

Ledbury Primary School Olympic Torch Project May 2012



We acknowledge, with thanks, the generous funding from the Arts Council which has made this exciting project possible.



LOTTERY FUNDED



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

The passing of the Olympic Torch through Ledbury on 24th May 2012 would be a special event for the Town. Our inspiration for the project came from the desire to extend this experience for the children by involving them in a memorable community event - beginning with a relay by local school children carrying our own Olympic Torch.

All children at Ledbury Primary School were invited to design a Torch representing the Olympic Values and Ledbury Primary School's Values. Our original concept was to commission local blacksmith, Stephen McRae, to make the Torch to the winning design. However, thanks to the funding from the Arts Council, we were able to develop the project into an experience which far exceeded our aspirations.



Many of the children's designs incorporated our Values, particularly love, unity and caring - portrayed by smiles, hugs, hearts and intertwined hands. As these same values kept coming through the designs, Stephen suggested that, rather than choosing one winning design, he should interpret in his work all the ideas put forward by the children.

8th May. The Project begins.



Stephen introduced himself to the children in school assemblies. The teachers and children became his blacksmith workshop, the forge and the tools.

We learned about what happens to metal when it is heated and the noises we would experience on our visits to the blacksmith's workshop!

Inspirational Designs



Stephen was particularly drawn to the design by the whole of class 1CM who had made a photographic record of what they wanted to include in the Torch. Stephen loved the feeling of togetherness and the shapes made by the children hugging each other.

The Design Workshops



Using the work produced by 1CM as the starting point for the design workshops, Stephen worked first with our younger children. Unity was at the forefront of the workshop. The children depicted this Value by illustrating people of all nationalities joining hands, bordered by outlines of their own hands. Children used their own hands to experiment with shape to understand how their paper design could be translated into metal work.





Older pupils continued the designs by expanding on the Values of Love and Unity with depictions of the Earth.



Working towards the idea of representing Love and Unity in the torch, children experimented with the shapes they could make in groups.

They also interpreted shapes drawn on paper, deciding whether different groupings of lines and curves looked friendly or hostile.





The children then put their ideas into action.



Some groups used hands in 2D and 3D shapes to interpret Unity.



Others used heart shapes to represent Love.

Repousse Workshops



Children were deep in concentration in the Repousse workshops, beating patterns onto copper leaves to be incorporated into the torch.

Some of the children incorporated words and pictures into their work, others worked on texture.



It was planned to attach the leaves climbing up the Torch to represent growth, but the positioning of the leaves would need to be reconsidered when the weight of the torch later became an issue.



Ben proudly displays his finished artwork.



The Blacksmith's Workshops



Stephen's workshop was transformed with the children's artwork providing inspiration for this work.





Every child at the school visited Stephen's blacksmith workshop to learn about Stephen's work and to see demonstrations of working with metal. Many children had the opportunity to have a go at hammering hot metal.



Every class brought back a "little friend" made during the workshop. This is 2SU class pet "Rocky the Snail" with Matthew.



17th May

The Prototype torch is ready!

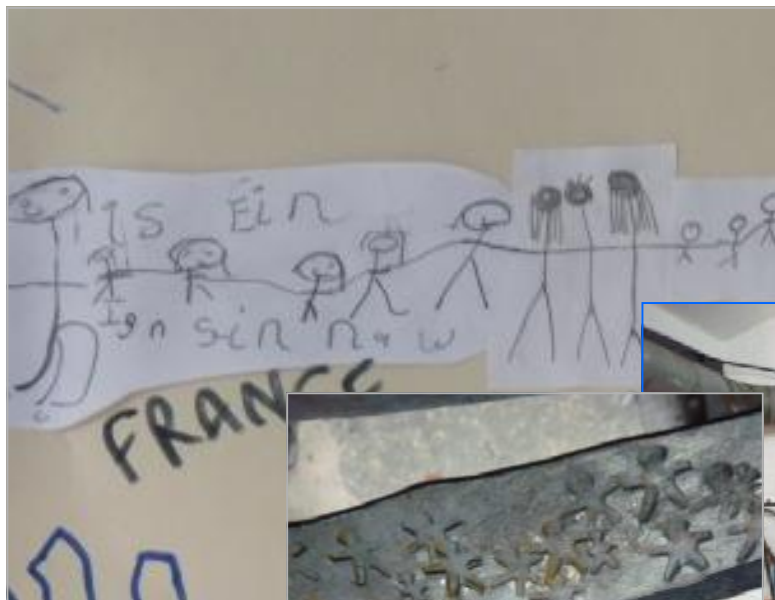


Stephen produced a prototype of the Torch. Three curved strands of metal would represent the children cuddling and hugging each other. Onto this would be added the chosen designs from the workshops – hearts representing love, people holding hands representing unity and leaves representing growth.

When the prototype was trialled by Kaisan and Victoria, the children chosen to run the relay, it became clear that the Torch was unbalanced and would not take the additional weight of the chosen designs on the top in addition to the fire cage. Stephen therefore decided to add these features to the base of the torch to counterbalance it.

Over the next few days Stephen would produce the Torch, helped by children and staff.

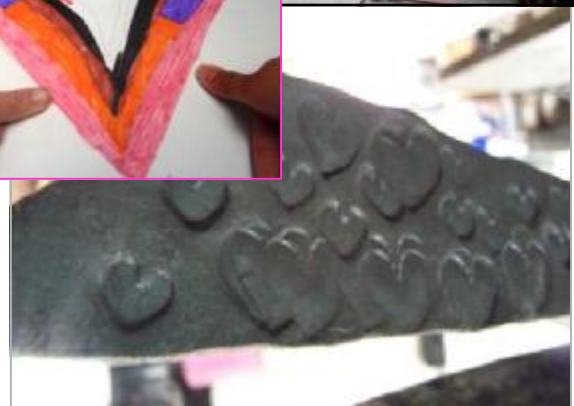
The Torch takes shape.

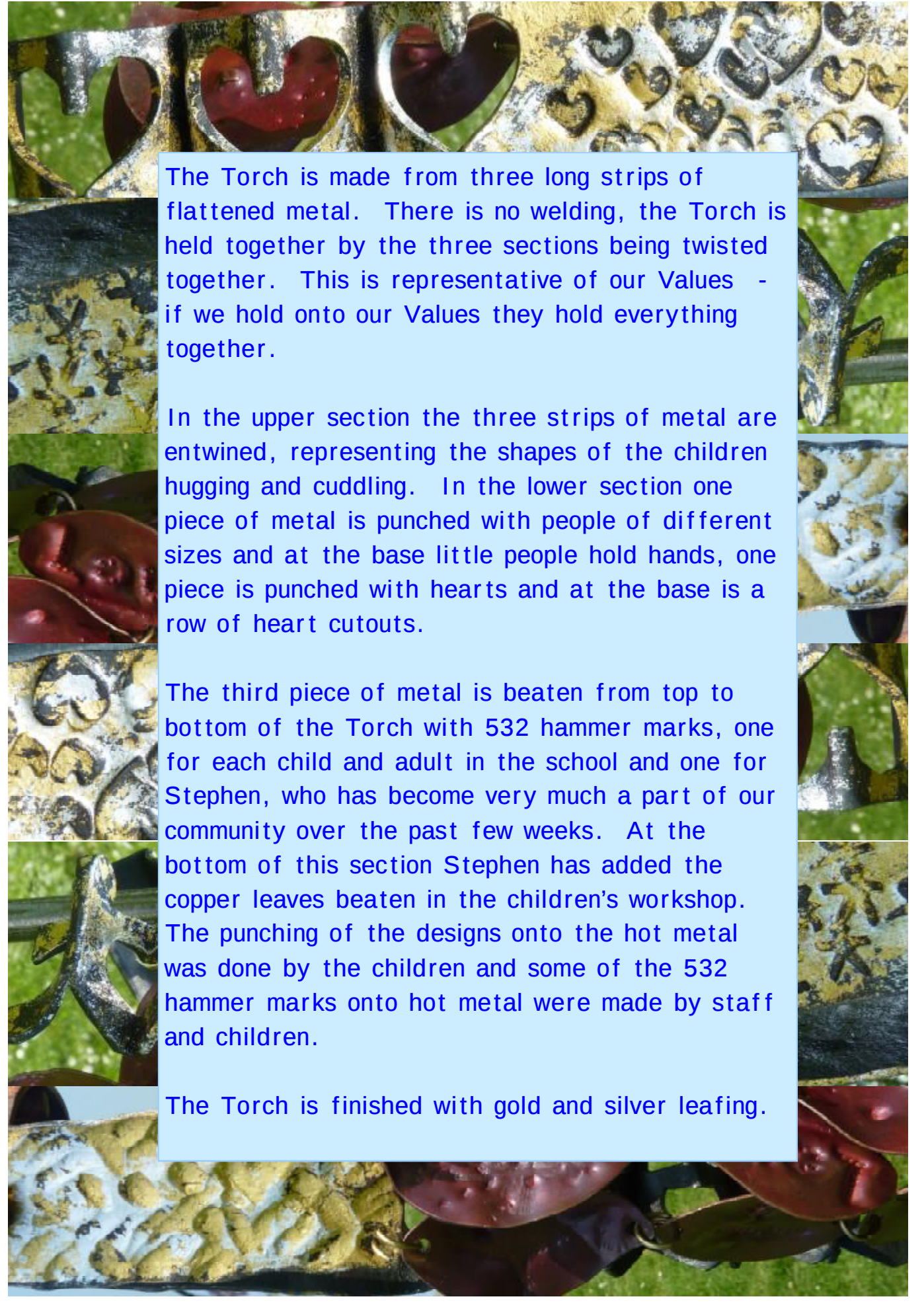


Children and staff helped to hammer 532 marks into the metal, one for each child and adult in the school and one for Stephen.



Children worked with Stephen to punch the patterns of people and hearts into the hot metal.





The Torch is made from three long strips of flattened metal. There is no welding, the Torch is held together by the three sections being twisted together. This is representative of our Values - if we hold onto our Values they hold everything together.

In the upper section the three strips of metal are entwined, representing the shapes of the children hugging and cuddling. In the lower section one piece of metal is punched with people of different sizes and at the base little people hold hands, one piece is punched with hearts and at the base is a row of heart cutouts.

The third piece of metal is beaten from top to bottom of the Torch with 532 hammer marks, one for each child and adult in the school and one for Stephen, who has become very much a part of our community over the past few weeks. At the bottom of this section Stephen has added the copper leaves beaten in the children's workshop. The punching of the designs onto the hot metal was done by the children and some of the 532 hammer marks onto hot metal were made by staff and children.

The Torch is finished with gold and silver leafing.



Tuesday 22nd May. The Torch is lit!



The flame to light the Ledbury Torch was kindled by the sun.



Stephen lit the torch for the first time watched by Victoria and Kisan, our oldest girl and oldest boy, who had been selected to represent Ledbury Primary School.



Health and safety was of utmost importance. Victoria and Kisan had to learn to carry and pass the torch safely.



Wednesday 23rd May.

We met members of the Town Council in town to try out the route for our Torch



The Torch bearers from John Masefield High School, Ashperton Academy and Much Marcle joined us on Ledbury Primary School playing field to have a trial run with the lit Torch.

Everyone coped well with this new experience, but to ensure the safety of the bearers, we decided to elect two staff members to act as escorts.



Stephen brought the Torch into school to show the children and to explain how the Torch has been built to incorporate the children's ideas and the school's values.



In the evening Mrs. Rees was interviewed by BBC Hereford and Worcester, then we gathered at the Ledbury Market House to be interviewed on ITV Central News.



Thursday 24th May
The big day arrived!
The Olympic Torch was due to pass through
Ledbury at 10.00 am.



Children
wearing
flame hats
gathered
in the
playground
and made
their way
into town.



There was great
excitement as
the Olympic
Torch passed.



After the Olympic Torch passed, we gathered in the centre of town for our own relay.



On the Sunshine Radio stage Stephen unveiled our Torch and explained how it represents the Values of Ledbury Primary School. He was accompanied by the Mayor and the relay runners, Roma (Much Marcle Primary), Natasha and Sam (John Masefield High School), Kaisan and Victoria (Ledbury Primary), Megan (Eastnor Primary), Mena and Ryan (Ashperton Primary Academy) and Toby (Much Marcle Primary).



Stephen lit the flame and ran the first leg of the relay before passing the Torch to Kaisan.



The relay runners were escorted by Miss Marsh and Miss Hope from Ledbury Primary.



Natasha proudly displays the torch at the end of the relay.

The Torch Relay Team



Megan



Kaisan and Victoria

Natasha and Sam



Toby and Roma

Mena and Ryan



Stephen



After the Torch relay, children from Ashperton Primary Academy, Ledbury Primary and the John Masefield High School entertained the crowd with songs and samba music.



We invited everyone to join us at our Community picnic in the grounds of Ledbury Primary School.



Our own Torch relay, with two children elected from each year group, began our afternoon sporting events. Mrs. Rees and the Mayor ran the last leg!



31st May

The Torch, carried by Kaisan and Victoria, escorted by Miss Marsh and Miss Hope, was used to open our Sports day—and will open our sports day in future years.



The Torch will also be used to open the Sports day at Ashperton Primary Academy and for Community Events.

Stephen is now producing a stand so that our Torch can be put on display in our Reception Office as a permanent reminder of our 2012 Olympic Event.