

South Devon Biodynamic Group

Winter Newsletter

January 2022



from LITTLE GIDDING BY T.S. ELIOT

Midwinter spring is its own season
Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown,
Suspended in time, between pole and tropic.
When the short day is brightest, with frost and fire,
The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches,
In windless cold that is the heart's heat,
Reflecting in a watery mirror
A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon.
And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier,
Stirs the dumb spirit: no wind, but pentecostal fire
In the dark time of the year.

V

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from...

Dates for your Diary:

2-5th February 2022. Online Agriculture Conference from The Goetheanum

24th April 2022. Huxhams Cross Farm, The day that we dig up the preps etc. We are welcome to join this part of the BD course. Details will be emailed nearer the time

South West Biodynamic Group

The South Devon Biodynamic Group's purpose is to inform those interested in BD methods of gardening and farming of what is happening in the area. As a member you receive

- A quarterly newsletters and seasonal gatherings where we make the biodynamic preparations. These are then made available to members free of charge.
- A library of Biodynamic books kept at The Apricot Centre.

We charge an annual subscription of £15 per person and £20 for a couple. We offer a concession of £10 a year if needed. Sort Code 20-60-88 Acc. No. 13509680

Preparations are available from Velwell Orchard. Please contact Jeremy Weiss 07962 432317, velwellorchard@yahoo.co.uk Soon to be moved to Whites Farm, Lower Dean, Buckfastleigh.

If you wish to join, please contact Diana White (Treasurer) at dianawhite35@hotmail.com or phone 01803 473551 or 07747 398 839

southwestbiodynamicgroup.org

From The Editor.

Thank you to all contributors of news and articles for this season's issue. I have included news from the Goethean Science project at White's Farm. The garden there will be managed biodynamically by Mark Gordine and although the education project is not strictly about biodynamics the principals of Goethean science underlie Biodynamics.

Grants: One of the roles of the SWSB Group is to use excess funds for grants to help people attend BD courses or conferences that they might not otherwise be able to attend. In return we ask that they write an article for the newsletter about what they have learnt or some other way share what they have learnt. We have already had an application for help towards the online BD Conference at the Goetheanum in February. See agriculture. conference@goetheanum.ch. If you need help to attend the on line conference please email dianawhite35@hotmail.com.

Also, a reminder of the South Devon Land Trust fund which also can make grants or loans to BD projects and training. Please contact derekklapworth@gmail.com

Events: As the covid rules and restrictions ease several events have been held .

Wreath Making Workshop.

Rosalynd Maynard organised a seasonal wreath making workshop on 16th October at Cholwell Farm in Dartington led by Christine Walton who had collected a profusion of beautiful dried flowers and leaves. See the pictures to below to see the results.



Preparation Making Workshop 16th October .

The next day, also at Cholwell Farm a compost preparation making workshop took place. We made chamomile and dandelion preparations. Selby Thomas had gathered the flowers and Frankie van der Stok directed the participants. Thankyou Tom Petherick for allowing us use his lovely holding.



Stuffing the mesentery with dried dandelions.



Sewing the stuffed mesentery ready for burial till Spring



The completed mesentery.



Stuffing a cow's intestine with dried chamomile



Nearly finished!



Chamomile about to be buried to be dug up in Spring.

By Diana White. Photographs by Selby Thomas.

News From White's Farm, Lower Dean.

The Autumn months have mainly been taken up with clearance and planning, as well as becoming familiar with and settled on the land. This is a completely new project, and it has been important for me to spend some time connecting with the land, and the wildlife, as well as the local community, before embarking on any bold endeavours. The season, with its slightly slower pace and general feeling of unwinding and taking stock before the busy Christmas period of celebration and reflection, has definitely helped with this!

I have also been blessed with a small but keen group of regular volunteers, and their company and enthusiasm has certainly helped with some of the more daunting tasks at these early stages of development.

Progress has been made, however, and the main garden plot is beginning to slowly take shape. One of the existing poly tunnel frames has been cleared ready for skinning in the Spring, and work has begun clearing the second already-skinned tunnel, which will serve as a propagation and growing area. Another outside growing area has been cleared and mulched, and a simple composting area set up. A site has also been chosen for what will become a storage shed for the Biodynamic Preparations.

A few weeks ago I was fortunate enough to be invited to Ruskin Mill Trust in Nailsworth to attend an annual event they hold for staff members to celebrate the winter solstice. The event focuses on their Biodynamic work, and this year there were talks on the relationship between Biodynamics and medicine, an astrological report and forecast, the recharging of the Rose-Gold lamp, a eurythmy performance, and a recital of an ancient Celtic mythological text. A very interesting and enjoyable day to say the least, and great to see and be inside the inspiring Field Centre.

This week on 6th January we carried out the first Three Kings Biodynamic stirring at the farm. It was also my first, and I experienced this special occasion where we reconnected with the land once more, and ready ourselves for the coming new year. By Mark Gordine



Warming the water before stirring



Stirring inside on a wet day

Goethean Science Project at Whites Farm

The apple pressing event was a great success with further clearing taking place in the bottom garden, as well as the activities of sorting and pressing of apples. We pressed in excess of 200 litres of juice.

Mark Gordine (see article above) joined the project in October (and progress is now being made with a steady momentum. We have now purchased new tools which enables volunteer efforts to be much more effective. We were delighted to host a weekend conference by Jeremy Naydler in November, out of which a more pro-active desire for community involvement was established by those attending. This led to a festive gathering

in December, with a choir and small orchestra and the welcome voices of community singing.

The community was welcomed back to the land on 6th January with the stirring of the 3 Kings preparation. This feels particularly poignant and important in the light of the current world circumstances and enables us to begin to work more consciously with Jeremy Naydler's insights on the 4th Industrial Revolution.



We have two D of E volunteers who are contributing weekly to the preparing of the Pottery and Photography workshops and a generous donation has been made towards insulating the roof. Looking forward, we are focusing our attention on how to develop the Goethean Science building. We feel this is of paramount importance in order to house teaching spaces for science, Goethe's Colour Research and courses to support teacher development. We have been donated a large amount of science equipment from Wynstones Physics department for these purposes.

We would welcome expertise in fundraising to get this aspect of the project off the ground. On this note, we would like to offer a fund-raising workshop on Light, Dark and Image on Saturday 19th March 2022. Places will be limited to 25 people - if you are interested, please contact Alasdair at ignitingflames@icloud.com. We would like to thank everyone for the continued tremendous enthusiasm and interest in the project. Alasdair and Denise

Huxhams Cross Farm

During the season we have seen our beautiful farm experience very mild temperatures, and hardly any rain, although this has been pleasant for those of us who aren't a fan of being wet or indeed cold, it has also felt strange to not have had many hard frosts.

However one thing that we have been certain of is the farm still being full of tasty biodynamic vegetables. Over the last few weeks our market stall has been packed to bursting with a variety of seasonal treats, parsnips and carrots, kales and brussels.

In flour news, our YQ population wheat and our Devon Landrace are being milled now So we have fresh flour available on our website. This local flour is brilliant for bread making and all-purpose use.

Our New School where students can study a Level 3 in Regenerative Land Based Systems: Food and Farming has started and we have welcomed 24 students to Huxhams Cross Farm to learn from the land. Training up in regenerative models of food production and land use at all scales in Devon.

Festive Market

We held a mini market and farm open day in December, showcasing the new developments of the farm as well as offering the local community of craft makers and food producers the opportunity to sell their products. Hannah, one of our new trainees, made a delicious batch of soup with the help of Vorriey and we made £160 for the wellbeing fund. All in all the day was a great success with our local community enjoying the farm and the mild weather we had throughout December.



Adult Education Training

We are taking booking for our new courses Introduction to Agroforestry, Introduction to Biodynamics and Economics of Permaculture and our ever popular permaculture Design Certificate for more information visit

www.apricotcentre.co.uk/trainingcourses

Wellbeing Service

The Apricot Centre Wellbeing Service has been busy this term, with new clients joining us. Our therapy team is going from strength to strength. We are working with 80 + young people and their families offering a range of therapeutic support from assessments, psychotherapy, family therapy and creative therapies to name a few.

We have also seen a new development on the farm with young people unable to access school attending weekly sessions with a team of therapeutic mentors, this is proving successful and we hope to continue to develop this service further

If you would like to discuss any wellbeing activities please contact us on wellbeing@apricotcentre.co.uk

Please keep in touch via Facebook, Instagram and our website - www.apricotcentre.co.uk.

PS Marina O'Connell's book: ' Designing Regenerative Food Systems' has now been published. To quote the blurb – 'A toolkit for designing regenerative, profitable food systems so as to mitigate climate change, offset biodiversity loss and grow good food. Backed up by striking impact research on Apricot Centre, Huxhams Cross Farm, Dartington.'. Published by Hawthorn Press. £25.

Recipe:

Leek and Mushroom Bake with Millet, Almond and Cheese topping.

From The Biodynamic Food and Cookbook by Wendy Cook. Published by Clairview

An ovenproof dish required.

Ingredients:

4oz.110g grated cheddar cheese
6oz/175 millet cooked in
1pt/570ml vegetable stock (hot)
3oz/75g roasted, chopped blanched almonds
2oz/50g butter for sautéing millet
1 tbs chopped sage
1 tbs chopped shallot

1lb/450 leeks, thoroughly washed, finely sliced
½ pint.275 vegetable stock
2oz/500g butter for sautéing
2 cloved garlic finely minced
2 floz/55ml sherry
Spring onions/parsley chopped for garnish

For the filling

2 tbs olive oil
8oz/225g mushroom finely sliced

Bechamel sauce: 2oz/50g butter and
2oz/50g plain flour for the roux, ½
pt/275ml milk, 1/2pt/275ml cooking juice
and stock, 2tbs double cream, 2 bay
leaves.



Method:

1. Carefully wash the millet and leave to drain and dry in a sieve.
2. Melt 2oz.50g butter and sauté millet in a heavy pot until the grains are coated.
3. Pour on the hot stock and bring to the boil. Reduce heat until simmering and cover tightly. Leave to cook (approx. 10 minutes) until all the liquid has been absorbed. Remove from the heat, fluff up the millet with a fork and leave to cool a little.
4. In a mixture of butter and oil, sauté the leeks and then cover with ½ the stock. Cook for 5 minutes with a little salt. Drain and reserve the juices.
5. Melt 2oz butter in a frying pan, add chopped garlic, then mushrooms and 1/3 tsp salt. Cook for 5 mins. Add the sherry and a generous grinding of black pepper and cook for a further 5 minutes. Drain and reserve juices.
6. Place the leeks and mushrooms in an ovenproof dish.
7. Make a roux with the butter and flour and add milk/stock (1Pt/570ml) stirring briskly so that no lumps remain. Add cream. The sauce should now be a coating consistency. Adjust seasoning and pour half the sauce over the vegetables, keeping the rest to serve with the dish.
8. Mix the millet, almonds, cheese to add on the top with the chopped sage, keeping a little cheese to add to the top with the chopped shallot. Spread on top of the vegetable sauce mix. Cover with foil and cook for 20 mins at 180 °C /gas mark 4. Remove foil and brown for another 15 minutes.

Biodynamic Produce for Sale

Hemp and other Tinctures available (all home made)

The CBD tincture was made by Nick Read from the hemp grown at Dartington and is the only UK organically grown CBD.

The hemp was grown for 108 days and Nick applied the two main biodynamic preparations, the cow horn and silica preps. However he also did weekly ceremonies with sound frequencies in sacred spaces on the site.

Please see his web site for costs and purchasing information. <http://www.englishhemp.co.uk>

Other tinctures currently available:

Stinging nettle (adrenal system booster)

Self heal and yarrow (general healer)

Turkey tail (used for centuries to boost the immune system)

White willow bark (natural pain killer)

Hawthorn (heart healer)

St John's Wort (menopause)

These are available in 10ml samples.

<http://www.evolvedbotanicals.co.uk>

All the plant materials are grown or foraged on Nick's land and harvested by hand at the optimum time to extract the best out of the plants used.

A review by Sean Ferris, a medical dowser in Totnes, says 'Nick's CBD tincture dowses at a particularly high level near to 99%.

Derek Lapworth

GREENLIFE SHOP, TOTNES. 01803 866738. Some Demeter products, Biodynamically grown vegetables in season and Seed Cooperative organic open pollinated seeds.

TEIGN GREENS, OXEN PARK FARM, Lower Ashton, EXETER, EX6 7QW – in conversion to BD. Contact Tim Dickens for availability of produce. www.teingreens.co.uk

VEGETABLES FROM HUXHAMS CROSS FARM: We deliver weekly vegetable bags or boxes. The boxes contain Huxhams Cross Farm own produce as well as several small BD and organic growers who will be providing vegetables at certain times of the year. We can add eggs, flour fruit and water. You can order online at www.apricotcentre.co.uk.

Enquiries to Bob Mehew: 07507 841 158 or bob.mehew@apricotcentre.co.uk

Hapstead Farm Meat:

All produce from animals that are managed according to high welfare, organic, biodynamic regenerative farming principles. Contact Tobias Goulden about what is available. - Email: tobiasgoulden@yahoo.co.uk.

FRUIT JUICE CORDIALS for SALE - Contact Derek Lapworth on 01364 644010

All with organic apple juice--

Rosehip 500ml 7-1 concentrate	£5	Mixed fruit	£6
Plum as above	£5	Wild fruits	£6
Elderberry	£6	Sour Cherry	£6
Sloe	£6	Raspberry 330ml 7-1	£5
Elderberry elixir, with herbs and honey and apple juice	£5		
Sloe elixir as above	£5		
Sour Cherry elixir as above	£5		