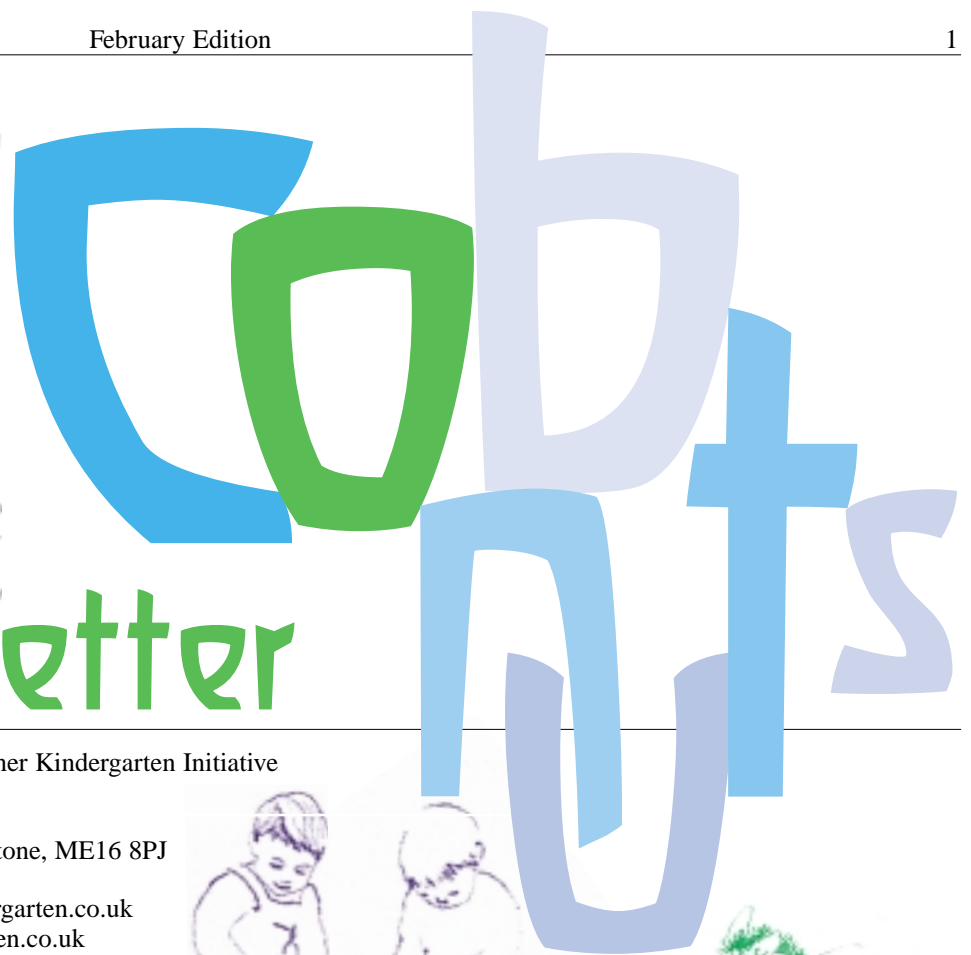


Newsletter



Newsletter of the Maidstone Steiner Kindergarten Initiative
Editors: Jacky, Sue and Hans

9 Gatland Lane, Barming, Maidstone, ME16 8PJ
Telephone: 01622 201 028
E-mail: enquiries@cobnutskindergarten.co.uk
Website: www.cobnutskindergarten.co.uk



Cobnuts Kindergarten is up and running. We have just finished our third term (of a 6 term year) with six children enrolled, and we are open for 3 sessions a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

We hope to expand to 5 sessions a week by the summer term, and our aim is to have at least 10 children in each session for next year. So please continue to spread the word to anyone who might want to enrol a child. And if you know of anywhere where a poster or leaflets might usefully be displayed, please let us know.

Opening Festival

The sun shone on our opening celebrations at 9 Gatland Lane on Saturday 1st October. Many parents, children, friends and supporters came

'Cobnuts is up and running'



to celebrate the occasion. Two children, John-Martin Adams and Edward King opened a large red bow tied across the kindergarten door.

Jacky gave a talk in which she thanked all those who have supported the kindergarten over the years, and

have made it possible for Cobnuts to open at last. Seasonal activities were provided including crushing and pressing apples for juice, and making conker stars and bean-bag shooting stars. Everyone helped plant bulbs around the trees and in the flower beds. Music on the fiddle and recorder made a lovely background to the activities. Delicious refreshments were enjoyed by all, as was the final treat – a puppet show performance of Mashenka and the Bear by the Elfin Grove Puppet Company.

The Kindergarten

by Carol Hooper,
Cobnuts Kindergarten teacher
September saw an unusual start to the new kindergarten. The doors were open and the first term saw only two children attending for two mornings. Both children's parents also attended kindergarten – this was a unique situation and certainly one that I was not accustomed to! Four adults, one baby and two boys, not long turned 3, going through the paces of a kindergarten morning together. I would like to think that a bond was truly made between everyone and we all definitely worked together, supporting one another and laying the foundations not only for the kindergarten but also for the basis of

the kindergarten garden – much planning, designing and digging was done, and many pieces of clay pipe were found in the garden soil. Before the term was out, both parents, plus baby, had graduated from kindergarten, leaving Sue and I alone with our 2 children to carry on the kindergarten routine with its rhythm firmly in place.

In January four more 3 year old children have joined the kindergarten,

'We have now extended the Kindergarten to three mornings a week'

and three new families have joined my Friday parent and child group. We have now extended the kindergarten to three mornings a week. As well as the three open festival celebrations described in this newsletter, we have held festivals within the kindergarten mornings for the children only. We celebrated the end of our first term together with the children from the parent and child groups.

I truly think that it has been an eventful first term: unusual, exciting,

sometimes daunting and definitely interesting. The new year looks positive and may many more children come and join us in this beautiful setting here in Maidstone, and may we see the kindergarten grow and flourish!

Parent and child group

The parent and child groups continue to be very active and vibrant. We welcome all new families who have recently joined both groups. The Friday group, led by Carol, has a healthy number of parents and children attending on a regular basis, and the Tuesday group continues to be popular too. There is currently a small waiting list for the Tuesday group, as numbers have increased slightly at the beginning of this term.

We are very grateful to all the parents who contributed handmade items to sell on our Cobnuts stall at the Blackthorn Christmas Fayre, the total raised being £116! Thanks to all the parents and friends.

Martinmas

In November we celebrated Martinmas. Parents and children came together with homemade lanterns and watched a puppet show, sang songs and then took part in a lantern walk through local orchards. It was a well-attended event with 46 parents and children taking part, and the procession of lit lanterns weaving their way along the paths was truly magical.

Candle lake

In December, inspired by the candle lake at Canterbury Steiner School's Advent Bazaar, Cobnuts created their own candle lake within the kindergarten. The room was completely transformed with metres of cloth and fir branches. Sparkling white Christmas lights shone like stars in the sky, and the candle lake was decorated with islands with scenes of the stable, with Mary and Joseph, an ox and a donkey, shepherds with their sheep; and an angel descending from heaven and bringing the baby Jesus.

Parents and children came and lit their candle walnut boats and floated them upon the lake. A reverent mood was created and the magic that shone in the eyes of the children was truly rewarding.

The garden at Cobnuts

The wonderful garden at Cobnuts is enjoyed every morning by the children coming to the kindergarten. The construction of the sandpit is nearing completion, and has provided the children with endless possibilities for creative play and digging!

There are plenty of signs of new life and growth, especially with many green shoots appearing from all the bulbs planted at the Michaelmas

Festival. The garden promises to look wonderful in spring when it flowers. The grass on the hill has grown well, and this too is nearing completion. During kindergarten sessions we have

'... the magic that shone in the eyes of the children was truly rewarding'

seen further signs of life in the garden. On painting day one morning a fox came visiting, accompanied by a loud chorus of cawing from nearby crows. The fox stayed long enough for the children to be able to put down their brushes to see him. There have also been numerous visits by a spotted woodpecker who has been frequenting the tree near the sandpit. Bluetits have been seen leaving the nesting box on the shed, and other visitors the the garden have included magpies, wood pigeons, sparrows and blackbirds. We hope to organise a bird table to hang from the tree, so if anyone can help...

Advent workshop

On 12th November a day workshop was held in the kindergarten, hosted by Ann Druitt and Christine Fynes-Clinton (co-authors of 'All Year Round'). It was well attended. Ann and Christine had transformed the room with an Advent table and decorations, and spoke about the celebrating of Advent in the home with young children. They showed the mothers how an Advent table is transformed from an almost bare background into a magical Advent garden featuring Mary and Joseph, shepherds with their sheep, and the

mineral and plant world. After a shared lunch there were craft activities making Advent items. Ann and Christine will be doing an Easter Workshop for us in April (see calendar below).

Craft group

With Easter approaching we hope once again to make some handmade items to sell at the Easter Fayre at the Blackthorn. If you would be interested in joining us please contact Carol or Sue at Cobnuts (T: 01622 201 028).

Gifts

We have received many generous gifts from our supporters and well-wishers over the year. These include:

- Our lovely sandpit
- A wonderful children's play kitchen
- Wooden doll's furniture
- A rack for drying paintings
- A puppet show by the Elfin Grove

Puppet Company and many other gifts of money and labour.

Andrew Mortimer has made the lovely coat pegs and bench in the foyer, and Tijno has made the corner nature- table and put up hooks and shelves. A very big thank-you to everyone who has helped and supported us.

'The garden promises to look wonderful in spring when it flowers'



Cobnuts would like to acknowledge the help and support given by Canterbury Steiner School through the winter term and their continued support throughout the rest of the year.

CALENDAR 2006.1

February

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 22nd, 8.00pm | Kindergarten Parents Evening
Parents evening for those with children attending kindergarten |
| 25th, 3.00pm | Puppet show followed by a small puppet making workshop, with Eileen Whitworth |

March

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 8th, 8.00pm | Talk by Dr Bodo Gottschalk, GP
'Giving Childhood back to your Child' |
| 30th, 8.00pm | End of Term Festival for kindergarten and parent & child groups |

April

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1st, 10.00am
– 4.00pm | A day workshop with Ann Druitt and Christine Fynes Clinton
'Preparing for Easter with the family' |
| 8th, 11.30pm
– 2.30pm | Cobnuts Easter Festival
A picnic with Easter activities |

