



Waldorf English Week e.V.  
www.english-week.de

June, 2023

**To the English Teachers at the  
Rudolf Steiner Schools / Waldorf Schools**

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to invite you to the next Waldorf



from **Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup> – Friday, November 3rd, 2023**  
in beautiful, historic **Haus Altenberg**, near Cologne.

Since its founding, the *English Week* has always seen its primary task as offering language teachers different possibilities to develop and support those personal and professional capabilities which Waldorf teaching, understood as an art, continually calls for. For those of you who are not familiar with the *English Week* here is a brief description, which can serve as a first introduction:

*The concept of the English Week is based on our conviction that intensive artistic work with actors, directors, storytellers, poets and clowns, can be of immeasurable benefit for foreign language teachers. Thus, we view the daily three-hour artistic workshops as the keystone of the entire English Week. In addition, there are morning lectures based on the general conference theme and a wide variety of working groups addressing different methodological issues and questions, as well as a 'Market Place' offering an exchange of materials and ideas. We also regularly invite leading experts from outside of Waldorf education to offer new perspectives on language teaching. The evenings are full of the "Spirit of English" in the form of songs, dances and artistic presentations.*

**The theme of this year's conference will be  
"The forms of things unknown...": Learning Words in a Foreign Language**

Learning a foreign language invariably means learning to be able to understand and use countless new words. Without this, a foreign language, remains largely incomprehensible, unmanageable and meaningless. Accordingly, the question of how to enable pupils to experience a foreign language as **comprehensible**, **manageable** and **meaningful** can be seen as primary goals of language teaching. The crucial question has always been how this can be achieved.

The first part of the title of this year's conference is taken from a passage from Shakespeare's *A Midsummers Night Dream*. Here is the excerpt:

(...) The lunatic, the lover, and the poet  
Are, of imagination, all compact.  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold –  
That is, the madman. The lover all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.  
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name. (Act V, sc.1)

What might it mean for pupils of different ages to be able to imagine “the forms of things unknown”, to experience from “the poet’s pen” words as shapes which give to “airy nothing/A local habitation and a name”? From the very beginnings of Waldorf education, Rudolf Steiner viewed methodologies based on translating words from the foreign language into the mother tongue as both highly inefficient and unreconcilable with the artistic approach to foreign language teaching which he envisioned. In the course of the last hundred years, the question of how to learn new words has been increasingly integrated into a broad range of creative and artistic methods both in Waldorf language teaching and in a variety of different humanistic approaches. Today, the widespread use and increasing efficiency of digital translations raises new questions which need to be addressed: How can learning new words in a foreign language become engaging and meaningful for pupils growing up with the convenience of translation machines? Can digital technology be fruitfully integrated into an understanding of foreign language teaching that views artistry, imagination and creativity as paramount?

The lectures and courses of the English Week 2023 will attempt to address these questions. Parallel to this, it is our deep-seated conviction that it is exactly the artistic workshops, which constitute the ‘heart’ of each *English Week*, that offer teachers unique chances to go substantially further in developing their perceptual and expressive capabilities in working with words and language, within a highly supportive environment full of warmth, humour and trust.

### **The entire English Week Team 2023**

will be very much supported in this regard by a special guest from outside of Waldorf Education. **Chaz Pugliese** will be back with us again this year and for those of you attended his workshops in 2018 it will be clear as to why we wanted to invite him back for this theme. He will be joined by an experienced team of Waldorf teachers and teacher educators and performing artists. We are very happy that **Paul Matthews**, England's leading specialist for creative writing, and **Norman Skillen** from Ireland, one of our co-founders, will also be able to join us again. For the second time, we will have one of England's outstanding storytellers **Martin Maudsley** joining us. We are delighted to have **Sarah Kane**, one of the leading Chekov drama specialists in Europe and the U.S.A., back with us again. **Juanita Bredenhann**, a wonderful music teacher from South Africa will join us for the first time and create an evening English Week Choir, along with bringing a varied repertoire of songs to aid our classroom activities in her working groups. **Mario Radisic** from Haan-Gruiten, **Miriam Watson-Kastell** from Marburg, **Kristina Döring** from Düsseldorf, **Alexandra Spencer** from Berlin, and **Kavita Desai** from Freiburg will all be giving courses. And naturally, Silvia Albert-Jahn (*Mülheim*), Christoph Jaffke (*Stuttgart*), Doris Schlott (*Frankfurt*), Peter Lutzker (*Stuttgart*), Robert McNeer (*Ostuni, Italy*), Martyn Rawson (*Kiel/Hamburg*), Ulrike Sievers (*Hamburg*), Alec Templeton (*Basel*), Catherine Bryden (*Kirn*) and Tessa Westlake (*Cologne*) will all be back.

### **We will also offer**

an open ‘**Market Place**’, designed to facilitate the exchange of teaching materials and ideas for all grade levels. This space is intended to enable teachers to directly offer and explain resource material and ideas they have developed. **Thus, please bring copies to exhibit and share; examples of students’ work, and/or books you wish to recommend.**

We are very glad to be once again in **Haus Altenberg** ([www.haus-altenberg.de](http://www.haus-altenberg.de)). Whereas the rooms are new, having been renovated both before and *after* the flood, that beautiful old Gothic cathedral in the courtyard is still standing there and for those of you who don’t know it and the immediate area, it’s a wonderful place to spend an inspiring week.

At the same time, **the number of available rooms** in Haus Altenberg, due to damages caused by the 2021 floods to the popular guest house 'Brauhaus' near the stream, **has become more limited than ever before.** Since we regularly have long waiting lists, we strongly suggest that you register soon. If it is possible for you, we also encourage you to book double rooms, instead of single rooms.

You can find all relevant information and documents on our website [www.english-week.de](http://www.english-week.de)

We hope very much to be able to see you in Altenberg!

Peter Lutzker • Silvia Albert-Jahn • Doris Schlott • Martyn Rawson • Christoph Jaffke • Ulrike Sievers  
• Mario Radisic • Kavita Desai • Alexandra Spencer