning layers that the school provides for the students to grow, with all of them being equally important. Staff and students then went off in many different directions, converging once more at the end of the short break and resuming the last part of the term.

How few see the mountains or a cloud. They look, make some remarks and pass on. Words, gestures, emotions prevent seeing. A tree, a flower is given a name, put into a category and that’s that. You see a landscape through an archway or from a window, and if you happen to be an artist or are familiar with art, you say almost immediately, it is like those medieval paintings or mention some name of some recent painter. Or if you are a writer, you look in order to describe; if you are a musician, probably you have never seen the curve of a hill or the flowers at your feet; you are caught up in your daily practice, or ambition has you by the throat. If you are a professional of some kind, probably you never see. But to see there must be humility whose essence is innocence. There’s that mountain with the evening sun on it; to see it for the first time, to see it, as though it had never been seen before, to see it with innocence, to see it with eyes that have been bathed in emptiness, that have not been hurt with knowledge - to see then is an extraordinary
Education Corner

The Autumn Workshop Week

Brockwood hosted its annual workshop week during the final week before Half Term. 16 different workshops were offered during the week, with facilitators coming in from different parts of the UK and Europe to offer their skills and expertise to the students. Several new faces were welcomed this year, enriching an already diverse mix of people who have been sharing their time with Brockwood over the years. Workshops ranged from Aerial Yoga to Parkour, Lindy Hop, Digital Journalism, Flight Simulation and Working with Energy and Sound (see photo of the 'sound bath' given in the Assembly Hall at the top of this newsletter).

It was a pleasure to see all the students, Mature Students and staff engage with the different workshops - either focusing on a particular one such as Drama, or enjoying a mixture of various different workshops throughout their week - and we are very grateful to all the facilitators who took the time off of their schedules to be with us during this wonderful week.

The Workshop Week is very important to us as it provides a unique opportunity for students to try out something new, which is otherwise unaccessible to them in their daily lives. To come in contact with such professionals, who are willing to share their expertise with us, is a very fruitful experience which can contribute in myriads of ways to one's learning journey. It's also very fun!

Firelighting
Rowan and Gregor get the fire going, but not before putting in some good hard work.

One of the skills offered in Human Ecology this term has been friction fire-lighting. In this option, students were introduced to the principles of lighting fires in the outdoors, including identifying viable tinder from the plants and trees around us. The major focus, however, was on understanding the principles and putting into practice a method of friction fire-lighting called the bow-drill. This method uses a spindle that, under pressure, rotates very fast in a hearth. This creates a fine, hot powder that can form an ember. Both the spindle and hearth are made from dead wood. The spindle is spun using a bow, and pressed into the hearth with a bearing block. All of these pieces were made by the students, using only a knife, folding-saw and some cord.

They then tried to use their sets to make an ember, which would light a fire. Unfortunately much of the wood that had been used was too hard to create an ember, but we built enough sets from softer rhododendron wood, and everyone was able to have a go at creating a fire. Almost everyone succeeded (after working in pairs or threes), though often after much effort and persistence. If any of them decide to practise this, they could easily make a set and get fire by themselves in 30 minutes or so. Whilst it may never be used in a survival situation by anyone who was in this group, it's been an opportunity to experience what we are capable of, with just a couple of simple tools and some skills.

**Inquiry Time**

**October 5th:** The way school decisions affect everyone.

The topic of decision-making was introduced by one student to the whole school and we looked together at the decision-making process, how decisions affect us, the way we communicate decisions and how we react to them.

**October 12th:** What are you going to do with your own life?

This question was the introduction to the Inquiry Time and was designed to encourage conversations that would reveal the thinking that individuals had about what they wanted to do in the future. After a brief introduction three further questions were posed: What
is ambition and success? Do you have expectations/aspirations concerning your future? What are your dreams/passions/interests?

All the participants in the Assembly Hall were then asked to split into groups of about eight and consider these questions together. After about twenty minutes the concept of right livelihood was put forward so that there would be a sense that whatever is done in the future is not necessarily an isolated activity and there is much to be considered beyond the likes and dislikes of the individual. A further twenty minutes or so was spent discussing this in the same groups. Finally two questions were left to be pondered beyond Inquiry Time: How much are you in control of your life? What are you doing now that is shaping your future?

**Presentations**

**October 4th:** Staff member Jennifer read out a letter she had written about Brockwood’s intentions the previous evening. Here is an excerpt: “The intentions of this school are to find out if it is possible to have a religious mind. Some of you may be thinking at this moment: well what does that mean? It means a mind that is capable of sitting still, not escaping or running away from yourself or your thoughts and seeing the truth, which is what we actually are [...] that this can open the door to a balanced life, inner peace, care, an awareness of strong habits or a particular neurosis that we may carry. I think we all need to hear this once in a while because in the end we are trying to find out a different state of being.”

**October 5th:** Thomas and Javi gave a presentation on how we sit. The presentation started with a parody on the way many of us sit during assemblies and meetings. They then went on to let people sit in their favorite sitting positions for a moment before screening a video on the negative health effects of sitting still and on chairs for extended periods of time. Towards the end of the presentation, we all practised proper sitting on a chair. Several alternative sitting positions on the floor were also demonstrated and explained before inviting everyone to participate in a 30/30 squat challenge (30 minutes a day, 30 consecutive days) to practise the deep squat, one of the natural human resting positions.

**October 8th:** Student Maggie presented ‘Finding Home: The Real Stories of Migrant Britain’ by journalist and author Emily Dugan. In a series of short stories, the author shares her travels with several migrants from different parts of the world, whose journey she followed and documented. Some of these stories have been used in this year’s Movement of Humans class, and one was also used last year by a student who adapted it as a monologue for a drama performance.

**October 12th:** Staff member Julien gave a presentation about e-safety to the school. He explained how the cyber world grew from analogue to digital in the last few decades, and shared some simple but efficient tips to avoid the worst of the internet - such as how to identify phishing scams.

**October 14th:** Glenn Edney gave a presentation entitled "We Live On an Ocean Planet". He reminded us that the Ocean covers 70% of the surface of our planet and 97% of the livable biosphere, and that no matter where we are, each breath we take connects us directly to the Ocean. Glenn, an ecologist and ocean explorer from New Zealand, has spent 30 years on and under the Ocean, learning from its dwellers, large and small. He shared moving personal stories about his deep encounters with giant octopus and whales, and a recent recording of the Humpback
Glenn Edney on how oceans work.

October 18th: Workshop facilitator Toni, who was running the Clean Fuel and RawFood workshops, gave a talk about transitioning to a vegetarian diet, and what to look out for while shopping. She gave a brief outline of the core elements needed for a healthy vegetarian diet and then spoke about the simple things one can do to avoid eating bad foods (such as reading the list of ingredients on the back of your pack of potato chips).

September's Events and Happenings

Performance Events in September:

Friday 14th: Brockwood's Halloween Party announced the start of the Workshop Week, with many going to great lengths to create fearsome costumes before eating some yummy snacks and hitting the dance floor with DJ Yoel and Alex on the decks.

Friday 7th - Tuesday 18th: Gregor and Ulrich performed a series of pieces from Bach's Cello Suites for the school, starting with a rendition of the Prelude from Bach's sixth Cello Suite, for viola. Ulrich then played the Allemande from Bach's sixth Cello Suite on Tuesday, with Gregor treating us to a rendition of the Prelude from Bach's first Cello Suite for guitar on Friday. Ulrich finished with the Courrente from Bach's sixth Cello Suite on Tuesday morning.

Activities & Trips in October:
October 5th: A small group of students headed down to Warnford to collect the willow branches that had been set to soak in the river overnight. It would be used later in the day for the Handcraft workshop in Human Ecology, woven together to make different baskets and ornaments.

October 13th: Brockwood’s annual Food Festival took place. This year students, Mature Students and staff were allocated countries at random, and came up with delicious recipes for the school to enjoy in a sumptuous feast on Thursday evening. India, Italy, America, Germany, Austria, Spain, The Netherlands, Great Britain, France and China were all represented. Italy’s aubergine-mozzarella bake was arguably the dish of the year!

October 14th: Students went on a short excursion into London to visit an exhibition on contemporary Indian art. On exhibit were two paintings of artist Balraj Khanna, grandfather of staff member Pierre, whom they then went to visit in his studio in West London for a talk about his life and work, followed by a walk through the city and some impromptu street photography.

October 27th: A good dozen students were staying back at Brockwood during the Half-Term break. We thought it would be nice for them to get out a bit, so a day-trip to the town of Brighton was organised. The journey to Brighton, a two-hour drive on winding country roads, was an experience in itself: The morning sun was cutting through the mist, blue skies opened up everywhere, bringing out the autumn colours in their full intensity. Once in Brighton we split up into smaller groups for some shopping, eating and sightseeing. The cobblestone beaches and the enormous Pier were available for everyone’s enjoyment and it was refreshing to get away from Brockwood for a change of scenery.

School Gallery
Igor and Thomas practising movement exercises during the Parkour workshop.

Tais and Tina in Pete's Working with Energy and Sound workshop.
Helen, upside down, posing for the Aerial Yoga presentation video

Team America on their way to culinary glory. Brockwood Food Festival
Ivan and Maia practise their Lindy Hop routine during workshop week.

Blue Tit, Blackbird, Wood Pigeon and Great Tit nests taken out of their bird boxes by Human Ecology students to allow new families to build new nests.
Students with their captain Dave, going through the training before getting into the flight simulator made up entirely of recycled materials from Brockwood.

Surya and others getting down low during the Parkour workshop
Students let loose in Gerard's Drama workshop.

Dharma, Lucia, Roxana and Isabelle weaving willow in Human Ecology hand-crafts.
Lost

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
I have made this place around you.
If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.
No two trees are the same to Raven.
No two branches are the same to Wren.
If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.

-David Wagoner

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brockwood.org.uk