

PART IV Focus Group and Interview Transcripts

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Contents

1 Interview Aonghus Gordon, Founder and CEO, 21/12/2021 1 st Interview (at the Field Centre)	3
2 Interview Aonghus Gordon, Founder and CEO, 13/06/22 (at the Field Centre)	12
3 Interview Aonghus Gordon, Founder and CEO, 04/07/22 3rd Interview RMT (via video conference)	24
4 Interview, Trustee (TR), 09/06/22 Interview	31
5 Interview Trustee, 04/07/2022 Interview	41
6 Interview Trustee 08/07/2022 Interview	49
7 Interview, Member of the Executive Team (ME), 04/07/2022 Interview	59
8 Interview Member of the Executive Team, 13/07/2022 interview	67
9 Interview College Principal, 07/07/2022 Interview (via video conference)	73
10 Interview College Principal (CP), 15/06/2022 Interview	83
11 Interview Blacksmithing Tutor (TU) 17/06/2022	93
12 Interview Greenwoodwork tutor, 17/06/2022	104
13 Interview Woolcraft Tutor (TU), 06/07/2022	113
14 interview Greenwoodwork Tutor and Training Coordinator, 23/06/2022 Interview (in lieu of virtual focus group)	115
15 Interview Animal Care Tutor, 06/07/2022 [in lieu of second cross Trust focus group]	122
16 Focus Group (School), Teaching Assistants (TA), Classteacher (Clt), Craftteacher (Crt), Speech and Language Therapist(SaLT), Landworker (LW) 28/06/2022	127
17 Focus Group (College) Horticulture Tutor (HT), Daytime Support worker (DSW), Gallery Coordinator (GC), Metallwork Tutor (MT), Jewellery Tutor (JT), 30/06/2022	145

1 Interview

1 Interview Aonghus Gordon, Founder and CEO, 21/12/2021 1st Interview (at the Field Centre)

Summary: In this interview Aonghus Gordon, the founder of RMT, explains how he defined PSTE much clearer in the Seven Fields of Practice by observing how costs are allocated in cost centres through his own Masters research, hence also emphasising the importance of ongoing research. This clarity enabled the Trust to train its staff much better. The beginning of the self reflective process started with the awareness of being in time and space, biography meeting a specific space, the Genius Loci. He outlines the challenges around succession, namely whether the structures are strong enough to hold the method and that leaders need to engage in morphological (transformational) thinking sourced from the Seven Fields of Practice. His hopes are that through this in the succession a transformation of the Trust might be possible comparable to the morphology and development from the Romanesque to the Gothic architectural style without a “rupture”. Furthermore, he explains that -with his background as a potter- he has been shaping the physical body of the Trust. This is now large enough to sustain a university which has the task for the second phase of the Trust’s development: changing the thinking, the etheric. The Trust can mitigate the risk of losing its direction by having research and practice well connected and a well informed central core, the civil service.

1 Constantin Court (CC): Right. So I think that hopefully works. Okay. So [...] I suppose as I'm embarking
2 on this research project over the next a few months. So, there are three parts to it. So, one is a
3 trustwide survey and then involving all staff. The second part is going deep and being for some time
4 in workshops and mainly observing and having conversations and participating with the tutors and
5 really looking what lands on the ground in terms of the method. And then the third part is really part
6 of the evaluation already, which is focus groups with staff and it's more conversation and their
7 reflections as well as interviews with senior leaders, the people who are responsible for
8 implementing the method.

9 Aonghus Gordon (AG): Really? Yeah.

10 CC: So I thought it would be really good as you as the person who has founded Ruskin Mill and has
11 really brought PSTE into the world, building on insights from Steiner but also other people.
12 Em...really what your views are around implementing the method and what you think or hope for or
13 what your view is on what's helpful to senior leaders but also to staff and what the barriers are.

14 AG: So, in undertaking the research for the Masters a few years ago, what became apparent was to
15 observe what was already here. And when you then look at what are the areas of practice that the
16 Trust has endorsed, you begin to observe that there are budgets in what we might call for certain

1 Interview

17 fields of activity. And the budgets are not only set every year, but the capitalization of the trust also
18 follows something similar. So, a Trust centre, even in 1983-5 immediately had a cost centre called
19 "The Garden". It had a cost centre called "Craft Work" and it had a therapy component called
20 "Holistic Medicine".

21 It also had a cost centre called "Care", and there was a cost centre called "Leadership" but it was
22 never named as what you might call an imperative in that without the right leadership, you couldn't
23 deliver the other descriptors that I've just given.

24 So that last field seven, leadership and management, was actually the most buried, partly because it
25 principally involved me, but not solely. And of course, you don't see yourself straight away, so you
26 don't realize the significance of the actual cost centre of leadership. But when it became clear in
27 2011 that you couldn't actually do all those fields and maintain them unless you had somebody who
28 understood why they were there. And so year after year they're there, but they weren't named, they
29 weren't consciously described. And very often not all the reasons for them being there were actually
30 fully explained. So, the Trust really only woke up to itself in about 2011. And in waking up to itself, it
31 can then name the function and the practice and even the budgets and the cost centres and the
32 capital centres. And it was a huge revelation.

33 So, what you find from this is that without research you can't really navigate the future until you can
34 name what it is you got and answer the question, so why do you do it and what is it and how you do
35 it. So, with the answering of those three questions, you could then start to put a program of
36 teaching staff.

37 CC: Mmh.

38 AG: I don't know whether I answered your question.

39 CC: Yeah. So[...]

40 AG: But what I can say is that the Genius Loci comes out of a long standing interest in do you know
41 where you are in the world? What do you know about the world and how do you connect yourself to
42 the world? So, there is a lot of biographical process in that that maybe one has to be a bit
43 discriminating about. But ... So, I discovered when I was 17 that I could get from A to B without any
44 prior arrangement just by hitchhiking. So I found myself giving myself an intention of, let's say,
45 hitchhiking to Aberdeen, meeting a friend at 08:00 in the evening and I set off at 06:00 am in the
46 morning and I could do that. And then I discovered it was quite regularly the fact that I could set off
47 with an intention and achieve it. At that time, I had no idea what that meant except that I was a bit
48 embarrassed about it because people would comment.

1 Interview

49 And what I now discover is that that biographical interest is being interested in where you are at any
50 moment and being cognizant of all directions of space and their relationship to time. So, this is a
51 personal attribute of knowing how to be in time, how to be in the right location in time. And that is
52 probably one of the reasons that the Trust has been able to accelerate and develop, because if you
53 know where to be in time, things happen and things unravel in a certain order of sequence. And I've
54 always called this "the cognition of the Genius Loci". And it's a biographic [...] it's a biographic
55 situation that I brought into the organization so that you're not out of time and place, which is the
56 first problem of not having healthy education.

57 CC: MMh...

58 AG: There's a whole lecture, there's a whole piece of research in that biographical process. So, I had
59 to modulate, I had to be very careful with colleagues around this seemingly strange and interesting
60 facility I had, which was to be in the right place at the right time.

61 CC: So, I suppose that was around the Trust and yourself becoming more self aware and more
62 explicit about the method. Now if you think about as the trust has grown so rapidly in the last few
63 years, and if you look at the landscape of our senior leaders, I think there are some leaders who have
64 grown through Ruskin Mill Trust and of course there are also some leaders who have joined us.

65 AG: Yeah.

66 CC: So can you say a bit about what you think, what has been helpful to the colleagues?

67 AG (laughing): I think there are a series of problems. So let's start with the problem. In the growth of
68 the Trust, there is as yet untried reality check of whether the succession is sufficiently conscious and
69 embedded to hold the framework of the Trust. The difficulty is that nobody really knows until the
70 founder's disappeared or found a way of acquiescing out of involvement.

71 There is a direct relationship between the capacity of the team and the confidence that that
72 generates for a kind of stepping back out of the insight of decision making. That ...em... is tricky. So
73 the reality is that the organization will have to change dramatically for the senior leaders to be able
74 to step into the shoes of the founder. And there are two problems with that. One is I always
75 maintain that everybody's got to make their shoes, and if they wear the shoes of the founder, they
76 will probably destroy the organization because it has to be transformed, not retained. Senior leaders
77 need to know how to make a pair of shoes, and they probably need to kind of study the technique of
78 shoe making as a metaphor so that they can work from where it is to where it may need to go,
79 where it needs to travel in those new shoes.

1 Interview

80 Nobody's ever asked me to date, how do I make a pair of shoes so that I can have a degree of
81 autonomy whilst recognizing where the trust has got to and the autonomy is in learning to navigate
82 because that has to be the case.

83 So, the paradox is that that might only happen with new members of staff rather than older ones.
84 But I've had no indication as to where that might come from, only that it will need to happen. And
85 there is in the Seven Fields, there is the toolkit to do it. And the question is whether the toolkit that
86 is available would be used in those circumstances. So, if you look at the soul qualities of each of the
87 fields which have been written up, the code is in the soul quality that stands behind each field. But
88 that is only a doorway to be opened because each one needs to be researched, because it needs to
89 be time located and not located in the Aonghus Gordon context, but only in the Aonghus Gordon
90 kind of referencing of the fields.

91 So, there's no point in debunking the fields. Otherwise you would probably first of all rupture the
92 structure and then you would probably lose vast amounts of money. And that's not really
93 acceptable. That's a mismanagement if you lose a lot of money. And you'd lose a lot of money, partly
94 because you would lose identity and therefore the integrity of what people are currently purchasing,
95 because it's very subtle what people are purchasing. So, if you change it for whatever reason,
96 without knowing the why, then you will have a rupture. But that's how most organizations go
97 forward. I think Ruskin doesn't need to do that because the keys are in the seven fields. Now, do the
98 current leaders know that? No, because those questions we never discuss. Do trustees know that?
99 No, because they don't know how to ask a question. Basically, what do the trustees do and senior
100 leaders? They are in a remarkable, honorable and deeply respectful relationship with the founder, to
101 the point that might be unhelpful in that there's not enough interrogation of what really goes on.

102 So, some of the eldership senior leaders have a prior knowledge of things that has been difficult for
103 them to in a way test under their own discrimination. And some who are not necessarily leaders,
104 although there are some exceptions, who have found their way into research, but then keep the
105 research quite focussed on a field without looking at the field before or after, or the transformation
106 of some of the fields within themselves so they could miss in understanding how it's really one
107 continuum line of development with named nodal points. And so another way of addressing how
108 leaders find their way into the method is to say, first of all, you need to acquiesce with the very fact
109 that you've been born. Not everybody acquiescences with the idea that they've been born. And the
110 other battle that I regularly see is that they're either in denial that they should be here, and that
111 shows up in avoidant personality disorders, or in being angry that they haven't found what it is
112 they're supposed to do. And they can be quite disruptive because they're asking questions that

113 should have been asked much earlier on. And so those questions are not questions, but they're
114 performative acts that enable them to be conscious, keep them alert. That's quite a common
115 behaviour in organisations that set out to explore human development and rescue happens to be
116 one of those organisations. There are many.

117 So, the keys to the future lie in being able to read the script each Field and what it presents, both as
118 a soul quality but also as a will opportunity and a cognition of answering the question, what is my
119 task? So, by knowing your purpose, which comes out of questions that lie within Field 1, you may
120 know what your career or vocation is called Field 2. And you then need to decide on the moral code
121 of what you're going to do, which is either battle against the Earth or with the Earth, that is Field 3.
122 Can you work at peace within the world, particularly in the environmental agenda? And Field 4 is,
123 what perspectives do I choose to view the challenge of being in the world, which is therapeutic
124 perspectives on new ideas of human development, in our case it's Steiner? And how do I develop my
125 relationships with my fellow human beings in such a way that I don't repeat patterns of
126 unnecessary...em... that are unnecessary? And when I start to feel uncomfortable with those
127 patterns, I've actually started to diagnose myself. So I know what it is I need to be able to avoid
128 doing with a pattern or why I prefer to be in a mode where I'm, let's say, appreciated more because I
129 don't happen to perform those patterns. So that self diagnosis of what is helpful to the world is Field
130 6 that's for the other, and Field 7 is knowing what I need to do in order to hold myself to account. I
131 can ask colleagues who will then trust in a relationship that enables me to either co lead or lead
132 myself, or lead a Department or a team in which we can collaborate. But the capacity to do that is, in
133 a way, founded on a bit of self diagnosis.

134 The Seven Fields of Practice are as much for staff as they are for students, which from the student
135 perspective, can be translated into a curriculum experience. They don't have the order that the staff
136 can access because of their exceedingly complex profile, and that predilection for something that
137 engages them is really the hook to start the journey. But they will experience all Seven Fields in their
138 particular ways as a result of the correct mantra, which is: "How do I choose at 16 to make decisions
139 that can help me fulfill my potential and to even reimagine it?" So leadership in Ruskin Mill, if it's
140 fostered through those windows, will create a morphology without a rupture, which would be
141 remarkable if that can be achieved. Generally, it's not.

142 CC: So what do you think then, over the next 20 years, should you ever wish to step back a bit, what
143 is it that we need to do for low ruptures to [...]?

144 AG: Well, I think my part in the longer term vision of Ruskin Mill is to create the body because it's
145 what I do. I'm a potter, so I shape form. And due to my very fortunate childhood, I was given a code

146 which was entirely an enculturated code of recognizing health. And that's not just the health of trees
147 or the health of animals, it's health in general.

148 That partly comes out of a Steiner education, which we can't underestimate its value, but also as a
149 niche and aesthetic where everything was cleansed, that would obstruct principles of health. What
150 Venice achieved was this morphology without rupture, which is where possibly the code comes
151 from, where you go from Byzantine Romanesque into Gothic without a rupture. And the Gothic then
152 finds its way into Renaissance without a rupture, and it then finds its way into the Baroque. And those
153 four vernaculars have not had to fight against each other, but each one created succession out of
154 the other. So I know it can be done in terms of four totally different cultural consciousnesses. And if
155 you put a Romanesque team of builders with a Gothic team of builders, you would have nothing but
156 disputes and political infighting. But what's magical is that the Romanesque guys gave way and
157 recognized that there was a higher level of achievement in the Gothic. Very simple alteration. They
158 just simply put a point above the arch and went up rather than back down again. So their interest
159 was how do you catch light not in the Romanesque, which was how do you move the energy of the
160 Earth up into the light and then back down? The Gothics just wanted to move the energy of the
161 Earth up into the light and dissipate it, which is why there's nothing really left. In true Gothic
162 architecture, it's all dissolved. Only what's left is the kind of bone structure.

163 So, can the Executive Team, can the trustees find a way of using the morphology which lives in each
164 of the fields and in the joining fields in such a way that you move from a Romanesque body into a
165 Gothic etheric, which is the power of life. So I would say over the next 20 years, the Trust's task
166 would be to move out of the physical body -and it is- into a new order of life force, which is "How do
167 you learn to think in a new way?" And that is involving the etheric and the rhythm. So, the
168 development of the master's course is really the next step, which I have to believe I wasn't going to
169 be responsible for, because I always knew that there would have to be a 50 year plan in the Trust,
170 but I believed that at one point that wouldn't be my task, it would have to be somebody else's. Well,
171 what's interesting is that it's come faster than I can imagine. So, it looks as if I'm also responsible, but
172 this time with a team, because I can't do it myself, which is also the etheric, which is how do you
173 create a life force of collaboration in which to hold the next step of the organization, which is to
174 extend its life force energy into the world.

175 So, do I think the physical body of the Trust is going to grow? No, I don't think so necessarily. And I
176 think it might be making lots of mistakes if it expands in the way that it's expanded in the last few
177 years under my guidance, because certain people's biography give certain attributes over certain
178 periods of time. But what I was clear about that is unless the body was large enough, it couldn't

1 Interview

179 sustain a university. So my task was to build the body so that the University could emerge, which my
180 view is, needs to operate in every centre. So it's like a distributed current network facility. And
181 ironically, the internet is actually kind of an image of how you distribute knowledge, but not
182 codified, not abstract, not virtual, but actually living. So that the electrical picture is -and this is just
183 the same as the physical body -the electrical picture is reconfigured so that it's a life force. So, the
184 pictures are actually living pictures in the Earth, rather than electrical dead pictures on the screen.
185 That's the next task.

186 The physical body, there the task was to take a redundant building and look at how you can
187 reimagine the physical body. So, my task is really only a quarter of the project's future unravelling,
188 which is my job, is the physical body, and I can put the code down for some of the methods because
189 that also comes out of my biography concerning health. But the assumption in that method that can
190 go into that which has been discovered through the transformation of the physical body needs to be
191 validated. That's an etheric intellectual [...] em. So as teams of people start working together on a
192 much deeper level, then you might find the soul of the organization emerging, and then it will start
193 replicating again, maybe not through a physical body. That's another time. So that's my picture.
194 Now, you're the first person to get that picture, *[both laughing]* and I think it's correct that you're
195 the first person to get that picture.

196 CC: You heard it here first.

197 AG: So, my job is only a quarter of the project, which is getting the physical body. I'm good at putting
198 the physical world [...] I'm fairly good at collecting the physical body of the world because I'm a
199 potter, but I'm a potter who also wants to see light through the material world, which is why I
200 studied Chinese ceramics. So how do you bring spirit into matter and how do you bring matter into
201 spirit? That is my contribution. *[pause]*

202 CC: Okay. Any other hopes you would have for this particular research project, which is very short
203 term, not 20 years.

204 AG: Every research project won't waste its time if it uses one of the lenses of The Seven Fields. Now,
205 people are slightly vexed by the idea that Angus says there are Seven Fields. That's quite a
206 provocative statement. Well, it is and it isn't. It could well be that The Seven Fields are not the end
207 result - of course they're not. That The Seven Fields are also made up of fractals of each other. There
208 is a kind of labyrinth of discovery into an archetype in which seven has its spiritual, scientific
209 lawfulness, which is harnessed from thousands of years of working in sevenfold manners as a human
210 rhythm. So as we're working with human beings and we're developing human beings, what are the

211 codes and the archetypes that allow us to get to the source of what obstructs us from being fully
212 human? So the seven fold path is a direct entry into understanding sequences and processes that
213 generate life. Now, you can find that in countless spiritual disciplines, both non-christian as well as
214 Christian. I've chosen to stay within the Judaic Christian paradigm in spite of the fact that I also
215 explored Hindu as well as shamanic as well as Shinto paths. And it's clear to me that that's another
216 task, doing a comparative between Judaic Christian powers and Oriental powers, it's definitely worth
217 it. But what you will discover is that in different regions of the globe, in different times, in different
218 locations, opportunities developed to be able to find that particular time spirit's path into
219 development. From a Rudolf Steiner perspective you can avoid possibly running down cul de sacs.
220 And I think I've chosen to be cautious in not running down cul de sacs. But that is a challenging
221 statement. *[pause]*

222 So what does it look like in the next few years? *[short pause]*

223 What could go wrong is that the research and the practice split, which is very common, and that can
224 happen under a number of stressful situations. The disappointment of senior leaders. A financial
225 crisis that starts to appoint utilitarian thinking. So all the creative individuals run probably actually on
226 their own accord potentially. Or they're sacked. A kind of sloppiness in which the universities and the
227 authorities start to counter challenge about the method; that is quite possible. Not having sufficient
228 connectivity within the organization to defend itself. 80% of the challenge of the trust will come
229 from within, not outside - as it always does. And so having been involved in shaping it over the last
230 35, even 40 years, all the challenges have come. Every challenge can be sourced from within itself,
231 not external. When I woke up to that, it was so clear that if you don't have a research culture, it will
232 just blow itself apart very quickly. But today I had an email from Michaela Gloeckler¹ who read the
233 Christmas newsletter and she said, Aonghus, how brilliant of Ruskin Mill to develop a civil service. Is
234 it not the case that this is why Rudolf Steiner College failed? Can we have a VC to talk about this?
235 What are you doing that might create succession?

236 So there are two things. So the civil service which creates an opportunity in which individuals are no
237 longer in a way, so decisive in the future of the organization. I include that myself. Whereby the
238 intelligence of the organization is distributed into administrative and visionary functions. In which
239 the civil service is also informed by active research will be, in my view, the succession opportunity
240 that avoids rupture in departing from the organization, which, of course, I will be doing. How it looks

¹ Previously leader of the Goetheanum Medical Section in Switzerland, the main seat of the international Anthroposophical Society as well as research and conference centre out of the spirit of Rudolf Steiner. Now Mrs. Gloeckler is retired and an international activist for health and childhood concerns.

1 Interview

241 is still not clear to me. But as the research develops and the civil service develops, it enables me to
242 be less attached and connected to everyday function. So I suspect there'll be a natural opportunity
243 of the functions of research and the civil service actually doing some of the work better than I could.
244 That has to be the ultimate positive exit, which is what I'm after. *[CC laughs]*. It's not difficult for
245 those two things to happen. *[both laughing]*

246 CC: Okay.

247 AG: Okay. Shall we leave it like that?

248 CC: Wonderful. Thank you very much.

249 AG: I don't know how you put all this together. *[both laughing]*

2 Interview

2 Interview Aonghus Gordon, Founder and CEO, 13/06/22 (at the Field Centre)

Summary: In this interview Aonghus Gordon explains the interrelationship between the people who have inspired him in the development of PSTE and Seven Fields of Practice, what impact they had and how they have been instrumental following the enlightenment, which went along with a desecration of universe, earth and people, to bring a holistic understanding of the world together again. The conversation was aided by a visual display of their weighting by allocating peas to each name.

1 CC: I am in the process of exploring the question, how does Ruskin Mill Trust implement the
2 methods and looking especially at the role of the senior leadership of the organisation, centre
3 leaders, executive team, trustees. What are the helpful things and where could things improve? And
4 I'm looking at that also on a personal basis. I'm interested in senior leaders coming into the
5 organisation and what's helpful to them in terms of understanding the method and what has been
6 challenging. Because the hypothesis from my previous experience is that actually senior leaders can
7 have an immense impact on how the method is implemented- or not. So that's really my question.

8 AG: Are you talking about the Executive Team, you talk about the Directors, you talk about the
9 whole leadership team?

10 CC: Yes, I think so. I try to keep that as an open question. Well, at the same time, obviously, I'm
11 battling with that every day. So, in the last interview, we talked a bit about that question already, we
12 looked at senior and we looked at trustees and you were saying a few things about the role of the
13 university that will help impact that. So, this time I thought it would be interesting for me to actually
14 look a bit more at the method itself.

15 AG: What aspect of the Seven Fields?

16 CC: Well, I've prepared a little exercise because -correct me if I'm wrong- but I see it when I talk to
17 colleagues a bit like there are the seven fields and PSTE. I think we're now at the stage where
18 actually most staff in Rustin Mill will actually be able to name at least some of the Fields and name
19 some elements of some of the Fields. But then, of course, there's something that sits under it or
20 above it, depending on where, you know, if you go upstream, where it comes from. Yeah, so I have
21 prepared a little exercise for us to explore this. I have taken 100 peas from the garden and I put
22 together a few names which I think are impacting on the method. And I wanted to ask you whether
23 you want to allocate the amount of peas to each of the names that you think according to their
24 impact. *[shows small label with names written on and bag of peas]*

25 AG: The incorrect names or the sudo-names or what?.

2 Interview

26 CC: I have got Steiner. I have got Ruskin. I've got Morris.

27 AG: Yeah.



28 CC: Most staff will be able to name them; many staff will not have read into. I have got Hildegard of
29 Bingen. I have got Gandhi. *[CC lays the labels on the table as he speaks]*. I have got Goethe. Of
30 course. Ita Wegman, Karl Koenig, Freire, Dewey and Illich. And I've got a few free ones in case
31 anybody else comes up to you, comes up in your mind. And I've got a bag of peas.

32 Needless to say, what will be very helpful for me then is that in the interview, in the write up, I can
33 then dive deeper into this while referring to this interview. Is that okay? *[lays out the cards on the*
34 *table in no particular order]*

35 AG: Of course, I love your creative logic. *[laughter]*

36 CC: So do you want to put peas to it?

37 AG: I will tell you how many peas.

38 CC: Right. Ok.

39 AG: What's your question?

40 CC: Well, how many peas would you allocate to each individual?

41 AG: There is a narrative in this. I am going to answer it in a narrative.

42 CC: Ok.

2 Interview

AG: To understand one of the key post-war conditions of British culture, the phenomena of John Ruskin having been forgotten in historical influence is quite remarkable. In fact, his estate was more or less abandoned and it took many years after the 40s and 50s discover that really he had anything to say. The difficulty is that more and more people discovered that he was a central critic of a certain type of capitalism and that didn't get down well. A number of his contemporaries would relish in the fact that the establishment really didn't understand what he was saying because he was too smart and had they understood, they generally thought that he would have been probably hanged for what he was saying as he was able to comment on the fact that the division of labour is the cause of so much social and economic strife. The difficulty is that post-war Britain was still living under the Victorian legacy from a monetary perspective, a lack of social cohesion, it was all very polite, but it was never scrutinized. So since Ruskin's life Steiner made a major influence after his death in 1899 and if you look at what Ruskin was trying to achieve, you realize that he had a number of limitations in which he didn't see the origin of the ills that he spoke about. And if you then look at the post-war condition of Britain and Germany it was particularly difficult, even after the First World War to really talk too much about Steiner. But many heroic attempts had been made to set up Steiner schools and more latterly specialist schools. With the Camphills emerging, his work actually became not only renowned but also highly appreciated in specific areas of therapeutic work. What I observed is a constant agitation between something that was deeply unresolved, which was how English people had laissez-faire attitude very often to the way they did things and made decisions about things and the very concrete situation that those bringing spiritual science to the UK had with regards to Steiner. Obviously that more concrete aspect could sometimes be socially affronting and I could also feel and hear the double think between appreciating Steiner's influence in therapeutic ideas in education and then the incomprehensibility of the ideas themselves.

What I then discovered in John Ruskin really by accident only partly through a family situation. Which was that my father had complete works of Ruskin and I remember diving into something, a book called *The Stones of Venice* and I discovered that what Ruskin could do was to think about a piece of shist and see within the piece of shist the Alpine range and I found that very remarkable. So I realized that he could see things that Goethe saw, which was how do forms and shapes start from a micro perspective and yet have a macro context. And I then decided that maybe John Ruskin, under the influence of Goethe, was a better person to put at the front of any work I did and allow Steiner then to come in from behind to pick it up. And I think that's been such a strategic decision that it serves the trust quite well. That's not to say that you don't mention Steiner on every business card, on every charitable document, because that would also be incorrect not to. But you take a character such as Ruskin, who's already made a step into a kind of transformative form of thinking and

2 Interview

pictorial thinking and in a way not resurrecting, but actually look at the value of what he did say. And nobody can dispute the fact that he wasn't a genius. He had his own social limitation, but he was a genius and he was the critic of that descending period in industrial Britain that brought, in a way, a kind of cultural poverty in spite of some of the good aspects of the period. So Ruskin became the name plate, if you like, the carian (?) coal, which I would now call the Goethe of Anglosaxon culture. I can only see that because I use Rudolf Steiner's spiritual scientific context.

So, if I had to put a numerical loading, then without my comprehension of spiritual science, I couldn't even give you this description because the starting point of reference is so far upstream that it gives me the privilege, and it is a huge privilege, to be able to scan the horizon, to see how individual contributions contribute to a philosophical change making process. What I never understood was the enormity of the task of what lies behind an enormous indifference towards Ruskin and Goethe and Steiner. At the time, I had no idea. It's not prejudice so much as not having access to the key to open the door, because those codes have never been offered in an educational process. So who arrives at the door are usually those individuals who have a predestined relationship to it, who struggle in life and find through circumstance and challenge, and those who are genuine thinkers, who are actually asking very critical questions. But there a few and far between. So, if we say we're going to put 50, a loading of 50 to Steiner with the peas, I would say that's probably correct.

[CC counts 50 peas and puts it under the name tag "Steiner"]

AG: Now, in order to bring Steiner alive, what Ruskin has done is to be able to see a piece of shist and look at the Mont Blanc Massive. He has the same thinking that Hildegard of Bingen has, which is he's a macro and a micro. So he has this capacity to be able to see the big picture and also see the little picture of the micro element. And that capacity to see like that means that you have a type of intelligence that has depth and widths at the same time.

So you then have to go and say, well, how much loading does Goethe have? And as he is a predecessors of Steiner and Steiner can build on that, then you probably have to put in my reckoning, about 25 peas.

[CC puts 25 peas under the label Goethe]

AG: We have to remember that Goethe has not what you might call access to a spiritual science to see the whole other part of it.

Now, the equivalent of that would be to see the student with the gifts that they bring and equally see that as a result of some of those gifts, some of which are extreme capacities of skill, but in having this extreme capacitive skill, they are self-limiting in their ability to be in the world in time

109 and in relationship. And so, to have this pictorial sense of what is wholeness is one of the great gifts
110 of Goethe. And Ruskin understood that and through reading Goethe was able to see how correct
111 that is and in fact attributes to Goethe a great accolade really, which is that he's one of the greatest
112 people he's ever come across. And the quote I can't give right now, but that is the statement. So
113 Ruskin then goes ahead and finds applications. And so, he sees for example that in being able to look
114 into phenomena he can also see the solutions and he can also diagnose situations. So, he does this in
115 Sheffield when he walks out one morning and berates the fact that the soot and the dust and the
116 smut in Sheffield is so thick and deep and then he catches himself and as he treads across this
117 puddle of water and soot he realizes that it's through the transformation of the clay with the carbon
118 in time that will through the right metamorphosis form the basis for an opal. And as we wear and
119 adorn ourselves in opal, isn't it extraordinary that what was filth and subjugation can actually at a
120 later date transform into opals? So he sees opals as he stretches his legs in trying to avoid the muddy
121 sooty puddles in Sheffield. Now, to be able to have this capacity in the moment, to be able to
122 translate one thing into a new possibility is one of his great gifts.

123 It's also one of the strap lines that I've drawn into Ruskin Mill which is "re-imagining potential". So
124 his opal experience in Sheffield is really correlating to this idea that whatever situation you find
125 yourself in, you can choose to move it forward into a future transformative potential or you can get
126 stuck in the mud. This same skill set has been applied through my own biography in looking at the
127 heritage of industrial buildings which were once subject to the division of labour.

128 So, Ruskin is the kind of premier clarion call to Goethe's work on which we can then build a further
129 development step through Steiner's work, which is what Steiner did himself. So what happens with
130 Steiner is that you can then realize that an old and ancient craft when it's applied to a more
131 developmental process and you choreograph the dimensions of space and look at how children
132 actually enter the world. You can begin to see those primary primordial movements of children can
133 be reapplied in an age appropriate way if they hadn't been in the adolescent process or even before
134 that. So, it was a great wake up call for me when I read his lecture on anthroposophy and science
135 where he describes for the first time, how we enter from birth to space and how we grasp the
136 dimensions of space in the frontal and in the horizontal and sagittal. And there our students are still
137 struggling and maybe their struggle centre on not grasping the spatial capacity that then unfolds a
138 morphology of being present in the world. So this is fairly lawful. So you can then understand why
139 Ruskin said craft was the basis of human morality. And you really, from a spiritual scientific
140 perspective, can you grasp the reality of what that statement means, is if you can't be in space in this
141 three dimensional cross, you're not going to be able to stand upright in the world. And he then
142 describes the imperative of the ego being potentially present as you to interrelate those dimensions

2 Interview

143 of space. So, it's not possible to really go forward with Goethe and John Ruskin's work unless you've
144 got a special scientific picture of how to take the old into the future.

145 So, we've got 25 peas left

146 CC: *[laughs]*

147 AG: And I think we can give five to William Morris. Because he was one of the individuals who was
148 deeply countercultural and had some of the conditions in a way less extreme form than our students
149 in that he did have Tourette's and various other mild mental health issues and he kind of consoled
150 himself in Icelandic mythology. But really in the world of nature. And as he read tracks of Ruskin, he
151 understood that it was nature that could restore health to the human being.

152 So the Arts and Crafts movement was born as an ability to represent the power of life through
153 formation of domestic items, right up to and including the ecclesiastical works. He was really the
154 doer of the Arts and Crafts movement whilst Ruskin, you could say, was the cognition. The buildings
155 that came out of John Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts that came out of William Morris really are the
156 expression of the soul, the achievement of soulfulness, of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

157 Was it represented by a female? I think that needs further research. You could say that the
158 precursor to bringing those two unities together as a whole before it was split apart was Hildegard of
159 Bingen. So, she saw the universe as an inseparable connectivity between human beings, earth and
160 universe. But I don't think she's significant in that what happened is that Francis Bacon split it all up.
161 So the question is, where are the peas allocated in terms of taking the future of holistic ideas,
162 spiritual scientific ideas, forward post Enlightenment? So at the moment, although she's important
163 as a past representative of unity, I can't credit her with a contribution to the conscious rejoining of
164 universe, earth and people.

165 CC: As in, something that she maybe had more in the feeling life of was expressed again in Goethe?

166 AG: Goethe's gift was given by Francis Bacon because he set it all up. He destroyed the known world
167 order and then it was down to other human beings to start consciously bringing it back together.
168 You could say Goethe was the first renowned personality who could start seeing how the world
169 actually does cohere. There was no great achievement in Hildegard of Bingen, in saying what she did
170 other than in the beauty of her articulation. Everybody thought like that. But she could say it in a
171 way that you could say maybe had more of a consciousness of it. That was radical, but that's not
172 what Ruskin Mill is trying to address.

173 CC: I'm so sorry. How many peas would you put to Ruskin?

174 AG: How have we forgotten that? I would say probably ten.

175 CC: *[counting peas]*

176 AG: So, I'm going to go to Ita Wegman. *[pause]* What is worth recognising is that in Rudolf Steiner's
177 biography, he has got this special needs child who he works with on a regular basis and I believe he
178 trains as a doctor. I think he's a hydrocephalic and he then joins the army and gets killed. Now if you
179 read Rudolf Steiner's dedication to a human being you realize that he's clearly the founder of the
180 therapeutic movement because he has the capacity to see what's still to be born, changed and
181 transformed. And if you also read the beginning of the Umlandshoehe, first Rudolf Steiner School in
182 Stuttgart, every day he's seeing children who really are that deeply displaced in their constitution.
183 Far more relevant than anybody would like to give credit to. In fact, in the Umlandshoehe there were
184 children who were so special needs that they really should not have been in the school. But he knew
185 how to include them

186 CC: Which was through....?

187 AG: Through Eurythmy¹...

188 CC: Of course, it was before the course, but after his experience as an educator.²

189 AG: The medical course had not been given³. No, the curative course hadn't been given. But he was
190 in the process of working with the teachers at the Umlandshoehe. The profile of those children who
191 came to him with Kollisko is extreme. So he realized that he already had a special needs school in the
192 Umlandshoehe. Nobody would have ever accepted or discussed it at the time. Now there lies a
193 problem because in the Rudolf Steiner schools you could say that Ruskin Mill at one point had about
194 10%-15% of its pupils from Rudolf Steiner regular schools and they came because we had a very
195 special arrangement with the schools and the parents and we assessed them and provided they
196 really didn't need more support than let's say one to six. Which was about the ratio at the time.
197 Then our fee structure was quite low. And so, you also knew how to incorporate some of the more
198 challenged modern pupils. My concern was that those pupils should not have been leaving the
199 school and one of the reasons for the development of the Hiram Trust⁴ was to see if those pupils
200 could remain in the school. But that's another story. So, if we go back to the inclusion of education in
201 the first Rudolf Steiner school you will find it as highly diverse, totally inclusive and through the
202 credible work of a collaboration between Steiner, Kollisko and the Eurythmists. And it was mainly

¹ Form of movement art and therapy inaugurated through Rudolf Steiner, based on his spiritual scientific insights (supersensible perception) of human constitution

² Referring to the "Therapeutic Education Course" that Steiner gave in 1924 to support the work with special needs children and his own experience of an home educator for a child with hydrocephalus.

³ Course given for doctors and medical professionals in XXX

⁴ Charity set up by Aonghus Gordon in order to provide training for teachers in "normal" Steiner Schools in crafts and innovative education for young people with special needs

203 the Eurhythmists that they were able to keep those children relatively safe in the first school. I'll
204 have to go back and look at more deeply what type of challenge, but there were some serious
205 mental health issues. So Ita Wegman formalized that and brought a specific stream and give her 5.

206 *CC: [CC puts peas under the name]*

207 AG: She articulated something from Steiner.

208 Dr. Koenig, I think three. So how does Dr. Koenig influence Ruskin Mill? It's very limited because the
209 concept for Koenig was kind of immersive karmic digestion, we don't do that. We do karmic
210 digestion in other words when a member staff encounters another student and takes on their
211 challenge in such a way that they allow the students to enter their domain they're giving the student
212 a gift that they are sharing the burden now that insight I can say to Koenig thank you. I'll give you
213 three peas. But actually when I read what you say it's a reiteration from Steiner and sometimes I say
214 you need to be clearer with that. I am accused of not being clear about it.

215 CC: I suppose the other thing from Koenig which is different in Ruskin Mill and much stronger in the
216 Camphill movement is this whole social experiment of community of nearly Kibbutz-like scenarios.

217 AG: I think we have to separate out the primary task from your personal wishes and I am not sure of
218 the validity of self sacrifice which reaches the pitch of spiritual pride. Problematic for me. Having
219 been a director of Park Attwood⁵ we've seen that really it was a refugee centre for burned out
220 Camphill people I was quite disturbed and that's how it worked and everybody was quite upfront
221 about it. Although nobody outside the Camphill movement really talked about it as to whether they
222 should change anything internally and of course it was forced upon them in the end. So there are
223 some dysfunctional elements in Camphill. So what is Koenig's great gift? I would say his peas are
224 related to the gift of redeeming the scorpion in Britain.

225 AG: Gandhi I give one as an emissary of Ruskin. Most of his thinking is derived from the new
226 economic morphology that Ruskin wrote about which was 'Unto this Last' where he can apply
227 morphology of a plant to that of money so he describes very carefully that if you don't allow the
228 plant to go through the process of flowering and into seed you destroy money.

229 *[CC puts one pea under Gandhi's name]*

230 AG: So, Ivan Illich was the great liberator for me because I had no context at the time when I did my
231 teachers training of saying: "Where do you find the evidence that you can take learning outside?"
232 Ivan Illich was very critical of the institution of schooling itself. He said very clearly that the school

⁵ Anthroposophic clinic which went into administration

233 proforma in itself damages children's education. So you need to take account of the dull of the
234 institution. So what was interesting is how conventional Rudolf Steiner schools are very conventional
235 from a certain perspective and maybe they should be. But with the young people that I was working
236 with it was clear that the constraint limiting of movement that the students needed to exercise was
237 not appropriate and so they would create situations for themselves to be either outside or throwing
238 the equipment outside to get outside. And for me as an observer of where do the circumstances
239 arise in how you think about something? Where are the source points of the thought, who's the
240 protagonist of the thought? Because our students follow what we think so where are we getting our
241 thoughts from to put children in the classroom? For me that was really important and having studied
242 nomadic tribes and followed for example the schooling of young girls who had to go through a
243 process of weaving in their endowments for their husband as a tribute of goodwill I saw them taking
244 their weaving out of trees at sunrise. And weaving about a meter after a meter every morning and
245 the complexity they designs was such that it was already at a computer circuit board. So these are
246 twelve, thirteen year old girls and they're being tutored by their mothers and they're moving from
247 being girls into mothers. Very challenging situation but that transition was to awaken their cognition
248 through their hands because these were highly intelligent girls, they had no autonomy to express it
249 other than in this very strict regime making their endowments if you like.

250 And that was schooling outside and made a very deep impression on me and it was only later that I
251 did my teachers training and wanted to know where did this type of land fit? Not under the
252 conditions of an extreme Islamic culture, but as relatively extreme. But how could you learn and
253 where did you learn outdoors? Well, you learned outdoors in the primary schools, in the
254 kindergarten. So how is it that we stop that experience when it's so needed and so really Ivan Illich
255 put a concept together for me, which is that schooling has its own imperfection. So I'm going to give
256 him three but we don't talk about Illich a lot.

257 AG: Paolo Freire, Dewey, well, they are great, you could give them one each.

258 CC: Three peas left.

259 AG: I'd probably give them to Ita Wegman. *[pause]*

260 Now that proportion is based on those numbers. If you gave me a load of other names, number
261 would be different.

262 CC: Would you have other names you would want to add?

263 AG: I'm more interested in who has contributed to the post enlightenment. That's my question and
264 in my knowledgeable fairly limited academic research of this subject. I've done a Masters in some of

2 Interview

265 it. Well, the fact is that Goethe was the first person to put it back together again post enlightenment,
266 but he could only do part of the job. If you then say, what could he not do, then? Between Steiner
267 and Goethe, 75% has been put back together. That's actually the reality. Everybody else just
268 following through what you might call morphic resonance from..., what is he called?

269 CC: Sheldrake

270 AG: Sheldrake. So the question is who has the authority within themselves to be able to place the
271 concept into language and for the language to peripherate to those who need to hear it. I would say
272 75% of that is probably correctly at the feat of Steiner and Goethe. It is probably higher. But then
273 you've got to bring it into context in Britain, which is why you've got Ruskin with 1,2,3,4,5,... 10
274 *[counting the peas]* was it? And I would say that's probably correct because without Ruskin and his
275 treaties on industrial buildings I wouldn't have got the insight to be able to do transformation of
276 industrial buildings. For the colleges, for the schools I probably arrange this a little bit differently. So
277 maybe I would probably take five out of Ruskin and give them to probably Wegman.

278 CC: Because it's in an earlier developmental time.

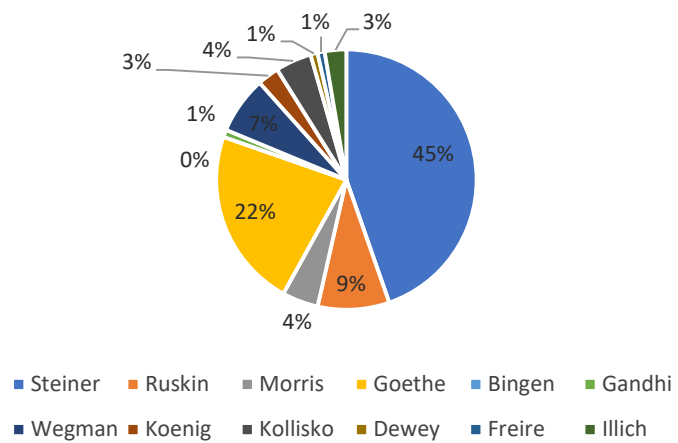
279 AG: Because we don't really need any industrial buildings. What we need are the gardens. Does
280 Koenig do anything with the garden? Not particularly. I probably put Kollisko in there. Maybe one of
281 your guys missing is Kollisko. *[CC writes a name label for "Kollisko"]*

282 AG: So for schools, I'd probably take five away from Steiner. Maybe we should do that anyway. We
283 have to think about it. So the context is who's contributed? That's my question. Who's contributed
284 to the re-embodiment in the desecration of universe, earth and people? These are the people that I
285 put the weighting behind it. The question is: having desecrated the world order that Hildegard of
286 Bingen saw, who has put it back together again? That is my answer. *[Pause]*

287 CC: Thank you.

288

People inspiring PSTE and the Seven Fields of Practice



	number ⁶	percent
Steiner	50	45%
Ruskin	10	9%
Morris	5	4%
Goethe	25	22%
Bingen	0	0%
Gandhi	1	1%
Wegman	8	7%
Koenig	3	3%
Kollisko	5	4%
Dewey	1	1%
Freire	1	1%
Illich	3	3%
TOTAL	112	100%

⁶ The aspiration was to have 1 pea equalling 1 percentage point, however, I counted the peas wrong and only noticed it once I finished the interview and counted the peas together. Therefore, e.g. Aonghus intention of allocating 50 peas to Steiner wishing to attribute 50% percentage points might need to be seen in this unfortunate context.

3 Interview Aonghus Gordon

3 Interview Aonghus Gordon, Founder and CEO, 04/07/22 3rd Interview RMT (via video conference)

Summary: In this interview Aonghus Gordon elaborates on his views of how much understanding of the method PSTE and the Seven Fields of Practice different people in different roles should have and what are the implications around those and what the trajectories for the future development of those roles as well as the Trust as a whole are. Starting with the Trustees and members of the Ruskin Mill Executive Team, Principals and centre leaders to classteachers in schools.

1 CC: So, yes, it's progressing well. I have had a number of workshop observations in the blacksmithing
2 workshop, in a Greenwood workshop, and then this week, I'm going into a felting workshop. Okay.

3 AG: Remember, that felting is the entry point to the textile curriculum, as is cutting down trees,
4 really, as is charcoal making for the blacksmithing. I think it's important to differentiate different
5 phases of activity in the craft curriculum. I've been hammering quite carefully the entry point for the
6 Greenwood working curriculum being cutting down and then the working on the shaving horse,
7 which is really the feeling and the more cognitive on the pole lathe. And I think the new Masters
8 programme has agreed with myself and Matt Briggs, including Chloe, to make three different legs for
9 the stool, one with side axing, one with draw knifeing on the shaving horse, and one with turned.
10 She said, well, that looks awful. I said, It's research. It's an item, but it doesn't have to look awful if
11 you actually do each leg nicely. They are all different, but it's really important that the guys feel the
12 different entry points that students can have in green woodwork. So you're going into feltmaking it
13 would be important that you do some work with weaving. So the Johnson Cup, this slightly irritating
14 competition that Janine has brought in, I've decided to have three first prizes. There's a prize for
15 felting, there's a prize for weaving, and there's a prize for knitting. And each of the students who've
16 been selected will have one term of the Johnson Cup. They're all first prize winners in different areas
17 of the Trust's work. Knitting, weaving, felting.

18 CC: So they are the workshop observations. And then I've also been doing a few focus groups.

19 AG: What do you mean by that?

20 CC: I've got five staff members with different roles, and they are all direct contact staff. So
21 residential support worker, daytime support worker, classroom teacher, craft teacher, landworker.
22 And we're having a conversation about the method, and that is actually very interesting. So that's
23 very much in the sphere of understanding and language, of course, where, of course, the workshop
24 observations don't have to go into that at all. It's really about what actually happens. So that is why I

3 Interview Aonghus Gordon

25 was so keen to make that part of the research. And then I also start having individual interviews with
26 leaders. That's also very interesting. So I've got quite a few lined up, and that's individual. And I hope
27 that people feel they don't just have to repeat language. They can actually also say where they are
28 struggling and what are the things they don't understand.

29 And I thought it would be interesting to explore it with you along those lines. What do you actually
30 feel where understanding is needed in the different roles? Because there also was one notion that
31 came up, actually. In a certain role, one needs to understand less of the method, let's say, and in
32 other roles, one needs to understand more. And of course as a biodynamic land worker one has to
33 understand biodynamics to a good extent I would say so I thought it would be interesting maybe just
34 to go through a number of roles. And if you want to in the classical hierarchy: trustees, school or
35 college leader, I am interested in your view on classroom teachers, what do you think what they
36 need to understand and maybe craft tutor.

37 AG: Are you differentiating between schools and colleges or not?

38 CC: Well. I think there are some aspects which are very similar I think a tutor in a school and a tutor
39 in a college however there are also some very clear school inflections also in those roles and then of
40 course there are classroom teachers and we don't have that anywhere in colleges. But maybe
41 starting with trustees.

42 AG: Difficult one. I think if trustees aren't able at the time of crisis to know what's what then the
43 inevitable potential hijacking of the organization is potentially imminent so things can run quite
44 smoothly until there is a crisis. The issue is and that's really the major role for as far as I can see is in
45 the event of a crisis which will happen. How much do you know in order to relaunch the ship so
46 ultimately they need to be the guardians of the specific IP.

47 And that's not to say you can't have other specialists on the board but if the majority of the trustees
48 do not have working knowledge of what the primary purpose, Steiner, and then you could call it the
49 secondary element which is method out of Steiner if that is not the primary intention for their
50 guardianship and they know that and it's rehearsed the chances of them having to be accountable
51 for the future of the trust is likely to happen at least once every ten years. And that decision they
52 make at that time could take the trust forward or put it into obscurity. So the answer is because they
53 have the ultimate power that they are steering an organization based on Steiner, the second one is
54 still not good enough which is what aspect of Steiner? And if the Trust has spent hundreds of
55 thousands in researching its method then they need to have honored the results of that research.

56 Now, I don't think there's another organization, certainly in the UK, that will have put so much
57 resources into a certain aspect of Steiner's work.

58 CC: I agree.

59 AG: Do the Trustees understand all that? No. Why have I appointed quite a few elderly trustees as
60 opposed to young trustees? Well. The young ones always end up wanting to apply for jobs or
61 research positions the elderly ones have done their research and are quite happy although when
62 push comes to shove I'm not sure they really understand the method. So trustees 100% but in the
63 time of crisis is when they are required to show up.

64 The paradox of Ruskin Mill leaders let's say the two directors only just having joined the masters is a
65 very late development, but better late than never. So I think the organization, with the advent of the
66 two directors joining, has finally arrived at a point where there is likely now to be a functional
67 understanding as to what it is that they are expected to increasingly deliver as well as the external.
68 It's very late and if you look at those leaders who've been put in position as to when I left Ruskin
69 Mill, which is 20 years ago, 22 years ago, this is the first time that a leader has actually got hold of
70 the method. Everybody up until then fudged it. Everybody.

71 CC: So would you then say centre leaders, they're probably then also having to do the Masters, don't
72 they, in order to dive into it?

73 AG: Centre leaders are also quite complicated. I mean the Trust already put so much research money
74 in. The question is how do you train up a centre leader for a research position that takes two years
75 to complete? And the turnaround of their position is actually relatively short term. It's where the
76 greatest turnover is at the most senior level and I haven't squared that now. In the care it's pretty
77 shocking, in the education it's stabilizing, but it's not particularly good.

78 What I do think is essential is that the trustees endorse the strategic plan of the organization. It's
79 then given to the Executive Team. If on the Executive Team there isn't a majority of knowledge, if
80 the Executive Team is not in the majority with the practical working out of the knowledge of the
81 method, then it will either tread water or go backwards. So, the relationship between Trustees and
82 the Executive Team seems to be absolutely crucial. So, you can have a principal or a head teacher
83 that's coasting with the method. In other words, they are neither in it or opposed to it, but they
84 facilitate its progression but they're not going to be the driver. I suspect that's probably a good result
85 given our current day.

86 If that was the case in all centre heads that would lead to an eventual implosion. So there's a
87 possibility, there is a possibility of a certain percentage coasting and I think we have to be pragmatic

88 about this. There will always be coasters in the same way that there are activists who want to lead it
89 forward.

90 I would say pre training in spiritual science can be helpful, but in the case of one leader of a school
91 because she's done a training in other areas, there are a whole consequent area. There are barriers
92 as a result of that in understanding the inflection of PSTE. So, you cannot assume that being
93 interested in spiritual science is actually going to deliver the method. In fact it's often the case that
94 being interested in the spiritual science may be a blocker to delivering the method.

95 So the availability of the Masters, the availability of short courses, the availability of very tangential
96 entry points and I think tangential can be considered biodynamics, Goethean Science, PPOC¹. But in
97 the end the journey that staff kind of discovering is that that's all fine but if you don't know the why
98 of doing descent into matter, craft, it can be over within a couple of years because it will be seen as
99 occupational therapy and it's going to be difficult to argue the fees for occupational therapy so Field
100 four becomes the elephant in the room as it is the lens by which you can justify in the inspiration of
101 the Trust particularly Field two and three. Or if you can't do Field four then you will simply end up
102 with seven conditions² for a special school or the outputs on an Education, Health and Care Plan.

103 So at the moment -this is brutal- I think we're still riding on the back of a high level of energy that
104 has been inducted into the will force of the organization which is as a result of a few people who
105 know why and the rest of the organization is living off that energy and so the question is if that
106 energy can be rebooted also well. The jury is out as to whether it can be rebooted.

107 Hence we need to ensure that there's sufficient number of staff so that there is not what you call it
108 an insurrection as those who want to reboot it and those to say it's a waste of time.

109 CC: I suppose there's the energy and then there's also the level of insight isn't it? Sometimes I'm
110 astonished when there's a safeguarding event, new legislation and so on and, of course quite rightly
111 so, the amount of energy that can be released within a day is quite remarkable. It's unlikely to have
112 that amount of energy released about phasic human development or the twelve senses.

113 AG: Well I think what's interesting with Tara is that she is willing to have a go and so the new Steiner
114 School specialist training after five years that should have gone somewhere. So that's positive. What
115 we do about Principals? Well, we send them off to a bit of mental health seminar work; we've done

¹ These are courses offered as the Ruskin Mill staff training; PPOC= a course which explores the Pedagogic Potential of Craft

² Referring to the seven areas of learning as described in the governmental Independent School Standards

116 some masters. It's still not clear what course or is there a course to be a Principal of a Ruskin Mill
117 College?

118 CC: I think the feedback I'm getting is that people come from so different backgrounds quite frankly
119 and sometimes it's a bit like finding the right string for them because not everything chimes, let's
120 say. I think the range of courses is greatly appreciated and what seems to be also really important is
121 having individuals and sometimes they're not sitting in the line management structure at all but they
122 are just knowledgeable people or seen as knowledgeable people and approachable people
123 throughout the whole level of Ruskin Mill people are saying I worked really closely with that person
124 and that has helped me enormously to actually make sense of it. So, I think that is maybe something
125 to...

126 AG: The courses being less instructive you mean?

127 CC: No, I'm saying it's actually a range of elements that help people to understand. Sometimes it's a
128 course that lays out things, but then it's actually having an individual to help to digest and actually in
129 smaller groups, or one to one informal, totally informal conversations on car rides, in car rides, et
130 cetera, that help people the most to go a bit more in. So I think that's maybe something to think
131 about as well. But it is probably actually that informal way of doing it that is the most helpful,
132 actually. There are a number of elements and then I think there are of course, people who have
133 been on various courses and have been here for ten years and still are not getting any further either.
134 That is also an interesting variant. So, I by no means have found answers to all of those things yet,
135 but it's interesting just to see the whole range of how people are progressing in their understanding-
136 or not.

137 The option of going away and getting a book and reading it, I can tell you that hardly ever occurs.

138 AG: It's not how it works anymore. It's not going to work like that. You have got to remember, Ruskin
139 Mill is a practitioner community, not even a teaching community, really. People don't go to books. I
140 think their concentration is too limited.

141 CC: Well, I think we're entering that age as well. That is probably the case. So, what are your
142 thoughts then on, just a few more words on the class teachers, which is a new breed in Ruskin Mill
143 Trust?

144 AG: Well, I think it's years of work, frankly, years of work, and it can only happen through role
145 modelling. I don't think it's going to be successful unless you've already done a teacher's training and
146 you've also got some practice. The challenge is that the particular group of teachers who've chosen
147 to come in and work with the children, they are fairly extraordinary human beings. What they're

148 saying is that I'm prepared to do day after day of work and endure quite high levels of humiliation
149 and considerable obstruction, and that's a very particular path of development and you won't find
150 preordained Steiner orientated people to do that work. I think it's very difficult, and it's more
151 difficult now than it has been. And Gerhard is one of the old guard who would do it out of the love of
152 doing it. I don't know how effective he is. Probably effective, but there are no more Gerhards, they
153 just disappeared. So the question is fine. And this is a kind of karma piece, really, which is Ruskin Mill
154 placed itself to be an institution in the British vernacular. In fact, when it won teachers over from
155 other centres³, they cause nothing but trouble, really, when you think about it.

156 The style at the moment, I don't know what it's going to be like when I step down, but the style at
157 the moment is to bring in the troops and train them on the job, there is no other way of doing it.
158 And that's also because we're expanding. But that may not be the case going in perpetuity because
159 there was a phase in Ruskin Mill where we expanded through big government grants. They're all
160 gone the next phase is by being given gifts. They're probably about to go. There may be a few more.
161 I'm not sure. It depends on the success of the training, frankly.

162 What's clear is that we will not be able to expand unless we can train quite effectively new leaders
163 and senior leadership teams and guys on the ground. So, the next phase of development is what can
164 you achieve through an in house training program on the ground? And if Ruskin Mill can support
165 that financially, then it's got a good future. I don't think that Ruskin Mill necessarily ahead of the
166 game on the continent. I think on the continent, significant resources are put into training of staff.
167 That's not the case in England, so we're probably more continental in our inclination to spend the
168 percentage of our turnover on training. It probably still isn't enough, or we haven't organized it
169 singlely enough with real specialist teachers to know how to train those who are willing to train. I
170 think it's still quite ad hoc.

171 CC: Well, I think also on the continent, the Steiner education is much closer to the general
172 mainstream pedagogical ideas and approaches. It's still much more around "building" and actually
173 holistic in the best, in the widest view. So, whereas I think in the British or the Anglo American
174 education system, it's economically geared. It's not about developing the whole person in a German
175 mainstream school. Certainly in my time, it was really about developing as a person. That was still
176 something that most teachers would have agreed it was not economically geared at all, really.

177 AG: So, Constantin, I've got to go to a PPOC meeting.

³ Referring to teachers who are Steiner trained for neurotypical children

3 Interview Aonghus Gordon

178 CC: Sure. Wonderful. Thank you very much. I see you on the other side.

4 Interview Trustee

4 Interview, Trustee (TR), 09/06/22 Interview

In this interview one of the trustees gives an overview of her own personal journey into understanding the PSTE. From being involved in founding and running a local Steiner school that her children attended, meeting shamanism as a spiritual view of the world to then working closely with Aonghus Gordon in setting up the third college in Sheffield. She shares her view of the importance of the practical engagement with the material.

1 CC: Well, thank you for making the time.

2 TR: It's a pleasure.

3 CC: So I'm interested in the implementation of the method and the role that senior leadership plays
4 in that. I'm interested and I usually always ask people two parts to this. Regarding their personal
5 journey what has worked for them in terms of getting into the method and what were the things
6 that were helpful and what were the things that were not helpful. And then the next question would
7 be what is helpful to other colleagues in terms of the things you have observed for senior colleagues,
8 let's say. So maybe starting with your own journey into the method.

9 TR: Right. Well, when I first started in 2004 to help Aonghus to develop the third college, Freeman
10 College in Sheffield, I think it would be fair to say there was no method. There are certain
11 terminologies I can use that I remember in the early days. One of them is age appropriate play. One
12 is going back to source for material. One is the development of the use of a tool, as in using the
13 example of the hand, the arm and the hand as a spoon, a knife and a fork. The process of in those
14 days when I had to do my first Ofsted inspection, which was very soon after arriving and I didn't have
15 any experience of it, I had to get some understanding of what was the Ruskin Mill orientation course
16 and wanting a nice and simple... so I needed to be able to understand and explain to an Ofsted
17 inspector - and I was the Head of Development at the time- 'What is the Ruskin Mill Orientation
18 course?' And I learned that the Ruskin Mill Orientation Course was about engagement, make
19 something useful and beautiful for yourself, then move to making something useful and beautiful as
20 an item of service in the household, with your family or the home that you're living in. And then, as
21 far as possible, to maximize your potential, to develop that into an ability to work in some way that
22 was appropriate to your own potential and that might or might not be employment. Once I had that,
23 I realized that everything hung on first of all, you have to engage, you have to bring somebody in. In
24 order for them to be able to learn to expand their own potential, they have to, first of all, be
25 engaged in the world with joy, with pleasure, with lightness. And so the development of the
26 curriculum at Freeman College was very much along the lines of part of the development of the trust
27 that Aonghus had already done was to work around the motif of setting of the table. And at Ruskin

28 Mill, they had done a lot of the land base of setting the table. They had done work with wood,
29 leather. I cannot remember all the things that they were doing. Then the Glasshouse, which had
30 been the next one in the year 2000, had developed things to go onto the table glass and they'd also
31 done other things, obviously, with it. But that was the setting of the table on the time it came to
32 Freeman, which is why I remember particularly the use of the arm and the hand to show the knife,
33 the fork and the spoon was to develop cutlery. And there is a distinction between cutlery and
34 flatware. Cutlery is the knives, flatware is the spoons and forks. And the history of that and the
35 development of that at Freeman. There was no PSTE. It was in those early days the Ruskin Mill
36 Orientation Course. The motif of which was that it was a non accredited course. So it was a traveling
37 journey for a student with areas of accreditation in it. And they were OCNs, they were bespoke. They
38 could be developed for a particular student. So when I say engagement, then you could have an OCN
39 developed for it.

40 The experiences I had with Aonghus in the fairly early days of development was that everything that
41 I could see appeared to be that we were going back to the things that my grandparents did
42 automatically. So I remember my grandmother teaching me about collecting cockles on the beach
43 and then actually showing me how to cook them which to me as a child was really horrific. Squish
44 put them in boiling water and keep the pan lid on. I also remember listening in the early days of
45 visiting my grandparents about listening to the Archers with my grandfather on the radio but with
46 my grandmother making a rag rug from old clothes and they weren't short of money. I remember
47 saying to Aonghus: 'I don't really understand what are you trying to do going back to the old days?'
48 He said: 'When we go back to the old days we are going to take the essence of the way that people
49 live and bring it into modern consciousness so that as people are continually disconnected from the
50 world that they live in and students are increasingly disconnected and how it goes for the food they
51 eat and everything. We will bring back a conscious process and it will become therapeutically
52 healing.' I remember saying: 'I understand that. That makes a lot of sense to me and I would like to
53 help you do that. But I am not sure what terminology you want.' At some point, remembering this
54 conversation when eventually we started a training program, which was the early days of Hiram,
55 which was the name first given to the training department, I remember a lot of the expressions that
56 he had been using. 'Age appropriate play' became a very useful terminology for a spiky profile of a
57 child with developmental delay. So if you could find where the age appropriate play had not
58 happened and introduced it in a way that it wasn't called play but it was done through engagement
59 of the world and material and matter, you could help the child to redevelop that by giving it an
60 appropriate curriculum. But it wasn't called that time.

61 CC: So the language has changed a lot but would you say the actual practice has changed a lot?

62 TR: No, I think the essence of it is the same which is to connect anything and everything back to
63 source. Ultimately for me, all matter is connected to spirit. So the expression of 'descent into matter'
64 where a young person is helped to come into their body, into the sensory world through material
65 which they most likely with the kind of profiles we had they would not have done that and then do
66 that through a curriculum that engages them with material back to source. So if for example, the
67 early one that I taught when I was at Freeman was felting, I would obviously then take students out
68 to meet -at the time I had sheep- so I would take them out to meet the sheep. There was actually
69 one who was fairly tame, would come to a bucket called Mary and they could meet Mary. They
70 could then work with the fleece from Mary. They could have a connection to that and then they
71 made their items of service. I didn't do that for very long, but the essence of the way that Aonghus
72 was looking at, the development of it, I understood.

73 It was harder with metal. So when it came to doing it, for example, the silver, it was hard to know
74 how to connect because actually the sourcing of the silver, we did end up with recycled silver.
75 Looking at the essence, but actually digging that out is much more difficult, gold panning and so on.
76 When you're working with a metal work curriculum. It's more of a challenge. However, we have very
77 good tutors who did actually connect the understanding of where it came from and also looking at
78 the abuse of where it came from. Duncan Edwards was particularly good at this.

79 We were working at the time as well with what was called "The University of the Spirit". Which was
80 a development with different anthroposophical initiatives. With Alanus University, with Norway with
81 Rudolf Steiner University College, Oslo, with various academic people that came together in a group.

82 CC: I remember it well.

83 TR: Yes of course you do. So working with the 'University of the Spirit' then lead Aonghus to the look
84 at a Masters in Education through Rudolf Steiner University College and in the early days of the
85 development of our training with Crossfield, which was a part of Ruskin Mill. It started in Ruskin Mill.
86 And I joined the first Masters of Education, which Aonghus and Charlotte were both on. Part of the
87 work was done in this country, part of the work was done in Norway. And Aonghus and Charlotte
88 created from that a Joint Masters, the name of which you can put in. They created the joint masters.
89 And following that, Charlotte took, because she did the framework and Aonghus did the content, she
90 took that to the University of West of England to try to give us a Masters in Practical Skills
91 Therapeutic Education. What actually happened was they gave us a shell framework in professional
92 development. That first one was professional development and in brackets PSTE it was in fact a
93 professional development masters and it was a masters of science, not a master of education. And
94 Aonghus liked that it was a Masters of Science not a Masters of Education.

95 There were things around that, but I can't remember all the details anyway. And in fact, the person
96 who was leading that had been developed it who is now on the board, and I can't remember her
97 name, but she was to do the nursing, so she developed the shell framework.

98 As that first Master that I did, we were then working with the new language that had been
99 developed through Aonghus' and Charlotte's Masters. Now we were not given the Masters, so we
100 had to gain understanding of it. And there were challenges around that because the mentors on it
101 didn't know about it either. So we had a bit of difficulty with it, so I was trying to research what was
102 the Seven Fields of Practice. And for me that was the..., I knew that was the journey of the student.
103 So when I said, I can see what you were trying to do and now you're wanting to bring it into a
104 consciousness, I can see that it was really a journey of development. You could even call it -and I
105 would- a modern initiatory path. A shamanic apprenticeship, I could see what was being developed
106 in a conscious way, through material connecting back to source.

107 However, there was an element of challenge to that because it was the first time, their thesis had
108 been worked with. I realised not very long after managing to complete Masters, that we were
109 needing an aide memoir pocket card¹ for the new language, so that whereas I could use, and
110 Aonghus could use even more, he could go back to the Living Earth training program first developed
111 out of Cotswold Chine². I could go back to the orientation course. Nobody was able to. And then we
112 had a bit more of a development with Dan somewhere along the line. No, Dan was after that, I think.
113 I can't remember all the time scales of these things. But what became very clear to me was that we
114 needed to have a language that we could settle on, that you could dive into at different depths to
115 understand, but if you didn't keep terminology the same, the staff training was very challenging
116 because people didn't know what we were talking about. And then how do you then train people
117 and how do you develop training?

118 Again, I can't remember the exact date of when the pocket card started, but the pocket card was
119 actually the underpinning the language of our objects and the understanding that we look through
120 insights of Steiner, that we use the life processes, that they informed the care qualities, all
121 consciously. So the development of consciousness is the process, really important.

122 CC: Let's see what I can recap. What has been helpful to you? You of course had a grounding in a
123 spiritual practice before, personal conversations, I know that that has been helpful.

124 TR: Absolutely.

¹ This is the Ruskin Mill Vision and Values Card

² The Steiner Special School close to Ruskin Mill where Aonghus Gordon used to work.

125 CC: So, which was a development journey, really, then I suppose working very closely with Aonghus.
126 But then I suppose that was more through experience, because at the same time you were part of
127 the changing language and the changing language, I suppose that was a challenge, wasn't it? Before
128 it settled on something. The understanding of the practice, that's one thing, and the language that
129 describes it more the other.

130 TR: Yes, two different things. What I experienced was that uncertainty. For example, in the early
131 days of what we called Hiram, we did indeed have two people. We had a practitioner and we had an
132 administrator, so we have a practitioner who would help staff through and in fact, we had
133 something called the staff orientation program. That was an early process. It was set out. In fact, you
134 yourself completed it.

135 CC: I remember.

136 TR: There were processes, but again, yes, the settling of the language and the recording of what did
137 people manage to learn from it? Training is one thing, but actually understanding and changing the
138 culture of the staff, understanding: 'why do I do that?' This was more of a challenge. So, we got quite
139 good. So that, for example, staff orientation program became a rolling one. You could join at any
140 point and you would be able to come back to the same place again.

141 Really good, things that were quite good. Why would you reinvent the wheel, why would you not?
142 You make a new wheel and then you go back and go, why did I even have that wheel? That was all
143 right before induction became a real challenge that I really took on board very seriously and still do.
144 And I still don't think we do anything like well enough. And that was actually to be introduced into
145 what is the signature of the way we do this work is that if you don't engage with people from the
146 beginning with material, it's always going to be difficult because other things will come in. And I still
147 don't think we manage that well enough, but it's aspirational still to get to that point. And I think we
148 need to keep like, all of it, you have to keep looking at it again, see what you learn.

149 CC: Anything else? Any other element that have helped you?

150 TR: I've always used, you could call them aspects of method, but they're actually for me, there were
151 some. So, one of the things that I did experience that was incredibly helpful for me was rhythmical
152 massage. I'd done a training in massage anyway, so I had a qualification in something called energy
153 stream, which was Swedish massage with quite a lot of in depth understanding of anatomy and
154 physiology. But when I experienced rhythmical massage, I experienced this at a different level in my
155 being with energetic flow and release in a gentle way of blocked energy. So, looking at the therapies,
156 they were new to me. Therapy wasn't new to me. I've done all sorts of things, lots of different

157 therapies myself, and I've done something like Feldenkrais and lots of Shiatsu and things. But
158 actually the therapies of Eurhythmy and Rhythmical Massage particularly were new and open
159 minded. I was very happy to engage with them and found them beneficial. And so that was new,
160 that side of things the student study, looking at the medical, because at Freeman College we tried to
161 develop a medical centre through spiritual science, and that was difficult to do because we had a lot
162 of difficulty finding a doctor and the nursing practice because there's a shortage of anthroposophical
163 doctors and nurses, actually..

164 So those things were interesting, helpful to me to a degree. So, rhythmical massage was particularly
165 helpful. And I saw a great deal of benefit for students. And from my own experience of it, the other
166 thing that I always do is I turn to practical things for myself. So gardening, biodynamics, wonderful.
167 Can't say I understood all of it, far from it. Happy to do it, I'm happy to join in with it.

168 I found the two or three particularly insightful things that have stuck with me through looking at
169 that, and one was from a biodynamic beekeeper. And he explained about choice, that the element
170 of choice, which is a big problem for a lot of our youngsters, is that when they have to make a
171 choice, a conscious choice, the grief comes from having to give up something. And it's a simple thing.
172 And it came from beekeeping and it came through a biodynamic training at High Riggs. But I've never
173 forgotten it because actually recognizing in our young people that to make a choice means they
174 actually have grief of giving something up, was very powerful for me because, of course, you don't
175 see it, so it's like everything else, it's extremely obvious when you see it, but it's so obvious that you
176 can't understand how you could not have realized it. However, most people miss it completely. I
177 think that came out of one of the things for myself that you asked what to do. So that was helpful for
178 myself. And I engaged in jewellery making, painting, gardening, all those things, bread making, all
179 automatically because they are part of me and it's the way I live. And so actually, it wasn't difficult
180 for me to live the way that I actually believe it is for us in our training and so on.

181 CC: And what about Steiner then?

182 TR: Absolutely impossible! *[laughter]*

183 CC: So you met all that already before?

184 TR: I started a Steiner School in Sheffield when I wanted my children to have, well, I started off
185 wanting them to have an alternative education to the mainstream because I didn't like the lack of
186 creativity and the way I could see it being channeled into too early academic development, that
187 wasn't helpful. So, I did a little bit of home schooling with my first child, and then rather than moved
188 to the Northwest Steiner School, which was a possibility, I actually went to Tintagel House, knocked

189 on the door and met Robert Chamberlain, who said they were wanting to start a Steiner School.
190 Would I like to help. So, I did. My husband and I both helped. I found getting into the understanding
191 of Steiner's developmental processes, of understanding human phasic development almost
192 impossible through that school. It didn't help. What I experienced was spiritual pride in the same
193 way that I had experienced it in the High Church of England. And given that I have experienced
194 spiritual pride in the High Church of England at a fairly mega level, I just experienced the same thing
195 again. However, what I did experience was, meeting a shamanic teacher.

196 Meeting spiritual pride and struggling with and then meeting correctly a shamanic psychotherapist
197 through the school, which I know on my journey was absolutely spot on.

198 CC: So you met Steiner first and then shamanism?

199 TR: If you want the timeline. I did. High Church of England. Steiner School. So, in Steiner, looking for
200 something in Steiner, because my brother was of course also running Cotswold High School at the
201 time with Aonghus. So, I knew about that. I knew it was a different form of education that connected
202 to spirit. So I looked for that help. Helped to start the Steiner School in Sheffield found that access
203 into anthroposophy as very, very challenging. Things like breastfeeding my child and being told that's
204 not an appropriate thing to do to come to a meeting. I've just breastfed my child sitting on the floor
205 in Cole's department store. Why can I not bring my child and feed it at a study group? All that stuff.

206 CC: That is unusual for Steiner study groups, I thought they breastfeed all the time. *[laughter]* Highly
207 objective research.

208 TR: But then I met a psychotherapist at the side of the school because his child came. A shamanic
209 psychotherapist. I was then introduced to and interested in something called the Shamanic Path
210 from North American Indian teachings through the Deer tribe, and I became apprenticed through
211 that path. Then at a critical point in the development of the school, they decided to cut off the top
212 class. We didn't have any say in it, and that meant that my daughter was then thrown back from
213 going into the Steiner school to having to go back into the state system. They kept going with the
214 younger class. However, by that time, my youngest child was in kindergarten and there was a
215 kindergarten teacher who didn't speak a single word of English. And it became increasingly
216 challenging. Actually, ultimately, my marriage broke up at that point. I moved house out of
217 Derbyshire and all the children went into local Derbyshire schools and I carried on with North
218 American Indian teachings and let the Steiner side go until 2004, when I have then been to art
219 college for five years, doing an access course and then a certificate in fine art. And then I met
220 Aonghus when I was actually about to do some I was on some pilgrimage work, artistically and

221 spiritually, to the Bardsey Island in North Wales. And I met Aonghus because my brother had
222 introduced me saying that you might be interested to meet my sister, who's in Sheffield. And that's
223 when he wanted to start the Sheffield School. Actually, I was reminding Aonghus of this the other
224 day when I said, well, actually, I'm busy doing pilgrimage work and some artistic work about going to
225 the Augustinian Abbey on Bardsey Island. He said: 'Could you speed it up a bit?' I said: 'Well it's a
226 pilgrimage, I am meant to walk.' He said: 'Can you just do it in a week?' So, I drove the pilgrimage
227 *[laughter]* to every little chapel for the Celtic Saints.

228 And I suppose, if you want to know this, the end of that journey is that I was then very sceptical
229 about working with Anthroposophy, which is not the same as spiritual science, but I was sceptical
230 and said to Aonghus, if you're going to turn out like the others, I'm not interested. And to be fair, he
231 hasn't turned out like the others. It's been a very good journey. And then finally I decided to actually
232 join the class lessons³. Aonghus was highly amused because when they accepted me, he said, you
233 thought you wouldn't get in, didn't you? Thank you.

234 And I'm still trying to make sense of the mantra and the shamanic journey, which it is of the Michael
235 school with what I have done in the past and so on. And it's very clear to me that it is a modern
236 initiatory path being worked through practical skills therapeutic education with young people and
237 staff, but quite hard to get that to the next stage of understanding for people. You don't realize what
238 you've chosen, but this is what you've chosen. And that's virtually the whole of my work with staff
239 now, including yourself. Why didn't you tell me? *[laughter]*

240 CC: So that brings me to the next point. The senior staff you are working with...?

241 TR: So what you do you just find another way of saying it. Just keep at it. You just hang on. My
242 Masters of course was on the Seven Laws of Kippax.

243 CC: You are a master in terms of individual conversations. So that is a helpful thing. Having language
244 that does not change that much, that's a helpful thing. Having some form of staff training program,
245 or now, actually training programs that can be chosen for staff, that's incredibly helpful.

246 TR: I think it's difficult to realize that if you take another simple thing, if you have a point, you have
247 360 different points of view. So, seven lenses is not much, get your head round! Because actually
248 that whole thing about how do you see? So, in the shamanic teachings it's called the assemblage
249 point, which is the way you see and you need people to get to. Goethean Science and the
250 observational process of looking at Goethean Science is only one way of looking. A terminology I

³ The School of Spiritual Science, inaugurated by Steiner, for enhanced meditation practices.

251 would use is that you are learning to see a 360 degree way of looking at something. And if you
252 extend that out to the universe, then you go out to the planets and the stars and so on. But you can
253 bring it down that you're looking at one through one lens. And if you then take the seven fields of
254 practice, you break it down into chunks that when they are joined together, are totally whole, like
255 the braiding and strong. But you can also go in through a different angle, different ways of using
256 terminology for people to see that pictures are bigger than the one point that they see.

257 The other one that I use all the time, which is I've used it this morning with Colin Talbot is this
258 business that if you want, if you point a finger, you look out and call it projection, whatever you
259 want. If you point your finger out automatically, your hand will turn three fingers back towards you.
260 It's terribly simple. Terribly simple. It's like you can't help it. It's like the hand is a spoon, and three
261 pointing back. Well, what do I do about it then? Where am I in this picture? But you'll have heard all
262 these things several times over.

263 CC: It does take a few times, doesn't it?

264 TR: Well, you have to keep doing them.

265 CC: So, what do you say then? Of course, it's all kind of really individual and how far people are
266 getting into the method and what is the entry point and so on. For me, I'm still fascinated by how
267 some people go into it and they feel like a duck and water and some are resistant for years and they
268 only get into it after they leave.

269 TR: They are attracted. And this is one of the things that Aonghus is looking at again, constantly, and
270 we still have to get better at how do we join up? Bogdan will say, bless him, render onto Caesar
271 things that are Caesar's. And render onto God things that are God's. Actually, how do you do that
272 interview process. You think you've come for a job, you have, what are the technical things that you
273 need to be able to show us that you can do that we need you to be able to do? And what else do you
274 think you've come for? And you'll need to be able to do both.

275 CC: Do you actually think a senior leader needs to understand anything about Steiner in order to
276 understand PSTE?

277 TR: No. That's a very fast reaction to the question. Because if spirit is matter. You don't need to
278 understand it intellectually. But if you're not engaged with matter in a full sensory way then you're
279 going to miss the connections.

280 To actually be able to use it diagnostically as an educational method. You probably do need to have
281 good training and human phasic development of neurotypical. Because you need to be able to

282 understand neurodiverse. I don't know that you need that to be able to create, to work with
283 material.

284 CC: That is an ongoing question for me. Because, if you look at Camphill, originally, at some point,
285 everybody was deeply into it.

286 TR: I will give that a lot more thought as well, because it's the same thing that I have all the time,
287 which is the reason that I go on about. I mean, it causes amusement, the pocket cards. So interesting
288 comment on that. I am not protective of it I am protective that the staff have something that they
289 can understand. If they cannot understand it they are just going to dismiss it. 'Why are you going on
290 in about the Seven Fields but you don't tell me what they are? And you don't tell me what they're
291 for.

292 CC: It's a bit cruel.

293 TR: You need to have steps to everything. Same with the Ofsted inspection. She wants to know how
294 conscious was the planning, how conscious is the process? What I say, we want to see people who
295 can do this work. Yes, but what Aonghus wanted from that early conversation I had with him all
296 those years ago was, yes, you're going to do what your great grandparents did. They were connected
297 to the stars, they planted with the moon. Are you looking back nostalgically or are you saying:
298 Where are we at now? How does this work and what's the process? So you do have to have some
299 consciousness of why. I still think if you are engaging with material you don't actually need to do
300 that. But if you need to understand student development you do need to have an understanding of
301 what would have been the standard development. Probably spiritual science because Steiner's
302 insights were helpful. I have not had a conversation with Aonghus about it recently. What are the
303 non negotiables is the big thing.

304 CC: Of course in some areas of the Seven Fields you have got Steiner there straight away. For
305 example biodynamics. There's no such thing as biodynamics without Steiner per definition. But then
306 Genius Loci, for example, is something that I never really talked about, although he probably did it.

307 And then there's transformerative leadership that he always denied that there's such a thing as
308 leadership because it should be the College of Teachers, for example, running school while he was,
309 of course, the director of the school, he did not sew himself that actually he was actually running
310 that school very decisively, actually very clearly. But all the guys are saying, oh, it's a college of
311 teachers who run the school, because that's just not true.

5 Interview Trustee

5 Interview Trustee, 04/07/2022 Interview

In this interview one of the trustees shares how his lifelong experience and study of Steiner's work was the entry point to understanding PSTE. He notices the skill in Ruskin Mill bringing the method into a language that can be understood by external bodies as well as being able to meet the requirements of compliance which contribute to Ruskin Mill's success. He appreciates the role that research plays in this and voices his hopes that Ruskin Mill can be the seed in the future for ideas of social renewal.

1 CC: Well, thank you for making the time. That's great. So, yes, I think I have given you a bit of an
2 overview, I believe. It is part of a doctorate study that I'm doing with Sheffield and I am interested in
3 implementing our method. Not to say that is actually my job, to deal with this and think about it and
4 do something about it, but I suppose this research gives me the opportunity to actually explore it a
5 bit more and have really some reflection time around it, I suppose. And it gives me also the
6 legitimate well, I wouldn't say excuse, because it is my job actually to talk to people about how to
7 best go about it. And then that has led me to the question of the theory, let's say, or hypothesis, that
8 before one implements something, one has to understand what it is one wants to implement, I
9 suppose, that somehow goes together. And so I have done a survey, all staff survey on the method,
10 and I have been in workshops and I'm still going into further workshops in terms of looking at what is
11 actually happening there in terms of day to day work. And of course, that is also something I usually
12 do anyway, but it's interesting to do it under a kind of research perspective, if you want. So and then
13 I have had focus groups with staff who work directly with students, and then I have done some
14 interviews with senior leaders of the organization. That's all really interesting. And I suppose I'm
15 interested in all the levels of the organization. So I'm pleased that you as a trustee are available for
16 that chat. So I suppose my first question is always well, basically, I think there are two perspectives
17 to that. The one is, in terms of your own journey, what has helped you in terms of understanding
18 what the method of Ruskin Mill Trust is? And then secondly, what are your thoughts on the
19 implementation of that? Not necessarily only for you, but also as an organisation. So maybe the first
20 part first. When meeting Ruskin Mill Trust and PSTE and the Seven Fields, what were the helpful
21 things in terms of getting more into it for you?

22 TR: Do you mean how did I make that connection?

23 CC: Yes, I suppose in terms of I'm thinking, of course, you have got probably a lifetime experience of
24 Steiner's work. And I suppose that is essentially in the design principle of Ruskin Mill Trust really,
25 isn't it? But then there's also, in some aspects, a bit of a different inflection in Ruskin Mill Trust.

26 TR: I think the thing is that 40 years ago I moved up to North Yorkshire so that my children, who've
27 been taught at home, could go to a Waldorf school at Bottom Village, which is a Camphill community

28 based on threefold social order¹, at least in theory, probably as a community, came as near to it as
29 possible, really, to kind of put those ideas into practice. I wanted to go there in a way and my
30 interest has remained there because I was inspired by that whole concept. And whilst my work has
31 taken me in a different direction at a certain level, I guess my work continues to focus around how
32 do I bring these threefold ideas into practice. And I spent a lot of time and a lot of energy when the
33 Bottom village was under siege² because I wanted to save something that was very dear to me. And
34 something has been saved. There is the Esk Valley Camphill community. I don't think you were at the
35 meeting when they came down.

36 CC: No.

37 TR: So yes, I've been an anthroposophist for a long time, but I've also been involved with Camphill
38 and the Threefold Social Order and the concept of integrating those three elements social, economic
39 and cultural, in a process of that may be loosely called community.

40 My journey to Ruskin Mill has been to a certain extent written for quite a long time, but came
41 together around the work that I'd been doing about on bees and a connection with Aonghus and a
42 shared interest in these sorts of ideas.

43 But when I came to be a trustee, I would say that I understood more about the theory of PSTE than
44 the practice. And I think one of the things that I've really enjoyed since I became a trustee is seeing
45 how that model works in practice because I'd say that PSTE actually also rests very firmly in that
46 three fold context. Here's a model that's been developed to support a specific group of people, not
47 necessarily with learning disabilities, but with challenging behaviour and certainly not necessarily
48 living in community with people with those particular needs, but to some extent creating the context
49 of community as a kind of backdrop for enabling the kind of the integration of social, economic and
50 cultural elements to take place. My concern as somebody who wants to, who feels that threefold
51 community as expressed through Camphill has been an experiment, well, not an experiment which
52 actually is waiting to evolve into and is very much needed in our culture in a more evolved form and
53 wondering what that more evolved form is. My link with Ruskin Mill in a sense is following a lead
54 which says to me, is Ruskin Mill part of, is it part of a journey towards being an engine for something
55 of the future?

56 So, what I meet is something which is very much putting spiritual science into the present and I think
57 doing a great job. What I ask myself is, am I right in thinking that this kind of organization is going to

¹ Steiner developed insights into how the spheres of culture and education, social and the law and the economy should interrelate in society or organisations as a "threefold social order"

² Bottom Village underwent a number of management changes following unsatisfactory inspections

58 maybe at some point experience in itself the need and the impulse and perhaps the necessity to
59 evolve into something that it hasn't quite got his head around yet at the moment? It now currently
60 provides something called PSTE. And I think there's a genius there because what we've done is
61 created a very functional, accessible concept where you can prove efficacy, which is what the world
62 wants. We know that. Especially if you want money from them and you can do it in the context of
63 spiritual science. To me, maybe that already is a kind of evolution, but also maybe sooner or later it's
64 going to fall foul of the evolved resistance to that. The resistance to Camphill was clearly lived within
65 a certain context of regulation, funding for and as you would have probably heard Aonghus say
66 many times, well, they only got themselves to blame. All they have to do is yeah, well, maybe that
67 was true, maybe I don't know, it doesn't really matter. But that's what caused the kind of come
68 uppens. And that's happened paradoxically in the context of the success of the process. A long
69 winded response to your question.

70 I think what's introduced me to PSTE is in a sense is a vision of not just what can I offer to Ruskin
71 Mill, but what is Ruskin Mill offering me? Because I'm not a kind of spiritual voyeur. I don't want to
72 accumulate anthroposophic initiatives. I want to make the whole equal more than some of the parts.
73 So am I making sense here? Am I answering the question?

74 CC: Yes. So I can see where that fires your interest, as well as open something up where you feel
75 you're contributing, isn't it?

76 TR: Yes. In the end, Aonghus asked me and Helen, I guess, because I got to know Helen because she
77 came up to live up in our neck of the woods.

78 So I was asked and I said yes, and I'm glad I did. And something is evolving, but right at the center of
79 it is the thought that for me, given the kind of breadth of my involvement in different things and
80 interests, I can't afford to be doing things that don't, as it were, don't feel part of the whole of who I
81 am. That, in a way affects the way I see myself as a trustee. Which you might want to come onto. I
82 don't know.

83 CC: So what do you think? What was new for you when you met Ruskin Mill?

84 TR: I think what was new was the recognition of the depth of the kind of concept of being thought
85 about, worked out research. Because when I first met the kind of 'research' word which is ever
86 present, I resisted a bit because I'm saying yes, but one has to be very careful with this concept of
87 outcomes and measurable outcomes.

88 CC: Yeah, I agree

89 TR: From the point of view of delivering, but I think partly because I wasn't quite understanding the
90 way in which research was being used. And I think that has definitely changed. And I think that the
91 magazine which has been produced has been and also the Trigonos³ event, I think that's really
92 helped me see where you're going with that.

93 If I may switch to the kind of I still think that there is a danger that you end up looking at something
94 as if it's a done deal, as if it's fixed, when actually the essence of this kind of threefold connection is
95 always evolving. And organisations are always evolving, the people are always evolving, universe is
96 always evolving.

97 Just like when you get an increase in size and bureaucratic administration of organisation, that tends
98 to be death, it tends to be sclerosis so they can't hold that spirit. And of course, I think that is a
99 danger and it really focuses your imagination on thinking can you have both, live in the world and
100 measure it and be part of a process of continual change and evolution? Because if you don't change
101 an evolution, you either lose the spirit of what you've got and if you don't embed it enough in what
102 has already become, then also you become very vulnerable as being people who don't have enough
103 rules to prevent abuse.⁴

104 CC: Yeah, I think it's actually really nice to look at it from those two angles, two perspectives, isn't it?
105 There needs to be constant rejuvenation from somewhere and the question is always what is that
106 font, isn't it?

107 TR: Is Ruskin Mill a threefold organisation. Yes, it is. Is it pursuing in terms of that kind of threefold
108 model? I think it is. And it's putting into practice. Is the organisation itself a threefold organization?
109 Yes, I think it is. But who are they? Who is the social, who is the cultural and who is the economic?
110 Who is the thinking, who is the feeling, who is the willing? Of course we are all of those. But actually,
111 structurally, I'd say that the practitioners are the will, other physical, other economic, if you like. The
112 executive is the social data, the mediators and the trustees are the cultural. And I think it should be
113 that we all have a responsibility that there's a need for those elements to find their kind of proper
114 relationship. And there's also a singular responsibility, I would say, on the trustees, if they are that
115 kind of function, to have the luxury of being thinking about the future in a more focused way. Not
116 that we don't all have to think about that, not that we don't all have to be practical, not that we
117 don't all have to be to engage with each other in a social context. Here's the question, if we are that

³ A retreat centre in Wales which was recently gifted to RMT and at which the Trust holds an annual trustee and senior leadership Strategic Review.

⁴ This is again an allegation to the critique of Camphill at the time, lack of systems and processes to prevent abuse

118 kind of organization and I guess that's why I see I'm there obviously when I look at the trustee, the
119 list of trustees, it says [name], threefold social order or social enterprise or something, and I guess
120 that's okay, but that's fine. And I'm happy to be engaged in that, as I said on Wednesday. But by
121 virtue of the space I occupy as a human being and my age and my context, I'm also there as
122 somebody who wants to help the process of remembrance of this evolutionary requirement and
123 perhaps to be an element of potential irritation in that.

124 Because I know the business is business. I run a business, I'm quite familiar with the need for forms
125 and structures and regulations and rules and tax consultant etc. etc. But if the business loses its
126 sense of meaning, if it loses its sense of cohesiveness, it's not worth a lie, it becomes a machine.

127 CC: Yeah. And I suppose also in Ruskin Mill -and I don't think I've seen it to that extent in any other
128 organisation, quite frankly- where practitioners who are in the workshop day to day are invited
129 regularly, as a matter of fact, to go into that reflective space and really go into a very different space.
130 Be it through the Masters, be it through other courses, the craft course. The Goethean Science
131 course. So, looking at it, I think the last time I counted, we have about 250 staff who were engaged
132 in substantial courses, so that's a fourth of the staff population. So, I think that is remarkable,
133 actually, when one thinks about it, not to speak about all those who have done that already
134 beforehand. So, I think that is really unique to me.

135 CC: Yeah. And I suppose then with the economic side, there are a few interesting developments on
136 there. So there's a PhD looking at CSA, community supported agriculture and I suppose in the social
137 enterprises, there is probably still a lot to do, and we got a few shops developing at the moment,
138 again, or being reinvigorated.

139 So that's interesting. What is your feeling, how much have you looked around the Trust, have been
140 in workshops, have had conversations with staff?

141 TR: I have not really. There are actually only two centres that I have been to, one was Trigonos and
142 one was Fairhill, which I went to with a colleague of mine recently to look at herb growing. So that
143 was a very specific connection where a specific linkage between who I am in my wider world. I think
144 that was very useful.

145 CC: Well you have been to Clervaux.

146 TR: Of course I have. Yeah. I've been to Clervaux and Ruskin Mill several times.

147 CC: And Sheffield, I suppose. Freeman College.

148 TR: No. Clairvaux a few times, but going back when it first started, I went up there again looking at
149 herb growing, and I've been a couple of times since I became a trustee.

150 But in terms of my engagement with workshops, PSTE. I haven't really got engaged. But also, I am a
151 craftsman. I was a potter for ten years. There's a good deal that I get about that because I've lived it.
152 And I have a certain feel about my relationship with people with challenging behaviour because I've
153 spent like, nearly 40 years one way or another. I had six children and five of them went to Bottom
154 school, so I was juncting in and out there for a long time, so I kind of have a sense about that
155 relationship. I don't have much of an idea about the inner dynamic of managing groups like that.

156 CC: So where would you see Ruskin Mill in five years time, ten years time? What do you think? What
157 are the main challenges ahead?

158 TR: Now you're asking. I think the main challenge, I put the main challenge as a kind of global one. I
159 think we're getting very near the edge of an exponential curve. So, if climate changes just on that
160 point where it's about to sort of zoom off to the infinity point, I think socially and economically with
161 there as well. The World Economic Forum will hope that with the combination of artificial
162 intelligence, media control and gene editing that we can be controlled one way or the other, so
163 we're not going to fall apart. What's coming can be contained primarily in the interests of those who
164 already own the wealth. But I'm not sure that that will be possible. And my own model is that I
165 personally like to sow the seed of the new form in a way which may well not get developed during
166 my lifetime, but may well be like the seed that grows after the fire is out, of the forest fire. At least
167 there's something planted there.

168 When I think about Ruskin Mill, my vision is as an organisation and of the work that's being done
169 within it, the kind of inner resoluteness that's being created in it as being a preparation for something
170 greater than what it currently is.

171 Not something which is entirely and primarily devoted to PSTE, for instance, which is a kind of which
172 has to be, in a certain context, the delivery of a service to the community. But I think I can only say
173 this to somebody who was aware of spiritual science, because otherwise it's just wacky backy, isn't
174 it?

175 I think as anthroposophists we have our work to do, but our work takes place within the context of a
176 greater work, doesn't it? So I see the evolution of Ruskin Mill. Of something of an entity led by
177 Aonghus, obviously, and Aonghus' will. That has been given a context where it's learned a lot of
178 skills. It's learnt a lot of survival skills and it hasn't lost its... and it's almost like it's been trained. It's
179 been given a kind of exercises. Isometric exercises to develop a certain kind of strength and will and

180 a lot of that, of course, is geared towards surviving Ofsted or somebody of that kind. But the meeting
181 we had the other day was we're talking about appointing an independent CQC type style person.
182 And I thought, yes, that's a good idea, because if you can find somebody that's got if you can find
183 that person and there's a big question to find somebody who wants to be able to think about the
184 future risks, because that's what we're talking about, future risk. Well, what are the future risks?
185 Well, there aren't many people who see the future risks the way I do. No. And be a CQC trained, etc.
186 They'll see the risks as how you deliver what's already there. Yeah. And what struck me when having
187 that conversation is that we ought to be a group of people who, just as you might do blue sky
188 thinking, to think, which way do we go? You know, to conquer the world with our widgets and
189 grommets and whatever it is we manufacture, but a kind of group who are thinking, what is the
190 future? If anthroposophy is about anything, it's about making the spiritual hope visible, whether
191 that's Eurhythmy or understanding how things actually work in practice. Steiner was forever saying,
192 research that bit the connection between the spirit and the.... and that's what we need to do, I think.
193 We need to we need to try and capture that. We need to try and focus on trying to understand the
194 nature of this organisation as a being in itself, who actually is responding to forces. So we have
195 Anthroposophia as the spirit of anthroposophy. I would say that Ruskin Mill has its own being. It
196 must do.

197 CC: It seems like it.

198 TR: I'm not saying once we spend all our time stargazing and this brings me back to something in a
199 way much more practical, in that we need, in our culture, a new form of community. And it's not the
200 nuclear community that we live in. It's a dead duck. And it just leaves us all stressed out, trying to
201 sort of square the circle, really, because there's no form which can lessen the pressures that come
202 with childcare or economic sustenance or even spiritual understanding. The forms aren't there. We
203 don't celebrate together, we don't live with other people and we work with other people, but we
204 don't.... And I think Ruskin Mill could be a source of this newness. But it would have to change shape.
205 It would change a lot. It wouldn't be what it is now. And yet I think it has the ... but then a caterpillar
206 is not like a butterfly, is it? But the DNA is the same.

207 That doesn't bother me. But to be able to grasp that nettle, I think, is to be able to answer the
208 question you've asked, I think, requires, well, a will to do it and for people to come together to do it
209 and for it to be seen as something that's worth doing or should be done.

210 CC: Well, maybe in November, let's see.

5 Interview Trustee

211 TR: Yeah, well, I was thinking after the visit, I thought I will just put pen to paper and maybe just try
212 and draft out a few thoughts that I might bring to that group in November, only because it sort of
213 exercises my own imagination.

214 CC: Yeah, good. Wow. A lot in there for me to reflect on. Yeah. Thank you very much. I will take this
215 away.

216 TR: Thanks.

217 CC: If you've got any other thoughts that come to you following this, then just send me an email.

218 TR: Yeah, I will.

219 CC: Thank you. Thanks for your time.

6 Interview Trustee 08/07/2022

In this interview one of the trustees explains about attending the Ruskin Mill Masters programme and the PPOC in conjunction have helped her to understand the method better, through theory and even more so through practice. She shares her observations and insights into how staff might struggle to engage with the practice because of a fear of losing face and being out of their comfort zone or through lacking the integrated experience that the students have due to logistical challenges connected with their role.

1 TR: Okay, what questions would you like to ask?

2 CC: Well, I think we're already in it.

3 TR: Oh, my God.

4 CC: So, yeah, how do you get to as a trustee coming from outside? How do you get to know the
5 matter?

6 TR: By doing it, I really found, by doing it. One of the things, as I said in my CV that got me through at
7 least the last decade of life in social services land was actually about doing many more things with
8 my hands. And there's a book that I've read recently for The Masters by somebody called Harry Siri.
9 It's Swedish, it's in translation, and she has a thing about learning to know the world through your
10 hands, through making things. And that spoke to me as much as I realized that that's actually what
11 I'd been trying to do. Because the thing about the transition in social services land is it's become very
12 much more about head stuff. It certainly was more heart stuff when I started in 1985, but now we've
13 gone down different route, and I think I was trying to find a way of surviving that very much kind of
14 sending it into your head. And it's becoming much more about social services as the service user. So
15 if you have the definition of a service user or client, as we used to call them, somebody who feels
16 better as a result of the intervention, then it's varying the family. It's usually the organisation. And I
17 think because I've served so long, I was definitely starting to feel that I needed to do something that
18 actually, literally got me out of my head. And the thing about learning how to use an axe and other
19 bits and pieces is you can't let your attention slip. And I'd finished my cutler stool with Joe a couple
20 of weeks ago, and one of the discussions I've had with Helen was my desire when I retired was some
21 kind of apprenticeship, that kind of practical apprenticeship. We could give you that. Okay, I've not
22 done it before because of a conflict of interest, but actually, as soon as she said, there is the PPOC¹,
23 you can do that. And in terms of my kind of coming in and dealing with my own anxiety, the PPOC
24 was great because it meant that I was in contact with support workers and tutors. And for the last
25 few weeks, I've been doing bull raising with Joe Tyson and there have been students in the room. So
26 I put it into my essay about the PSTE because on the one hand, me and me and the student, we

¹ Pedagogic Potential of Craft course

27 don't really interact, or we didn't interact. We just exchanged the old jokes about doing this for
28 nothing because I'm doing it because I want to and she's doing it because she's a student. But at the
29 but at the same time, we're absolutely absorbed in the task. Joe's got his music on and we have the
30 kind of rubbish conversation, but it's fine. The devil at the detail of how the method works is the fact
31 that I'm doing it, he's doing his stuff, and we're doing it in silence, but actually doing it. We're not
32 being avoidant at all, which is one of the things that I think had always astonished me about the craft
33 stuff was that I could stay in my head, I could go, blah, blah, blah. I could be completely obsessed.
34 And then I've got an axe and a piece of wood, and now I have to get down to the serious business of
35 not losing my leg or my fingers, and it would be really nice if I produce something at the end of it.
36 And my mother would say, that's nice dear. Why didn't you just buy one? *[laughter]* That's right.
37 You're right. I did buy it. And so that whole kind of process is why it's good to be doing Masters
38 alongside the PPOC, and I've got the time to do it in terms of the different levels that it kind of
39 comes in. I put my hand up: Goethean Science, drove me out, because there was a kind of
40 presumption that people had the vocabulary when they came in, and I didn't have the vocabulary at
41 all. So I stood in front of the tree looking at Sophia going, you're going to have to give me a hint to be
42 doing in terms of communicating with us. I got it afterwards, but I know that it's the kind of first time
43 that they've done, so there's all kind of things to get over. And I tried the method in Ecclesall Woods,
44 that kind of knowing and imagination, all the other bits and pieces. Okay, I get it.

45 CC: You met more trees afterwards.

46 TR: Yeah, met more trees afterwards. Sat there and did all these bits and pieces. I think the slow
47 start was about getting into the academic thinking again, because social services is not exactly
48 renowned standard of its academic excellence. So that was really good, on the one hand, of reading
49 this stuff and analyzing it, and on the other hand, it was like the frustration was I didn't get the
50 method. I didn't get the Goethean bit of the method, the bit where I do it, that's not an issue, it's like
51 a word and all the other bits and pieces. Okay, you want me to hear the sound that it's got to make,
52 that I know that I've got it right, that's fine. And because of the kind of persistence, if you like, that
53 obviously 35 years of child protection social worker will give you in that respect. All of the stuff
54 you've asked me to do has been a pleasure, and therefore it's not actually been any chore to go, oh,
55 this spoon, this spoon, 40 hours of my life. And it's like, okay. Yeah. She gets out of the spoon, which
56 she carries everywhere, because everybody should see this is 40 hours of their life. *[takes out the*
57 *spoon of her bag]*

58 CC: That's wonderful. Yeah. Wow. So have you done a copper spoon before?

59 TR: That is the copperspoon, silver plated, as soon as I get my trusteeship back I will get back on the
60 course, because at the moment, I'm raising a bowl, which will be silver plated, and then I'll be
61 allowed to do a silver spoon according to the finish, possibly with you and Keith.

62 CC: I got so many craft projects lined up now in the last few weeks

63 TR: To kind of draw back from the kind of headstuff into the handstuff has been a pleasure. Helen
64 and I have lots of conversations about the aging process, and she's always been my 'Sensei'. In a
65 martial sense it's not master, it means 'one who has gone before'. Right? So she'll go, you need to
66 think about this. And I will studiously think about whatever it is that she's told me to do. And one of
67 the things was about the whole stuff of embodying yourself in the kind of craft stuff. And I through
68 the PPOC, I've been a trustee since September, and I've kind of carried on and can see the resistance
69 of the support staff over that of the students, because, like the student, she doesn't have a choice,
70 and she surrenders to the method, and some of the other students don't want to do it. And so then
71 it becomes their resistance drama. And I think for the staff and the support workers, it's about
72 wanting to maintain that little bit of status between them and the students. And so, on the one
73 hand, they want the opportunity to play, because the PPOC does feel like play, but on the other
74 hand, they don't want to make a habit out of it, even though there's that childlike quality of kind of
75 like, when can I take it home if it's a fast project? That kind of stuff. Or like a rolling pin. I've seen
76 endless numbers of rolling pins created by people. In fact, it happened again yesterday. Another
77 rolling pin has been created, so they catch kind of glimpses of it through the bits and pieces they are
78 given as part of their induction. But the students are really carrying the method. They're the ones in
79 terms of doing the stuff that Aonghus talks about, in terms of the magical synergy, they're the ones
80 who are actually kind of whether they like it or not, because they got three years of doing this. And
81 in my module two, which was a comparison module one, task two, which was a comparison of a land
82 based method with PSTE, I wrote about basically how the method gives the student skills for survival
83 now that the school I had gone to was something to do with primitive technology and tracking. And
84 they have an immersion at the end of their things, where what you've made craftwise, you take out
85 with you to support you in the five day immersion through surviving using those crafts. Okay, I didn't
86 actually do the immersion. I did all the courses because I also knew physically I wasn't fit enough to
87 do it, which is another element of it. But the things of negotiating with the material. Dealing with the
88 tutors. Dealing with the resistance. Are all skills that the method gives the student to survive in a
89 different kind of survival situation. Which is after the college. Some of them will never go into what's
90 called ordinary life. But quite a lot of them in terms of where they are in their spectrums. Have to
91 deal with those quite complex negotiations which are as complicated as trying to work out what to
92 do with this piece of metal. And so, when tutors explain the pedagogical approach, I can see how it's

93 a continuation of all the decision trees that the students have to make then enacted in their
94 relationship with material in terms of ... I had it yesterday, where I started a jointed stool. So we
95 started some of the stretches. We did the kind of wood and stuff, and I pole lathed something that
96 just didn't work because I don't have the skills to pole-lathe something that's very narrow. So, I sent
97 Joe a text to say what we need to do is I will draw a knife, the smaller pieces that will support the
98 bigger frame, but actually will turn the stool legs, which is progression, if you like, from the cutler
99 school, which is what I want. But then we do all of this and we do this, which is like, okay, doing this
100 means that I will acquire the skills to do that, which is again, fundamental to the method. We do
101 these bits and pieces of projects and then I think imperceptibly, I think is the right word,
102 imperceptibly. The students are given bits and pieces that then they can kind of build on through the
103 relationship both with the tutor and the material itself. Because in the PPOC and the kind of
104 inductions, the staff are only getting tasters of it. They see the potential of the method, but it
105 doesn't mean anything to them because they're focused solely on their role, because they're trying
106 to do something on behalf of the students. And it's like, I need to take this on board because this is
107 why I got this job. I think they see themselves as kind of shepherding or supporting students,
108 learning to do this because I've immersed myself in the method and doing it alongside the students,
109 that then that kind of bigger picture is that I can see what's happening to both sides. And so that's
110 what pissed me off with regards to having to give it up because I took it seriously in terms of, okay,
111 it's part of my responsibilities of being a trustee was to try and fully experience the method. And I'm
112 just said that in the interview for the Masters because it was like, why would I want to do this? And
113 it's like, on the one hand, why would I want to do this? You needed guinea pigs. I was quite happy to
114 be a guinea pig. *[laughter]* But also it was a feeling that if I just done the PPOC, I was missing the
115 academic input. And if I just on the Masters, I was missing the method. Yeah, I was missing the
116 actual hands on stuff that through the PPOC, because of being a trustee, I could actually do it
117 alongside a student, which I've managed in the secure, enclosed space of the spoon forging. But I've
118 not done in the wider environment of the kind of green woodwork. So the green woodwork I've
119 done has been for the senior leadership team. So that space is basically, when I see most of the
120 people who are being inducted, very nice and polite, they're quite excited, and then they come up
121 against their frustration because it's like, this shouldn't be so hard. Okay? But actually, in terms of
122 those things that are not available within the culture we have, you're either siphoned off into the
123 kind of hands craft stuff or into the head stuff. And they don't meet here. I tried to do it together.

124 I paid for the craft stuff whilst I have the employment and would regularly go away and learn how to
125 do things. My frustration was because the money head stuff took so much time, I never improved.
126 And so once I finished the college, still, Joe said, what do you want to do next? And I just simply said,

127 I want to improve. Yeah. I want to do that apprenticeship thing whereby you do something that
128 actually then taxes me in the same way you go from spoons of bowl to mug to silverspoon. And how
129 [name of metal work tutor] describes it is at each one of these points, you ask less and less because
130 you have those processes within you.

131 CC: Embodied.

132 TR: Embodied. For the students. I think the student I'm with on the Friday mornings, she's just gone
133 from finishing her spoon, which is going for plating, to starting her bowl. And so that's a completely
134 different experience. So you go back down the big snake in the snakes and ladders of craft and
135 you're then asking more questions, but then it gets quieter and quieter the further you go on. You go
136 on sort of learning this. And then the third project, which is a beaker, is a combination basically, of
137 both the spoon and the bowl. So each one of these things, as I've observed the method, has these
138 things within it that's like, okay, it's not an obvious kind of steep ascent, but it is a kind of an
139 understanding in your head that these things are happening. And the thing I say to my martial arts
140 students when they say, well, it's really difficult to practice, is, I want you to practice practicing, and
141 then we'll sort out the difficulties. But first of all, I need you to practice turning up. And then we'll
142 carry on solving with what you do. But first, present yourself. And that's what's happening to the
143 students all the time through one way or another. When they're physically taken there, when they
144 arrive there in their own volition, they are practicing turning up, which is what you need to do in life.

145 CC: Yeah, that's right. And then things can happen.

146 TR: And the teachers know the ones that they can actually guide down the road. I see that a lot. And
147 others where actually this resistance is going to be so impossible, we're never going to get to the
148 craft. So actually what I am is shepherding you in the moments where you are here. And so for me,
149 given that I did so long of that in terms of assessment, it's a pleasure to actually to be able to see all
150 these things without actually having to do anything about it. But also the Masters kind of gives me
151 an opportunity to reflect on it and write it down and they kind of like, oh, that's what they want.
152 Okay. Yeah. Kind of understand that. So the essay was about various things that happened during
153 the kind of module in Nailsworth and it's like, okay, I could then fit it all together for it to make
154 sense. So it's happening. It's happening in terms of kind like it's good to have Freeman College on the
155 doorstep, which means that I can then literally experience it and it's good to be doing Masters. I'm
156 quite excited about module two, which is like hand on stuff, really. That should have been like
157 module six for me. I'm going to struggle with the biodynamic stuff, but each module presents a
158 challenge, if you like, in that respect. In terms of where I go with it. Is this what you want?

159 CC: Yeah.

160 TR: You got any other questions?

161 CC: So what are - you hinted at that: So PPOC is more the kind of staff who were directly with
162 students and then Masters, maybe more leadership colleagues and so on. So, have you got any other
163 observations with regards to how they are taking to it?

164 TR: The mix in the Masters was interesting. There was a lot of kind of, I think uncertainty in that first
165 week because I got Covid the end of the first week and that was the bit where we were all supposed
166 to go home anyway, but that's fine. And there was a lot going on. I suppose the thing about how the
167 Trust works is, everybody seems to have at least two jobs. At least two jobs. And so there was that
168 kind of sense, basically, of people trying to focus but being continually distracted by the other job.
169 And so, it was kind of quite difficult in that respect. We were all kind of finding our feet and then
170 Simon got Covid, this kind of stuff and Judith kind of tried to step up, but it was like, just think of it.
171 But the good news was I wasn't clearly the only one that didn't get it. But maybe as an outsider, I
172 was the only one that could say, we're not getting this. And everybody was really supportive and
173 really helpful trying to be kind of enthusiastic at the same time with this thing about what's going on
174 somewhere else whilst I'm here. What fires are people trying to put out over there? The Genius Loci,
175 module is not the easiest one to kind of go into this method so I do now understand it in terms of
176 how the method works for the surveys and all of the other bits and pieces and how they arrive at the
177 signature crafts. Okay, that made a lot more sense.

178 CC: What got you there then?

179 TR: What got me there? I think actually the Erasmus thing which I've done last year when I'd gone on
180 a Genius Loci walk with Joe and the Norwegians but it wasn't something that I kind of put anywhere.
181 Another classic example would be Helen had a ticket for the Heritage Craft Association weekend
182 AGM that she couldn't make.

183 I went and took notes on Alex Langley talking about Crest which is Anglosaxon word meaning skill
184 and physical attitude which I then was able to kind of use. When I started thinking about it, it was
185 kind of like, oh, I think I've written about this, bringing it in and then it was kind of like not really
186 getting it. The Goethean method. Then when Bernie Courts on the Friday afternoon talked about
187 identity and Genius Loci. It was like. Right. I get it now but it took me a week to get here so there
188 were kind of bits where like. Aonghus walk on Tuesday, the stuff with regards to knowing was like
189 and then we got to the signature crafts and the Horsely Valley then I just kind of reached around but
190 it's that thing of like any assessment. It's not always obvious the information that you'll be able to

191 get. My habit is to just write it down anyway. Eventually something will form that kind of puts this in
192 and the second week that I was away for there was a lot of stuff about the community pots. About
193 clay making but I was still on with this so whatever it was that they were doing in my head was not
194 the equivalent.

195 And that seemed to be much more about feel whereas the spoon forging is much more about sound.
196 It's that kind of like, does this sound right? And certainly there was a point where I was doing the
197 spoon forging with a couple of the staff. I kind of looked at the bloke next to me thinking I'm sure in
198 terms of how you're hitting that I'm not supposed to know quite as much about you as I do in this
199 moment. *[laughter]*

200 So that expression which is so commonplace within kind of Trust life, resistance and material is so on
201 the one hand, nuanced, but on the other hand so commonplace that you don't realize that you're
202 observing it as well as my own. What I described just kind of carpet rolling like a toddler in a Godzilla
203 suit in terms of: 'Just tell me what it is that you want'. And then when enough of us said it, they
204 changed it. They changed it to they just gave it to the template because it was like, here's the thing.
205 And it's like I sent one in and then Simon, bless him, kind of said, no, it's not that. I was like 'Just tell
206 me!' It's like just and that is the kind of thing of like the previous conversation. If this is a test, that's
207 fine. This is a test of creativity and all the other bits and pieces. But actually, if you're wanting
208 something, then just tell me and then I will go away and do it for you. Yeah, I observe the tutors
209 doing that with the students who are basically saying, I don't want to be here and doing this. Tell me
210 what it is that you want me to do. Because actually you wanting me to have a creative process,
211 which for autistic, young man, is always going to be beyond me because it's that ability to project
212 that the autism particularly affects. Aonghus lecture.... It's the second time I've seen it because I was
213 able as a trustee, to actually have access to some of the VC related about how autism affects the
214 etheric. That's interesting because it's so advanced now in terms of how what people know about
215 autism, how the Trust method, which is about embodiment, is very countercultural in that respect. It
216 is about bringing things in. But when you bring things in, that's about all the anxiety and all the
217 uncertainty, what is it that you want? Which actually that week one of the module actually
218 replicated in me, which was that kind of like, you keep talking about level seven of something and
219 that you want this. So there's a presumption on your part that as somebody who's joined this, I
220 know all of this and that's really not okay if you're hoping to take this out into the world with people
221 who don't speak this language. So, you have to be much clearer about what it is you want. Because I
222 get all the Genius Loci, I get all of that, but I only got it after I done my toddler in the Godzilla suit..

223 And I think even the people who work for the Trust kind of struggled with it in terms of that
224 presumption. So my feedback was the reading list upfront. So now all the modules, all the tasks and
225 modules have gone, Matt very kindly has given me the reading list, which I'm quite excited about
226 because I've read quite a lot of books about hands and making all the bits and pieces, because I think
227 that's an important preparation, because what I understand from Joe and Matt is going to be quite a
228 lot of hands on stuff. So, the tutors are not the tutors. The participants in module two are going to
229 be challenged in the same way I've observed all of the tutors dealing with inducted staff who
230 struggling with their resistance about their loss of status in that relationship. It's not observed by the
231 students so there's not that to kind of go but it's observed by their peers.

232 CC: It's experienced by the staff.

233 TR: Yes. It's observed by their peers and by themselves and so I do know that it's about a loss of face.
234 It's not shame. But it's about uncertainty and it's about bringing those things in which is exactly
235 what's happening to the students.

236 CC: Being out of control actually.

237 TR: Well that's right. So yesterday I spent 3 hours doing this and it's broken. It's broken. It's not
238 working. All the other bits and pieces I made a chair on the course. It took me about a week and I
239 went home and I looked at the chair bottom part which is like what I'm just about to make and it's
240 like I don't think I turned those. I didn't turn them because I realized I couldn't. I didn't have the skill
241 but that's quite an advanced process as opposed to just slinging the bowl against the wall shouting
242 it's not working and that's also quite interesting to watch in the staff members where it's like I'm
243 really disappointed in this because there's lots of childhood memories of taking it home to your
244 mother and she is going: 'That's nice, dear' which I have with my mother still because I still make
245 things and stuff. 'That's nice, dear.' Quite the same way as she used to do when I was about five,
246 bringing this slodgy picture home but those kind of echoes and memories of childhood
247 disappointment. And I think because we pay so much attention to aesthetics that actually continues
248 to promote the divide basically between those that can, the rest of us that just buy it and those that
249 don't even bother. And to actually give the students the opportunity to be creators of that actually
250 puts them over there and teaches them also how to kind of navigate the path because 'I've made
251 this'. I carry my spoon everywhere.

252 CC: I got my slippers in the car...

253 TR: So I can see the complexity of it. But the PPOC because of the level those particular participants
254 are at, they are kind of between, if you like, the people who are on the Masters and the students. So

255 they're almost kind of like they're the supportworker out in the world thing and so they spend a lot
256 of time talking about how much they love working for the Trust at the same time talking about the
257 barkingness of working for the Trust. Because it's not always clear to them what it is that they want.
258 They understand there's a method. They understand their experience in the method. They enjoy it in
259 that kind of nursery school sort of way they don't necessarily connect it as far as I can work out
260 through the sessions that I've had. Bear in mind probably started in November so I've spent six,
261 seven months doing these things with support workers and stuff. They don't make the connections
262 because actually they're just having a piecemeal. The students make the connections, but they can't
263 necessarily express them because they're experiencing the method and it's working almost like a
264 kind of charging them. Because they are then being able to do things like look at this piece of metal
265 and think. Okay. I did that last time and if I do that again that will work. In a way because of the
266 chopping and changing for the support workers they don't get that continuity and because they've
267 got that focus, if you like, on the students. So, they're happy for the students to experience the
268 method, but it's not for them because they can't make the connections.

269 CC: Because logistically, you mean?

270 TR: Logistically, I think, is an issue, and their resistance. So the stuff that I do with Joe hilarious
271 insomnia, every week he rings all the senior leadership team and we're supposed to be coming to do
272 these sessions, and every week I'm the only one that turns up. That is fine, you write it all down.
273 Yesterday was the first time somebody actually turned up, but there were two people who were
274 being inducted. Okay, yeah.

275 CC: Not senior leadership...?

276 TR: But not senior leadership team. Okay? So it's perfectly right. All the reasons that they give them
277 are utterly legitimate because they're too busy doing what they're supposed to do. But what that
278 means is they are I think the word I want to use is policing. They are policing the students, using the
279 method without actually participating in it for themselves, which I totally get. I have used all those
280 avoidance strategies myself, but essentially that's what they are, because I actually don't want to be
281 embarrassed by how bad I'm going to be at this, but it's all right for the students to be really bad at
282 this.

283 CC: It is also giving it the time that it needs.

284 TR: Whereas that's how Helen got me, was like, you can do all of this. And it's like, okay, I'll come to
285 the dark side. *[laughter]* How much of this can I do? As much as you like!

6 Interview Trustee

286 I'm not particularly looking forward to making the slippers. I'd rather make a knife. But if I'm on the
287 method I'm on the method. I do the slippers I will do the items of service. So together it's been
288 really, really good and it is really good. Separately, I wouldn't get everything out of it that I am
289 getting, but then I'm also not working and I've not got children, so I'm in a different position to quite
290 a lot of the people.

291 CC: Well, thank you very much. You're welcome. Thank you for your time.

7 Interview, Member of the Executive Team¹ (ME), 04/07/2022 Interview

In this interview a member of the Ruskin Mill Executive Team gives an overview of his own biographical experiences and connections to a practical education as well as how he has implemented it in some of the financial systems.

- 1 CC: So the overview is: My overall question is how are we implementing PSTE? Okay. Okay. And I'm
2 looking at that question really through the various levels of the organisation, if you want so. And I'm
3 looking at what are the helpful things and what are the maybe challenging things in that? And I
4 suppose as such, everybody will have something to say about that, I'm assuming, or I'm finding that.
5 So far I'm doing three things, more or less. One thing is I have done a staff survey. So that was sent
6 out to all the staff through the email distribution system and was quite a long survey, took about an
7 hour. So I had 70 responses back from that. So that gives me something to think about and to look
8 at. That's the one thing. Then the other thing is I've spent time in workshops doing workshop
9 observations, because at the end of the day, that is, of course, where the rubber hits the road, isn't
10 it? What is happening with the tutor, with the student in the workshop, working on material that is
11 what actually matters, and of course, all of the challenges around that, you know, you name it,
12 logistical, et cetera. And then I've done focus groups with members of staff who work directly with
13 students in terms of what's helpful for them and what's maybe challenging for them, and particularly
14 with understanding the method if you want. Because, of course, my theory is before you implement
15 a method, you need to understand what it is, isn't it? And then I'm also having conversations with
16 senior leaders because my theory is also in order for things to work smoothly and effectively, it's
17 probably also important that the senior leaders understand what it is we're trying to implement.
- 18 ME: Okay.
- 19 CC: And then I usually ask two parts. So for anybody who joins Ruskin Mill, what is your own
20 personal journey in terms of what you make of the method that we're trying to implement? And
21 then secondly, in terms of the organisation, what are your thoughts around implementing, then, that
22 method and what's helpful and what's not? What's difficult?
- 23 ME: Are you asking me on a finance perspective, or is it, as a CFO of the Ruskin Mill prospective, how
24 I am implementing the PSTE? Are you asking my personal view, as a personal aspect? There's two
25 answers.

¹ English is not his mother-tongue, this was only corrected where it seemed absolutely necessary for comprehension

7 Interview Member of the Executive Team

26 CC: Yes. Okay, that's interesting. Well, I think, first of all, in terms of you not having met Ruskin Mill
27 Trust, you not having met PSTE, coming into the organisation, some reflections on your journey, let's
28 say.

29 ME: Okay, so I'm just joining as a new person.

30 CC: Yes. Yeah. And what has been helpful for you?

31 ME: First of all, the Ruskin Mill perspective. If I join a Ruskin Mill learning, understanding the PSTE
32 beginning original experience in 2000 and I don't know, in 2013, it was a struggle for me to
33 understand what does it mean PSTE to people, right? We talk a lot about PSTE, we discuss about
34 PSTE what actually PSTE does for that individual to achieve. It took me a long time to understand
35 that because I don't think it's clear cut, straightforward. So, my personal perspective it took me to
36 understand if somebody just joining in the Ruskin Mill, don't understand anything about it, what the
37 hell is these people doing, just farming? What does that means for anybody? What does this mean
38 our thing time pass. It really helps for people to understand how that changes it's going to make on
39 the special needs child, which is our student focus. So if you are looking at the student focus, I think
40 that my personal understand, my understanding, even though I have a special needs child myself,
41 you can see how the difference between the standard normal school with the Ruskin Mill, with the
42 Sunfield School makes so much difference for the children, which we don't have it in Wiltshire. If you
43 send my son to the school locally, they just use the iPad, laptop, there's no connection, human
44 connections, animal connections, relationship and friendships does nothing. The relationships is
45 made between the computers, between the computer and them. Right. So that's the key at the
46 moment the students learning and other schools are they having a relationship with either
47 electronic devices but they don't have any relationship with animals or even the people to get that
48 understanding and develop it. So that is the gap. That gap I think Ruskin Mill providing it. Right? So
49 the gap that Ruskin Mill provide is making that relationship and understanding it with which help in
50 the long run for children. Right? So even that I think what personal view this just not Ruskin Mill has
51 to do for even at least for special needs I think they need to start doing for normal kids. So there kids
52 who are can't in education, not every child is a 100% educationalist. Right? So, I think that's a gap in
53 the school doesn't do these types of things. Does that make sense?

54 CC: Yeah, no, I fully agree, absolutely.

55 ME: So that's my understanding from when I started Ruskin Mill it was wobbly, it wasn't really clear.
56 I think there is always an element of it still at Ruskin Mill people who joins now isn't real... one thing
57 because of that the terminology we use PSTE is not much been used widely.

58 CC: No, that's right.

59 ME: Because we only use it whenever we require. There's no much widely used PSTE. Right. And I
60 don't think that PSTE even for the training... we don't link the training with PSTE what health and
61 safety PSTE means, what is safeguarding PSTE means. So anything if you link that into the Education
62 so what I have done coming back to finance system, the finance thing in the financial perspective,
63 the PSTE when I developed the Access². So Access provides on each and every [*aspect of the*] PSTE
64 curriculum which can be costed and able to pull a report. So basically farming if you do farming, glass
65 making we got everything set up like that, but the problem is if people don't really code where they
66 spend we can't pull that report but the system is developed for people to come using it.

67 CC: Okay.

68 ME: The system is there. So if you got an invoice, if you spend the invoice on farm and if you code
69 that farm it's gone to the farming we will be able to code it for farm budget. If it goes for glass
70 making, we can be able to code it for glass making. So, if somebody codes it for us, the cost can be
71 looked at. It how much each PSTE [*element*] cost technically but that's individual and the people who
72 work on the ground floor. So, the system in financial and my team is always trying to put them in
73 practical situation. This is why they are practical. They learn why the PSTE is there. So, their system
74 they understand what PSTE means through financial system that each and every element of has
75 been categorized on that group. There are around 100 groups we put on a project which is PSTE
76 related. So, I don't think anybody knows how many projects.... What are the things that have been
77 done across the country as PSTE except by my finance team. [*laughter*] Because each college does
78 different things.

79 CC: Yeah.

80 ME: Right. So as finance concern, the finance team will know what other PSTE actually has been
81 done.

82 CC: Yeah, fantastic.

83 ME: I don't know about how useful or not, but this is my answer.

84 CC: Yeah, no, absolutely. When you say initially it took you a long time but then I suppose you've
85 really seen it through the student impact, isn't it?

² An integrated software solution that RMT is in the process of implementing since 2022 to support and connect finance, staff planning, HR and training.

86 ME: That is the key because it took me a long time. See people like Finance, IT, HR the focus is to
87 work on those sections. They are not really into students.

88 CC: No, you're providing the service.

89 ME: We are providing a service. So, the problem what we face is maybe we mean as a central
90 services or finance team face to understand what is PSTE. They can simply say: people do practical
91 things but the impact, understanding the impact is where the problem... takes a long time. How does
92 that link into the students' behaviour, student skills? These things take time.

93 CC: Yeah. Have you got one or two examples of situations or events or something like that where
94 you thought oh, that's really interesting, that is PSTE.

95 ME: That's not particularly events means you are referring.... I consider every single thing happening
96 at Ruskin Mill as a PSTE. Right. Even if you're walking to the farm from Ruskin Mill; if somebody
97 comes to Ruskin Mill College cafe to walk back to Ruskin Mill that is also part of PSTE. Because the
98 reason for that for me they are learning something while walking through the valley. Right. This is
99 why my PSTE comes. If the teachers or care workers are trained properly enough, right... They
100 should be able to walk in from Ruskin Mill Cafe to the college. They will be able to train those kids
101 from walking from there to there. Because you can see lots of birds there, right? They can be asked
102 to count that one and they can be asked to count how many trees are there, how many animals
103 there are, how many steps you are walking. It's all part and parcel of their life, isn't it?

104 For me, every single thing what they do is partly considered as PSTE. If you don't, I think then that's
105 where the problem is. Because PSTE cannot be done with just one section. It need to be... it has a lot
106 of branches to be worked together. That's my view and my theory. But I don't know how others
107 think about it. It could be different. But that's my view.

108 When somebody is not just doing if you just doing a pottery, right? Just doing somebody go and do
109 the pottery, is not that PSTE. PSTE has to start how many grams of property clay you need, right?
110 They need to explain about the clay, understanding about the clay, right. So why they need to
111 explain and understand the clay. Then you go and buy the clay, purchase the clay, right. And choose
112 the right clay. Clay. It's all come about, is the PSTE just preparing and doing work. Do you
113 understand?

114 CC: Yeah. No, it's the whole experience, isn't it?

115 ME: Yes. So that's why I consider as a PSTE is from day you walk into us as a student, you are
116 learning the PSTE, right. While you are eating, drinking. This is the PSTE come from because it's not

117 just particularly you're trying to do one thing. Yeah, that's my theory, but doesn't mean no.

118 Everybody accepts that, Aonghus might say something different.

119 CC: I don't think so. Yeah. So what do you say now in terms of your professional practice? Are you
120 doing that today different to when you first joined? Are you setting different emphasis on things?

121 ME: Except that they didn't to have that. When I took access, when I had to negotiate with Access,
122 this is one of the things I was asking them: 'Will you be able to do this?' Right? So actually there is
123 lots, this is why it's very interesting to understand the people, how things can be done. Right? This is
124 one thing. I was speaking to Access people very clearly and said we are part of PSTE and make sure
125 that we need these items in the system that can be coded according to that.

126 When they start doing that, then they said, yeah, we can do this way. So we got Butcherworks,
127 things in the Butcherworks³. We do lots of things.

128 I could show one day how the PSTE link on Access financially and how each product has been linked
129 to it. But we don't have as a Ruskin Mill Trust a list of items or products. What we do as a PSTE, I
130 don't think we have that. So we say craft, right? We say pottery because there is no such a list
131 compiled and given to anybody. This is what our PSTE curriculum is. I'm not seeing that.

132 CC: In terms of the individual subjects you mean.

133 ME: As a Ruskin Mill Trust group. I don't see what PSTE items are done at Ruskin Mill College. I don't
134 know what other PSTE work done at Glasshouse College because Glasshouse is slightly different to
135 Ruskin Mill College.

136 CC: Yes.

137 ME: Freeman is completely different. So if somebody new staff comes, if you give them a guideline
138 we are dealing with the PSTE. These are the things normally children do at school as a PSTE. Right. So
139 these are the things we do at school. It's much more easier if you have that to people to understand.
140 Okay. Because what we do, we write a lot on other things. We write a lot on newsletters, new
141 things. But there's nothing summarized. People don't read for every single thing nowadays.

142 CC: Okay, so you mean in terms of kind of a local overview?

143 ME: Yeah, I think that will be useful. I don't know, but that's my view. Yeah.

144 CC: Okay. So in terms of if you could well, I suppose we can. But if you could change one or two
145 things which you think are most obstructing the implementation of PSTE across the trust, what do

³ Workexperience site in Sheffield

146 you think? Have you got something in your mind? What's unhelpful in terms of implementing PSTE
147 across the trust?

148 ME: For me, it's a clear understanding. Right. Clear understanding between there is a clear
149 understanding between the senior management. I think that needs to be getting very clear. Right.
150 What I'm saying is you might say: 'yeah, each person might use in a different way.' I think I raised
151 this before as well. When Matt was training me on one way and the other guy the same guy, same
152 person in Freeman College. I can't remember to do how I was doing the in Trusties away day about
153 using Greenwood work. Okay. I think when you're using the Chisels, one came and said, use the
154 small one. Another one came and asked me to use the larger one. Right. It's two people from the
155 same place and giving me two different instructions. Both could be right. I don't know. It could be
156 both could be right. But that's where the confusion starts. It needs to be clear, it doesn't matter who
157 does it. It doesn't matter how you do it. It needs to be just a clear instruction between everybody.

158 My father is a woodwork teacher. When I used the saw, like a different way, he will say, do not use
159 this way. You had to use it this way. I said, Why? He said, if you use it this way, you can use it for
160 long. The life will be long. Just for example. It'll come straight as well as this will be properly.

161 He was teacher then. He was a teacher's trainer. So he was only four people in Sri Lanka been given
162 the title of teacher trainer on the woodwork.

163 CC: Okay. Wow.

164 ME: So my dad used to come in north and east, the rest like southwest is somebody else and there
165 are four people. So the thing is what I learned from he used to go and do the seminars and
166 sometimes he used to go and do seminars with the teachers and we used to go when the school
167 finished. So I can see how things he trains and how does he explain one by one and say how this
168 helps children as well as the teachers. It's interesting how... my key point is: the message need to be
169 clear and method needs to be very clear, right? And if you don't get those things too right, it's very
170 difficult. If individuals staff come using their own method to train people, that is a risk. Ruskin Mill
171 should have their own method of training the students, not the method of the individuals who train
172 so where is the Ruskin Mill method gone when I was sitting there and learning this? So it's the
173 individual method came rather than Ruskin Mill method. So we are telling we are the specialist on
174 PSTE but we are relying on a method of somebody else.

175 That's not good. It won't sustain for long, can't sustain for that way because you will come with the
176 one method this is why, you see Aonghus always said if you hear from him: 'they come and do their
177 own thing' because we don't have a real method and real training. Yeah, so if Matt has been trained

178 or Matt if we introduce tutors, if we take a new tutor to work Greenwood work if Matt or the team
179 providing the training of how the Ruskin Mill thing right or they just let them to do their own way.

180 CC: Yeah, I suppose it's interesting I suppose there are different ways I mean, there are different
181 schools of thought in even the same craft, isn't it?

182 ME: Yeah, it is but then Ruskin Mill cannot juggle around that because you can't have ten schools of
183 thought in one method of one PSTE. That's where the danger is, I think that is where the weakness
184 of Ruskin Mill is. It's good to have a practice but I don't think we still got a grip of our staff training.

185 CC: Yeah, I suppose the journey that I've seen in the last ten years is the attempt to standardize
186 things more and more, isn't it, while still keeping alive. So for example, also the Genus Loci Audit if
187 you want I think we're just about to define the way how that is done, isn't it? So this whole defining
188 of how things are done, that's still ongoing that is still ongoing work yeah, I agree.

189 ME: That's my view but it's different from individuals

190 CC: Because only then it allows people to be able to understand it, isn't it?

191 ME: Otherwise it's very difficult. Yeah, absolute chaos. I know you are recording doesn't worry yeah,

192 CC: Don't worry about it.

193 ME: That's my view.

194 CC: Yeah. All your data will be kept anonymously. Don't worry.

195 ME: They know how I talk and how I write. I have been at Ruskin Mill now for 10 years. It'll be
196 straight anyway. No bending.

197 CC: Yeah. Good.

198 ME: Was that useful or not?

199 CC: Yeah, absolutely. And I think I always appreciate the view of colleagues who are working in the
200 supporting functions, because sometimes you can have a bit more of an overview and a bit more of
201 an external perspective, which makes it fresher. Rather than, I think sometimes colleagues who are
202 working with students day in, day out, sometimes you can't necessarily take yourself out of that
203 perspective.

204 ME: Yeah, you lose track, actually, what you're trying to do.

205 CC: Yeah. Good. All right, thanks. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time. If you've got any
206 other thoughts, let me know. Thank you much. Bye.

8 Interview Member of the Executive Team, 13/07/2022 interview

In this interview a longstanding staff member and now member of the Ruskin Mill Executive Team gives his own personal insights and experiences into what helped him to understand the method of the Trust better as well as ideas of how it could be implemented better in the future.

1 CC: *[giving context of research as an introduction]*. So then I did three days in a blacksmithing
2 workshop, three days in a wood working workshop, three days in a felting workshop.

3 ME: Whereabouts?

4 CC: In a college and in a school. And that is all so fascinating...because at the end of the day that is
5 where the rubber hits the road. And that is where all the theory comes into practice.

6 That's why I keep going on about it. I would love us to be as cool as Google, only we don't have slides
7 and skateboards. We have got blacksmithing workshops! That's like, super cool. And I would love
8 that. To have a culture where each manager goes one day a month into a workshop. That's it, no
9 questions asked. That's what you do. That's what everybody does. Super cool and also you see it all.
10 You see staffing issues, you see curriculum planning, you lack of whatever. It is supportive. That's
11 how they take breaks. The person comes in telling them what he thinks of college.

12 ME: I spoke to Aonghus about it briefly after the last ET here. There was this incident with the
13 student on the roof. *[name of Principal]* spoke to me about it. Aonghus managed to persuade her
14 *[name of student]* to come down. *[name of Principal]* was really grateful. And Aonghus said how was
15 that for *[name of the Principal]* was that alright? It is good for staff to see that. *[phone call*
16 *interrupted interview]*

17 ME: where were we?

18 CC: Managers in workshops, you have spoken to Aonghus...

19 ME: Yeah. And that's where, again, this thing of the cultural trips comes in. How good it is for staff to
20 see. Something happened at *[name of the college]*. There was an incident and I got involved and
21 *[name of Principal]* said that was when the attitude changed *[towards me]*. They thought we are off
22 in our ivory tower. I think it would be good also for the Executive Team, especially those that want to
23 get involved in the more operational stuff and ask questions about it. A lot of businesses do, have
24 senior managers return to the factory floor. And we don't really. *[name of other manager]* does that
25 sometimes.

26 CC: I think there's something about being in a workshop as a manager, which means usually like five
27 minutes in and out. Or actually being in a workshop as a colleague on a horizontal level.

8 Interview

28 ME: We do not have student contact unless it is a serious crisis or exclusion which is not good
29 enough. Imagine if we started the Executive Team with an hour, we moved around the different
30 colleges, and each one we just say we need five sessions available in the first hour and that is what
31 we do.

32 CC: That would be powerful.

33 ME: And it would be quality assurance.

34 CC: Absolutely.

35 ME: One of the biggest complaints about management and again, this is not exclusive to Ruskin Mill
36 is they're making these decisions, but they don't understand what's really going on.

37 CC: And they will not know you have done how many years of support work?

38 ME: And it has changed anyway.

39 CC: I am interested into this whole connectivity. You've got the method there, which is kind of the
40 ideal, if you want. So you've got various people having contributed to that, Steiner, Ruskin, Gandhi,
41 elements of different people and so on. Then you got Aonghus Gordon to bring it together. And then
42 you got what's happening actually with the student in the workshop. And I'm interested in how that
43 actually hangs together. And my theory is that leadership has a big part in this. For example, in
44 schools where through a change of head teacher workshops get replaced by IT labs or whatever. And
45 then there's sometimes feeling of dissatisfaction with a certain leader, and we say, he's not getting
46 it, and let's move him on or her. And my question is really, well, how can we make this better? In
47 terms of succession of the organisation.

48 And what's the difference between someone who gets it and who doesn't get it? And how can we be
49 more helpful in that?

50 ME: I think that's the thing, how can we be more helpful with those leaders as well. Because it is
51 not.. when I try to take some perspective...if I would be an independent observer of the Executive
52 Team there are times we would probably be quite embarrassed by our criticism of leaders. It is only
53 a reflection of us. We are the ones who are responsible.

54 CC: PSTE can only be learned in Ruskin Mill Trust. So we cannot really criticize anybody who comes in
55 for not knowing it. Oh, they've already worked here since two months, they don't get it, but it's just
56 not....

57 ME: That is our problem not theirs.

58 CC: And of course, we try various things. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't work.
59 Those are really the things I am interested in. So, [name of interviewee], your personal journey.
60 What made you get it?

61 ME: So first of all...

62 CC: This is always the question, because sometimes we don't get it either.

63 ME: Yeah, two main experiences. Before I worked at Ruskin Mill, the reason I came to the [name of
64 college] was I went for dinner with [name of tutor] and [name of other tutor]. I knew [name of tutor]
65 from when I was very young because her father was my art teacher and her brother was in my class
66 at [name of Steiner school]. So I had known them since kindergarten age.

67 CC: I can understand why you moved away from [name of town] at some point. [laughter]

68 ME: And they were living in the house that I lived in as a border when I was at [name of Steiner
69 school] and my parents lived in Wales. Anyway, I visited [name of tutors] just as a social thing. They
70 said, come around for dinner but we've also got some students here. There were three students,
71 they were houseparenting at the time and I was working in a psychiatric hospital in [name of city].
72 That was my first exposure - this was totally different to anything I had seen in care as a model.
73 There is a bit of work to do. This used to be a totally unique model - houseparenting¹. And what we
74 see today is not really unique as such...but that is a another conversation.

75 The way that I learned most was... there was no...there was the occasional seminar by Aonghus.
76 Sometimes the principal of [name of college] would do a Tuesday evening training. There were
77 various anthroposophical doctors milling around. There was JD[name of doctor]. There were like
78 long events sometimes at Hawkward². so there was training. But most of what I learned, I was
79 supporting a student, one to one, very challenging student. And session he liked most was with
80 [name of tutor], she was the weaving tutor at [name of the college]. She was a genius with the
81 students and one of the most oppositional and choleric people to work with. She would regularly
82 storm out of meetings. Impossible to manage. I spent quite a lot of time in her workshop. At the end
83 of day after 4 o'clock I would go to her workshop, she would make me a cup of tea and we talk
84 about the day. She basically coached me through the Ruskin Mill version of Steiner's pedagogy.
85 Which I got some experience of having been to a Waldorf school. It is very different actually. Most of
86 my school days I sat behind a desk.

¹ "Houseparenting" is the term, coined in Camphill for the living together and caring for people with disabilities and mental health conditions in a more non-hierarchical way.

² Centre for mostly anthroposophical trainings

87 There are other people as well. But she was the main one. As I say, it was not formalized at all, other
88 than we enjoyed talking. And I don't think this is exclusive for Ruskin Mill at all. Most of what I have
89 learned I have learned through an apprenticeship type model. Of course, there were courses as well
90 but mainly through an apprenticeship type model.

91 That was the same in the NHS as well. It is an interesting model in the NHS. You have the most
92 skilled professionals working directly with the patient. So was working alongside psychiatrists as a
93 care worker. You don't really get that in other industries. It is not like you are doing teaching or
94 social work you don't get moved away from the patients. You are still a consultant or a surgeon or
95 whatever. The ward that I worked at in [name of city] there was a psychiatric nurse who was
96 brilliant, there was a psychiatrist who was brilliant. I learned loads from them. It is a master
97 practitioner model.

98 CC: It is actually quite amazing that management here sometimes...do emails...

99 ME: Medicine is very interesting. You could be an assistant carer working with a consultant
100 psychiatrist.

101 CC: Elon Musk put all his meeting room in the middle of the factory in glass cubicles. So you're
102 surrounded by all the engineers and all the stuff that's happening.

103 ME: Yeah, that is another industry that has done that, the tech industry. Most of the CEOs are ex-
104 engineers. Whereas in a lot of other industries it is the finance people who are the CEOs. But not in
105 tech, so Elon Musk or what's his name, Facebook guy, Zuckerberg. So maybe Aonghus should have a
106 pottery workshop. That would be amazing.

107 CC: I would love to have a woodworkshop.

108 ME: But that's also I've seen people's view of him completely change. When he does a session, when
109 he does his thing, he loves it. And he is this lovely, warm guy..*[laughter]*....that is not to say that he is
110 not that the rest of the time!

111 CC: That is right.

112 ME: There's a huge contradiction of us not doing this.

113 CC: I mean, I have heard that from a lot of the staff actually explicitly saying we are so about hands
114 on, kinesthetic learning stuff. Staff training is often ...powerpoint...Well I hope that the outcome of
115 my research is a bit of a shake up. Of course we are now starting a university and our colleges and
116 schools are amazing and amazingly different and so should be our university.

117 ME: The other thing that that kind of training would do is more contact with students and more
118 experiences of seeing their development. A while back the CQC at [name of the college] saw a
119 performance during an inspection. Not necessarily a demonstration of the Trust's method. It was a
120 cabaret performance. I mean, *[name of the Principal]* arrived late, got in just at the back to see some
121 of it, not having much sleep in for days, being under massive stress, CQC becoming obsessed with
122 window restrictors for days. Just observed the kind of compassion between students. One of them
123 would get up and the encouragement and the applause and then the pride. And I looked over at
124 [name of Principal] and I could see he was almost starting to cry. And it's like, this is why we do it.
125 We need to remind ourselves regularly of that as well. Because otherwise our own health and
126 wellbeing becomes a problem. If you just get beaten up about compliance or live in constant fear
127 about something awful happening. You really need it, because otherwise, it becomes unhealthy. You
128 need some balance with it as well and the balance is to see, yes, we have made a difference.

129 It would change the organizational culture. I think it would also be more difficult to be blamy
130 towards staff as well, actually, if that relationship if you see.

131 CC: And you see also whey people are doing what they are doing. And actually they are doing
132 because there are always various reasons, bus is not coming, so and so does not have a driving
133 license and so on and so forth.

134 ME: It does make a difference when we say: "Well done!" Especially in an environment where
135 recruitment is a problem. So yeah, I think it would be a really big step forward.

136 CC: Any other thoughts on senior leaders and onboarding. Where it has been successful, I would say,
137 or where there have been challenges?

138 ME: I'm still not sure whether it's possible to enter the organisation at senior level without having
139 done some work on the ground in most circumstances. I think that *[name of other senior leader]* sort
140 of did, but she had also been a teacher. So maybe if in your career you have it is a bit different.

141 CC: She started as a trustee.

142 ME: Interesting way to come in. I think there is more we could do around Field 7 and the style and
143 method of leadership that that informs. We could be clearer about that. Again, what I'd love to do is
144 to spend some time at the Executive Team to spend some time on how do we want to be perceived?
145 How do we want to be experienced as leaders by staff? And going into workshops is a great
146 example. And it's tricky stuff because I feel guilty about not doing it.

147 CC: Well, the challenge is I feel also guilty about doing it. I cannot tell you how difficult it was actually
148 to, first of all, have those three days in my diary and then secondly, confidently saying to quite senior
149 colleagues -the founder for example- saying, no, sorry, I can't do that meeting. "Why?".

150 ME: Exactly, because it's also alright until it is not alright. Yes, so I would like to do some work on
151 that. In terms of role modelling and going into sessions, but also just how else do we to be
152 experienced. And what are the behaviours that we need to?

153 Does not feel great sometimes when we travel around as a team. So at worst I feel we go to ...*[name*
154 *of school]*... we make a mess, we ask for loads of cake and biscuits to be brought to us, we leave the
155 place a mess and then we leave. This is not great rolemodelling.

156 CC: Yes so colleagues on the ground might struggle to see the benefit of that...*[laughter]*

157 ME: And I'm not suggesting that we should be the ones making our own lunch. Because I do
158 understand the organisation needs good value for money and I am not good value as a cook.

159 *[...interview was interrupted by conversation with passing by student]*

160 ME: There we go. Does that not totally change the experience? And there are less and less guys that
161 I know around the place. And I think as the Executive Team there is a bit of work for us to do to
162 reconnect, because we will, certainly Aonghus, Helen, myself we will know less and less students and
163 it is of course different if you are Headteacher or Principal.

164 CC: So the supportworker yesterday, who was not happy, I had thankfully met the week before at
165 *[name of market garden]* and we had worked together.

166 ME: So there is also something in terms of management connection to the ground to staff.

167 CC: Well, thank you very much.

9 Interview College Principal, 07/07/2022 Interview (via video conference)

In this interview a College Principal reflects on what has been helpful in his induction and ways how he gets deeper into the underpinning thoughts of Steiner in a contemporary way.

1 CC: Yeah. So, yeah, I'm really interested in, really each individual, you know, what are the
2 helpful things in terms of understanding the method or aspects of the method as it were,
3 recognizing that with 1000 people there will be probably 1000 different understandings of what
4 the method is. So what were the helpful aspects in terms of maybe for yourself when you joined
5 Ruskin Mill?

6 CP: Do you mean the induction?

7 CC: Yeah, there are things where you thought this is an aspect of the method and now I got it.

8 CP: Well, I was having a conversation this morning during an interview where a student
9 engagement coordinator was trying to be appointed as an EHCM¹ and we did get a conversation
10 about the moment of clarity, if you like, when undertaking craft work. Her issue was around
11 Greenwood work and she was talking about the challenges in making a stool over days and
12 days and getting irritated about one's own limitations, they tend to bubble up quite clearly and I
13 came to reflect on mine earlier this morning. My moment of despair came at Freeman College
14 in spoonforging. He told me that I'm very impatient and although I didn't think I was at all. If you
15 had asked me to list my idiosyncrasies, or failings, or whatever you want to call them, until it
16 was revealed through metal work.

17 And so, I found myself eagerly trying to surpass all expectations from the guy, I cannot
18 remember the chap's name, just that it's been spoon forging. But he said I looked at spoons that
19 other people made on the wall to have something to compare things to and I thought, I can
20 smash this, I can do that quicker and better. *[laughter]*

21 That brings with it other challenges. One is I was really enjoying, I really wanted to get to the end
22 product because I really think it's a beautiful item, shimmering copper and beautiful polished.
23 So I wanted to get there quickly. But I guess over the next day or two I just repeatedly, annealing
24 and bashing and it will not be moved any more quickly than it's going to. Even though I wanted

¹ Education, Health and Care Manager, role overseeing those aspects of the student provision as well as liaising with external stakeholders

25 to, I was willing it to take form more quickly than it allowed itself too. That's what frustrates me,
26 I know where I've got to in that moment. And then of course, I had to take some time and the
27 phone went or something.

28 So I stepped out and at that point I realized I thought about Jordan who's a student at college.
29 Jordan is a young man with profound learning difficulty, who can go into crises very quickly, can
30 be pretty dangerous if it's not handled with care. And I thought about leatherwork for him, which
31 we've been doing for a number of years before we had to move him to the farm really. He used
32 to love just punching holes and making belts and things. We got to get Jordan to do some spoon
33 forging because... basically at [name of college] we couldn't find a craft offer that would keep
34 him occupied for long enough. And I don't mean long as in just doing it because it's going to take
35 some time, but actually slowly but surely changing the shape of something over time. And I
36 started to think that's him, that's what we're trying to do to him. But he's been so burnt by
37 system, we got to keep hammering to realize this moment and transformation.

38 So I think it has helped moving him to the farm. But he was the first student I thought of and here
39 I am, being irritated by myself because I don't want to do this repetitive task any longer because
40 how slow the progress is. And it just made me think: What on earth are you talking about?
41 Because this is the whole point. It links with a comment from Aonghus some time ago back
42 about how autistic young people don't appreciate the concept of time unless you show them
43 with visual imagery like the flora and fauna changing in a certain environment. So at that point
44 he was talking about the trees at [name of a Ruskin Mill school] and I think somebody disagreed
45 there or something and of course they don't really change and so how is this young person get
46 to know where they are in time? Which was fascinating. And then all these things started to
47 come to mind about time and the slow pace of things come to fruition and it made me check
48 myself and I felt really guilty for having the thoughts I've had. Who do you think you are?

49 CC: Yeah.

50 CP: That would be interesting. And I always bring it back the student, a student I have known
51 and trying to think, actually, I can see the benefits of this for the ADHD condition.

52 CC: So how was it resolved then?

53 CP: Well, I still did not finish because I ran out of time. *[laughter]* I still have to go back and finish
54 it but I will do that. It wasn't through my own design. Literally the day I had no lunch. I didn't
55 want to stop for anything. I was just keep going with this thing. The piece I've got from it, I do still

56 polish. It's quite therapeutic to have in my pocket with some fine grained sandpaper. If I'm
57 having a bad day I stop polishing, therapeutic to get it to an item of service.

58 But I do carry it around with me in my bag all the time. I do reach for it from time to time.

59 CC: Okay, so you still have got that bad conscience of not having it finished.

60 CP: That's true. That was probably the most difficult. I've done pretty much all of them now.

61 Yeah. Making a three legged stool was close. But the thing is because I was outdoors and I had
62 chosen the tree and I got the wood, I think because you can't get the copper, you have to take
63 copper billets. You are losing a step along the way. So I guess for me, the green woodwork
64 session, three days in the woods was a really clear seed to table.

65 CC: So you have actually seen the tree and have felled the tree as well?

66 CP: Yes, To me that was the most profound craft experience I have had.

67 CC: That's right, yeah.

68 CP: I got it. I was so keen. When are you going to go competing priorities, but you've got to do
69 this thing. When I did get to do it, I was with [name of other senior leader] and [name of other
70 senior leader].

71 CC: Okay. Yeah, great.

72 CP: My active instincts immediately kicked in as well as they do. It helps the competition, but
73 just looking at everybody's choices and I was the only one that kept the cheer the whole way, so
74 I did. I was proud of myself. [name of other senior leader] was there as well, the four of us.

75 CC: Yeah.

76 CP: But it was amazing. It was much more profound than I envisaged, and the stool is right next
77 to me now. *[shows the stool]*

78 CC: Yeah. Oh, beautiful. Very nice. Yeah. Beautiful finish. Yeah. For some reason, you are
79 muted.

80 CP: I pressed the wrong button, right?

81 CC: Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

82 CP: I don't know what we got to, but yeah. Stool different wood. I used a different type of wood
83 took a darker wood for the stints. Occasionally they pop out with the moisture in there and I

9 Interview

84 have to go and wack them in. Sometimes when I get into work in the morning I just see that they
85 are okay and I give them a little knock.

86 If you look at the legs here, you see the pole lathe work.

87 CC: Yeah. Beautiful.

88 CP: Just one of the different little twists in here, which they've all got.

89 CC: Yeah. Lovely.

90 CP: I guess I do compare mine with others, but what happened is I use this, our student
91 engagement manager. So when we have meetings, he always pulls it over and sits on it. I think
92 for me, it was the three dimensional, larger scale objects rather than the glass workmanship.
93 Obviously, another world of therapeutic or jewellery making or felting and the other things. For
94 me to have that stool in three dimensions in the corner of the office every day and I show
95 people, in the world it stands, proud. And it makes me think about those three days in the
96 woods.

97 CC: Yeah.

98 CP: Quite impressive, what a profound ceremony to make the whole stool. Making from the
99 tree. Actually, killing something. Making it up. And carrying, like, a pole bearer, carrying the log.
100 It is like you would with anybody that's passed away or some living thing that's passed away.
101 Trying to manifest something new and reshape and reimagine and all the things that we do. It
102 was a really, really deep contemplation. Quite the sort of sombre to start with, because it is not
103 nice to kill something. That's what we were doing. So that was a helpful experience. So, yeah.
104 Those are two big ones from my induction. Lots of other things as well. Depends where you
105 want to go with it. But if you keep firing questions.

106 CC: Have you got any examples of things that you put on parking and you are kind of struggling
107 with?

108 CP: Which bits? Not craft items, but in general...

109 CC: With regards to the Seven Fields of Practice.

110 CP: Interesting. Yeah. So I think about Holistic Medicine probably more than others, depending
111 on day of the week it is. *[laughter]* But I had a really interesting conversation with *[name of*
112 *anthroposophic doctor advising the Trust]*, and so one of the things that you put in the Seven
113 Fields Audit document a few years ago before it changed. I'm not sure how it is now, I can't

114 remember how it's worded now, was the use of homely remedies. I'm thinking in terms of Field
115 Five. I guess I'm thinking about residential and the Seven Fields of Practice and Care Qualities
116 integrating. I didn't know what that meant, really. So that's been a bit of a journey. Okay. I think
117 there's a perception about homeopathic medicines being 'cracked up', whatever you want to
118 call it. People are sceptical of what they are because of reputational or misrepresentation over
119 the years. And so I set myself a bit of a target to mythbust with that and so I've had a
120 conversation with [*name of anthroposophical consultant*] about this similar thing. And I was
121 talking about my mother used to put witch-hazel on when I bruised my arm as a child and things
122 like that. And that people just think about St. John's Wort or whatever it is with all the reputation
123 and also bad reputation that precedes it. When people say, what is it? What on earth are you
124 doing? I'd say, well, you know what, go to Boots chemists and have a look on the shelf and they
125 sell which hazel? And you're telling me you don't believe in homeopathic medicine, but actually
126 it's a commercial proven, natural remedy and that's all we're trying to do here. We're trying to
127 use nature to inform our approach to health.

128 A really great insight I got from Frank when I had this conversation was, yeah, that's a really
129 good point. And what about this? When you get a sore stomach, you put a hot water bottle on
130 it...

131 CC: Yeah.

132 CP: How many billions of people have used that remedy? A doctor didn't need to tell you to do
133 that. You did it because it made you feel better. We got into this whole dialogue then about what
134 evidence is in medicine. So, it was fascinating because I think he dropped a line. He had a NHS
135 'bodyguard' who was monitoring what he was doing. They thought he was a loose cannon
136 because he was into anthroposophy or medicine and they were kind of watching him closely to
137 make sure he didn't give somebody something that was going to harm them. I know ...it was
138 really interesting. That was during a training he did to us, he is here today.

139 He talked about his bodyguard that has been deployed to watch what he was doing. He said,
140 Why? Because your homoeopathic medicine or your odd ways are not proven, there's no
141 evidence to say they work. And what he said to me during the conversation with the evidence,
142 let's be forget, is how people feel once they have been treated. Not 75% of human beings had, I
143 don't know, tonsillitis cured by taking penicillin in 1917.

144 You can only base it on the more granular data if you like a human being to human being. You
145 put a hot water bottle on your stomach. Did you feel better? You're not going to times that by a
146 million and do a research project on; it just doesn't matter. That person felt better.

147 What he was saying was, you don't need to do evidence-based research of the masses. There's
148 always going to be variations. It's just in the moment, did it make you feel better? There's a
149 much bigger story to it, but I thought I just took that nugget away. That's really interesting.

150 So I mentioned St. John's Wort because it's a vexed issue in the world of medicine and can
151 allegedly give heart attacks or cause problems. And he said that only ever happened with the
152 stuff you buy on the shelf. I thought that is a great insight there. Because actually what they've
153 done is completely slammed a remedy, a natural remedy, but over looking at it as dried, dried
154 up chemicals, homogenised and left on a shelf, six months used by a date, whatever, two years
155 later. And the fresh St. John's Wort is where there's no evidence that that's ever been harmful.
156 But no one will tell you this stuff in the papers I guess.

157 When I first started, I thought Field 6 what is all that about? You talk about Holistic Medicine
158 and then the Student Study is your access point. For me it was and then you start to think about
159 broadening that out and actually targeted individuals like we were, the therapeutic footbath
160 training at Upper Grange many years ago. It seems like a long time ago. It probably wasn't
161 maybe two or three years ago.

162 Again, you're thinking about nature and how touch and heal and how the balms that we used
163 that day could treat different conditions. I don't know, sleep deprivation, whatever it is, and you
164 use different tinctures in the bath and whatever. And that was really interesting to me as well.
165 The human touch, the care element of it led me on another journey then. It's obvious, really, but
166 just about caring, being caring, being kind, having a relationship with another sentient being. It
167 is the very proof of the sense of belonging part. So, a residential student being given a
168 therapeutic footbath by a specialist, a member of staff or whatever it is, would be quite
169 profound and moving experience for somebody who hasn't received that level of intimacy and
170 care. That took me down another road, I think.

171 CC: Is there any aspect where you went away and kind of researched that yourself a bit more?
172 Or bought books on or thought, oh, what's that about? That's fascinating. Really into that.

173 CP: I struggled to get the time and patience to sit and read them. I'll be honest. What I do, and
174 this is probably not very in line with the method I joined a load of anthroposophic groups on
175 Facebook.

176 CC: Okay, that's great.

177 CP: So I'm using a digital tool. They come up with very interesting things...

178 CC: Yes, they come up with all sorts...

179 CP: I actually got the point where I thought: Blimey, for people who are spiritually inclined they
180 do have a good go at each other. I found myself in the middle of some massive clash between
181 ideology...

182 CC: Yeah. You want to think twice before you put your comment in there...

183 CP: Yes, I am more an observer of what is going on. But it is helpful. I used to be an avid reader
184 until I had children. I absorb nuggets or pick things up, whatever insight from other people I talk
185 to. But yeah, that's helpful because what will happen is on my phone in the morning will flash
186 up with a quote or lecture.

187 CC: Okay. Interesting.

188 CP: Depending on how I'm feeling that day, I'll land on it or I won't. But sometimes, like recently,
189 what I'm saying is my research is live daily.

190 CC: Yeah.

191 CP: It's synchronized with the way I'm feeling or it helps me to synchronize. Recently there was
192 a lovely one about, I think somebody summarized it that there's the equivalent of a 'thought
193 slap' on the spiritual plane. So for instance, if I thought ill of you, Constantin. If I said
194 Constantin, he's horrible or whatever, that intent and impulse would travel to you and that you
195 would generally be hurt even though you haven't heard it directly from me. So what we're trying
196 to do, in behaviour management with students. How you can manage it with students is to say if
197 you give out negative energy, negative impulse or thought I don't like that person, I don't want to
198 be friends with them, they're horrible, big nose or big ears, whatever it is. But they will actually
199 feel that indirectly and that will harm them and the relationship between. That kind of negative
200 emotion will eat you from the inside. And so it's quite interesting to couch that to autistic young
201 people who fight on Facebook about something. They've got a vehicle now that can travel, that
202 helps that intent travel and like that's really interesting. But the parallels can be drawn and it
203 also helped with staff well being as well. So I have this conversation with staff, but I'd say: "Why
204 are you bitching about that member of staff? Have you actually gone to the member of staff and
205 and tried to understand what they are dealing with? Have you actually sat and said let's talk."
206 You'll find that everybody is in a better place? So it's really interesting because most staff get on

207 well. But I think there are times when you find yourself trying to stand between two people when
208 you bang their heads together and go: 'get over it!' Yeah, you can't tell them to do that. So you
209 can be a mediator. But I don't like doing that. I mean, I'll do it if it's needed but I really want to
210 go: "Sort your shit out..."[*laughter*] with two people to get to an end. There are certain processes
211 where you have to, but they just need to just be reasonable with each other. Yeah, that's one of
212 the incidents.

213 Good health and food and nutrition insights around that from Steiner's lectures that I kind of
214 just absorb. I really like this idea about the cracks of where the light gets in, transformation and
215 trauma and your own biography. And I remember the first time I was interviewing at Ruskin Mill
216 and of course when you were interviewed, you want to portray this notion of success, how
217 successful you are, target this and objective that. And one of the questions that threw me was
218 telling me the time when you experienced failure. That throws you off. I use it all the time.

219 The moment when you realize your own limitations and what you're going to do about seems to
220 change the way you think or act on new information. And so, I think there's a great line from
221 Steiner which says "Wisdom is crystallized pain".

222 CC: [*laughter*]

223 CP: Because when you think about the imagery of that. It is ill fused together and this is the
224 mineral inside you, binding.

225 CC: Yeah, I can emphasize with that. Yeah, that's right.

226 CP: When you think about the moments that got fused forever. You put your foot on that land
227 mine and the scars will always be there. But you have to move on. That is my research, there is
228 probably a word for it...

229 CC: Contemplative action research, I would call it. I think it is really those things that you need
230 to live with and you need to mill over a bit because if you just read a book and the chapters go
231 on, but you can't really catch it. When I read Steiner, I found it actually quite difficult to read a
232 lot of it nowadays because I'm in a different mode of understanding. When I was young, I was
233 churning one after the other, but I would say my level of understanding was maybe not very
234 great, to be honest, of what I was consuming there. And I think having a more limited
235 consumption but a deeper thinking into it, it's a different approach.

236 CP: It works the other way. So if I got an idea like something's going on in the college with
237 students, like this behaviour trend, I don't know, people are being mean to each other. I think:

238 'okay, what could the student council do about this'? Maybe we could do like a session, of
 239 course, within I think in my first year I thought it's all about being kind and it was quite topic,
 240 kindness. So what does Steiner have to say about it? And that is when the whole 'thought slap
 241 thing' came about. But having kind thoughts about others. Having a positive intent, I sometimes
 242 do it that way. I think actually something's bubbling up. What has he got to say about that, then I
 243 research that? That because what he's already said about something, I then start to think about
 244 that. It is quite useful in education because there's a wealth of information. That you can pinch
 245 it with... a pastoral curriculum from his work, pretty much everything.

246 CC: Yeah. Have you got any other thoughts on inductions for senior leaders, training for senior
 247 leaders, what they would need? On implementing the method, understanding the method?

248 CP: Yeah, I think, well, I did do this. It wasn't strictly part of the induction, but I remember going
 249 to Pembrokeshire for a couple of days and this a "seal to eagle" training². Okay. And it's not
 250 necessarily doing that because it is Transformative Movement³ based. But I remember being on
 251 a mountain with a bunch of other budding senior leaders and I remember the wind was so
 252 incredibly loud I couldn't hear anything anyone would say. So eventually everyone just stopped
 253 talking because it was pointless. And we all just stood on top of this mountain contemplating, I
 254 guess, how far you have come in a way. But it was a shared experience that reflected on. So I
 255 think there's a lot to be said to getting people together who are going through the same stage as
 256 opposed to individually flight, moving around the country, doing different things. It's good to be
 257 in a group, to think about how you can draw insights out of each other around the craft. I'm not
 258 saying this doesn't happen. I think I meant a lot of the time I was on my own, going to Clervaux,
 259 whatever. It would be interesting to do that together. That would be interesting.

260 The other one on a very pragmatic level would be to schedule in a meeting. If you're in a senior
 261 position, whatever Smt level position that you meet with the Head of Finance in that schedule
 262 and you meet with Head of HR and you meet with the Head of Health and Safety and the
 263 Safeguarding Lead. Just so you've got that real bird's eye view of a steer about what the key
 264 areas are and how to approach these. These people are part of the answer.

265 With HR. What is it about how far we really start to try and move somebody on? What's the
 266 process? How do we progress them? Conversely, what is it that we want to do to performance
 267 manage in both directions? Because different organisations have different levels of patience

² Name of a weekend event that was lead by an anthroposophical movement therapist, exploring movement and nature

³ Name of the particular approach phrased by that particular therapist

268 and threshold, that would be good. Just to meet that top tier of people under each of these
269 headings.

270 But from a craft point of view, you do need to get a visible perception. Otherwise, you can't
271 possibly look at transitions and guide people. Probably needs to be some work on the different
272 pathways. Rise is or isn't, gateway is or is not. I know it is a source of disgruntlement for some.
273 But I think for new staff though. Meet the Rise 'Guru' and then the gateway specialist and
274 whatever it is.

275 Yeah, I think. What else? Residential. Going into residential, having dinner with residential
276 properties.

277 CC: Absolutely.

278 CP: That is a must for anybody in a management positions.

279 CC: I agree.

280 CP: Yeah. I think of others but I cannot think of anything at the moment.

281 CC: Thank you, [name] , for giving me your time.

282 CP: No problem. Enjoyed it.

283 CC: Thanks for that. Yeah. And I think what I find interesting is of course also the range of
284 experiences. Because of course, I think you are probably one of the first people who went
285 through this kind of exemplary induction. Then we've got people who have been bumbled into
286 the organisation maybe more recently, have not really got to grips with the induction. And then
287 of course, there are people who have been here 100 years and kind of grown out of it, but never
288 have gone through a formal induction as well. So that's really an interesting range of
289 experiences there. Good. Thank you very much. Okay, have a good day. Alright, bye.

10 Interview College Principal (CP), 15/06/2022 Interview

In this interview the Principal of a College reflects on her own journey, the people who have helped her progressing her understanding of the method of RMT.

1 CC: So and yeah, so I think what I'm interested in and what of course keeps me busy most of the day,
2 quite frankly, how to implement the method. And my interest is really what impact the leadership
3 has, as in the leadership of the organization. So that's Aonghus, trustees, executive team, leadership
4 of the individual sites and so on.

5 I'm particularly interested in how new leaders join us as well, for example, because then sometimes
6 there's the notion: "So and so is doing great." So the question is then why is that? What have you
7 done to help that person and why is that person doing great? Well, there are more questions about
8 that. How do we make that judgment? And so on. And then sometimes there's also the knowledge
9 to know: "So and so doesn't get it." And then why is that and what could have been more helpful?
10 So I'm interested in, actually, really diving into the experience of some of the senior leaders in terms
11 of what they have found helpful. And of course, there's a range, some who have joined a few
12 months ago, and then there are some people who have been in the organization for years and years.
13 So I'm interested in the personal experiences of those people, and then I'm also interested in what
14 helps them in the day to day work to implement the method, what are the helpful things and what
15 are the challenges they experience. So really two parts, if you want some of that conversation. So
16 maybe you got any thoughts on your personal journey in terms of coming into PSTE and the Seven
17 Fields and what has been helpful and what could have been more helpful, what was missing that's
18 also interesting.

19 CP: Okay, so for me, I think my particular journey into provision lead has been relatively
20 straightforward in terms of understanding the method. So I started work 19 years ago at Ruskin Mill
21 as a cafe assistant in the Ruskin Mill Cafe. And then I moved to Freeman. That was in 2003. And then
22 I moved to Freeman College, relocated, to take up the cafe manager post. Even then, what was
23 probably different for everybody else, maybe different from others' experience, was that we were a
24 very small college. And even in that post I benefited first hand from seeing Aonghus and Helen
25 Kippax at work. So it's really not... probably quite a different path. So, I saw down in the first very
26 early premises, everybody worked very first hand. I experienced it with them. And then even in
27 those early times, I was fortunate to do one of the trips. So, I did the Sinai out trip with Aonghus and
28 John Picking. So I saw the Sinai trip in practice in 2007. Then in 2009, I moved from cafe manager
29 and tutor at Freeman into student journey manager. And then I had mentoring. I remember you as
30 being a positive mentor, put you in that, you were, with some particular students, I know I would

31 come back to you and ask you and check things. So we were fortunate in that we were adjacent to
32 the residential office. We had line management from the provision leads. And then I moved into
33 Senior Student Journey manager post around 2012-2013. And then at that time I then took up one
34 of the first 1st Masters routes. So, I was in the second Master of Science with the University of the
35 west of England. And we were the first group, the very first group to go through the Field Centre.
36 And that particular Masters came out of... seemed to be predominantly based on the thesis that
37 Aonghus had cowritten with Charlotte von Bulow. And Aonghus and Charlotte led that course. There
38 was a faculty group who were familiar with working in the organization. We had Jonathan Code, we
39 worked very closely with Aonghus and Aonghus took us through every single field. That was the
40 programme for that year.

41 So, I actually had it really embedded straight from Aonghus, straight in. I wrote an assignment on
42 each field and then took up a particular line of inquiry for the dissertation, which was howor do
43 the workshops meet the need of young people who've experienced disrupted attachment,
44 something like that. But that took me straight into a practical experience and fundamentally that's
45 now my bedrock, isn't it? So I've come in already having done a very foundational course at the point
46 at which it was all very much very new. So we were the first year and we had the copies of the very
47 first Practitioner's Guide straight off the press, and that was your handbook and off you went. Prior
48 to that, I had begun to do some of those original PSTE courses. There was "PSTE level 3"...

49 CC: Yes, I remember that...

50 CP: Then I did one year of the PPOC, which is still a little bit overhanging there, haven't completed
51 that one. And I've still got my bowl in Joe Tyson's workshop. But fundamentally, in terms of learning
52 the method, I've always been familiar out of that with Seven Fields, go backwards and forwards and
53 work with them quite freely. So it's never something that I've had to have a specific induction with
54 or not understood. Alongside that, I have had colleagues who have been more experienced in an
55 anthroposophical background and they have been very helpful. Yeah. So there was Joanne, there's
56 Andrea, great font of knowledge. And I also know in a different way, on a different angle, I can
57 always go to Matt, but he's also a colleague that brings a depth into my understanding. And now I
58 am even more blessed because I go on the Mental Health Seminar¹. Now, what I'm finding from the
59 work on the Mental Health Seminar is that the bit that I've learned through the MSC with UE is kind
60 of like the front facing, isn't it? It's Practical Skills Therapeutic Education, the model and method of
61 the Trust as played out through the Seven Fields of Practice. I'm going to get it round the wrong way,

¹ Seminar with intense weekend blocks exploring mental health conditions from an anthroposophical medical perspective.

62 but I'm going to say hand, head and heart. Think that's the way. The what, the how and the why?

63 But I always wanted to check those. I will put up my hand yeah.

64 CC: There is still a debate going on. *[laughter]*

65 CP: Now, by doing that very early development, which is rooted in anthroposophy. I'm now learning
66 the backstory to Aonghus. It's like going behind the stage, it's really interesting, actually. And it's
67 probably I'm finding it in some ways more helpful that way around. It's quite curious. I don't think I
68 was missing it until I've done it. And now I see what I was missing. I can see that.

69 And now, by default, I'm beginning to build a picture, because I've only done three seminars. I'm
70 beginning to build the back picture. And that's so satisfying. It's really satisfying, I can't tell you. I'm
71 beginning to learn the developmental phases. I'm beginning to learn some quite tricky concepts. You
72 go in there and you have a James Dyson lecture on the higher beings and then many threads that
73 come into it, alongside some very solid Goethean Observation from Michael and that kind of
74 exploration. And that it's really like the backstory. So it's never going to be necessarily something
75 that comes first and foremost, because in my job, the PSTE and Seven Fields come front and
76 foremost. But I'm finding it really helpful because maybe that wasn't in the Masters. It's a
77 framework. And I'm finding that also really helpful. For example, we did a student study yesterday
78 evening, and there's a point now at which I can see that for the staff team, it's quite important for us
79 to go back to doing some of that developmental framework with the whole staff team, because we
80 haven't done it since Joanne, since pre Covid. And if you don't have that framework, is really helping
81 me do the study. The mental health seminar is really enhancing my study work, student study. And I
82 sort of went home yesterday, and I thought, yeah, it's quite tricky for staff to come into the student
83 study without that frame of reference, because without that, what happens is it can turn into a
84 debrief, a conversation, a free for all.

85 CC: It doesn't lead to the deepening of the understanding of the students.

86 CP: Yes. Because we were looking at where they were in their developmental phase, and the
87 facilitator and I concur with them. We were looking at it in that they haven't got through year nine.
88 There was a separation that hadn't happened. And a colleague was trying to say that one of the
89 manifestations of their behaviour was teenage. And we were saying, well, we don't think it's not a
90 teenage model because they're here. And it suddenly came up, and I was like, oh, yeah, that's a real
91 gap for that person. They don't know that framework. They don't really know what unconscious
92 framework the facilitator was working on and how you move it round. It was really interesting,
93 actually, to work, to follow up. But without maybe doing that work in the Mental Health Seminar, I

94 might not have been so aware of it. Yeah. And of course, I've done resilience how many times with
95 Peter? But even so, again, I have to say, Mental Health Seminar is enhancing the resilience as well,
96 because I'm also, again, seeing where the roots have come from. So, I've learnt it the other way
97 around. I've learned the top stuff and now I'm going down and seeing the root where some people
98 come in and they don't know the root come in, they don't know the top. How you come in and you
99 don't know any of it? Neither the root nor the flower. That's quite tricky, I think.

100 CC: Yeah. And of course, as you said, it's a journey of 19 years.

101 CP: I can go to the autism show and I can talk about how, by implementing the craft working, we are
102 working in a triad of conscious worker, young person and material, and what the impacts of that are.
103 And I've watched colleagues do it with a real, genuine intention, and they haven't maybe articulated
104 it quite within the frame of reference, because it's complex, isn't it? It's like, well, we give them a
105 hammer and they have some autonomy with the hammer, and they bang around a bit and they're
106 learning transferable skills. No, that is not the full story.

107 CC: Well, as you said the front piece.

108 CP: Yes, but it's the very front piece. But I can see how that you can get a little bit of functional
109 knowledge and not always be able to go all the way back down the tree, way to the roots. I think it's
110 difficult. And you can come in and be very good at your job and fundamentally duck and dive.... Are
111 we on the second bit now?

112 CC: Let me see. I suppose it's difficult to accelerate that journey because that's just what it takes,
113 don't you think?

114 CP: And then eventually, when you start revisiting it, and I always think that's helpful, because
115 sometimes it comes back in a different form. And once you get to know the subject very well, then
116 you can see where everything joins up. There was one quite recently, I think it was online, where
117 Aonghus has gone round and he linked "Seven" into "One" in terms of the conscious self and said,
118 unless you've got your conscious self in Seven, you can't necessarily locate yourself in One. It was a
119 brilliant lecture seminar, I think it was online. It's one of those training ones. And I want to go back
120 and listen to it again, because it was so exciting, really, to think about how it all passed through. And
121 even four and six, which are most complex. Yeah. One, two, three, straightforward five. People tend
122 to see that as residential. It's more complex than that. But that seven. Yes. Selfgenerated
123 consciousness in action. Not just self autonomy. We can call it self autonomy, but it isn't. But then if
124 you go back to Aonghus' source, what also really helped me was reading the paper from Aonghus
125 and Charlotte.

126 CC: Okay.

127 CP: Yeah. I always start back to that one again, because you can see where it came from. And some
128 of the stuff that they pulled out of Gert Biesta with the self generated conscious action is really key
129 and it really helps you understand self generated conscious action. And going back to Aonghus',
130 Gordon and von Bulow original paper. It is really interesting because then you're going back and
131 seeing where that started from. Yeah. Four and six. I think six was more straightforward with the
132 practice of anthroposophical medicines in the Trust.

133 CC: And of course, there were colleagues who were extremely knowledgeable and had studied this
134 for years and years. You still have some...

135 CP: And four...to articulate four really clearly requires a lot of understanding of field 2, too, isn't it?

136 CC: It does, yeah. That's where it's applied. But it's, I suppose, the difference between craft work and
137 craft work out of the understanding of the development. Yes. It becomes something completely
138 different.

139 CP: Yeah. But what was really nice was to go back to the Mental Health Seminar, and at the end of
140 one of James' lectures, very early on, he talks about how the Trust articulates the self mastery of the
141 act of will by the embodiment of it in action in the craft. It was really nice to see James saying this.

142 The thing is recorded. But it was a really nice induction, because, of course, when I first came here,
143 James was coming every month here and he was giving the Hygiea² lectures. Not that I ever really
144 attended all of them. I got more of a chance down at Leadmill Road. Because you could earwig in,
145 because it was all closer here. I don't remember, but I do remember a lot of that Hygiea stuff, a lot of
146 that embedded stuff back in 2006, 2007, fundamentally was really important. But it is much trickier,
147 because I think people have to get hold of the fact that it's... it's a spiritual concept, isn't it? You are
148 asking people to work out of their higher consciousness and by their higher consciousness you mean
149 their spiritual self.

150 CC: And also to see something like that in the student.

151 CP: Yes. And without that, you're kind of done for. Ultimately, if you're not able to work, it's a
152 different work. The work has a different it's more mundane and it's very hard to articulate that. But,
153 you know, when you go to other organisations, and that's what I always say to people in an
154 interview or in a meeting, it's because it's the consciousness that we're asking the staff to work out

² Hygiea- Greek goddess of health and hygiene, initiative at Freeman College to bring together therapies inspired by Rudolf Steiner's insights

155 of. That's one of the key differences. That's what makes it possible for things to happen. And then as
156 a leader, then you've got to know that some staff can do that and some staff can't or won't. That's
157 the difficulty, isn't it? But it's probably not a bad thing, because then you're not all clappy happy
158 singing, are you? Do you know what I mean?

159 CC: Yeah. It doesn't become an enclave.

160 CP: It doesn't become yes. It's not eating itself, operating, because you have to have the outside. The
161 whole point of it is that students can be in the community, not that students can live in Freeman in
162 Ruskin Mill Trust forever.

163 CC: And you have got colleagues who ask, well, why are you doing? Yeah. Which I personally think is
164 really helpful, isn't it?

165 CP: It's all very interesting, but if you don't get behind that articulation of the vision and the method,
166 then yeah, Aonghus is right, it does get tricky. And then people don't know what they've left when
167 they leave, you see, they leave and then they miss it. They don't quite know what they missed. I also
168 think that's quite interesting, to interview people who have worked here and maybe less, and what
169 can they see in the negative space is quite interesting. Once they're not no longer working here and
170 it's become a negative space, I wonder what their perception is.

171 CC: Yeah. So what's your experience of colleagues, senior colleagues, what has been helpful for them
172 to learn? I think your journey is probably quite exceptional, isn't it? Not everyone has the benefit of
173 all of that. And I think now we've actually grown so fast in the last ten years, I would say.

174 CP: Yeah. And if you're coming in via LinkedIn yes. It's not so easy. What's my experience? Well, a
175 recent experience, I guess a recent colleague is left. We had an incredible journey together to sort of
176 look at a particular area of the college, and that was extremely fruitful. But I do think, by default,
177 that actually when their experience has been that when they had left it, I have found that quite
178 interesting.

179 CC: Yeah. And what do you think, what is helpful for senior leaders when they join us and what's
180 maybe difficult and what could we do differently?

181 CP: Well, it's a slow process, isn't it, over the years, rather than the fast forward scrabble? Because
182 you've always got to have your point of difficulty, haven't you? Because that's what makes it you've
183 got to have that moment where you really question it. And however good the induction is, the
184 induction is probably going to be a really good induction, where everybody thinks that everything is
185 amazing. And that's also tricky, because when people go, oh, this is amazing, this is wonderful, and I

186 can't wait to work here, and everything's going to be fantastic, but you're still bringing yourself in,
187 and that self is going to have to interact with all the other self. Probably at some point, there's going
188 to be a problem. There's that moment of not disillusionment, but there's that moment where you
189 learn that it's actually going to be you and your work. The organisation is not going to carry you, it's
190 got to be your work. And then there's the Aonghus lecture of the toilet bowl lecture, and Aonghus is
191 always really clear, isn't it?

192 CC: Flushed away.

193 CP: Aonghus is always really clear. He says, there's a point and you might go really happy. It's not
194 always a bad thing. He says, you and I, we might part and you might leave the trust, because you're
195 going to go on to different things and you've taken what you want, you've contributed what you
196 want, and you go, not always a difficult moment. If you go beyond that into the ascent, then
197 normally you're going to stick around a bit longer.

198 CC: You got to be on board.

199 CP: Yeah. And you need to know why you're here. Without that, you can't be conscious. And that's
200 come up sometimes with colleagues. Why are they here? Yeah. What's brought them in? And what's
201 the tendency for action, really? Higher consciousness. Not that we're all meditating and levitating.

202 CC: How do you see that with now, for example, the EHCM, also your deputy, for example. What has
203 been helpful to them in terms of getting under the surface?

204 CP: Okay. They all have loved, without exception Trevor Mephams³. And there's a queue of people
205 that want to do it. And that's the little mini induction to the backstory. That's the little backstory. So
206 they really like Trevor. And then I think it's the study and then I hope the EHCM programme is good.
207 I'm sure it is good. It's a bit bitty and they're a bit spread out and they can't always go to everything
208 because of the work commitment and it isn't quite the same. I think probably it's the odd things,
209 isn't it? It's when you're able to put yourself in and do all those odd little things that come up, those
210 little weird ones, so that you get the parts of the whole. You can't just work here and think that's it.
211 It's around, making yourself open to the parts of the whole. So odd little conferences that I've kind
212 of ended up at, odd little conversations, the odd guest speaker or listening to Christopher. It can't
213 just be PSTE and the Seven Fields because you need other prompts to think of it in a holistic way.

214 CC: It gives you the whole picture.

³ Experienced Steiner Teacher who has been employed as a consultant to deliver staff training with groups of staff on Steiner's insights on human phasic development

215 CP: So maybe you might find a different piece of writing might be helpful for your understanding of
216 self generated conscious action or how to be a conscious practitioner. Gerd Biesta. It is about doing
217 some of that background reading. Steiner is very difficult to read.

218 CC: What's your experience with that? For yourself or for colleagues...

219 CP: I've had moments of flow and then moments where I get really stuck and it's difficult to get over
220 the stuckness. So writers around Steiner are good and helpful, or writers that maybe contribute a
221 kind of parallel thinking. And even some of the philosophy coming out of enlightenment, the
222 language and the translation of Steiner makes it difficult.

223 CC: Yeah, I think that's great to have that surface framework which takes some key concepts and
224 actually puts them out quite clearly.

225 CP: But I think my actual core Steiner knowledge is weak and something that I've always got on my
226 head that I need to improve on. You know what I mean? Think about maybe I should go to one of
227 the Steiner groups, or how could I do the reading group? Or oh my God, I really need to do
228 something about this, but I really can't read Steiner on the bus going home from work. I can't. I wish
229 I could. And some people do, don't they? Some people will get through all those tricky things by that
230 little five minutes. And I keep meaning to do it because I think without it, I'm going to have to do
231 that, I think, in order to get through the Mental Health Seminar, I'm going to have to do it. It's kind
232 of learning the way through to me. I let myself get subtracted by some of the other
233 recommendations that James is giving us. But James is coming out, James Dyson is fundamentally,
234 they're all coming out of having learned the text. And at some point I'm going to have to go back to
235 the text. Now, the Trevor Mepham group for the postgraduates of his first year was a good idea in
236 theory, but we didn't have enough time to really get into it. The idea that you would sit and read
237 through 'Theosophy'⁴ together was wonderful, but we actually only did that we only had about three
238 sessions, and they were quite disrupted. And I don't think...and Trevor was very much, do you want
239 to do this? And we all said yes, but maybe we weren't the right group at the right time. But I think
240 something like that would be really helpful.

241 CC: Yeah. And I suppose also it probably, well, you are now at a different stage in kind of grasping
242 those concepts as compared to ten years ago or 19 years ago. And they all very meaty chunky
243 concepts.

⁴ One of the fundamental books of Steiner

244 CP: And I have had my moments of dissent and rebellion. You have huge moment of dissent and
245 rebellion and absolutely arguing all your way through. But I guess at some point, then you have to
246 stop. I think the Masters saved me. The Masters came at just the right time. And I am grateful for
247 Aonghus, for intuiting that. I think he does. It brought me back in just at the right moment. They
248 were the happiest years. That year was my happiest year. I remember that year. It was just like the
249 real... that was such a good year. There were lots of challenges at work, and it wasn't easy at work. It
250 was a really good year. Going down very early down at the Field Centre. Being at the Mothership in
251 its inaugural year. It was very privileged, actually, and having those conversations with Aonghus and
252 having those conversations with Charlotte and Simon Charter, and Aksel and Charlotte's partner,
253 Fergus. Fergus' philosophy, those kind of mind expanding moments. You suddenly think, oh, yeah,
254 we were in a group.

255 CC: That is also an important point, really, isn't it? For senior leaders is also to create that head space
256 and that time space.

257 CP: It was a good course, because I don't think it got so bogged down as the Norwegian one. It was
258 just the method. PSTE and the Seven Fields in a year, bum. Yeah, that's what we did. Yes. You go.
259 Yeah, it was really good. I don't know what's coming out of Huddersfield, but I think that was just...
260 we were so lucky that you let us do that. I think they were very hands off. Yeah, that was good.

261 CC: We do all the deliveries.

262 CP: It was really good. Dennis Klocek, Gert Biesta. Marios...

263 CC: Yeah. Good.

264 CP: I was really lucky. It was really good, I do feel very privileged, my training journey.

265 CC: Looking around at your senior colleagues. Do you think there's something else one could do to
266 help? Are they ready? Are they, people need to be ready for those things that's relevant.

267 CP: I think they're very bound up in the job and, you know I don't know. I don't know with colleagues
268 whether they've got that same perception. Sometimes you find it in the most surprised, but I know
269 because look at me. You find it in the most surprising places, don't you? It's not always the people in
270 the role as you see it at that time. I do think it comes down to having spiritual capacity. I'm really
271 sorry, but I do. If you're entirely earth bound, you're not going to be open to thinking in the same
272 way, are you? Because it isn't a literal task, is it? Yeah, you're working in a different way and I think
273 it's understood, but maybe not always experience. I think, with the Head of College Residential
274 there, they have capacity to get there. If they stay, yeah, eventually, maybe not for quite a while. I

275 think it takes a long, long time and I think you can be very young and get it, and you can be very
276 young or not, but if you come in with a lot of baggage or thinking or thoughts, then it's quite difficult
277 to get down to it, isn't it? Because I can think colleagues have done the courses and they've done the
278 PPOC and they've done the Goethean, which I thought would be really helpful, and yet I don't know
279 that they really get it.

280 CC: Sorry, you do or you don't know?

281 CP: I don't know, yeah.

282 CC: It's a difference to use the language and it's a different to actually really well,

283 CP: You have to be able to embrace some pretty challenging concepts, don't you? You have to be
284 able to sort of hold them in your mind and you might not agree with them, but you need to have the
285 capacity to think, okay, are there beings that aren't visible in the world? It's tricky. Have we been
286 here before? And I remember Aonghus talking about this and remember getting very ... myself. In
287 2012 and 2013. Is there something else operating in the world? What does it mean to be human?

288 CC: And of course, education becomes something completely different when you think, oh, this is
289 actually dealing with that person, with all the things that person had to deal with previous lives and
290 later lives. So that makes a completely different kind of education compared to dealing with his
291 brain circuits. How one can actually think about education without what is actually my picture of
292 what it is to be human is when you look at it from that angle, it's completely unbelievable, actually,
293 how one can think to be able to talk about education without talking about what is the makeup of a
294 human. Completely weird, isn't it, not thinking about child development, but think you can say
295 something about education.

296 CP: Yeah, without experience, if there's nothing as experienced.

297 CC: Well, you need to define it at least. What is your view on child development? And out of that
298 comes what is education for?

299 CP: Yeah, I just think it takes time. I do think it takes time. And people get very busy, and they have
300 very busy lives, and they sort of know that they really like working here, but maybe they don't think
301 about it very much.

302 CC: Good. Thank you very much.

11 Interview Blacksmithing

11 Interview Blacksmithing Tutor (TU) 17/06/2022

In this interview the tutor gives his insights from a practitioner perspective on how to onboard new staff and work with staff who have been part of the organisation for a long time but maybe lost their enthusiasm for the method. He draws on his own journey to a deeper understanding of PSTE, using a very practical, 'non-academic' bite-size approach. He gives examples of what has helped him to make sense and connect aspects of PSTE.

1 CC: Well, thank you for making the time and thank you also for having me in your workshop.

2 TU: No worries.

3 CC: Those few days were great experiences and I thought it would be good to just a few weeks later
4 to have a bit of a wash up, if you want so.

5 TU: Of course.

6 CC: Overall, I'm interested in my leading question is really still 'How do we implement the Seven
7 Fields as the organisation'? And I think, so that's in the context of an educational method, which is
8 only to be found in Ruskin Mill, really. So I think then that's interesting. What is actually so special
9 about it? So that's an interesting question. Of course, people do foreign schools and people do
10 nature education and you name it. And then craft is probably much less there much, much less there
11 actually in schools. So, then we got this really interesting educational method which is now actually
12 blossoming with kind of publications and courses and the research centre and so on. And then of
13 course, also in the context of succession of the founder coming to an age where he won't be around
14 forever, none of us will be. That's the least controversial to say about that.

15 So in the next 20 years, 50 years or whatever, so how will PSTE, the Seven Fields, Ruskin Mill, what
16 will change, how will it be? But the question for me really is, what's the role of the leadership of the
17 organisation? And that includes also what causes her set up and so on, what are the helpful
18 mechanisms, let's say, or unhelpful mechanisms? And then how is that for people who are working
19 directly with students? And so what are your own experiences in that?

20 TU: Well, it's been a big sort of hit and miss with the training. Some of it is great, and how you're
21 pitching it at people who have been here for a long time, as well as people have been here for a
22 week, to get that level. Because sometimes when you first start, you're like, I don't know what's
23 going on. And I know the sort of messages just like flow over you and it might come back to you
24 when you've been here a while and you learned a bit more, but when you first hear it. Something
25 and again, this is difficult to have two different sort of levels going on at the same time. So people
26 being here quite some time, have a high level of understanding and for those who need to do a

27 foundation, because that crossover, you've got people being here a while when I know all this
28 already, but the people who are just starting out, this is really interesting, and vice versa. So that
29 would be good for a new starters.

30 CC: So what were the things back at the beginning, so what were the things where you said what you
31 met in the very beginning where you said, oh, that's actually a bit weird but really interesting. And I
32 want to look a bit more into that. What were those?

33 TU: The ones when I first started, the ones that really was a Genius Loci. I found it fascinating. So
34 anything to be with Genius Loci like and anything at all that I can use in session to engage a student.
35 So that's geology, geography, history, anthropology, anthroposophy, so that human element and
36 grounding the student is fantastic, I can use that. But if you're talking about Goethean Observations,
37 I'm not sure how I use that with students. It might be okay for me to be aware of Goethean
38 Observations, but I think that's a bit heavy when you first starting, getting the PSTE and the Genius
39 Loci, the therapy, build that up. I think it's lost on new starters, the sort of the higher end. Practical
40 skills, the twelve senses. I think that's really interesting. The balance, movement, life and touch. I
41 took that straight away and then started looking at reading into how that affects the middle and
42 higher senses and the higher cognitive functioning. And from a practical standpoint, not just sort of,
43 yeah, it might do this, it might do that, but the proprioceptive senses and the skin and how that
44 affects how the student knows where their hands are, things like that. It's real.

45 CC: Very tangible.

46 TU: Yes. Go onto your bellows and move them up and down. They're going through planes of space,
47 they are balancing, working from the feet, shoulders, the eyes, all that sort of seven years stuff. I can
48 use that. And obviously as a practical craft practitioner, that's what I'm interested in. Some of the
49 Steiner sort of modules around, I don't know, just things that appear weird in the box.

50 CC: Yes, it always appears weird until it doesn't anymore... *[laughter]*

51 TU: All those like really practical things I'm really into. Because Steiner does sort of go into the
52 occultic side of the thing and I'm not really there yet for that. And I get it. But at the minute, because
53 I've only been doing this for four years, the question is: 'How is that going to help a student right
54 now.'

55 That's unbalanced, that is not going to help you right now. But using the wheelbarrow and the
56 bellows and the hammer, and the sequencing and 'go and get your PPE on', all those sort of things,
57 that's really tangible stuff. That's where I am.

58 CC: And you would say so those are things which have kind of changed your practice.

59 TU: Definitely. So again, I don't see myself as a blacksmith anymore. It has only been four years, but I
60 don't see that anymore. My craft skills have depleted because I spent more time doing therapy with
61 students, you know what I mean? So class myself more as a therapist than a blacksmith. Once in a
62 while I get a few hours and then it's back again but it's more to do with the therapy. Looking at a
63 student, I've had two assessment students in recently. One really good. He's engaging, his focus,
64 grasp and step is good, his, balance is good. All of those sort of basics are good. Muscle tone,
65 however, not good at all, underdeveloped. So what can we offer as a college? The muscle tone. So
66 we'd be doing some heavy lifting going on the bellows, building up that strength. His aim is really
67 good, but there's no power there at all. So again, that might be connected to proprioception. Maybe
68 he's not realizing how far he can go when he's using the metal, he might just be touching it and
69 pulling back rather than going through the material. You can't really do much in 40 minutes trying to
70 get gage that need. So maybe it's that. So yeah, I sort of see students and as they're coming into
71 High Riggs itself, like they're walking.

72 CC: I've seen that how you work with students.

73 TU: So when it comes to that, it's great, but how do we get other staff to do that as well? Because
74 that's where we're going, isn't it? We want to be able to help these students, not just do our craft.
75 That's not what it's about. I mean, all those things are innate, but do we just rest on our laurels and
76 just go, well, the craft is doing it itself? I don't think we do. I think we need to medicate¹ the craft.
77 Okay. So yeah, it balance is off. So we've given more of that and less of that if they're not
78 communicating properly, get them working in a team and it forces them, it's things like that. But we
79 need to bring the staff into that, tutors especially, supportworkers as well, but the tutor is there for a
80 reason and I think what we need is more engagement in that.

81 CC: You say that Goethean Observation... So some of the things which were appearing a bit strange
82 and so on at the beginning you said you parked and then you've gone back to them. Do you see any
83 relevance of Goethean Observation now?

84 TU: Well, I am going on a Goethean Science course this weekend...[laughter]

85 CC: I know, that's why I am asking.

86 TU: I mean, only from the little bits we've done, you know, the Goethean Observations and the
87 drawings, take the feelings out of it completely and just look at what it is that you're looking at. And

¹ As in 'prescribe'

88 that's observation, am I liking this kid? That might impact on what I want from them, I might really
89 get on with them well, and again, that colours my judgement. So I need to suck all that away and just
90 look at that that is in front of me and that will help with the prescription. Does that make sense?

91 CC: Yeah.

92 TU: So hopefully this course over the years, it's becoming a rolling thing like Pedagogical Potential of
93 Craft. You might miss one and then you come into that one, and then it comes round again, which
94 helps. Sometimes you just haven't got time, if you miss that first one, that's it. That is great that you
95 can roll.

96 Hopefully having done the one in the 5th year, maybe tutors are a little bit like the first seven years of
97 a child, we come into our own a little bit more in the 7th year.

98 CC: But I also think it does take time, doesn't it? Because actually there are so many aspects and so
99 many windows, one can look through, the twelve senses in itself.

100 TU: You could spend your whole life.

101 CC: Yeah, absolutely. And I think it only becomes real when it becomes meaningful, isn't it?

102 TU: And it's when you go on courses like you do, and Matt and Aonghus and things like that. So
103 when you're watching the seminars, you can be like, yeah, I know that. Do I need it? Not really. Keep
104 moving. And then something really interesting will probably go, what's that? And you go, right, let's
105 have a look at what that is. And there might be some stuff on the S-drive already. But yeah, it's just
106 because it's what is meaningful to you right now. It's something that piques your interest. It's getting
107 that... at points I've gone, that's really interesting to me. So, I pulled it out, taking it apart. Even in the
108 first few weeks, I did a talk on Genius Loci. I had only been here a few weeks. Because it was like, it
109 was all presented as well. I did Geology at school, so I thought, you know what, I'm going to take it
110 right back. So I went back to the Big Bang and I went Big Bang all the way forward to the formation
111 of the Earth and then the massive landmass and how that broke up. And then this landmass became
112 England and this is where Sheffield is. That went a bit far, but it's because I didn't know what I was
113 talking about. But it was interesting. Staff did engage in it because we had a bit of fun and we sort of
114 like saying the UK or Europe and we're going to just separate. It's just pulling those little threats of
115 things that interest. So I'm moving on. Talking around Genius Loci is there, it's always there. I really
116 like it, it's my favourite bit. But then we're going into the therapies that's really interesting my
117 attention. So Genius Loci is backing off a bit and that will progress as time goes on. So then the
118 therapy side of things will take a back seat and it'll be part of my...

119 CC: Toolkit?

120 TU: Yes, toolkit. Okay. And then that will fit, something else will come in and that will fit. And that's
121 how it is. I think that's a safe for everyone. Yeah.

122 CC: So how do you go about then kind of getting deeper into that? Well, that's up to you, isn't it?

123 TU: Something that I like then, number one, my first port of call is always I go to see Matt. Okay,
124 what's this about? That's interesting. Can you recommend any books? Don't get me wrong, I'm not
125 going to go out and buy these books if you've got them on the shelf. I look on the internet and see
126 who these writers are because there's generally scholarly sort of sections on the internet that will
127 summarize certain parts and that is really interesting. I will go buy a book or I will just keep plugging
128 away a little bit and a little bit. Because as you know, we're tutors and we've got stuff to do. This is
129 all in between and it does it takes quite a large chunk of my own time because again this is a bit
130 private stuff but my wife is a massive football fan and I hate it, it's boring. So while she's watching
131 football I can be quite happily just like looking on the internet. It gives me some stuff to do, it helps
132 me at work, helps me in my personal life as well. I think it's sort of like it just gives you a more
133 rounded view on life.

134 CC: It goes deeper.

135 TU: We started fostering the last couple of years. So we've got young kids coming in so you look at
136 that differently as well. Not just "let's play with toys and have toys", no, we're not having that, we're
137 not giving them a video game, let's get some practical stuff going in, what is their balance like, that
138 helps. I'm doing this for personal reasons.

139 CC: What I am then also interested in there are some people who can be here for ten years and can
140 hardly name a field and there are some people here who have been here a few weeks and can hold a
141 lecture on... *[laughter]*

142 TU: I think it's bigger than just one answer. You've got some there's a college side of things. There
143 are staff who have been here a long time and then have become disenchanted really maybe they've
144 got involved being really good and then they've tried to climb the ladder and become senior tutors
145 and it has not worked so they are where they are and they've tried several times and the amount of
146 knockbacks has sort of like disenfranchised them, they go I cannot be asked with this anymore, so
147 they'll do the minimum and it's enough but that really sends a bad signal to other staff. You've got
148 somebody in here a long time. They're a big role model and they just go and they know it's not
149 bullshit. They know it's really interesting. They've been there. They've been here those past few
150 years and they've been really engaged but because they've been knocked back into someone and

151 that really influences people new start to start he's been here. He should be a senior tutor but he's
152 not, so he has become ... just really sad, so that's one option you've got.

153 CC: But that doesn't necessarily say that they are not engaged in the method, isn't it, so that is the
154 managerial side and then there's the understanding.

155 TU: But they are not advertising it. You want them to talk about it in session not just we're doing
156 this. Why are we doing that? Sell it. That really makes a difference to staff because that may be their
157 first interaction with it and then you have to work harder in your session to sell it but then you've
158 got staff who are just crafters and I don't want to become anything else, so that's a very simple one.

159 CC: Well I think that's more interesting to me because why would you not want to go deeper?

160 TU: There's a lot of effort involved in increasing your knowledge and they might not want to do that,
161 they might want to just focus on their craft and crafters are very protective of their craft and they
162 don't want to be other or something else or extending that knowledge range, they might just want
163 to dig deeper into how to make this thing, not how to make the student. You've got people who
164 don't get it, don't get it at all. And I've spent a lot of time with staff saying, I don't understand what
165 you're talking about and I am very, very practical when it comes to explaining things, I make it funny.
166 I make people hold stuff and all sorts of things. You can keep trying and it's generally the same stuff
167 and you keep chopping away.

168 CC: Have you got an example?

169 TU: So as I was talking about PSTE a couple of weeks ago, I did that little 20 minutes section, I made
170 it funny, I made it light, we did it in a sort of and it sounds ridiculous, but people came up after us
171 and I really got that. That was really good. We did a sort of Blue Peter-esque sort of way. So we got a
172 glass. And said: So this is our student, they come in, they're missing a side of things, there's barriers
173 to learning to that as well. And we pour juices into the glass. This is PSTE, this is genius loci, this is
174 the therapy, this is role modeling. And then we started up, we talked about how Aonghus says: "fish
175 don't swim, they are swum". So that's a glass. When they leave here, they've got to be ready or as
176 ready as they're going to be. So all that inside the glass is going to help them when they move from
177 here to there, they're going to take that genius loci with them and hopefully it'll help them in some
178 way, shape or form. Now, after I get any more simpler than that, I really pitched it as simple stuff,
179 but I still have a staff member coming up afterwards and saying, I did not really get it. So, I went
180 through it again, but I think he was just masking. How do you work with that if you've got no sort of
181 "I don't get it". Even simple stuff, it's difficult and as a Trust, you've got to deal with all of those
182 things. People not engaging. I don't have the answer. That is where you come in! *[laughter]*.

183 CC: Some things take time and I know that for myself and sometimes I need to hear things ten times
184 until I know them and then, oh yeah, that actually makes sense. Why didn't you tell me earlier?
185 People say, I told you ten times before.

186 TU: Yeah, maybe that is the case, it's just that rolling sort of programme. But again, maybe it is an
187 effort and people see that it's an effort. Some staff say, why do I want to go into all effort? Why do I
188 want to go down to the Field Centre using my whole weekend because people are very, very hot on
189 the work-life balance. I don't want to use my whole weekend going to the Field Centre, so thank you.
190 So to put yourself in that situation, you have to be interested anyway. And if you become interested,
191 that means you raise your head above the parapet. And then so you get seniors going, they're
192 interested, let's put them on a course. So you don't raise your head if you don't want to go on a
193 course over the weekend, you keep it low. And even if you are interested, you don't want to go, you
194 don't want to do the weekend thing.

195 CC: Yeah, it's difficult, isn't it? Because somehow the method that Ruskin Mill uses, you can only
196 learn in Ruskin Mill, you can't learn anywhere, you can't learn at university, et cetera. Certainly, at
197 this stage. Let's see. So then how do you do that? Isn't it? Because it does take time, it does take
198 effort. And then how do you create that time while at the same time still working with students and
199 providing for students, isn't it? So it's that conundrum, really, for which I also don't have an answer,
200 but I think what I can see is that there are usually people who get deeper into it, there are many
201 different ways of doing that. And I think one really important thing seems to be that people find
202 their reference points, as in their people who they can ask.

203 TU: That's right.

204 CC: And that is not necessarily a line-management structure at all, but actually, many people I've
205 spoken to, they say, no, I found this person, and that was really helpful.

206 TU: It's things like little things. My first port of call is always Matt because he's really good at
207 transpiring (sic!) high end stuff into basic layman's terms, and it's up to me to go and find those
208 things that make it more high end, but I've got to build that thing up myself. He's really good. It's just
209 dropping it down to this, and then you go, that's interesting. And then it allows you to go and find
210 your way to the top – foundation's first and then going on. Some staff, seniors for instance, will just
211 pitch it high and I don't know what you are talking about. You need to bring it down. But the
212 problem is: they can't. Certain staff are great at it and certain staff are not. So you've got people who
213 just cannot disseminate that information into something that's ...

214 CC: ...understandable.

215 TU: ...understandable. What I was thinking when I was just thinking this. What you could do is, you
216 know, we have observations in sessions. It's how we teach from a viewpoint of mainstream Ofsted.
217 So, yeah, you will talk about the EHCP targets and you will talk about how do they include this, how
218 is the assessment made? Do you talk about the targets at the end? Does the student talk at the end
219 and discuss how they feel at the end? And all that something? What they don't do, they don't do
220 observations on PSTE. *[interruption]*

221 I think personally there should be PSTE observations, watching a session, how you incorporate PSTE
222 into your session. I know it sounds like a bit hardball, but it would make the tutors think more about
223 incorporating those things rather than just going, I don't get checked on it, so why am I doing it?

224 CC: Once upon a time. That was actually part of the observation.

225 TU: It is, but it is a smaller thing. I think a robust PSTE observation would be better.

226 CC: That is actually a fascinating example how sometimes you think, oh, PSTE, the method is really
227 embedded, it's really happening in all of the processes and then you turn around and a year later,
228 oh, no, it's all gone. I don't even know what you are talking about.

229 TU: We had Ofsted in a few years ago, and I think that sort of like comes to the foreground. Ofsted,
230 they're going to come back and we need to be on it. And that is a major part of it. And PSTE, as
231 mentioned, it's like a tick box. Is PSTE done in session? Of course it is, because it's already there, but
232 not as a, you know, when it's innate in the session. But if you're not actually using it physically,
233 mentally, then it's there, but it's not implemented.

234 CC: I find it really interesting in the workshop observations because, for example, it doesn't need to
235 be talked about. Not at all. It doesn't need to be explicit at all. You don't need to say, oh, now you go
236 and work the bellows because of your sense of proprioception.

237 TU: We don't need any of that *[laughter]*. What's the guy, he was from Holland.

238 CC: Christoph

239 TU: Christoph². Yeah, I watched two of his lectures. I have not watched the other two yet. But he
240 was talking about creating that for the first seven years, which all our students are: just do this and
241 then eventually they'll understand why they're doing it. To incorporate PSTE. Sometimes it is just "do

² Christoph Wiechert, experienced Steiner educator who published on the "Child Study" and has been guest lecturing RMT staff in the different colleges on child development

242 this” and you will benefit from it a little bit. Like when you're talking about writing “do this”, you
243 don't have to understand what it says, but it gets you into that sort of thing.

244 CC: Yeah, I mean, I don't think the students ever need to understand it, but I think it is, of course
245 interesting for if you go into sessions with the question, what do I see of PSTE and the Seven Fields?
246 And then of course, you see the connections and you see the Genius Loci and making a charcoal et
247 cetera and all of those things. Yeah. For me it is a question in terms of the staff training, then, how
248 can that be more, especially for the senior leaders, how can that be more practical, more explicit.
249 That actually it is there on the ground and it all goes through physical experience. Really.

250 TU: Yeah, because when you're in normally the session, the training sessions are there. Okay, but I
251 think if you put that tutor, the craft tutor in situ in their own workshop and say, right, have a session,
252 just watch, and then go here, what do you think is going on here? And then build on to so what is
253 our student missing? What can you do in that session to make that developmental help work and
254 don't you understand that better? Rather than sitting at a desk in the dining room listening to more
255 one to one, you could do a two to one. You can do a couple of tutors looking at their balance and the
256 movement and haptics and touch and all sorts of things. I think that whole classroom thing is great.
257 But, craft tutors are practical.

258 CC: It probably needs to be both, doesn't it? So, I think some people, I am thinking especially of
259 managers, they probably feel more comfortable in that space so that is then their entry point if you
260 want so, but it's again, looking at it from different angles.

261 TU: You can always bring in seeing things in action, bringing a craft into the dining room. I'm quite
262 happy to bring an anvil, and a hammer and a bellow, we could pretend that the bellow was a being
263 used. Look what is happening here when it comes to PSTE, twelve senses and all, so they see it, it's
264 physical rather than just talking.

265 I don't really fancy getting an anvil here but *[laughter]*...we've got Joe Tyson, he's got an anvil, it's
266 not fun, we have to drive it across with a handle, things like that. And maybe just have somebody
267 have a go at felting, that's just sitting at desk, isn't it? And just moving your hands and things like
268 that. We could do that and again, you're going to see the benefits and then people will start to see.

269 Let's say somebody has balance issues. You could so yeah, they're doing this, et cetera, but there's
270 nothing wrong with sending them out on errand. You could have a word with Ann in reception and
271 say, I've got this bit here, I'm going to send a student down for it. They have to go down the stairs.
272 Go to reception, Field Seven as well. Self generated conscious action, then they come back and they
273 worked a little bit more on their balance rather than just sitting and I appreciate balance is working

274 as well while he's sitting. But it's more when you're walking and climbing stairs so you could do that
275 every single session and every single session over ten years is going to really improve the balance
276 rather than just relying on the craft. Things like that.

277 CC: Yes, I agree, of course that's where we want to get to, isn't it? Where you've got the structure
278 and the craft workshops and the crafts which are kind of already 70% of the PSTE curriculum, if you
279 want so. But then actually what makes it amazing, if then the tutors and the staff and the support
280 workers and everybody can use it consciously.

281 TU: Yes, that's what I'm looking for, yeah.

282 CC: That is then the real Ruskin Mill education what we always aim for.

283 TU: You should call that your research: "Using PSTE consciously."

284 CC: That is what I am aiming for. Good. Have you got any other thoughts around that? If anything
285 else comes to your mind then drop me an email, then great, wonderful. Thank you very much. No
286 worries. Thank you for your time again.

287 TU: I enjoyed it, it was good, it was a good having you in session. It was quite funny because you
288 don't realize when you've got somebody in session, but when you've got somebody who's senior,
289 you sort of like when you say, do you know you've got senior inductions? You are a little bit on edge.
290 I don't even ask because it can change your judgment and it's like, we shouldn't be, it should be what
291 what the student gets.

292 CC: There is actually one observation that I also noted kind of explicitly in the workshop and I would
293 say, yeah, especially in your case. There was a wonderful kind of flat hierarchy, actually. It ended up
294 with the student explaining things to me, just because the student was actually more experienced in
295 it. So you really get the material and the process, being the primary teacher, actually, and then the
296 person, whoever is around and who knows it best, has actually the authority, if you want so about
297 the process.

298 TU: That's the thing, you are role model, you're free to show anybody who's in this forge, if you
299 know to do it, just crack on. And I don't say that explicitly, it's just that's how they should feel. They
300 should feel free to be able to show. This is how you do it. This is how you use the bellows. It's
301 working in a team and the real environment. You wouldn't have one person just going, I'm going to
302 do all this work. That's not how it works in the real world. Everybody pitches in. If you don't know
303 how to do something and it's like that's how you just make the point. You've only got one set of
304 hands. So if you've got four students in, then it's like just work over there with it. Yeah, no problem.

11 Interview Blacksmithing

305 CC: That's fantastic, isn't it? That particular student, he hasn't been in that workshop for over a year,
306 so that stuck.

307 TU: Yeah, it's a buddy. But it does help when you've got students who are really into blacksmithing.
308 It was about the autism fair on Friday. [name of staff member] was in, we had a look at the stand
309 and the signs and it's like, any input? What's missing? Well, what you need is a poster of somebody
310 fire working where all the sparks are coming out right now. Right now: Blacksmithing is cool. There's
311 so much on the television, Games of Throne, and the amount of people who are coming just for a
312 stand, for a sign. You would be surprised ...and that is selling. It's a bit sort of, like cheap, but it pulls
313 people in.

314 CC: Yeah. Have you had fairy lights on the stall?

315 TU: No, we need them.*[laughter]*

316 CC: Did you see the autism robots?

317 TU: I saw the virtual reality. I'll tell you what we're going to do. We're just going to get a kid and we
318 just going to stick a VR set on the head for the whole day!

319 CC: Blacksmithing them from the desk.*[laughter]*

320 TU: Yeah, Coming back to the assessment lad, he said, I do blacksmithing in minecraft. Okay.
321 Anyway, after so we talked about minecraft. I played this game there, so we did some blacksmithing.
322 I said, So what's the difference between minecraft and blacksmithing? He said: there's much more
323 effort involved. You've done it for real. How many of your friends will say, have ever done
324 blacksmithing? None, so that is cool! Thank you very much for your time.

325 CC: Great. Thank you. Yes. Wonderful.

12 Interview Greenwoodwork tutor, 17/06/2022

In this interview the Greenwoodwork tutor reflects on his professional journey and passion for the practical experience, also how he continues to learn on the job.

1 CC: So I thought it would be good to just have a check in after a couple of weeks, after I spent the
2 day with you. So thank you again for the time I could spend here. And I thought it was enjoyable.
3 Great experience.

4 TU: Great. You're welcome.

5 CC: So, got the stool, haven't put it together yet. Let it dry out a bit. So I'm still following this
6 question in terms of how are we implementing PSTE. The more I think about it and the more I look
7 at it, the more interesting it becomes that we've got this method that one can actually only really
8 learn in Ruskin Mill. There is no PSTE you can learn in Sheffield College or whatever. And it's this
9 interesting conundrum of insights from Steiner, insights from other people, digested by Aonghus
10 probably, and then practiced for 30 years and developed by Ruskin Mill with not so much written
11 things about it at all. But I think in the last ten years it has flourished with the Field Centre, actually
12 the research, the Masters, a number of re-iterations, people having done Masters in it. So I can
13 definitely see there's a lot coming out there. There's Practically Minded, there's a practitioner's
14 guide, and it is very different to other forms of Forest Schools, for example, where maybe schools
15 just buy an afternoon for a school here and there, and then the rest is the 'normal' system of
16 education here. And here it's the thing, it is the actual education.

17 My question is really people coming into this, teachers, professionals, leaders, and I'm particularly
18 interested in the leaders, how they come in and then what they make of it, how they learn it, and
19 then how they use it in their day to day work, basically. And on the premise you can really only
20 implement something once you've understood what it is.

21 TU: That helps.

22 CC: Well, for me, there's always the question, what's the best way of how do people learn about
23 PSTE? Maybe you got some thoughts on that, how you yourself have learned about it?

24 TU: Starting as a support worker here, you come on the training event and you get to have a go.
25 That's one way of how you learn about it. And it's changed in the way that you get that direct
26 transmission from someone who is sort of an approved PSTE trainer, who trained the teacher, in a
27 sense. So, having gone on quite a few of those, they're all very different. People don't always talk
28 about PSTE, but they might use some aspects of the other frameworks that we use like the Seven

Fields of Practice. So this training day, you know, we're focussing on Genius Loci. I think we did one that was focused on ...is itplant, mineral and human? So there's a lot of different lenses that we are encouraged to look through and one at a time.

Starting the work in the way that I did, as a supportworker, I have been around a lot of different sessions over a few years, pretty much every session that the college has run. And you get to see how a tutor delivers it on the ground. They don't necessarily talk about it to your student. Hey, little Johnny, today we're going to do Practical Skills Therapeutic Education. I think if they don't, even those words are too big for me to understand. So, you've got this sort of like a top down thing and then there's a bottom up thing as well. Somewhere they meet in the middle. Now as a tutor sort of operating somewhere in the middle there, where you receive in the ongoing sort of instruction about what PSTE is because it's not just making draft items, but then at the same time. So you've got the ongoing instruction for the training, but then you're delivering classes every day and you have to deal with the reason why we need PSTE. So that is when you came in and James came up and gave you that sort of gentle I don't know what ...gentle slap in the face. That came out of nowhere. This is the sort of thing that we're having to deal with. Before I start talking and going off on the tangent, what was the question? Are we going to stick with that question or do we

CC: No, I think it is exactly that, isn't it? There's the wonderful theory, isn't it? And then there's the way of implementation, which is actually pretty much sometimes Descent into matter, but not of a person, but actually of this concept of the Seven Fields of Practice. On the way you meet all sorts of resistance, which comes from the students, from the environment, from the logistics, from the time table. And I think that's really interesting.

TU: Yeah, I think PSTE from my perspective, which is the Green Woodwork and the Green Woodwork shelter is on the edge of the woods. It's open on three sides. You can hear the birds singing. We're sat in here right now with the bird singing near us. It's a nice calm environment and there's lots of nature around. Reality is that there are a number of sessions a week I can't get any students into the shelter, so I won't go into how I try and get them in. But the fact that they're on the farm, I would argue that the farm is a therapeutic environment to start with. We've seen that this term, that a student had a full time table up here because they were getting into a lot of trouble down in Sterling Works. The students settled up here, they've not engaged much. I'd say give them about 5% engagement in here, which time wise is very poor, I would have thought if you were to take that as a marker of success or not. But the behavior has settled and the relationship with staff and other students. And today they were in here for the longest time. So far this term, it's about 15 minutes. Considering that they've got about 2 hours available to them, maybe 20 minutes. And in

time it but it was a small amount of time, but that was a bit of test. The students got an idea of what they want to make coming in from their own motivation. And I think that's sort of where we do work quite well is that the student decides they want to do it there's a huge meaning to that rather than but yeah. No it's important we've got the therapeutic environment on the site which I really hope to get students into the woodwork shelter so that you can add the practical skills to the therapy.

It's not just the nature. It's in the nature of doing something purposeful and meaningful because you become inspired and you want to do it in some ways. It is always easy to talk about theory like focus, grasp and step. I was reading on the practice of this guy the other day was he called Coneigel (?). He wrote about it some time ago and then it was picked up by Anderson (?). I'm saying this because I hear people saying: 'the pole lathe is really good for focus, grasp and step.' And focusing very much so on the billet and where the tool is touching it and you got to spin that tool and keep it in the right place.

In a sense if that was just that in itself then so what but when it's combined with other things that the students will produce.

CC: I think that is certainly something that although I am in workshops a lot in between as well, I think it certainly struck me in the days that I was here when I was looking at implementing the method first key is actually getting the students in. And that whole engagement is just huge, that's absolutely huge and that's so individual and actually of course many of the people are so disengaged with education before they come to us. Being here is already huge step, it's interesting for many of them.

TU: I've been employed into this job and I don't have any formal background in woodwork or Green Woodwork. I'm practical and I can learn and teach myself definitely.... what an opportunity. But they took me. Angie and Paul Salt. Gave me the job. I might have been the only person who applied. But obviously they wouldn't have given it to me if anything... My background is in youth work, I have been working with marginalized young people on the street late at night. I'm coming from the point of view where the young people will be disengaged unless someone comes along and offers them something to do. So I'm quite comfortable with engaging the students trying to get them in. I know sometimes it doesn't work and that they'll only come in if they want to. But you can't sit around in the shelter asking 'where are the students doing PST?' until they are coming down. This morning I had quite a few hours of that when I was in.

CC: Absolutely, I have seen in at other times providing very much a work atmosphere, busy at times and today while one person said hello and then he was up again. Also that was in the context of that

94 person actually having engaged before very well and the same with the young gentleman who gave
95 me the slab so you chose that activity because actually the day before it had worked very well with
96 him. Unfortunately then on that particular day he preferred to do other things.

97 TU: It can be frustrating as a tutor. It is an opportunity to use this technology. Which is what it is.
98 One of better ways to describe is rustic technology, but it's off grit and it requires operation from the
99 individual. It's very intentional. You're not just going on a machine and doing it half hearted. You
100 have to really engage with the whole leg and it is frustrating. They don't come in, but conversely it is
101 very satisfying when they do and when you can sort of coach them through the making of the craft
102 item, which is the vehicle for the self development.

103 CC: What would you say then in terms of on your own journey? What were the helpful elements in
104 terms of getting deeper into the method?

105 TU: That's a good question. I've done the Seven Fields of Practice course quite a long time ago, down
106 in Ruskin Mill. Right. So that was quite a long time ago. I was a student journey manager. I've been in
107 the Trust for ten years before I started doing this job in a variety of roles. So, it's a kind of slightly
108 outward facing role, the work experience and student journey manager, where you are dealing with
109 a lot of external recording the work that the tutors and the support workers have done and then
110 you're translating that or presenting it to the stakeholders who are out there. So I would say I think
111 I'm only really starting to, I've only really jumped in with two feet very recently into PSTE. And
112 teaching it. Of course, it runs through everything that college does, but a lot of the jobs have done
113 previously involved in a sort of practical engagement in the outside community, trying to present it
114 in a way that doesn't contain too much jargon. I never saw myself as someone who was evangelizing
115 PSTE in the wider world, rightly or wrongly, because people are very busy and it needs to be quite
116 succinct. The results speak for themselves. So when I think with a lot of stakeholders, you show
117 them results and if they want to talk about how they've got there...

118 CC: So you did that course, was that helpful?

119 TU: That was helpful. And I've done so much training, I have been here for such a long time. We're
120 going over things that we've already done. PSTE. What is that? Because they're all massive subjects
121 and you don't really have very much time to do it on a training days.

122 CC: Anything else that comes to your mind?

123 TU: I would say what's really great is doing the experiential sessions, because you experience what
124 the students experience and I believe that part of our method is to continue working on yourself and
125 your own sort of responses and reactions to working with students. Part of that is doing what they

126 do and feeling the frustration that they do feel. You might break something, but you might go in
127 another session and you're like, I don't want to do this, launching for the door, I'm just going to go
128 make a phone call. This is exactly what students are doing, but you get everyone's different
129 perspectives on how to run a PSTE session. I think when you go to all the different tutor sessions,
130 you get taught different perspectives because it was presented differently.

131 CC: Of course, you are very much drawn to practical skills. Have you had specific things which you
132 thought, oh, that's weird, or interesting or what? So what do I do with this now? And something that
133 you grappled with a bit and where you...

134 TU: ...experience it.

135 CC: No, I mean in terms of the Seven Fields and PSTE, in terms of the theory, let's say, have you had
136 anything where you said, oh, I want to go deeper into that?

137 TU: I think for me, the priority coming into this job is sort of staying one step ahead in the craft
138 world, because that's the engagement tool. But not having a great deal of experience, I want to stay
139 one step, two steps ahead. That's been my priority. On a personal level, I'm probably most
140 interested in genius loci out of all of the Seven Fields of Practice, partly because in my life, I was born
141 in Netheredge, that's 2 miles from here.

142 CC: Okay.

143 TU: It's great to play, be a part of the outdoor city, but in a way that's inclusive and celebratory of
144 diversity. The power of the PSTE, you're able to meet people where they're at, practical skills wise,
145 everyone's at different levels. That's so interesting. How do you work with someone who doesn't
146 appear to be able to make anything or may want to cut themselves on the pole lathe accidentally or
147 on purpose? Either way, through your PSTE, but they can't use any tools. The students whose skills
148 are low, how do you get them on the run? How do you get a foot on the ladder? If you start and
149 that's really interesting, actually. That student in here who didn't seem to be able to have any
150 control over the cuts that he made, and we just blindly pull the blade against the wood and then five
151 minutes later has come out, and he's basically just shaved it to nothing. Slowing down, the practical
152 skills is really interesting. Get your sleeves rolled up, get your boots on.

153 Once a student, I had a student, he had a few gos. He made a spatula in the end, and through that,
154 he learned how to use a blade and not just to shave it to nothing. And he also learned that he can
155 make something. Until now, we've got it. So just using not only a single tool, whereas now we've got
156 him using a variety of different tools. We've got him on the pole lathe.

157 I guess I look to the students for feedback about whether it works.

158 CC: Yeah, that's with all theories. Yeah. Proof is in the pudding, as we say.

159 TU: You see it in the copper room, the gallery, down in Sterling Works. Aonghus or Matt, and he
160 gives lots of very interesting talks and intellectually stimulating. But if it's like here's a guy who can't
161 do it. He sat there trying to shave it. He developed his practical skills and he developed his self
162 leadership.

163 CC: And will you say those talks and lectures and so on, they have given you a kind of new entry
164 point into understanding a young person. If you think back to yourself ten years ago, how you were
165 looking at a young person in your job then just then and how you look at a young person now?

166 TU: I think it's yes, in the way that it's a sort of science of...or a rational framework. I remember
167 when I was first doing youth work and we were doing skateboarding was the engagement tool down
168 at the bottom of the street. And my boss is there and he says: 'It's not about the skateboarding,
169 Mark. It's about the young people develop themselves'. And I see that sort of coming from the same
170 place, but at the end of the day. And I would argue slightly differently. It's about skateboarding and
171 where it takes you. Because if I was doing football down there, the kids wouldn't turn up, but go to
172 better football thing down the road.

173 CC: Right. So you had to be good at skateboarding.

174 TU: That was where my passion was, of course. That was the engagement tool. And within that
175 discipline, there was a structure in which they progressed.

176 But here...There's so much theory, sometimes things get bit confusing, let's say. And I like to keep
177 things as simple as possible, otherwise I forget or have quite a full brain. And if one thing goes in,
178 then something else comes out. But for working with our students, I would say that the method is
179 enlightening in a sense and interesting.

180 And then I feel like it's my job to sort of test it.

181 CC: Some of the ideas, the 12 senses and so on. How is that for you and how has that developed
182 over time?

183 TU: Yeah, good question.

184 CC: First time you met that and where you are now.

185 TU: It's a framework, isn't it? Just because we grew up in a culture where, there's only five senses.
186 That is where we get pushed into in school. This is the way we set the chess board up.

187 Where is your student doing well? What are their strengths within that? Where's the weaknesses, in
188 a way? What is their sense of life? Are they asleep up the top? Diagnose? How we're going to get
189 this? Maybe he needs some food. Being able to use that sort of humanistic kind of approach where
190 you're like, okay, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we're looking at this. I can't test this person's sense
191 of balance because they're laying on the floor. Okay, why are they laying on the floor? Because they
192 like 'I am hungry', okay, we'll improve that one a little bit. Has to be healthier now. 'Come down to
193 wood shelter'. 'I'll come down now'. And then before they are keeling over you can look at the
194 balance. The pole lathe is very good for developing balance, and it can be done incrementally. I think
195 if you were to just say, 'There you go, this is how you do it, get on with it', and someone was
196 struggling with that side of it, then they obviously need more teaching. And there are great graded
197 ways where you can sort of improve that.

198 The warmth down here is very important. A lot of students think that the way to get warm is to put
199 fire on in the winter. Yes. It's not untrue, but actually get warmer by doing something if we get cold.
200 And then this is how you learn to regulate your temperature. We have students who come down. A
201 student is particularly disengaged at the moment. Took him to the shop a couple of days ago. He was
202 the only student who turned up and he looked half dead. He was hungry. I walked with him to the
203 shop and the walk took all morning. We got back in time for lunch. We got some food and then we
204 started talking. And it was very good for our relationship. But yeah, it's go on the whole time. How
205 do you teach people these things. It's really sunny. He said, it's really hot, well, you've got your coat
206 on, your hoodie underneath it. All you can do is draw his attention to it.

207 I think that's part of the power of using the materials is you have to listen to the material, do what it
208 wants you to do. That's fine. Don't mind if you don't do what I want you to do, but I want you to do
209 what you want to do. But I want to make something great. Shave the wood down to nothing. It's
210 like, were you listening to the wood there? Or do you need to adjust what you do in order to kind of
211 find your place in the world and orientation? Have I answered the question?

212 CC: The question was really in terms of how you see kind of specific aspects, for example, from
213 Steiner, which are at odds with how people look at young people out there. Yeah. How you use that,
214 isn't it? Because when you first hear that, that might sound a bit weird and so on, but then you
215 practice with that and use it and you take that as an observation.

216 TU: The senses are a diagnostic approach which give you what the young person needs in a certain
217 area. So I guess young people are complicated and they need a lot of work from all sides.

218 CC: Have you got any interesting observations about working with new staff and especially senior
219 leaders?

220 TU: I haven't been training anyone directly, haven't been doing any of those yet. No. I've been
221 around while they've been going on. I've done training for staff, I've done a couple of training
222 sessions experiential days, and I've been working with students, working with staff who have been
223 here a while. They have been to the talks. And they kind of know where they sit.

224 CC: Any observations on the staff you have worked with?

225 TU: In terms of the method?

226 CC: Yeah, in terms of how they think.

227 TU: People sign up because they want to sign up, because people get a sense of what craft they like
228 and so some people who come up have been very keen. And you really get to see people's
229 personalities and through the activities, how long someone takes and how dedicated they are to
230 making a very smooth finish on the rolling. It would be great to train some new starters. So far I have
231 been settling into the role.

232 When I first started doing it, staff were fine, I didn't have any staff that said you used to work behind
233 the desk. What are you doing in here didn't have any staff who said this, but some students did. But
234 it's been good to take it one step at a time because I've been doing the teacher training.

235 This is sort of an insight from the work with the external stakeholders before from the SJM job, is
236 that there are external frameworks. We've got our internal framework, there is external frameworks
237 as well. And if we call our framework eccentricity, staff and students look quite eccentric here could
238 be argued. And then you look at the wider world, which is useful because they give you holistic
239 development goals when the local authority comes in. How is little Johnny? The work that we do
240 through the method is evident in progress towards the EHCP goals. I think the local authorities think
241 it's lovely that so and so is made a spatula, but also how they have developed. We know in our
242 language how the students have developed. It's a really nice bridge between us and the outside
243 world and what we describe as holistic development.

244 I don't know if I ever end up answering the question.

245 CC: It's interesting how many different journeys into this there are. Every person I'm speaking to of
246 course has their very individual journey and some have been around for quite a few years and some
247 have started yesterday.

248 TU: And if you can be around for a few years and do lots of different roles as well.

249 CC: Yeah.

250 TU: Good. It's an honour to be doing this job for the Trust and it is a great opportunity to help the
251 students.

252 CC: I feel the enjoyment and I share it as well!

253 TU: It is great for you to come down. It's easy to be a bit intimidated by senior leaders and leadership
254 but you have been very approachable. People have come in and we've been working in here and I
255 feel a little bit under the spotlight. Whether I am or not, I don't know. But I felt much being myself.

256 CC: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you very much.

257 TU: Thanks.

13 Interview Woolcraft Tutor (TU), 06/07/2022

In this interview the craft tutor, who I spent a number of days with, reflects on her journey, how she met incidentally crafts and working with people with special needs, how this was very much at contrast with what she knew education was until then and her journey in Ruskin Mill Trust.

1 CC: Yeah. So let's have my... our chat. So what I'm interested in is, how do we implement PSTE, the
2 Seven Fields of Practice as the method of Ruskin Mill? And of course, it is a method that is not
3 available anywhere else. So I'm interested in how people, when they come into the Trust, how they
4 learn about it, what are they taking in, what are the things that are working, what are the things that
5 are not working? And then I'm interested in how we implement it. So how does it then come into
6 action? So I'm especially interested in senior leaders, but I'm also interested in every single person.
7 So maybe you've got a few thoughts on how you came into Ruskin Mill Trust and what are the things
8 that chimed and what are the things that you, I don't know, maybe parked or you found difficult?

9 TU: Trying to think about, where to start. I've always loved making things and my love of making
10 things wasn't about right, from the get go. It wasn't about, I want to make this thing. For me, it was
11 always one of my earliest memories of making things. At school, we'd been given a very specific task
12 of what we were making and it was really boring and I made it really quickly and then it was like
13 making stuff under the table, but I was making stuff so that I could play with the other kids, at the
14 playground, because I wanted more toys to play with. So, I was like making like a little boat and a
15 doll and stuff. And that's always been there for me, that sense of like, it's never just about me and
16 that's sort of like the sense of connection and of what making things gives you and being able to
17 slightly shape your world. And so for years, in any way that I could do that, I did. I volunteered in
18 primary schools, I created projects at big youth camps, and then kind of fell into... I grew up in
19 Sheffield and didn't think that people from here, especially me, could be like an artist or a craft
20 person. It wasn't a part of my worldview, it was like, oh, well, if you're incredibly privileged or if
21 you're phenomenally talented, that's what you do, but that's not what I am.

22 And then I fell into working at Garwald¹ Edinburgh. But loved the way that making was about more
23 obviously with the kind of sign and methodology underpinning everything. And also, the way that a
24 huge part of the organization was the idea that anyone who walked through the door or anyone
25 who attended a workshop. Even for five minutes. Even if they attended and they just chatted to
26 people. They attended and they swept the floor. They attended and they made tea or break. You
27 were totally part of that workshop and you had a really strong identity of such. So the members that

¹ A Steiner based initiative in Scotland working with adults with learning disabilities

13 Interview Woolcraft Tutor

28 used to come in with a whole range of physical and learning disabilities, I mainly worked in the
29 pottery. They were considered potters, even if they never...

30 [unfortunately, due to technical difficulties the recording ended here]

14 Interview

14 interview Greenwoodwork Tutor and Training Coordinator, 23/06/2022 Interview (in lieu of virtual focus group)

This interview was planned as a cross trust focus group, inviting people who had indicated in the survey that they were willing to participate. However, with only one participant being present it was then agreed to proceed as an interview. The participant, from his own experiences as a craft person (woodwork and spinning) and now training coordinator, emphasised the importance of practical experience in inductions of senior leaders as well as other staff and how this was seen as a path of initiation in the earlier days of Ruskin Mill. He also described how his understanding of Eastern spirituality as well as the understanding of the origins and craft traditions going back to ice age and stone age people helped him to understand aspects of the method of Ruskin Mill Trust.

1 CC: Wonderful. Well, thank you, [name of tutor] , for making the time. That's great. So I have
2 explained a bit where I am in this study. So I've done a survey, I've done some workshop
3 observations, and now I'm doing some interviews and focus groups. So in my overall question is still
4 how do we implement the Seven Fields and what should the training for senior leaders and
5 governours be? So I suppose that comes really from my day to day experience, that senior leaders
6 and governours can have a huge impact on these things. From my experience. Also how we I'm
7 especially interested in terms of how we bring senior leaders into the organisation.

8 TU: Absolutely vital. Ruskin Mill has got such a strange way of approaching life, if I could put it that
9 way, that anybody coming in from the mainstream not only have to get to grips with all the usual
10 mandatory functions or organisations such as this, but there's this very strange way of working with
11 your hands, head and heart. Now, dealing with that, you either embrace it or after a shorter or
12 longer time, you burn out, leadership is not effective in that interim period. So I think your question
13 is absolutely vital. I've seen it so many times. People, they can talk the talk, but I think unless they
14 actually do the craft and grow on the land, it eventually comes unstuck.

15 CC: Have you got any ideas of what are the ingredients that make it work?

16 TU: I think ... a willingness to think outside of the box is vital. If you are too rigid in the standard
17 approaches to education and governance, then I think you're going to struggle in Ruskin Mill. If you
18 are willing to confront things and sit with things that you are initially first of all totally ignorant of
19 and are prepared to admit that. But you go ...you listen to a lecture bywell... perhaps none other
20 than Aonghus and are prepared to admit that you missed 95% of it. But rather than rejecting that
21 you are prepared to sit with the discomfort of not knowing and go back to that and constantly revisit
22 it. That eventually you will start to understand. You will find things repeat and eventually it's a

shorter or longer time, depending on the individual and their history, it's almost as if the penny will drop. It may not be conscious, but eventually you'll go, yes, I know where we are with this. I know better how it works. I know where I am here. Now, that can take a long time and be quite a challenging process, I remember somebody saying that it's like a spiritual path and those who come here expecting they're just doing a job and getting paid for a job and they go home and that's the end of it. I'm afraid it's for a bit of a rude awakening because it requires a lot more than that. There is this general openness to challenge and discomfort which I think all staff has to come to grips with. And I think the higher you are up in the organisation, the more uncomfortable it can get. For the TAs¹, yeah, they can kind of take it or leave it as long as they don't totally reject it. Those teachers, craft tutors, really have to start understanding what they're doing, why this works in a very intangible way that it does work, because it's very hard to tie down. We're very much led by the system of education these days, which is very much at odds with a very nebulous, heartfelt feeling approach to a lot of the Ruskin Mill method.

And it's tying these together. That is constantly a challenge for the whole Trust. We have got to the apply the mandatory training and so on. There's no question about safeguarding. You have to educate people in reading and writing, arithmetic, all the traditional things that students have got to learn. But alongside that, the whole reason that Ruskin Mill is here, that we do much more than that. We're dealing with the whole person, not bits of the intellect of a person.

Yeah, I would say from the point of view of senior leadership, they're in for quite a challenge. I have to be aware that this is a deep challenge to them. I don't know how that's put across in interviews, but I see people go come full of enthusiasm. A year or two later, it didn't quite work out, I'm moving on.

CC: Where else could be ingredients that make it work for those people or make it work better? Where have you seen glimpses of that?

TU: Well, I think people who get into the workshops, the workshop that we have and the biodynamic agriculture that we cultivate is not something you will generally find elsewhere. Unless people that come from a craft or farming background and there are fewer of these, particularly in education. They won't get it until they literally get their hands on it. And getting into the workshop can be a revelation. You sometimes even hear people saying, that was amazing, I really get it now. But being in a making environment, using their hands skillfully, possibly for the first time or after a very long time, is almost a healing for their intellect. So many of us are coming from I don't know quite how to

¹ Teaching Assistants

54 describe the present society, a systems based society. And we go back to something which nurtured
55 humanity before the intellectual systems of the European Enlightenment. So it's medieval and
56 earlier and that's a very different way of thinking. So things that have come since the scientific
57 revolution, late 16th and 17th centuries are very different in feel and approach and attitude. I think
58 it's changing, but very slowly.

59 The leading edge of science, those scientists are really thinking outside the box, but that hasn't yet
60 filtered through to society. There's a time lag. It's still very mechanistic.

61 CC: Have you got a little scenario or description where you have the senior leader in your workshop
62 where the penny dropped?

63 TU: Yes. Are we allowed to mention names?

64 CC: Well, I will cut them out afterwards anyway, but that's fine. You can mention them to me now,
65 just for the context.

66 TU: Okay. I forgot about it. I didn't get the whole story because part of it was related to Aonghus
67 when she got back down to Ruskin Mill. Karen Herrington², who resisted and resisted and resisted
68 and Aonghus eventually insisted. You're going down to Clervaux and you're making three legged
69 stool, whether you like it or not. She really did, but then she got into the workshop and she
70 absolutely adored it. She came back with a really beautiful stool and said, why didn't I do this early?
71 A good question. We're all just like the students. We come across a barrier and it's painful. We don't
72 want to go there. We think we're going to fail. Senior Leadsers they are no different. We are going
73 into a workshop where you have no idea what's going on. We're going to use tools which could
74 possibly injure you quite badly. The whole idea of glass blowing terrifies me whereas I am quite
75 happy with sharp axes.

76 CC: Yeah. Have you done glass blowing?

77 TU: No, I haven't. Oh, okay.

78 CC: Yeah. So would you say then, what's the challenge then, for people to get into kind of the
79 practice and the practical part of the method then really this kind of engaging in something you're
80 actually not a master of, and hence you become quite vulnerable, actually, isn't it. Because you don't
81 know how it goes.

² Name changed

82 TU: Yeah, it could go very badly. Usually it doesn't. No. Senior leaders, say, have already proven
83 themselves in education, in academia, in previous life, so they are already accomplished people.
84 Otherwise they would not be senior leaders. It is probably a bigger challenge for them anyway. So
85 putting yourself back in a position of vulnerability is possibly an even bigger ask for them. Than
86 asking some kid who's been checked out of school: 'I'm a failure anyway'. So we're all very much like
87 the students, just a matter of degree. Senior Leaders are much more skillful at coming up with very
88 creative excuses.

89 CC: Well, you have got some colleagues, some senior leaders who you are looking after their
90 induction, isn't it? What are your experiences around that?

91 TU: Getting them out of the office, for a start. There's never any time, time is a great difficulty.

92 CC: Have you got any examples where you have together overcome that?

93 TU: Not really, because I haven't had very much time myself yet. I only really just started in the four
94 day Heart run, so inductions are fairly high on my list generally, because inductions are something
95 that's a really difficult fit in, for all staff, not just senior leaders. So that's one of my big challenges
96 now, is how to find time to release tutors, to do the teaching and release staff at the same time to
97 do a hands on induction. The mandatories are a fairly straightforward you just send them a
98 computer link and they get on with it- well I hope they do. The hands on stuff is much more difficult
99 to do that properly. I'm asking my heart colleagues if they have any advice for me about how they do
100 it. So, yeah, I might be able to answer that question a little more coherently next year.

101 CC: Okay, yeah.

102 TU: But yeah, finding time, it is time that is the difficulty. And releasing people off school timetable.
103 But residential it's a nightmare to penetrate that. Their shift patterns are so at variance with
104 everybody else's. Pinning them down to do any sort of craft is near to impossible. But I'm trying to
105 find a solution.

106 CC: Greenwood Works session at 10:00 in the evening.

107 TU: *[laughter]* That's probably well, yes, why not the night shift? Yeah, I'm thinking I might have to
108 take miniature workshops out to the houses. Yes, okay, why not?

109 CC: Yeah, that would be wonderful.

110 TU: A but tricky with blacksmithing...

111 CC: So what about your own journey, C, into the method? What were the helpful things? How did
112 you get into it? You were always there, that's all I know. You have always been there. So since the
113 midst of time, I suppose there was a beginning at some point.

114 TU: Okay? I got into woodwork because I needed a job. A friend of mine was a cabinet maker and he
115 wandered off to the workshop and pottered around all day and created a marvellous piece of
116 furniture and sold it for a profit and made a business out of it rather good. And at the time it was a
117 fashion for pine furniture and it was pretty basic stuff. I looked at it and mentally took it apart and
118 thought, well, I could do that. So got some wood, basic tools, started knocking out some furniture,
119 selling them at craft stalls and things. It worked, then I thought, well, I can do this if I charge three
120 times price. That worked very well. And with the profits from selling, I plowed that back in and
121 bought some power tools. Also worked with a furniture making company. Setting up at the same
122 time as me and I was reasonably okay with the hand tool. I was terrified by the machinery, so they
123 taught me how to use the machinery, which, looking back, it was pretty old fashioned stuff that we
124 were using then. But I got used to handling power tools and could churn out cabinet quality
125 furniture. Also, of course, you needed a lathe and couldn't afford a machine lathe. I saw a book
126 about how to make your own lathe. Bits of wood and string and things, built one, followed the
127 instructions and looked at it and thought, what a waste of time. Built that one. It will never work.
128 And that was my revelation. That was, wow, this is what I want to do.

129 Made lots of bad chair legs, eventually they got better. I made chairs, sold those few chairs, but it
130 was mostly to order, so I would only make if I knew I sold. That prevented a lot of stuff being piled
131 up.

132 CC: Yeah. Okay.

133 TU: It's always a bit of a struggle making a living out of production. Particularly if you're on your own
134 and have only small equipment. So I got a phone call out of the blue. Somebody see me at a craft fair
135 or heard of me from somewhere. Do you want to come and teach? I've got this outdoor school in
136 Weatherby needs to be one or two days a week. We bring kids back from inner city Leeds and they
137 do all these wonderful crafts. Total chaos. Yes. There was some basic pole lathe, there was a
138 blacksmith there. Kids came out from Leeds, thought they have been sent to gulag in Siberia or
139 something. Had no idea where they were, what they were doing. Spent a lot of our time running
140 around trying to catch them. We did a bit, but it wasn't well set up, I don't think. There wasn't the
141 educational therapeutic thoroughness. There wasn't the research, certainly not what Ruskin Mill
142 puts into this. So without that, it didn't last very long. It moved on to much more looking into care
143 farming.

144 CC: Okay. Yeah.

145 TU: Which was much more gentle, less craft based, doing things well. I think with that, it was
146 reasonably successful. Then went to a dinner party, and Ben Chaser³ was at the party. We got
147 talking. He said I've got this place, Clobeck Eco Centre. Do come and have a look. I'm just finishing a
148 straw bale building; we are doing crafts. We do land work. So I went, marvelous place. Straw bale
149 building just about being finished. Beautiful. Great ideas for craft work. Give you a hand when you
150 need some green woodwork doing. I've got my own set of lathes. I can do teaching, so did that. Very
151 good. When there was funding, then the funding ran out. It was very stop start, Ben talked to
152 Aonghus and the rest is history.

153 CC: Yeah. How did you then from being a crafter into PSTE and the conceptual side of things?

154 TU: Let's say very slowly, because this was when this was around about 2010, maybe a bit earlier,
155 2008. PSTE had not really emerged as such yet. It was 'descent into matter'. I was pretty involved
156 with a Buddhist centre.

157 There was quite a bit of Buddhist influence at the time within Ruskin Mill⁴. So I could kind of get a
158 handle on a lot of it from the Oriental perspective. And then, of course, Steiner forming this
159 synthesis of Western esoteric Christianity and the Eastern stream coming through Theosophy that
160 synthesis that he made and created Anthroposophy⁵. I could kind of see where that was coming
161 from, the possibilities of how this could be used therapeutically.

162 At the time Arian⁶, we did a lot of blacksmithing together. Okay. Well, this is how it works with the
163 students. You are in the place of the student. How are you feeling now, this craft that you're not
164 familiar with? The fire, Arian was a fiery character. It was an initiation, that initiation has now
165 become induction. They are not the same. It has been toned down. It's been institutionalized. So it
166 was something of an initiation. Also, I was invited to take up another craft, which I was not familiar
167 with. So I don't do textiles. Can't go with textile stuff, can't measure them. Don't sit still. Read paper
168 work. I do spinning. It was really frustrating. Most basic of threads, but there was something about
169 the engineering of the wheel, the manipulation of the material to go from a cloud of prepared fibre
170 into a hard thread, which then forms the basis of further craft. Weaving or knitting or whatever you
171 can do with a thread. That was fascinating. So that set me off on a little excursion into understanding

³ Name changed, local farmer and social entrepreneur

⁴ Possible referring to the chair of trustees, long standing colleague of Aonghus Gordon and main protagonist in bringing Clervaux forward being a Buddhist

⁵ Steiner was initially in the Theosophical Society and then created from this Anthroposophy

⁶ Blacksmith at Ruskin Mill College at the time

172 the technology of spinning wheels and the history of spinning. It was actually really, really simple. It
173 is imply a stick, you use a pointy stick.

174 There are sites. Very few remains of actual appear to be woven textiles going back right to the cave
175 people of the ice age; much earlier than anybody has suspected. So there is a history to textile which
176 yet has to be explored. So I made a great wheel.

177 The woodwork ties in beautifully with the textile; so you can make the tools that then feed into
178 another craft, and the blacksmithing will feed into woodwork. Because in the blacksmith forge, I
179 make the hooked tools to make wooden bowls. And you've got to make your own tools. They're not
180 really being adequately produced these days. They're still hand made by individual craftsmen. Unless
181 you can find a good one who will teach you how to use his particular style of tools, you really need
182 to make your own. So all these crafts fit together. The way Ruskin Mill operates as a craft community
183 replicates very much the way a medieval village would have slotted together like a jigsaw each craft
184 feeding the other. So this is a totally natural way of building up an integrated community.

185 The idea, that biodynamic idea of the farm as an organism. Well, the crafts are organs within that
186 organism, are like the organs of that being, and they all interreact and feed each other.

187 CC: Yeah, very good point.

188 TU: This is why Ruskin Mill has the strength to have the basic craft in all its centres. Then you get the
189 outliers like glass blowing. Only the Glasshouse is going to do that. Or metalwork in Sheffield, of
190 course. They have their speciality. Yes. But all of them have the basic craft, and that's so valuable.
191 Take one away and the whole lot is weakened.

192 CC: Wonderful. Well, I think that's a very nice panorama that you've drawn there for me.

193 TU: Yeah. Good.

194 CC: Well, if there are any other thoughts that come to you, let me know and drop me a few lines or
195 anything like that. But I think that's already quite a bit to draw out from, let's say. Good. Thank you.
196 Well, I have another go at another focus group, I think, in two weeks time, haven't I? Or next week,
197 maybe. I believe so. Let's see who comes for that.

198 TU: Well, I hope you get somebody.

199 CC: Thank you very much.

200 TU: Okay, thank you.

201 CC: Thank you. All the best. Bye.

15 Interview Animal Care Tutor, 06/07/2022 [in lieu of second cross Trust focus group]

In this interview, which was meant to be a focus group, the tutor gives his insights into coming to Ruskin Mill from another Steiner informed organisation, Camphill, and how he learned to understand PSTE better.

1 CC: Right, good. Yes. So I'm at the stage where I've done a survey, a cross Trust survey which you
2 have completed. You were one of the people who have seen it through all the way to the end. So
3 thank you for that. I've been doing a number of workshop observations and taken part of course,
4 and then I've done quite a few individual interviews of craftspeople, senior leaders, trustees and that
5 is all very interesting. So, my general question is really how do we implement the Seven Fields of
6 Practice and what are the helpful things and what are the things which are difficult? And I'm
7 especially interested in how people come into the organization and, into the organisation, and how
8 they learn about the Seven Fields, how they understand it, first of all before they work with it,
9 basically. Right. And of course, the context is that PSTE is something coming out of Steiner's insights
10 and a few other people but it's also something that one can really only find in that framework in
11 Ruskin Mill Trust. So yeah, maybe you've got some thoughts on how you joined the organisation and
12 how that was for you?

13 TU¹: Wow, seems like a long time ago. For me, of course we were first Steiner School background in
14 Brazil and then many years in living in Camphill. Although ideas are very different, well, they still
15 have a common theme so it wasn't anything... for me very much at home. It was not very strange...
16 yeah....to come to it and...if my early days back since....when I first came to Camphill. We used to live
17 in this place called Coleg Elydeir down in Wales and the principal at the time was a Danish woman.
18 She was touching, and her whole model and I think she had something I think she worked with her....
19 She had connections not necessarily from that type so we had a college for young adults yeah....from
20 doing to understanding....they also have lots of work and crafts and arts. Which I think it relates as
21 well with the practical therapeutic education at...through our body we can really eventually work
22 something that will help us be a little bit more control of ourselves so that's what we want to
23 provide for our students....sometimes disappointed, not disappointed....

24 And then the Seven Fields of practice. Of course...and I cannot say I completely fully
25 understand....but I can see that especially maybe towards which I can....actually then trying to.... and
26 then it goes through almost, the craft and then the care and then the medicine....thinking of that
27 now if you think that the human being is actually developing to potentially we should I think still in

¹ The participant had English as his second language. Errors in grammar etc were kept as they were.

28 futures to come we will have seven bodies....from our ego, then our astral then our etheric. That
29 might as well actually have thinking our limit connection with the Seven Fields because you really
30 have this whole approach that it goes from the body. Our material through our spirit and all that
31 transform where you get at the end of the transformative leadership never thought this came now
32 yeah....A picture for me to work a little bit more.

33 Well for me it is a full integration of everything. We just don't especially but I think for us just as
34 much as our students or residents but this approach that works in all those fields and if they really
35 can combine in harmony then of course we are helping with the...person....strengthening the ego.

36 CC: Was there anything new, anything completely different that you found in Ruskin Mill compared
37 to your previous experience?

38 TU: Something that I found....actually some ideas that from.... Ruskin hadn't really come across much
39 before. I had heard the name Ruskin Mill, never really had come across some of his ideas that of
40 course he integrated in Ruskin Mill Trust that was new. Still working on them to fully ...because it is
41 the genius loci of the institution, you have to know their origins. I don't know if necessary it's new
42 but I think what I found. Exactly like research and things that you are doing that we are trying to
43 bring into even potentially for the public to understand why the public all these ideas that are not so
44 easy to understand in a way. From Anthroposophy, I think actually Aonghus is very good at that
45 sometimes it can stick. But sometimes bring it down in simple...maybe easier to understand.... but it
46 is how we unite our experience....

47 I think from mainly most of my life... Of course the big difference was do we live in the community?
48 Of course, asking you yeah, we need to create because they are not necessary on our doorstep. Just
49 because the way we lived before.

50 CC: Okay, yes, that's right. Yeah, that's interesting because that's very different. Have you been
51 working with new staff who are joining Ruskin Mill Trust on inductions, for example?

52 TU: No, not with my closed sessions in the beginning, but now I haven't been doing much of that....at
53 the moment.

54 CC: Yeah, okay. Have you had any observations of new staff joining when they come working with
55 the students in terms of have you been explaining elements of the method to them or have they had
56 questions to you why you do things?

57 TU: Yeah, I can go back a little bit. Like I said before, I think when we still all together a little bit
58 smaller. I used to do a lot of the animal induction in the early days of the school. Yeah, for me and

59 that's why I actually like to do that. I always try to not just teach them what I need to do with the
60 animals. I could say most of the people that they were interested in a little bit why do you do
61 because some things might not be necessary. It could do another way but there's a reason why we
62 try like that. So the involvement with the students or the residents and I think most people really...
63 what an animal can bring to a student I think in general they sound really sort of interesting to
64 have...even comments later ...sometimes it's by doing formal can be a nice.... like while we are doing
65 things they can see it's not just like induction in a room and thenit did work really nice.... for
66 people to think usually when they especially because of course some people are also very new to
67 animals apart from... and they are then now supporting students with the feeding. But like I said....
68 because of this likely....

69 I have the students but I've been done more, I still get people and support. That's actually true, it's
70 not necessarily induction but they still come and support the students on the timetable.

71 In general, I think I'm luck because I think we have quite a lot of farming. I think most of the craft
72 that people really enjoy for them, they haven't maybe done things like that before.

73 That's the feeling for most of the staff I have interact together so they're also in a learning curve as
74 well or learning path, some of these new things but by engaging or enjoying these things then of
75 course, hopefully that will help, I think with the students, with the whole place because then it
76 doesn't become a dead boring job. There are lighting things that people can sell, people get
77 woodwork out. I think he helped staff most of them....might be some who don't like.... but I think for
78 minority, the ones we have here, they like and they are very happy to support people through these
79 different activities which they sometimes can involve themselves as well.

80 CC: Yeah. Have you got a specific example where somebody asked you oh, how come you doing it in
81 that way?

82 TU: Well, that's also a common question from students or residents, which is mucking out the barn
83 why do I like to as much as possible sometimes? First, because we don't have a tractor, but second
84 because why do I like to do by hand?

85 CC: Yeah.

86 TU: And then of course. I need to explain to them there are two reasons one reason of course. That's
87 pure farming point of view that if you pick little chunks that's going to be much more air on your
88 compost and at the end or at the grab big length sometimes we need to do for time but then I said
89 also they could see...people sometimes not for long. But they usually really engage with this mucking

90 out. It's a simple task for your board, you need to grab your fort andapart from I think it's better
91 for the compost that's the main reason why I like to do my hand as much as possible.

92 Maybe it's not just a boring thing, but some people say oh, that's true, he really engaged. Not
93 necessarily words for everybody, but some people really don't like the muck... but in general the task
94 is a little bit more supportive to help we finish.

95 Like I said, usually people especially not the best job for the first time we do not never had contact
96by giving those explanations. Explain me a little bit. It's helpful to engage staff and then it works...

97 CC: Have you got any observations on have you sometimes got senior leaders working with you?

98 TU: Sorry?

99 CC: Have you got senior leaders working with you? Sometimes with the animals?

100 TU: No, that hasn't happened actually for a long, long time....For a long, long time....The only one
101 here you be [name of person] because he's also responsible is different. They used to cover at least
102 one session. They are not such a big group. I think [name of person] did came actually. An extra
103 student, we are going to do some animal feeding.

104 CC: Yeah, absolutely. I think that's a very good idea.

105 TU: It is just the time.

106 CC: Have you got any other thoughts on implementing the method. What might be helpful for staff
107 or what has been helpful in your experience?

108 TU: I think what is helpful I do think...we cannot have forever, but the sessions usually I think at least
109 as a taste of these induction, sometimes it's like a week that they can do a little bit of all the craft
110 before fully. So I think that's a taste. Now here at Clairvaux, which should be happening today, but I
111 had committed here. I think we're just trying to now on Wednesday to go with staff through the
112 Practitioner's Guide.

113 CC: Oh, great. Yeah, that's a very good idea.

114 TU: And then hopefully that you help that time they are seeing...I think the more we can talk. But
115 sometimes ...I think a lot of it is.... we can have all these very nice little seminars or talks and
116 Aonghus did all the seven. Which is I think a lot of the learning staff it goes through and they really
117 join a session with someone and through the little interactions and maybe one question and that
118 side is important because of course not everything you can say on the list at that time. I think those

119 little inductions are then...I am really looking forward...For going through the Practitioner Guide also
120 would strengthen sort of keeping it aware at all times because it shouldn't just be.

121 CC: Yeah, that's right.

122 TU: I think that's. It's time for newcomers that's really we are still managing most of the time they
123 can do that at least for a few days, even if it's just three or four days that they can really
124 experience...and that hopefully just doesn't...because I don't think this also...to help be curious. So
125 I'm hoping we are doing something like discussions groups. It might be a nice way to try to explore
126 this, but that's very new for us.

127 CC: Good. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for your time. It was a bit of a small focus group.

128 TU: Sorry. I'm sorry.

129 CC: Well, I had hope that I had at least ten to 15 people, but I suppose I had three apologies and I
130 think the rest of people I'm not sure, but of course it was from a survey about four or five months
131 back. So it might be that people have forgotten about it and don't know what it is and so on.

132 TU: This time of the year can be quite tricky.

133 CC: Thank you for your time.

134 TU: Yeah, thank you.

135 CC: If you've got any other thoughts, very happy. If you send me an email or something like that,
136 you'll be very welcome. Yeah, thank you. Yeah, thanks. Good to see you. [name]. All the best. Okay,
137 bye.

16 Focus Group (School¹), Teaching Assistants (TA), Classteacher (Clt), Craftteacher (Crt), Speech and Language Therapist(SaLT), Landworker (LW) 28/06/2022

In this focus group the group explores critically what the method means to them, from different perspectives in the group, and its relationship with the usual education paradigm as well as with the daily requirements of the work with the students.

- 1 CC: So, my research question is how do we implement the Seven Fields? And I'm really
2 interested in the whole journey of us having a method. So then that is already controversial if
3 you're starting there. So what does that actually mean? So there is PSTE and Seven Fields. Of
4 course, then there are various interpretations of what that is. How has that been formed? So
5 there are some thoughts from Steiner, from Ruskin, from Morris, but I suppose there is a lot
6 coming from Steiner in terms of when you look at Biodynamics, for example, Field Three, that is
7 pretty much really drawn from Steiner. Field Four, human physic development and the twelve
8 senses that is probably also very much drawn from Steiner.
- 9 For example, Field One, that is something that Steiner doesn't really talk about, but that is really
10 an interpretation from Aonghus, if you want so and drawing on Goethe.
- 11 LW: I can't remember all the fields, so you might have to remind ...
- 12 CC: Yeah, so Field One is the Genus Loci.
- 13 LW: Okay.
- 14 CC: So it is really this construction if you want. So that's what we say that is our method. And
15 then I'm really interested in the whole journey of pretty much every individual staff member
16 understanding what the method is, because before you implement something, you need to
17 probably understand what it is. And we're all on a journey there in terms of having maybe
18 favoured certain parts of it and doing certain parts of it, and then it suddenly becomes a very
19 complex thing that is going on there because of course, there are also all sorts of logistical
20 issues around that in terms of what is the perfect time table for a student? A student should
21 maybe do 60% outdoors, 30% indoors, more cognitive things, maybe more hands-on things.
22 And before all of that happens, you've got the whole engagement piece as well.

¹ Name of the school replaced with 'School'

23 Yeah, so that is what I'm looking at. I have done a staff survey and I have done some workshop
24 observations and now I'm doing focus groups and interviews. So that's the journey, just to let
25 you know that.

26 Maybe it would be good to start with the question of what has been helpful to you in terms of
27 understanding the method in your individual journey as you have joined Ruskin Mill Trust. And I
28 wonder whether we can do when you say what that was, if you can just say your role and how
29 long you've been at the School or in the Trust.

30 LW: Can I just ask a clarifying question?

31 CC: Absolutely.

32 LW: Your question is how do we implement the Seven Fields? Who is the 'we' that you're talking
33 about?

34 CC: All of us.

35 LW: The School, specifically the Trust, all of the different colleges, all of the different branches
36 of that.

37 CC: But the question is really to you in your place.

38 LW: And when you're talking about our understanding and implementing of the 'method', what
39 is your understanding of what the 'method' is?

40 CC: Well, that is the question.

41 LW: Okay.

42 CC: Yeah. So it is the Seven Fields. Okay. But I'm very aware that all five, six people in this room
43 will have six different versions of that understanding.

44 TA: So it will be translated individually.

45 CC: Exactly. And I'm interested in exploring what have been the helpful mechanisms or the not
46 helpful mechanisms for you to get into that. So, I was keen to have this group also not with
47 people who line-manage each other. So this is also... you will be anonymized in the transcript
48 and nobody gets to read the transcript anyway apart from people in the university, just to know.
49 So I'm not here as a manager in Ruskin Mill Trust. Today I'm a researcher.

50 Clt: What is your role in the Trust?

51 CC: I am Director of PSTE, so my job is to help people implementing the method.

52 SaLT: I feel we need to work out what the method is.

53 LW: It is a bit of a chicken and egg situation.

54 Clt: In order to implement the method, we first need to understand what the method is and from
55 my understanding so PSTE. So let's start with the acronym. Practical Skills Therapeutic
56 Education. Okay, great, we know that. And then there are Seven Fields which are to be
57 implemented as well. So in your Seven Fields, your Genius Loci, Spirit of Place, number one.

58 SaLT: It is not that they have to be implemented as well. It's just that's what constitutes the
59 overarching practical skills? If you are covering those seven bases you are doing practical skills.
60 I think...

61 Clt: I think...

62 SaLT: You think we can name them all between us?

63 TA: I want to know because when you're doing a databridge², you kind of like look at what
64 actually students have met on that particular day. So is it Genius Loci, Transformative
65 Leadership or Practical Skills, Therapeutic Education. They kind of interlink. You look at it like,
66 what have they done today? Let's say, they were on the farm, mugged out the pigs. So obviously
67 when we're on their side, so they fall under all those or they have taken the leadership
68 themselves by leading the activity. So we normally tick that as we tick their target. It depends
69 on... we work together.

70 Crt: Yeah, I normally just tick a couple. I'm lucky in what I do in my craft. I've been here five
71 years, a craft tutor is my role. I think I can tick quite a lot of the kind of Fields of Practice boxes
72 because working with Role, it is about alchemy, so we look at the biodynamic side of things. We
73 look at foraging, look at collecting, then how we can implement that in the classroom or
74 outdoors. So we make remedies. So that's like Holistic Medicine side of stuff. I think the
75 Therapeutic Education is in there because when they get in the zone, they are working quite
76 often without knowing they're working. They want to use pestel and mortar, they want to
77 measure things out, they want to create something that's going to be beneficial to a human
78 being. Also as well, I feel as if there's an element of transformational leadership as well
79 because they then become quite empowered and I can stand back and then almost they then
80 can reinvent what they're doing using the skills that they've already learned. So from a craft
81 point of view, we are the masters, the experts, whatever you want to call this. We give them the

² 'doing databridge' refers to recording an occurrence or situation on the MIS system for the student

82 skills to then utilize and then cascade and share and offer and then produce things that are
83 purposeful and beneficial.

84 CC: In your journey into Ruskin Mill Trust, where have you picked up things and saw and all
85 that? Part of the method is a different method to what I have known before.

86 Crt: Yeah. Probably during training. The induction when I came here we had a full two weeks
87 induction I don't know if that still happens in the intensity.

88 Clt: I think it's the ideal but it certainly doesn't happenI had two days.

89 Crt: Right. I think we did the craft qualification for a year and so that was intense as well.

90 CC: The Pedagogic Potential of Craft.

91 Crt: Okay. Yeah. So we did that. I think that was even more information we're always constantly
92 in training being asked to reflect and translate what information we've been given and how we
93 can then disseminate that out and how does that affect how you can teach with our students?
94 Does that make sense?

95 Salt: I am a bit different because I am [name], the Speech and Language Therapist, whilst
96 ideally we'd work really closely with classes and out in the sessions it's not always possible to
97 meet the needs of the students and the direct therapy that they need and are funded for in a
98 class setting or out on the land. I did a degree in Steiner Waldorf education so I have some
99 background in it. But interestingly I still feel that lots of the training is pitched really high and
100 despite having an undergraduate degree when there's Steiner terminology flying around or
101 online lectures to watch I find them quite inaccessible even with an undergraduate degree and I
102 know that lots of people at school have also not accessed them which I don't find surprising
103 given three years of studying stuff and not...emh...

104 CC: And you found it difficult to access even with Steiner background. Really?

105 SaLT: Admittedly quite a long time ago. When I was 20 and I am now 37. And obviously some of
106 it is coming back like... I've not really worked with it since then. I worked at St Christopher's³ in
107 Bristol and then a Camphill⁴ in Thornbury outside of Bristol so it's starting to drop in. But I think
108 it's like 'use it or lose it' and if you're not using it all the time or reflecting on it all the time it's

³ Originally a Steiner inspired initiative

⁴ ditto

109 gone. But my hope is to be able to marry the approaches together more but it's quite hard to do
110 that at the moment.

111 LW: I think you're right, sorry, [name], land teacher. I think you're right that there's lots of
112 assumptions when we get those lectures that people have a basis in philosophy...

113 SaLT: And as it is worse it makes somebody watch a lecture or even half a lecture and say I'm
114 not watching it....

115 LW: It just goes completely...

116 SaLT: And that's a real shame whereas if we could start... But I was reflecting on this earlier and
117 wondering, like some people have been here a long time like yourself if there was some sort of
118 spiral curriculum whereby if you were a new starter you got some really basic head. Heart.
119 Hands. Will forces. That kind of stuff and then as you progress you got a deeper understanding I
120 don't know how it would work.

121 Crt: I felt like that's what I got because obviously when I came I came with some interest with
122 Steiner and my own self research. But when I came here, it kind of joined all the dots together
123 because I felt like I've got a really good deal with the pedagogical potential of craft and all fed
124 into that.

125 SaLT: But then you've got to remember you're coming in as a teacher with curiosity and
126 interests and not the woo, if you like, isn't unusual to you. You don't see it. We've got LSAs that
127 wouldn't consider anything other than...

128 Crt: At interviews, should they be sort of questioned to see if that's interesting them?

129 LW: It certainly happened in my teaching interview, but I don't come from a Steiner background.
130 My route into teaching was more traditional, although I've worked in sort of other organizations,
131 not just in mainstream education, but yeah, so the Steiner stuff is very new and something that I
132 Googled a lot of in advance of my interview. So I had some idea I would do that for any sort of
133 religious school or that I was going for an interview for I would find out about the method. But I
134 think that it's very different if you come from a Steiner background and that's your kind of whole
135 world or your whole experience of teaching is from that background, rather than if you're kind of
136 coming in as an outside person. So you can see the value. You absolutely see the value of the
137 Practical Skills education, but some of the more esoteric stuff is quite difficult to get your head
138 around, even if you have the desire to.

139 CC: Are you on the biodynamic course?

- 140 LW: I am, yeah.
- 141 CC: How is that?
- 142 LW: Well, interesting. Yeah.
- 143 CC: That can be a bit more esoteric.
- 144 LW: Very.
- 145 CC: You will be going very deep.
- 146 CrT: I've never been put on that course.
- 147 CC: Okay.
- 148 CrT: I researched that already. So there's a lot of the spiritual science stuff and the cosmic stuff
149 and the vibrations and things like that. That whole ritual.
- 150 LW: I totally understand the value of ritual. That's fine.
- 151 CrT: But there is also science, science involved as well.
- 152 LW: That is the issue, is that there isn't. Yes. And that's because it's not actual science. That is
153 my take home. The more I learn about biodynamic ecology, the more worried I am about it. I'm
154 learning a lot, but I am learning a lot about that. That is very interesting.
- 155 SaLT: I think sometimes in a school like this, I think it's safe to say there's a lot of students with
156 a lot of high needs, a lot of behavior that challenges. A workday can be quite stressful getting to
157 the end of the day sometimes it's like 'Halleluja'. In all honesty, the Seven Fields of Practice,
158 sometimes feel a million miles away because you're just not reflecting on that all the time, or
159 you're just trying not to get punched or trying to stop that time from getting punched. So that
160 can, I guess, marrying the philosophy with the actual short phase the of the day to day in the
161 school.
- 162 LW: Yeah. And it's not specifically built into the curriculum, is it? Or is it?
- 163 Clt: Yeah. [name] class teacher I've only ever been 32 years of mainstream teaching, but I've
164 always been a practical subject teacher and henc I've come through to the School. But the
165 planning does take on board... because your initial planning is.... you do look at some fields and
166 you do work out from the one statement that freedom or transition or whatever. So you're
167 looking at how to build a curriculum around it. But that's the ideal. In reality I don't really follow
168 it... In my head I know what I would like to do, but as [name of SaLT] says, every day can be like a

169 firefighting sometimes. I think I don't reflect on what I've done. I move on to the next thing
170 immediately to figure out how I can make the next thing.

171 SaLT: You are responding to the needs of your students.

172 Clt: Yes, very much. And I'm in a very fortunate position in the sense that I've got five boys but
173 they're much older and they're very stable. They are actually pretty stable in there. So I'm in a
174 very fortunate position that I can get through a lot more of the curriculum. But I have got
175 students who are wanting to do GCSE as well as so I've got one of the students who do GCSE,
176 Maths, English and Science. And I've also got other students who are doing OCNs. So they're
177 sort of like a high achiever, better, slightly higher achieving group. And to tie that in with the
178 Seven Fields, it's almost like it's really challenging. And also they know more than I do because
179 some of them have been here for a lot longer than I have and a lot more aware of the rhythms
180 and the routines that take place annually. And it's very dependent on what.... Yeah....

181 CrT: I think it's harder for a classteacher. I mean, I was in that role for two years over Covid and
182 then going back to being a craft tutor, I do feel as it is much easier to embrace the Seven Fields
183 and incorporate that into what you're trying to deliver with a craft curriculum

184 LW: I think you can certainly look at your activities and then you can tick a few boxes that you
185 think it might mean. Okay, well, we planted out the beans and then we kind of watered them. So
186 okay, you got biodynamic ecology; we've got some practical skills in there and such and such.
187 Took the watering can himself; so there's some transformative leadership, tick, tick, tick.

188 ClT: So that is how it goes into the practice.

189 CC: Of course the question is really from the understanding and the meaning of it and I would
190 say I think I can really see that. Of course, maybe the time to reflect on things is actually
191 something you need in order to deepen your understanding, isn't it? Because that is how we do
192 things. I mean, of course we deal with 1000 pieces of information every day, but if we actually
193 kind of deepen our understanding in something, we actually look at it for a month, let's say. And
194 we are stuck with a theme of education that has been something for you for the last I don't know
195 how many years and you know a lot about things about education so that is how we go down a
196 rabbit hole of something.

197 If you become a car mechanic you do that for a long time in order to be a good car mechanic
198 and I suppose Ruskin Mill Trust is having this slightly different construct of education. It's a new
199 thing, isn't it? I mean it's not what happens anywhere else you cannot learn about anywhere
200 else other than in Ruskin Mill that is the slight challenge I suppose.

201 So my question would then be: So are there any little elements I'm thinking of that have grabbed
202 your interest? So I can just say that from my own experience so for example when I learned
203 about the twelve senses as opposed to five senses which I always thought: of course they have
204 five senses what are they on about now with twelve senses. I had the luxury of doing a seminar
205 actually for a whole day and then actually I had a week in between until the next session the
206 next week for example I had the luxury to think about the sense of warmth. And actually that
207 had never quite occurred to me that is a sense of perception and of course that is something
208 that impacts on one's wellbeing quite intensely so then we had a one and a half hour session to
209 think about the sense of warmth and explore it and so on. Hence in two bowls of water of
210 different temperature and then put it in a lukewarm so your hands are completely different and
211 got a very subjective experience which is very different in both of your hands. And of course for
212 our students the sense of warmth that is potentially is an issue as with all of their senses and so
213 I can just say from my own experiences the expansion of the senses was something that I found
214 fascinating and I only found years and years later in occupational therapy something to a similar
215 depth...yeah I don't know.

216 CrT: I think we do experience, if we look at the life processes or the seven care qualities we do
217 have training sessions where we might concentrate on one. So it might be 'breathing' or it might
218 be 'rhythm' so we do, some of the training does, but it's whether or not everyone on board is on
219 board with it. I don't know if everyone gets the point.

220 SaLT: Your experience of watching it on the screen in your own time with your notebook
221 diligently interested and curious, I think it is very different...

222 CrT: I think it's a different experience for every member of staff, you need to interview every
223 single one of us and you'll get a different experience, some might see the purpose, some might
224 not understand, some might not see the point. If you are interested in this I think it's an easier
225 journey...to be able to then absorb more and more...

226 CC: Like with anything else...

227 ClT: I mean just think about your talk about warmth. I'm just thinking obviously I've just gone
228 and done some greenwood work and I met the greenwood work teacher, I've made a rolling pin
229 although I don't use it. I went off on my own to go do this rolling pin and I had an amazing
230 experience. It was just like the whole smell of the wood and the feel of it, the texture and just
231 watching, sort of getting to grips with the real basic lathe work. I mean, I've taught DT as well,
232 so I've used all the electric versions, but to actually then to coordinate sort of like the whole

233 machinery and it was just so satisfying. And I was like, how on earth do some of these kids
234 cope? So it's the opportunity to just be on my own. And I thoroughly enjoyed that whole one
235 session, but now that's it. I would love to do more in relation to that, but I think it's putting you
236 into the students boots as well and going, wow, if I'm struggling and I'm capable, I drive a car, I
237 can do the multitasking type thing. How do some of these students going to cope with pushing
238 the leg, getting at the right angle and sheer frustration of some of the situations that you put
239 yourself into? I mean, I have reflected because I've gone through it with Jeanette, but I would
240 love to be able to do even more of that because I think you suddenly become a little bit more
241 aware of the students and what they struggle with.

242 CrT: We used to do a lot more in house training, which was craft. The craft sessions were much
243 more so the training sessions were much more craft based and we would maybe do a carousel
244 and where teachers would be split into groups and we utilize the craft teachers within the
245 building. I think some of the training has turned more into much more cerebral training, but then
246 COVID probably has something to do with it, things are always on screens and I don't think you
247 get the same sensory experience of actually doing the craft and then balancing off how you feel
248 and how that affects students. Like you said, you can learn so much once you're watching
249 somebody lecture on a screen, but that's not going to be the same. It's almost like looking
250 through the chocolate shop window at the chocolates, but when you get in and dig them all out,
251 it's a true experience.

252 LW: It does seem funny that we promote a practical skills therapeutic education, and the
253 training that staff get is very much at the moment, not practical skills. We have a lecture at one
254 point where somebody was talking at us about how the value of practical skills and we're all sat
255 there going, oh, my bum hurts. We've been sat here for an hour and a half. Can we please just
256 show us what you mean? Tell us that we need to get the kids engaged. Show us how you might
257 do that instead of just talking at us. It was just so ironic, that lecture. I can't remember the name
258 of the speaker. Christoph or somebody or other. Believe in this stuff. Just put your money where
259 your mouth is. Show us how to do it, give us an example, inspire us with your method.

260 CLT: And isn't that an example, again, very much the sort of looking at an activity? I think we
261 learned so much more from doing hands on, taking it over and doing rather than actually being
262 told you're then in a position where you can remember, I don't know, maybe because I am a
263 hands on person...

264 TA: I think, as for me, [name], TA, soon to be HLTA, I've been here nine years and my background
265 of course, I was hearing from mainstream background back in Africa. But although I will literally

266 say like the schools in Kenya, although they have slightly changed, is very more like here.
267 There's a lot of practical activity skills to do. For me, it was not completely new, but at the same
268 time slightly new. But I think for me, my experience and my journey, I would say as a TA, we get
269 more hands on because we try to do stuff. Let's say practical activity, we have to demonstrate
270 something. Where as TAs, we have to do it to encourage the student to do.

271 HW: If you are a good TA. If you're not a good Ta, you stand back and chat with the other TA.

272 TA: Yeah. So I think that has begun in itself and we've seen the benefit of it to students, where a
273 student completely would not sit down and you take them the let's say to Eyam. I still
274 remember even a picture of a certain student and was kicking off. And I said, oh, he has started
275 school. And it's like on the saw, to me to you, to me to you. Literally, he was really working on
276 the saw. And you can see the reasons going on and the benefits of actually cutting the wood
277 and then taking the wood and making something like a rolling pin. And you're there thinking 'Oh
278 God, I cannot do it' and they take the room, actually showing you how to do it because they're
279 quite good at it.

280 CrT: And that is transformational leadership.

281 TA: Exactly. And then there's another student, for example, who is brilliant, and I say, this
282 student, you all know him, that makes the best bowls using what is it called? Clay. Yeah, I went
283 to the clay and jewellery place and saying to me, I've mixed the thing. Could you try that? And I
284 was feeling like, what have you mixed there? And he said, I want you to try that. And he's sort of
285 like an expert. He makes the best bowls he would. And he said, yeah, they're £40. And he will
286 tell you that the process will be and he's become an expert. And you can see him, you can
287 literally see his future being successful as a potter person making clay. So I think in itself came
288 here one year, four years, and I'm thinking and I've seen successful stories. I've seen students
289 that have gone on beyond and do something, students that would have never settled in a
290 mainstream school. And I think the benefit of actually giving students, like if you... enables you
291 to do what you want, you can do GCSE. And those students who are unable to settle in any
292 class can do practical skills and find themselves somehow so that's how our students it works
293 for individual students. Their timetable actually works for the students. They don't have all of
294 them have to be like Maths and English more thingi they can find themselves. And you can do
295 like all these other core subjects within the practical element of it.

296 CrT: Yeah, plus the curriculum allows for the development as well. Not just the national
297 curriculum, I mean the curriculum that is raised up by design. So it's like you've got you are

298 feeling, you're exploring, and contributing. Those three elements actually link very nicely into
299 the PSTE curriculum and how we deliver craft because there is an element of in the beginning
300 they come and they don't know what it's almost like having an offering of something that you've
301 never known in your life before. So they then take that on board and the being, the next month
302 into exploration and exploration into expansion, and to contribution to producing purposeful
303 craft items that this student can sell. We're actually marrying the PSTE in with the Seven Fields
304 in with the curriculum that we work by here. So I think it does link to the planning and I do think
305 there are stages in where the student can start off here and progress through to become almost
306 like a mastercraft person at the end of it. So he's on a journey and they start at one end and then
307 they come in with skills or not, but we're here to deliver those opportunities.

308 CC: Suppose a lot is already in the structural set up, isn't it? I mean, the fact alone that there's
309 Eyam where I think a lot of students spend a lot of time during the week and then you've got the
310 outdoor on the land and then you've got the crafts. So that's where the method is kind of
311 structurally already there from the student experience, isn't it?

312 CrT: You can see the change. You can see the change from leaving here, getting into a car,
313 stepping out when they get to say, High Riggs or Eyam. It's almost like they're shedding. You can
314 see them sort of shedding things because they've got freedom and they've got more connection
315 to nature. There's not so much tension, there's not so much... the energy is different. It really is
316 different. I am not knocking here or Tintagel as a building, but it is a different atmosphere,
317 different energy, it's a different setup. So it works as does Clervaux, as does Grace Garden⁵.

318 ClT: I think [name of SaLT] mentioned earlier, I think, about the fact that we've got staff here
319 who've been here for a significant amount of time, and then you get some very new staff coming
320 in and we don't all start at the same time. I started August, but then you get some start
321 September. We don't all start at the same time either. So I think, as [name of SaLT] said, when
322 you've got this sort of spiral of information, I've come in. I know so little about the Steiner
323 experience because I've been sort of like drip fed there, but I can't order what I have heard.
324 There is this lack of...

325 CC: It is not connected...

326 ClT: Yeah. So bits might come from one and when it's really heavy lectures I just...I do switch
327 off.... or somebody will say something and I would go oh, that's quite interesting. And then by
328 the time I go back into things I think, oh, I could do that in my session. I remember when so and

⁵ Names of other Ruskin Mill schools

329 so so did that, but then I lost the next bit and so I'm back to square one again. I think there's a
330 sort of lack of... it's still very bitty to me. I know what I enjoy doing, which is the hands on very
331 much so. I know what it's all really.

332 SaLT: I wonder if there was some way that staff could have a kind of handbook journal thing that
333 they work through throughout the year and then as part of your personal development you have
334 the book to look through with [name of Heart Coordinator].

335 ClT: We do that anyway, so she's got a book that you do your practical skills observations in and
336 then you reflect on this...

337 SaLT: But isn't that just a little bit like this? And that's what you get. So I'm talking about like
338 almost a ring bound thing that each week maybe you write a reflection or there's something that
339 keeps your training.

340 LW: But for me, if you're new to the Steiner thing, there's a lot of jargon that you have to get your
341 head around. So you've got Seven Fields of Practice, you have seven care qualities, you have
342 seven something else, you have twelve senses, you have four phases of being, threefold
343 human, two fold animals....You know there is all these different...

344 ClT: So you've got the problem of like coming in as a teacher. You've got all the acronyms that
345 go with absolutely everything else that happens and you say you're there, it just becomes a
346 muddle.

347 LW: It is overwhelming...

348 ClT:I think you've got to be here for a while and...

349 LW: I can absolutely understand your point, saying that a lot of the lectures go over people's
350 heads because people are thinking of the day to day. They're thinking how is this relevant? And
351 we're not making enough of the things that you're trying to be the Director of,... the Practical
352 Skill Education and the value of that at a very basic level maybe omitting some of the kind of
353 complex Steiner language around it and just really examining the benefits of practical skills for
354 our young people and bigging people up for what they are doing. I think that might be really
355 useful. But yeah, it is overwhelming, isn't it? All the different bobs...

356 CC: Are there areas that you have made sense of? So I think that you're just doing different now
357 as opposed to before you came to [name of the school]?

358 ClT: I'm a very much a practical teacher but the thing that I have felt here is I have loved the fact
359 that I can go on a genuine student so I don't have my standardized quickly in front of me.

360 Somebody will say something ...I can't possibly talk about thatI can actually go with the flow
361 and go into what their interests are and as a result of that, that then opens up a lot more
362 opportunities. To expand and be creative. And so I can get a non writer who's not written
363 anything to become a fluent writer because I've been able to follow what they want to do, which
364 is that glorious journey that I would never have had the opportunity of doing in any shape or
365 form, because you've got that rigid, you've got to do this. And then you might have students who
366 got these particular needs in your class, with an SEND⁶ teacher with them, but they're still trying
367 to do what you're trying to make sense of what you're teaching to the rest of the class on a much
368 different level. Whereas actually you're going down working with a student here and following
369 their journey, which is so much more exciting.

370 And I can also remember very much being in the mainstream. I remember when we would get a
371 day off for well being, so we would be given a day off in October, November time, the longest
372 slog, and given a day off for well being. And we could go off and do whatever we like. But
373 actually, to be honest, there are so much hands on, practical, relaxing stuff that we can do in
374 school. We do the basketweaving over there, and we do the melting and we do the festivals.
375 And those are sort of like that is the staff well being that is being covered as well. That's really
376 good.

377 CrT: That's all rhythmic as well. I think we work in rhythms far better than mainstream school
378 does. So when we celebrate festivals, we're working into a rhythm. So being on the festival
379 team, it's automatic that we know what the next festival is, going to tie in with the season.
380 Season is going to tie in with the theme. The theme is going to tie in with the craft that's
381 available for students. You can only do certain crafts if you've got the resources, and some of
382 those resources are timely. So there is a natural rhythm. I tend to do a lot of my paper making
383 with plants in summer because I can't do that in winter so much. And also the temperature, the
384 warmth of the water. There's rhythms that we naturally do that tie in with everything that we are
385 presented with and the seasons. So I do feel that we have an opportunity to do that more here
386 than you do in the same industry. And that makes I think it's easier. It's almost like a logical...

387 LW: I think you're absolutely right, but unless you know the jargon, you wouldn't go, oh, that's a
388 rhythm thing, that's a warmth thing. So you really have to kind of like understand. You spent a
389 week learning about what it meant by warmth as warmth from a sort of Steiner perspective. For
390 us, we're like lighting a fire. Is that warmth? I don't know. Let's put it down. It's warmth. Okay.

⁶ SEND= Special Educational Needs

391 CrT: You would not do that in summer though. That tends to be more of a winter thing that you
392 do that

393 LW: That is what I mean, unless you're sort of like really familiar with all of the what is warmth, is
394 that... what rhythms is that part of a seven something or a twelve something or a something?
395 Where does that... I've heard people talking about rhythms but yeah. So I think unless you
396 understand what the jargon means, you have to slot in what you're doing in that language in
397 order to express that you are doing it? You might be doing it. We're all probably doing it, but it's
398 whether we are aware that we're doing it or talking about it...

399 CrT: But in time you will probably become aware of it. That's the thing. When the students come
400 here, they can't possibly know what is available to them through their next educational journey.
401 So we put on a pathway. But as teachers too, I think as new staff too, you don't know the future,
402 you don't know what your journey is going to be of working here. You can't expect be expected
403 to know it all in the first year. You do still grow and learn more, I mean you have got a degree in
404 it. There's still something we all have to learn and we're all in it together really as well. You
405 cannot possibly know it all at the beginning.

406 LW: In your question, how do we implement the Seven Fields? It's like, well, we might be we
407 might be doing it.

408 CC: Well, we are still at the first point: What do we understand? How do we make sense of...

409 LW: Do we need to understand the Seven Fields in order to be able to implement...

410 CC: Well, that is also a question... Anything particular for you that you're doing different now as
411 opposed to before?

412 LW: Yeah, because it's a new job, I suppose, in a new school. I've not worked in special schools
413 before. What am I doing differently? I suppose I have to be aware of the Steiner inspired things
414 and maybe talk about those. I hope...

415 SaLT: You and I spoke once in the car on my way to work about being flexible here and that
416 sometimes we have this what we thought was watertight excellent session plan and we were
417 like raring to go and then students just wouldn't want to do it. Think on your feet, okay,
418 absolutely. And letting go of that professional frustration and not being able to deliver.

419 LW: You learn to be very adaptable, don't you? And resourceful and resilient ...

420 CrT: That is the whole point of the overview planning, isn't it?

421 LW: Yeah, I have session plans that I'm not necessarily going to do.

422 CrT: And also the weather...So you have like your overview and then if -because we are child
423 guided, child led- I have children there, so if they don't particularly want to make paper today,
424 they might have cuts on their hands or whatever you kind of adapt and you might say, well,
425 okay, we'll go out and forage the plants that we can then use to make the paperwork.

426 LW: What you might do maybe the language I used, changed. So maybe I would say, okay, this
427 activity is seasonally dependent. But now I could say this activity depends on the rhythms of the
428 land or something like that. Perhaps that would change, wouldn't it? The language that you use
429 to describe your activities.

430 CrT: I think so. Maybe in a year's time you might say all sorts...

431 LW: Maybe I have nailed the seven...what's it...[laughter].

432 SaLT: For me, I came from an NHS role and I was clinic based and I saw ten children a day,
433 pretty much one after the other. 20 minutes block. Ten minutes to write my notes. Bang. Next
434 one. Bang. Next one. So, it was a huge... even though I thought I understood the soft of the
435 school and the kind of students that I've been working with, I didn't expect it to be so slow.
436 Sometimes I think I've managed to get some children to play a game for a bit. They've allowed
437 me to be in their space for a bit sometimes is all I manage. But in the NHS, I was really like,
438 'these are targets, this is what we're going to do next'. And that's completely different.

439 CC: So that's connected to the nature of the students?

440 SaLT: Yeah. The nature of the students but also...when I worked in mainstream schools before, I
441 worked as a speech language therapist going in and out of mainstream schools, the children
442 that I've supported have always had a regular TA. I've been able to upskill that TA. This is what
443 we're doing. These are your sessions. I can see you again in six weeks' time because of the
444 pressure of the NHS, but then you would know that that person was delivering something
445 useful. Depending on teachers and whatnot you can do. It's a little bit here. I think it's fair to say
446 that is rare to get that consistency.

447 LW: It's such a high staff turnover, isn't it?

448 SaLT: Yeah. And it's not healthy for a lot of our students to have the same TAs all the time.

449 ClT: I switch around the TAs...

450 LW: ...or for the TAs.

451 SaLT: But I guess there was sort of a stark moment where a student here, their mum, contacted
452 the NHS and asked for an independent language assessment for that student. I don't think she
453 realized that we have two speech therapists in school. So, if you imagine an NHS therapist
454 coming in to see a student. She has been in for about 30 minutes and then went away and wrote
455 a report. I've not read it yet, but I'm going to argue that it's probably meaningless. Like 30
456 minutes of getting to know the students that I've sat in probably six sessions with and still would
457 struggle to say exactly what they're about and constantly changing and growing and adapting to
458 the school. So that contrast, that's a struggle for me, really. Like understanding that giving the
459 students as much time as they need to build rapport, get to know them, but still upholding my
460 responsibilities to the Healthcare Professional Council and the Royal College of Speech and
461 Language Therapist. Like having targets, and saying that I'm reaching that and then linking that
462 back to PSTE. Do I ever really? I'm not sure. I'd like to have some baking sessions and be more
463 hands on. I've thought about trying to link it to crafts. But again. The liaison that you'd need for
464 that. To organize that and pull it off would be huge.

465 LW: I can offer some gardening if you want?

466 SaLT: Yes? Nice.

467 CrT: My understanding of PSTE, and it's going to be quite simplistic, I feel like if they are kind of
468 like components that help deliver the education we offer and they link. I think they inevitably
469 then help the students to grow and then they slot together as components within the PSTE
470 pedagogy that we again offer. And that's a craft. So when I'm looking at my craft planning, I don't
471 specifically think, oh, I'm going to do that because it ticks that, it ticks that, I kind of feel like it's
472 a holistic collection of components that then helps me plan what I need to plan for my craft
473 curriculum.

474 ClT: Can I just say one extra little thing about the difference between mainstream and being at
475 [name of school]? Also, to me, I think I've become stale teaching in a state school, following
476 what I have to do, whereas here it just totally reignited my love of teaching and what I came to
477 teaching to do. And that's something that I think is very much Steiner through and through, it
478 really inspired me to become a better teacher, a better person to be for those students.

479 CC: Wonderful. Shall we take that as the last sentence? [laughter] Okay. Yeah.

480 SaLT: I can make one final point?

481 CC: Sure.

482 SaLT: On the training that we sometimes get, if there was a way to have a debrief, like maybe
483 staff are split into groups. For example, we had a lecture the other day with an
484 anthroposophical doctor, and you only had to look at everybody's faces when we left. If there
485 was a chance to debrief that with somebody that understood where he was coming from and
486 where he was at and what did you get from it? No right and wrong, but let's just have a chat.
487 What did it mean? Lots of anthroposophical things, from my point of view, are about planting
488 little seeds and then letting you go away and think about them. And if you don't know that that's
489 kind of how it works. You're just left thinking: that was supposed to be about autism. Like,
490 where was the autism in that? And what was he talking about? And I think it just baffles people.
491 And then I think that can ripple down into a culture of: Oh, we got another one of those
492 lectures...[grumbling]. It needn't be like that. If we could tease it apart and debate it.

493 ClT: Yeah, if we can speak then you could express that a bit better, perhaps. Yeah. I think part of
494 the planning for our sort of ...

495 CrT: CPD.

496 ClT: Thank you. I do feel we are the last as teachers and who are in [name of the school]. I feel
497 that we're often the last people that are considered in the needs for the planning for the actual
498 CPD. I think that it's very much okay for, like, well, this person's available on this day, so
499 everybody has to come and be part of this presentation because they're available. And I don't
500 know whether or not that fits in brilliantly with what we are.... from a previous lecture or
501 anything else. I just feel that there's a sort of like, you know, it doesn't really flow...

502 LW:... it is more reactive, isn't it?

503 ClT: And I do think that teachers are the last ones that are... all staff, not just teachers. I'm just
504 saying staff are the last ones to be considered in the value of planning a training...

505 CrT: Can I just ask as well. I did the Steiner Insights training⁷ and I thought that was a good
506 grounding and a good basis, even if you haven't got any knowledge before we went in there. And
507 I don't know if Trevor could do, like a little mini potted version of the Steiner Insights training
508 that could then be offered as a kind of more basic foundation of...

509 LW:... an online course or something.

510 CrT: Well, not even an online course.

⁷ Training delivered to some staff on Steiner's educational insights by an experienced Steiner teacher

- 511 LW: Doing a YouTube video on the Seven Fields to explain what they are...
- 512 CrT: ...but you know what I mean? Something like a little mini potted version of the Steiner
513 Insights, because the Steiner Insights, it's like, he is full of knowledge and he delivers it really
514 well.
- 515 CC: It was also a smaller group, wasn't it?
- 516 CrT: Yes, it was a very small group and then there was an opportunity to talk it through... like
517 what [name of SaLT] said.
- 518 LW: Some of the best biodynamic training we've had is when it's been up, like in the north
519 locations, when we've had a chance to it's a much smaller group and we get the material and
520 then we discuss it.
- 521 CrT: Maybe not so much en masse, maybe split down into small groups, and then the
522 opportunity to then discuss it in some ways how we would do like on the Steiner Insights. Like if
523 we could have many potted versions, then people could have as part of their induction, like you
524 said if it was like an online course, just an idea...
- 525 CC: Good. Many interesting things to take away from this.
- 526 LW: Was there anything useful for your writing?
- 527 CC: Yes. [laughter] No, thank you very much. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your
528 thoughts. If you've got any other thoughts coming after this, send me an email. That is also very
529 much appreciated. Yeah. Thank you very much.
- 530 SaLT: Thank you.
- 531 CC: Thank you for your time. Great.

17 Focus Group (College) Horticulture Tutor (HT), Daytime Support worker (DSW), Gallery Coordinator (GC), Metallwork Tutor (MT), Jewellery Tutor (JT), 30/06/2022

In this focus group, which unfortunately due to technical difficulties in the recording has cut short, a cross section of staff explore their relationship with the method.

1 CC: So thank you for coming, everybody. Before we start, can we just do a quick round? And if you
2 don't mind saying what your role is and how many years you've worked for Ruskin Mill Trust.

3 MW: I am [name], Metalwork tutor. I have been here for eight and a half years.

4 CC: Okay, thank you.

5 GC: I'm [name]. I am the PSTE and Social Enterprise Producer and I've been here 16 years.

6 JT: I'm [name]. I'm currently a senior tutor. I have been here four years.

7 HT: Okay. [name]. I've been here for 14 years, I am the horticulture tutor.

8 DSW: [name]. Supportworker, I have been here 15 years plus.

9 CC: Okay, thank you very much. I think I've got the consent form from a number of people, it's here.
10 If I just briefly take you through this. So basically, what I'm trying to look into is my overall research
11 question is how do we implement PSTE and the 7 Fields of Practice? And I'm interested in this whole
12 process of ...supposedly there's an educational method which is PSTE and the Seven Fields of
13 Practice. There, within 1000 members of staff, there are probably 1000 takes on what that actually
14 is. So that is already interesting in itself. Now there are various influences to that. There's Steiner,
15 Ruskin, Morris, a few others, probably a few also that we don't name actually, but which are kind of
16 all fused together in mainly Aonghus' thinking, really. Then we put a bit of that of Aonghus' thinking
17 out in the world in the Practitioner's Guide, and then there's much more which is still happening in
18 Aonghus's thinking, which is not coming out into the world very much, other than in talks, maybe. So
19 that's still developing, but I just leave that there if you want. So, and I'm very happy with the
20 thousand views of whatever that is. And then I'm very interested in that, of course, this PSTE is only
21 something it's only in Ruskin Mill Trust. So, you can really only learn that in Ruskin Mill Trust of what
22 that is. So that's the method.

23 And then supposedly, before you implement a method, you need to understand what it is, isn't it?
24 So, then I'm interested in each person's pathway into understanding how do we understand, what
25 are we grappling with, what are the things which have been helpful in terms of learning about it,
26 which are the things which have been maybe challenging while getting into this? And then I'm

27 interested in terms of how each individual members of staff bring that onto the ground, working
28 with the students and what are the challenges of that. So basically, your understanding of it and
29 what you do with that. And the overall study that I'm looking at is really in terms of what does the
30 leadership of Ruskin Mill Trust do, what are the mechanisms, what are we doing to further that
31 understanding? What's the training like? Those are the questions, really, if you want so.

32 So maybe the first question really is about what has been your individual pathway into PSTE and
33 what has been helpful?

34 GC: Shall I start? My relationship to Practical Skills Therapeutic Education really began before that
35 term was coined and it began with what I do. Part of my role is put on exhibitions in the public
36 gallery. But they are also exhibitions which are interpreted back into the method and the work that
37 we do. And so I worked with Rudolf Steiner's seven life processes and in my understanding of the
38 Seven Fields of Practice and how PSTE sits with that is the Seven Fields of Practice are held or the
39 seven life processes are the foundations of the Seven Fields of Practice I come out and fine art
40 background and have always been a practitioner all my life. And I do think that people who are
41 practitioners have an easier relationship with Ruskin Mill Trust method because it is to do with a way
42 of thinking which is about moving through the materiality of the object. So, all makers know that
43 there is this sort of subjective objective transformation occurs between the material and the object
44 and the object and the subject. These are very sort of complex spaces to consider as intellectual
45 positions but if you have a disc of copper and you put it on a lathe with a chuck you are witness to
46 the actuality of the material change where the disc of copper is transformed into the copper bowl.
47 So there is this transition between the objects and the subject.

48 When you talk when we talk to Ofsted or talk to people who might come in as governors and senior
49 leaders who are not having this experience, that really it's important to find one place is where
50 people can understand the language that's being used. Now, this is banal, but when I was working
51 with the Norwegian young women and I was talking to them about Practical Skills Therapeutic
52 Education, Rudolf Steiner, Seven Life Processes, I tried how you cut a loaf of bread, but they have
53 sliced bread in the end. I asked them how they pluck their eyebrows. Do you plug your eyebrows
54 away from the growth point or do you pluck in line, that is the same thing? You need to find an
55 action and way of thinking that people can drill down into, sorry, that's jargon again. But you can
56 look down into and start to understand how you can categorize the actions that you're carrying out
57 in order to get to your outcome. Then you can start addressing the way that you can approach it and
58 how the model works. But if it always belongs to something that people don't participate in, then
59 you're never going to hit that mark.

60 JT: I think even the actual action of exploring that this morning, that is the luxury that someone is
61 experiencing and is wanting to know about them, wanting to invest in it. I think how many people
62 must go through mainstream just sidelined and then what impact does that have on their life? If in
63 those moments you can feel value, feel heard, self esteem might be developed, confident in that
64 moment that they could carry to another situation. That I think, is what kind of sometimes excites
65 me. Regardless of what you teach, I think it is that human aspect.

66 GC: Also it takes away the anxiety of having to learn something. That knowledge can be garnered
67 and found and when you know it, you can have many examples. You don't have to have the one
68 that's given. That would not be very far, I think, from mainstream education, because they want to
69 see the results.

70 JT: You got seven minutes to talk about that.

71 GC: They want an example in those terms. [break in recording]

72 HT: It is in the vicinity I am thinking as well, they're not quite in that space today. We'll sit back and
73 we'll dance around it and do something else. The PSTE curriculum is beautiful for in there. You don't
74 have to link into what. It sounds like there is no real agenda, that is not what it is, because there is
75 an overarching agenda, isn't it? This is a good day to sort of push this angle. And that kind of thing,
76 that is the beauty as well, isn't it?

77 CC: I think there's a lot in this conversation and we could give you for hours. *[laughter]* Yeah, but
78 thank you very much. Thank you for your thoughts. I shall see what I can make of all of this. Thank
79 you for your time.

80 GC: Thank you for inviting us.

81 CC: Thank you very much. Thank you. Bye.