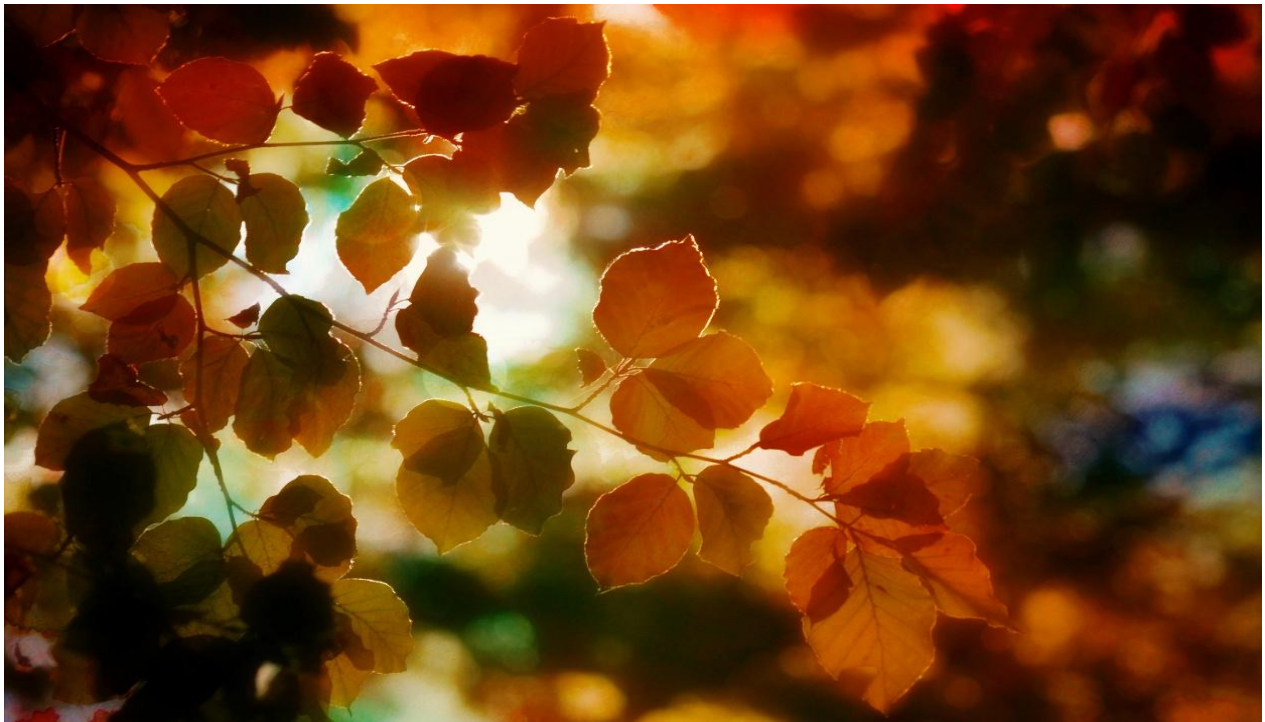


SOUTH WEST BIODYNAMIC GROUP

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2025



Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

By Gerard Manley Hopkins

Dates for your diary:

Sunday 19th October 2025 AUTUMN GATHERING at Whites Farm. (See details inside)

Sunday 4th January 2026 Three Kings stirring. Details inside

Saturday the 24th January 2026 – Community Meal Dartington Village Hall ,

From the Editor and Treasurer.

The Accounts for 1st March 2024 to 28th February 2025.

In Bank 29th Feb 2024 £1,348.42

Total Income: £12,819.14. (This includes £10,000 bequest and transfer of £900 from South Devon Land Trust)

Total Expenditure: £2,619.21 (£10,900 transferred to deposit account)

Total in Current Account at 28th February 2025 £648.35

Total in Deposit Account at 28th February 2025 £10,940.13.

If anyone would like to see the details of the accounts, please contact me dianawhite35@hotmail.com. There will be copies available at the Autumn Gathering on Sunday 19th October.

Small Grants:

A reminder that we are able to make small grants for promoting Biodynamics – help towards attending conferences, training courses or in some way help develop Biodynamics. If you could use some support in anyway, please contact the Grants Group, via myself, Diana White at the above email address.

Job Vacancy:

On a personal note: I have enjoyed editing the SWBD Newsletter for the past 6 or 7 years and the being Treasurer for 8 years. I am happy to continue with **one** of these tasks, but not both. I need to give up one of these jobs. I am also happy to support the person who takes on one or other tasks.

The Newsletter is published four times a year. It means emailing the various Biodynamic Holdings in Devon and Cornwall asking for news and/or articles. It would be helpful to be able to attend the planning meetings for the twice yearly Seasonal Gatherings in Spring and Autumn (a lot is done online for this). You will need good typing and layout skills too. You will need to send completed newsletter to the printers and collect and deliver to the team who address the envelopes.

Being the Treasurer means keeping records of subscriptions coming in, reminding people when they are due and keeping lists of paid up members. You will also write cheques for any expenditure concerned with the newsletter, the making of preparations and for Grants decided on by the Grants group.

If you would like to take on one of the roles, please contact me via email dianawhite35@hotmail.com - thank you in anticipation

This issue has evolved into one about nutrition and microbes! It wasn't planned. Thank you to those who have contributed articles and reports.

Community Meal

The dawn of the first century of Biodynamic farming and gardening, and the commitment to protect and celebrate local, healthy and ethically delicious foods, inspired the Wholistic Community in South Devon to create the Seasonal Biodynamic Meal at Dartington Parish Hall, nearly three years ago. Wendy Cook's prophetic emphasis on the role of food as medicine, the sacredness of soil, and the foundational importance of breaking bread together for harmony, joy and unity, is foundational to this initiative taking place in her village, Dartington.

To celebrate our dear Biodynamic cook, food guru, and much more, our Winter gathering will honour Wendy's contributions to the world based on the study of the work of Steiner and Goethe. The venue for this meal and future ones, are kindly sponsored by the Devon Biodynamic Group, whose financial help and support will ensure the cost is reasonable. (£12.15 per person) The first event will be on **Saturday the 24th January 2026**, and aims to celebrate and kindle the start of England's Agricultural year earlier that month.



Whether you would like to express your support for this seasonal gathering by booking a table for yourself, for family and friends, or may help us by contacting local organisations with similar ethos (thank goodness, there are many in this area), to reserve a table for their colleagues and clients. Each table is for up to 6 people .

Volunteers for catering and clearing are immensely appreciated for the continuation of this heartfelt offering.

Thank you, Manuela Murray. - murray.manuela@gmail.com

Food is life

In a world with fast food, political and global unrest, social media and AI, how can we ensure that we remain well nourished? When I say well nourished I not only mean how we live our lives and digest emotionally, I am referring to the food we eat.

Plant based foods come from seed. The seed is the source of all life. In order to grow the seed needs soil. The quality of the soil in which the seed is planted is of utmost importance. The location of the food is also of interest, if we are to support local economy and honour seasons and cycles. Many seeds are produced with GM, soil is increasingly polluted and food can be heavily contaminated and processed. If we choose to eat polluted and processed foods, that are out of season and grown in contaminated soil, then our health will suffer in the long term. If we look at more holistic ways of food sourcing and production then we can access unprocessed and uncontaminated food and promote our own health as well as supporting the local community.

As an Ayurveda* practitioner food is at the cornerstone of my personal and professional practice. I am constantly striving to find ways of reducing the impact of poor food sources upon my and others health. A huge part of this is to eat vegetables that are grown locally and which are in season. In terms of what keeps us healthy we simply need to look at what grows around us and we will find that nature provides all of the elements, vitamins and vital nutrients that we need in each and every season as the year passes. In times past we also used simple preservation methods, for example making elderberry syrup to ensure this vital immune tonic supports us through the winter months. (Derek Lapworth in Buckfastleigh works hard to keep this tradition alive and right now he has some delicious elderberry for sale!).



In terms of Steiner's approach, which is relatively new to me, we look to biodynamic growing techniques. This way of approaching food production considers how everything is interconnected, It looks at the planets and moon cycles, and to the whole of nature as a complete system, including ourselves within this cosmic vision. In this view there is a great synergy with the Ayurvedic approach which also employs the holistic view of life and the elements. This was recently emphasised to me when I came across the work of Wendy Cook, and upon reading her books I was inspired to find someone with a very similar experience and viewpoint to myself in terms of the energetic qualities of foods and how to interact with them.

Food is life. Because food comes from seed and soil it seems obvious that seed and soil are what we need to care for first and foremost. Our body tissues, cells and organs are made of the food that we eat. I urge you to source local farm shops or markets (which are so plentiful here in Devon), look for organic and unsprayed produce, eat seasonally and locally. If possible grow a little yourself, even on the windowsill. It will support the local economy, it will improve your health and it will inspire others to do the same.

Virginia Compton
www.virginiacompton.com

*Ayurveda is the Indian 'science of life', an ancient holistic healthcare system.

Fermenting workshop at Whites Farm.



On Saturday 20th September there was a workshop run by Jasmin Frances from Ruskin Mill College in Stroud. Participants learned how to make sauerkraut, herbal teas and fire tonics using biodynamic fruit, vegetables and herbs.

Jasmin talked about the importance of fermented food in cultivating a healthy gut microbiome, and how to incorporate both pre and pro-biotics in one's diet. She explained the links between gut health and mental health.

We made sauerkraut using biodynamic cabbage from the gardens at Ruskin Mill College where she works, in charge of nutrition for the students. We also added small amounts of carrot or beetroot. Some people added small amounts of chili or ginger. The quality and amounts of salt added was important. Himalayan pink salt was not suitable as this has antibiotic properties and we need salt with probiotic properties like Celtic sea salt. It is also important to weigh the cabbage and

other vegetables used and add 2% salt. I chopped 600 grams of cabbage and after working in the 3 g of salt (a very satisfying job using clean hands, squeezing and stirring) this filled a large jam jar covering the cabbage with the liquid generated by the process.. We need to leave this at room temperature with the lid loose to allow air in for 3 weeks.



In the afternoon we made Fire Tonics which are very simple. These will help our immune systems. We started with thinly slicing horseradish or ginger (some people did both) and putting them in a jam jar. This was the 'fire'. We then added

herbs, spiced and fruit – slices of lemon and orange, sloes, cinnamon, thyme and rosemary. Jasmin encouraged us to notice what items we were 'drawn' to and include those in our jar. We then filled the jar with unfiltered and unpasteurised cider vinegar and put the lid on tightly. We will have to wait five weeks for the tonics to 'brew'. Jasmin told us that the process will extract the vitamins and minerals etc from the contents. We will then add a small amount of the tonic to water or soups or make salad dressings with olive oil. We should not drink them neat!

We tried two tonics that Jasmin had made before. I tried both in with some warm water. One with elderflower 'hit the spot' – can't describe it any other way, while the other one was just ok. Others had the opposite reaction. It was a very informative and enjoyable day – holistically nutritious and warming. Diana White..

Jasmin's next course at Whites Farm will be on making a rose-gold massage balm. – hopefully in December. Details to follow.

Whites Farm Volunteer Days in their Biodynamic Garden.

Our volunteer day is every Friday with lunch included. We have a steady core of 4 volunteers working with Martha, with other people joining us as & when they are available. Volunteers are welcome whether it's an hour, a morning or the day! We start at 10am, stop for lunch at 1pm and finish at 4pm.

The Dangers of Synthetically designed Microbes in the Soil – a new technology.

A recent email was sent to the Anthroposophical Community by Tobias Kaye highlighting developments in agricultural technology. He points out, 'The soil alive, full of a wonderful diversity of microbes and agro-chemicals destroy this life, while Bio Dynamics enhances it.'

Now industrial agriculture has a new plan: Replace this life with a newly designed, patented genetically engineered microbe-system. This product is being used in the United States and despite the product being called 'Proven', there has been little research of its effectiveness in its claims to reduce the need for adding artificial nitrogen to the soil.

The Friends of the Earth have produced a comprehensive report on the Risks and Concerns of this technology which if you are interested can be reached on line - [GE Microbes Report Final.pdf](#)

Autumn Gathering.

The South West Biodynamic Group will be holding their annual Autumn Gathering at Whites Farm, Lower Dean, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0LS

The plan for the day is as follows:

Arrive from 9.30 for a 10am start.

10 am AGM

10.30 work with Preparations

12,30 pm : Shared lunch

1.30 pm Talk on The Biology of Soil by *Lorraine Campbell and who will bring her microscope along;

2.30 pm Stirring and spraying of 500 preparation.

4 pm finish

*Lorraine has recently been studying soil biology. – she says

'I would love to bring my microscope and do a talk. We could look at some of the preparations - I am sure there will be densely packed full of diverse microbes. The talk will include the symbiotic relationship between plants and their microbial partners. Understanding the roles of the four main groups; Fungi, Bacteria, Protozoa and Nematodes. The connection of the Human microbiome and the soil microbiome and the carbon sink.'

,

Please feel free to join us for some or part of the day.



Three Kings stirring

Hosted by Denise and Alasdair of Whites Farm on
Sunday 4th January 2026.
All welcome.

Gathering at 1.45pm for a tea and to settle.
Stirring for one hour to begin, 2.15pm.

This will allow time for those who wish, to share in the spraying at Whites Farm. And also hopefully, reach your destination, to spray your own spaces before the light fades.

Please bring a container for the three kings preparation stirred, to take away.

If you would like to grind the gold, frankincense and myrrh on New Year's Eve between the midnight hour, 11.30pm to 12.30am, please let me know, so I can arrange to pass it to you. Likewise, if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Sarah

01364 631 102

walkingtotherivertoswim@protonmail.com

International Links

I have been working closely with Sudarshan Chaudhary, a biodynamic farmer and indigenous Nepali, for the past three years or so. And wish to share this news with you.

HEALING the HIMALAYAS

The Himalayas are under threat, with their ecological foundations, farmland, and glacial lakes - the lifeblood of Asia - disappearing at an alarming rate. Could biodynamic agriculture - a holistic, regenerative farming approach - provide cross-cutting solutions to transform our food systems and heal our land?

We invite farmers, biodynamic initiatives and associations, local multipliers, and key stakeholders from the food sector to join us at the 3rd International Asian Biodynamic Conference, where we will explore synergies and collaborations for the future of agriculture in Asia.

If to gift financial support is possible for you, please use this link:

https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-nepal-host-the-bd-healing-himalayas-conference?attribution_id=sl:15cd60f3-8f21-40f8-afb1-3ffd237ad511&lang=en_US&ts=1757326084

There is a click-on-icon option, to change the transfer of funds to sterling. And after selecting the amount to send.

With deep gratitude,

Sarah

BIODYNAMIC PRODUCE FOR SALE

BIODYNAMIC BEEF from our freezer from our biodynamic South Devon Cattle, 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.com

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 – Contact for availability of produce. www.teigngreens.co.uk email teigngreens@gmail.com

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 meat. You can order online at www.apricotcentre.co.uk

BD FRUIT JUICE CORDIALS for SALE - All with organic apple juice
Contact Derek Lapworth on 07747 120 669

Hemp and other Tinctures (all homemade)

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

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

Flowers:

Trelowen Flowers | Organic-certified Cornish Flower Farm in conversion to Biodynamics

See Website [:trelowenflowers.com](http://trelowenflowers.com)

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