

SOUTHWEST BIODYNAMIC SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2023



Solstice

When music, warm of a summer gleaming,
dies away, tuned with the revolving seasons,
when the trees rich orchard and leaves are showing
polychrome lesions;

When the light moves. Glorious sun reflected
Colours star bright, deeper than eyes had caught them
In the green, black earth is a source of sunlight
deep into autumn

when you them feel chill and the days grow weaker..

excerpt from Solstice by Emery George

From the editor:

Here are a summary of the minutes of a meeting held at Whites Farm. It was not a formal AGM as we did not have time to give proper notice. Minutes kindly taken and typed by Denise Jones-Gordon

Minutes for Local Biodynamic Group, May 6th 2023, Whites Farm.

Present; Kit, Franky, Diana, Mark, Carol, Sally, Christine, Alasdair and Denise

Apologies; Selby, Sarah, Rosemary and Roz.

Diana described issues with the bank. The local group is 'unofficial' and uses a community account with Christine as a signatory.

- **Accounts:** there was just about enough money to cover the costs of the summer newsletter. If people agreed to receive it in future electronically then the costs of printing and postage will be saved. A request for this will be announced in the next newsletter. Alternatively, paper copies could be left at Whites Farm for people to collect. Diana requests support/input to help her with the content of the newsletter.
- Expenditure has increased now that the BD farmers and BD growers are working separately to make the preps. Previously, much more was donated and now materials need to be purchased. For example, last year the materials cost £146 and this year they cost £267.

. Chamomile needs to be picked next. A concern was expressed about limited supplies of chamomile -it's difficult to grow from seed. Could we transfer some of Selby's plants before she moves?

Preparations need to be collected from Whites Farm (no postal service available). Diana will forward a list of subscribers who have already paid for the preps to Whites Farm.

BD Library. Is now at Huxhams Cross - how can they be more available for use by the group? Roz used to monitor who had borrowed and returned books. Mark says the students training at Huxhams Cross do look at the books. Derek has dropped a few BD books to Whites Farm where there is already a library of anthroposophical books. A suitable dry location is planned on site for them (but not ready yet). • A discussion around subscriptions and accounts. How to encourage new members to join & to promote the group? Invite the BD Step-by-Step course members. An article in the Reconnect magazine? Have copies of the BD newsletter available at events

Denise Jones-Gordon 6th May 202

Since the meeting, the finances are looking healthier. We have several new members and thanks to members paying their subscriptions promptly when due. . I will monitor the bank account carefully and hopefully we will not have to raise the subscription this year.

However, if you would rather receive your newsletter by email (several people have requested this already) please let me know via email –dianawhite35@hotmail.com

There is so much Biodynamic activity in the area at the moment, it would be impossible to list it all. There have been courses, events and the making of preparations as well as the on-going work of farming and gardening.

The most exciting news, I think, is the development on the edge of Totnes at **Bowden Pillars Farm**. Some of you may have seen it in the national press focussing on the fact that Devon Wildlife Trust is going to create a the rainforest at Bowden Pillars farm,

The farm came up for sale recently next door to an established residential community at Bowden House. The Farm was sold in several lots and the group managed to buy the house and 50 hectares of land close to Bowden House.

To quote from the press article 'The 30 hectares of rainforest will sit within a larger 50-hectare site where two other interesting projects are taking place. The Apricot Centre, which champions sustainable, diverse farming, will grow wheat for local bread production among fruit trees and introduce a herd of cows for grass-fed beef and a flock of hens. Within a few years there should also be new human inhabitants – 40 green homes are to be built as part of a “regenerative settlement” on the old farmhouse site.’ Marina O’Connell, the farmer at the Apricot Centre, said in a recent talk that she will immediately start to work the land biodynamically and within a few years it will have certification..

See more about how it has been funded and a Land Trust formed on bowdenpillarsfuture.land/

With warm summer wishes (with the right amount of rain!) Diana White

Preparations:

Making the Valerian preparation:

Sarah Pank put out an invitation to join her to make a valerian preparation at her home. I was so much drawn to being involved in this process so got up at 5am for an early start working with the precise energy and forces of the morning, moon and ourselves!

Barbara had arrived a bit earlier (it's a bit of a trek in my van than prefers to move at a sedate pace) than me, so after a refreshing lemon balm tea waiting for me on entering the garden I met with Sarah and introduced myself to the valerian plants.

With Sarah's guidance and back up from the Biodynamic Gardening book we undertook the selection of flowers with gratitude and ceremony!
I had brought rain water from an oak barrel in my garden and once both (flowers and water) were in the little clear bottles we carved a cork to fit precisely tied it in place, so it would not pop under fermenting and also gave a method for it to hang in a tree!
All great fun and very special with just us three!!

We enjoyed a wonderful collective and very wholesome brunchy breakfast together on finishing. Thank you so much Sarah for this special morning creating alchemy with the plants!

Barbara took a bottle to hang in her garden.
I hung mine in a hazel hedge facing east in mine and Sarah hung hers in an apple tree! We both decanted the contents into dark bottles, a little later than instructed but the aroma is amazing and the liquid a golden amber. So the magic worked.!!

So much gratitude for this process and connecting ourselves to the plants and spirit and energies in this way.

Tess Stone



Supporting the sharing of the preps.

It would be very helpful, in collecting these from Whites Farm, if you could take containers please. And save them for re-use! There's not space for these to accumulate at the farm.

- * A 'jam' jar is ideal for the cow horn manure 500.
- * And for the compost preps, those tiny little jam jars are, if you track them down, a perfect size. You'll need 5, as they are placed individually in the compost pile.
- * A clear glass jar or bottle for the cow horn silica 501. You can store a quantity, in a bright, light place that catches the morning sun, away from electricity.
- * The valerian 507 is stored in little, dark glass bottles. Little, because the prep may keep longer in this way. These aren't easy to come by. So, please bring what you can, of a similar nature, when you go to collect, to receive the 507. And then the bottles that are suitable for long term storage can be returned to those who make it!

Thank you. Any questions, please contact Sarah walkingtotherivertoswim@protonmail.com or 01364 631102

Wishing to host a collaborative process in learning from Rudolf Steiner's Agricultural Course

My interest is to share the reading and conversations that flow from this study together. To give real reflective time and space to an unfolding process of inquiry and research. Working together in our shared convening perhaps with drawing, painting or other creative processes to support this. I live on the edge of Holne, Dartmoor. But also have an interest in the possibility of a group meeting in each other's spaces, to give the potentiality of sharing experiences of our gardens or land. I am open to us cooperatively finding the rhythm for meeting, once we know who may be involved.

If this invitation interests you, please call 01364 631102 or email walkingtotherivertoswim@protonmail.com

Thank you,
Sarah

News from growers:

Half Moon Field, Tigley. Contact Carol at halfmoonfield@planetmail.com



At Half moon field, the Wildflower meadow has come into its own this year, a delight to the eye and providing food for our resident Barn Owl and her chicks.

The gardening group, vegetable garden and soft fruit are just about coping with the dry weather, The BD compost and mulching are beneficial. The orchard trees seem to be happy after their application of Tree Paste this winter. Hens are laying and chicks are hatching.

The tiny hedging wipps we planted are now holding the spaces around the orchard and vegetable garden. We are continuing to work with the preps and learning all the time

Teigngreens —Teign Greens @ Oxen Park Farm, Lower Ashton, Devon, EX6 7QW



Meet our core Teign Green crew for the season. From left-right: out trainee Jo, Theo (farm babe), CSA manager Holly Green, Anna, our second trainee, head grower Tim and finally assisiatnt grower and lovely community's organic veggies for the year ahead.

Volunteering and Events at Teign Greens

- We're hosting a **tomato care workshop on 18th July, 5-7pm**- free for members and £10 for non members. Emily and Tim will teach you their tips on growing top tommys. Limited space so booking essential.
- At our next two Saturday volunteering days we'll be getting the last few crops in the ground (squash planting coming up soon), keeping on top of the ever present weeds and there's soon going to be a lottttt of harvesting to do. All welcome, kids too! And we honestly don't mind if you come along just in time for tea break and only pull up

one weed before you need to head off! We just love showing you where your veg comes from!

- **Saturday 8th July 9:30-1pm**
- And you're welcome to come along to our regular weekly **Tuesday volunteer days, 9am-4pm**. With all our volunteering events, it's helpful if you give us a heads up if you can make it, but if you're feeling spontaneous, feel free to drop in too.

If you live to nearer Exeter and are interested in Teigngreens, see their website – teigngreens.co.uk where you can subscribe to their newsletter, order a veggie box.

Whites Farm:

Volunteer days continue, working in the garden and polytunnel. If you are a member of the SWBD group you will receive emails about dates.

A very successful Biodynamic Gardening Course is being run at Whites Farm. 11 people have signed up and attend the 6 monthly classes. The course tutor is Frankie van der Stok who is happy to share the knowledge he has gained over a lifetime of working with Biodynamics.

There will be a similar course run at Whites Farm next year from February to August. 2024.

Programme Outline

- Session 1** – Seed connects with Soil
- Session 2** – Planning our garden
- Session 3** – The Plant between the Sun and Earth
- Session 4** – The Biodynamic Preparations
- Session 5** – Tending the garden
- Session 6** – The garden as an organism

For more details and to book see the Biodynamic Association website biodynamic.org.uk It costs £180 for the 6 sessions.

On the fourth session of the current course, SWBG members were invited to help dig up the preparations buried in the autumn last year. They are stored at Whites Farm who have received a grant from the South Devon Land Trust to give the lean-to where they are stored a more solid roof.

Here are photographs of the oak bark being removed from the pigs skull. We could not acquire a sheep's one and the freshly washed out skull was filled with oak bark and buried at Hapstead Farm by Tobias Goulden. and the silica which had been buried in a cow horn at Halfmoon Field at Tigley.. The Chamomile and dandelion had been buried at Whites Farm.



Seasonal Recipe from The Biodynamic Cookbook by Wendy Cook.

Salade Nicoise –Serves 6

A wonderful summer salad – a one pot meal full of delicious surprise flavours and bright colours.

Ingredients:

2lb/900g new potatoes
2 red peppers, roasted, peeled and de-seeded
7oz/200g can of tuna fish
½ can of anchovy fillets
1oz/25g black olives
2 tender sticks of celery
4oz/110g blanched green French beans
4 spring onions finely sliced
2 hard boiled eggs
½ pint/275 lemon mayonnaise
(this is when the zest of a lemon is used instead of vinegar when making the mayonnaise)
10z/25g pine kernels, pan roasted till golden
1 tbsp capers
2 tbsp parsley, finely chopped
1 tbsp chopped chives
4 sprigs of mint
1 tsp salt
Crispy lettuce and cherry tomatoes for garnish.



Method:

1. Scrub the potatoes and cover with cold water. Add 1 tsp salt and 2 prigs of mint.; Bring to the boil and cook in a covered pan until tender but no soft.. They need to be waxy and hold their form. Drain and cool.
2. Chop hard boiled egg, celery and spring onions, parlslley and sprigs of mint. Slice the peppers into strips. Reserve a little of each vegetable and herb for decoration. Break up the chunks of tuna fish.
3. Cut potatoes into fairly even chunks.
4. In a large bowl combine all the ingredients with the mayonnaise.
5. Take a salad bowl and line it with washed and dried lettuce leaves, allowing the green to frill around the edges. .Carefully spoon in the salad. Decorate the top with the reserved vegetables and herbs, olives, capers and anchovy fillets.

Serve chilled with crusty bread.

BIODYNAMIC PRODUCE FOR SALE

BIODYNAMIC WHEAT FOR SALE SPRING WHEAT, Miluka variety, harvested Sept 2022, available in 25kg paper bags at £10 per bag or 500kg dumpy bags at £400 per tonne. I am told Miluka is good for baking.

and

BIODYNAMIC BEEF from our freezer from our biodynamic South Devons, various cuts and joints but all the sirloin, rump and fillet steaks have been sold.

Please contact Tristan Bertie 07836 591 847

Lordswood Churchstow Kingsbridge

Or e-mail me at lordswood.biodynamics@btinternet.co

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.

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

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.teigngreens.co.uk

VEGETABLES FROM APRICOT CENTRE/ 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.

BD FRUIT JUICE CORDIALS for SALE - All with organic apple juice

Contact Derek Lapworth on 01364 64401

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 South West Biodynamic Group

Preparations are available from Whites Farm, Lower Dean, Buckfastleigh. TQ11 OLS. Contact Denise deniselaurenj@icloud.com

If you wish to join, please contact Diana White (Treasurer) at dianawhite35@hotmail.com or write to 12 Apple Wharf, The Plains, Totnes, TQ9 5QL 07747398839

