

The Culture Shock Wave project

Michael Hall School, Forest Row, England

On Friday 6th-Sun 8th February tables at Michael Hall School, Forest Row will be decked with checked red tablecloths and parasols; crepes and galettes will be flung in the air; classic films will be programmed, an art exhibition can be browsed, children's plays and puppet shows will abound, and live folk music and dance will vibrate through the air of a chilly February day...and it will all be in FRENCH! Joining us, we shall have guest students from Ecole Percival, Paris and Jean Rostand, Milly La Foret (our twinning town). Thanks to a grant from the Lefevre Trust, administered by the British Council, the Culture Shock Wave project awakes a friendly contest between two state schools and two Steiner Waldorf Schools across the Channel. Lead up collaborative projects exploring French and English elements of folk and folklore will result in visits to partnership schools to dip into and share what we have learned. Can we astonish the French with how French we can be? Can the French be more English than the English? We shall turn the traditional exchange on its head by visiting each other's country where we shall try to give one another a taster of their own culture... young people will explore the themes of local historical figures and folklore, traditional song and dance and myths from the region.

This is an exciting project which will showcase how Steiner Waldorf schools teach foreign languages, the international quality of our schools, working in partnership with state schools and facilitating exchange visits. Outcomes will include a film, a report, photographs, scrapbooks of young people's work, links with the local twinning association, local publicity and publicity on the British Councils website.

Ailsa Holmes, Michael Hall School