

Star & Furrow



JOURNAL OF THE BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION ■ ISSUE NO: 114 ■ WINTER 2011 ■ ISSN NO: 1472-4634 ■ £4.50

**SEDLSCOMBE
BIODYNAMIC
VINEYARD**

**INTERVIEW WITH
DORETTE SCHWABE**

**BIODYNAMIC
COLLEGE OPENING**

**WHY KEEP LIVESTOCK
ON BIODYNAMIC FARMS?**

demeter

THE BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION (BDAA)

The Association exists in order to support, promote and develop the biodynamic approach to farming, gardening and forestry. This unique form of organic growing seeks to improve the nutritional value of food and the sustainability of land by nurturing the vitality of the soil through the practical application of a holistic and spiritual understanding of nature and the human being. Put simply, our aim is greater vitality for people and planet through more biodynamic acres, more biodynamic food and more understanding of biodynamics.

Membership is open to everyone. Our members are interested in working with, developing and learning about biodynamics. Subscription rates are £30 (or £15 for concessions). Membership income funds in part the work of the Association, so they are directly furthering the aims of the BDAA; however there are also further benefits.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter, *Star and Furrow* twice a year, early booking on training courses and events days. They get involved in organising and supporting biodynamic initiatives through the local group network and there are conferences, the AGM and many other events that they can attend. Many are supported in their own biodynamic practical work through advice from the Association from whom they also source their biodynamic preparations and books.

Biodynamic Certification

The Association owns and administers the Demeter Certification Logo that is used by biodynamic producers in the UK to guarantee to consumers that internationally recognised biodynamic production standards are being followed. These standards cover both production and processing and apply in more than forty countries. They are equivalent to or higher than basic organic standards. The certification scheme is accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service and is recognised in the UK with the coding GB-ORG-06.

Apprentice Training

The Biodynamic Agricultural Association offers a practical two year apprentice training in biodynamic agriculture and horticulture. This takes place on well established biodynamic holdings around the country and is open to everyone aged 21 and over. Apprentices usually live and work on the farm in exchange for board, lodging and training. Their practical tuition is supported by weekly tutorials and a programme of seminars and block courses.

The objective of the course is to gain basic agricultural/horticultural skills, understand the principles and practice of biodynamic techniques and create a foundation for developing an independent understanding of the earth, life and human beings from a spiritual perspective. Successful graduates will receive a Crossfields Institute Diploma accredited by Edexcel.

Biodynamic Agricultural College

The Biodynamic Agricultural College at Emerson Campus in Forest Row is now part of the Biodynamic Association. The College offers full time accredited two year courses in Biodynamic Agriculture and Horticulture.

Seed development project

The Association is working to develop a sustainable on-farm plant breeding programme, increase the availability of high quality seed varieties suited to organic growing conditions and encourage the establishment of a co-operative network of biodynamic seed producers. The breeding and development of appropriate site adapted varieties is of vital interest to biodynamic farmers and offers the only long term alternative to biotechnology. It also requires an ongoing research commitment that is entirely dependent on gifts and donations.

Our Roots in Anthroposophy

Biodynamics was first envisioned by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) in a series of lectures given in 1924. Since then, biodynamics has continued to develop and the Association keeps abreast of developments in science, nutrition, education, health and social reform. It is linked to the Agricultural Section of the School of Spiritual Science (Switzerland) and affiliated as a group of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain. It is also a full member of Demeter International, SUSTAIN and IFOAM.

Spiritual Purpose

The BDAA makes the most of every penny; we are determined and focussed on achieving our purpose. Our resources are used effectively and efficiently and the co-workers in our organisation are empowered to direct their free and active will to their task. We also notice the last line of the Foundation Stone Meditation by Steiner "With Single Purpose" and let it resound in our hearts and in our organisation.

Funding

The Association is a small organisation wholly dependent on subscriptions, donations and grants. There is a growing interest in biodynamics and to meet this welcome development additional funds are being sought. Becoming a member and encouraging others to join is an important way of supporting the work. Donations over and above the recommended membership subscription are also extremely helpful. Even the smallest contribution can make a real difference. For those considering making a Will and possibly leaving something to support biodynamic development, a legacy leaflet is now available. Please contact the office for a copy.

For information on all aspects of the Association's work contact:

Biodynamic Agricultural Association,
Painswick Inn Project,
Gloucester Street, Stroud,
Glos, GL5 1QG

Telephone: +44 (0)1453 759501
Email: office@biodynamic.org.uk
Website: www.biodynamic.org.uk

STAR & FURROW

Journal of the Biodynamic Association
Published twice yearly
Issue Number 114 - Winter 2010
ISSN 1472-4634

STAR & FURROW is the membership magazine of The Biodynamic Association. It is issued free to members.

Non members can also purchase *Star and Furrow*. For two copies per annum the rates are:
UK £11.00 including postage
Europe (airmail) £13.00
Rest of the World (airmail) £16.00

Editor: Richard Swann, Contact via the Biodynamic Association Office or E-mail: rswann@biodynamic.org.uk
Design & layout: Dave Thorp of 'The Workshop'
Printed on a 100% recycled FSC paper by Severnprint, Gloucester

Published by the Biodynamic Association
© Biodynamic Association 2010
Charity No: 269036
VAT No: 791 2859 91

The function of *Star and Furrow* is to encourage the free exchange of ideas and experience among those who work with, or are interested in biodynamic farming, gardening and related subjects. Contributors subscribe to no dogma and are bound by no rules. **Their contributions are personal documents, not official utterances by the Association.**

Final dates for contributions are 1st April for the summer issue and 1st October for the winter issue. Copy can either be submitted in a typed printed format or as an electronic text document by e-mail. Please send articles to the editor at the Biodynamic Association Office.

BIODYNAMIC ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Chairman: Sebastian Parsons
Treasurer: Ian Bailey
Other Council Members: Elspeth Austin, Peter Brown, Charlotte von Bulow, Brian Cavendish, Spencer Christy, Vivian Griffiths, Heidi Herrmann, John Lister, Chris Stockdale.
Executive Team: Sebastian Parsons, Ian Bailey, Timothy Brink, Jessica Standing and Richard Swann
Association Administrator: Jessica Standing
Email: office@biodynamic.org.uk

BIODYNAMIC ASSOCIATION CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Chairman:
Huw Shepherd Tel: 0131 229 7803
Administrator:
Angela Wilson Tel: 01453 766296
Email: demeter@biodynamic.org.uk
Certification Manager:
Timothy Brink
Tel: 0131 478 1201
Email: timbrink@biodynamic.org.uk

Front cover photograph © Richard Swann
Biodynamic Grapes at Sedlescombe Vineyard



Editorial

I am pleased to bring you another packed issue of Star and Furrow covering a wide range of topics. There is so much happening in the biodynamic world both in the UK and throughout the world.

High on the list is training which is focussed both in the course at Emerson as well as the accredited Biodynamic Apprentice Diploma. It was very exciting to be at the 'handover' ceremony of the Biodynamic Agricultural College in October, where there was so much positive energy.

As part of the accreditation process the Biodynamic Association is finding new partners. One of these is Crossfields Institute. In this issue Charlotte writes about their work and what they can offer.

Land ownership is also on our minds and is one of the 'Burning Issues' that we have identified. Martin Large's article asks for interest and support to set up a Land Trust specifically for biodynamic agriculture. We will be engaged in this vital and interesting subject quite a lot in the New Year.

Because of the snow we were prevented from handing Dorette Schwabe her Lifetime Achievement Award. It is being rescheduled for a time in the first quarter of the New Year. Meanwhile, a picture of her life's work is portrayed through the interview she gives to Howard Smith.

Going into the New Year, many of us are looking forward to the Agricultural Conference in Dornach. It will be a departure from the usual conference format as can be seen in the flyer that is included with this issue. It is going to be a great opportunity for us to look at what the burning issues are in agriculture today and in doing so address how biodynamics can meet those challenges and create beacons of light to take our work into the future.



Richard Swann
Editor

CONTENTS

	page
Biodynamic Association Chairman <i>Sebastian Parsons</i>	4
Learn from Nature how fruits grow and seeds ripen <i>by Howard Smith</i>	5
Why keep livestock on Biodynamic Farms <i>by Timothy Brink</i>	9
A Biodynamic Farm Land Trust? <i>by Martin Large</i>	12
Biodynamic Diploma <i>by Kai Lange</i>	16
Crossfields Institute <i>by Charlotte von Bulow</i>	18
The Biodynamic Agricultural College officially opens and receives its own home <i>by Jesse and Nir</i>	20
New Leadership at the Agriculture Section in Dornach <i>by Richard Swann</i>	23
Bees in Winter <i>by Heidi Herrmann</i>	26
Sedlescombe Vineyard <i>by Richard Swann</i>	28
Weingut Dr Burklin-Wolf profile <i>by Monty Waldin</i>	30
Demeter International Members Assembly in Brazil <i>by Richard Swann</i>	32
Tree pasting <i>by Tom Petherick</i>	34
Visiting Biodynamic Initiatives near Wiesbaden <i>by Jackie Crompton</i>	36
The Green Goetheanum Project <i>by Bernard Jarman</i>	39
BD 500 <i>by Stephen Watson</i>	42
Lauriston Farm <i>by Richard Swann</i>	43
Biodynamic Sanctuary – growing your own in central London <i>by Richard Swann</i>	45
Reviews	47
From the Biodynamic Office	54

From the Biodynamic Association Chairman



© Sebastian Parsons

EDITED VERSION OF THE ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN OCTOBER 2010
AT THE BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, FOREST ROW

Welcome everybody, to the Biodynamic Association Annual General Meeting. A celebration of the launch of the Biodynamic Agricultural College (BDAC).

I am Sebastian Parsons and my role is the Chairman of the Council of the Trustees of the Biodynamic Association. This is my report on the last year for the Association. A year where the organisation has really been going through a growth point in its biography, a profound period of transformation which is still ongoing. In the Council and the Management Team a process of review, evaluation and restructuring has been happening to bring about purposeful activity so that everything we do makes a difference and moves us forward.

First the structure, we created an Executive group and decided that it would meet every week by telephone and every month in person. We decided that the monthly meetings would last all day and we would only discuss one or two issues per meeting. We wrote down everything that everybody wanted to do on a master list and started to prioritise it.

It became clear that some things would have to wait quite a long time before they were done so we made two special lists, the 'safe space for new ideas', and the 'safe space for projects that need funding that don't have money yet'. It is a simple structure and a simple process, but we have stuck to it, and it works.

The transformation of the work in the Council has been similarly focussed on running an agenda that is doable and prioritised. By delegating to the Executive team, the task of the day to day running of the organisation the Council is freed up to lead the organisation. The Executive Team minutes the weekly telephone meeting and this ongoing narrative of the life of the Association is circulated to the Council so that when they meet they know what is happening, and maintain a strong sense of the organisation as a whole.

This means that we can spend our time in the meeting getting to the bottom of strategic decisions. What path do we want to take? We can get to the bottom of understanding and approving the budget. So we can take the business plan that has been put together and we can say 'yes we want those outcomes' and then we can look at what it's going to cost and what those costs will mean in terms of sacrifice and whether we think we can do it. We can spend a whole day making a small number of decisions but decisions that are really big. So we have an effective Council and the bonus is, we finish our meetings on time!

This process of transformation has been going on for at least a couple of years and at a certain point an opportunity came towards us that was out of all proportion to anything that had come before that any of us could remember. That opportunity was the threat to Emerson College so if they were going to close and the Biodynamic course going to shut, how did we feel about that? It was asked if the Biodynamic Association would care for this course – would we take it on? The Association may be 60 years old, this may be the 60th Anniversary, but it is not a big organisation and actually

the turnover of the college is roughly the same as the turnover of the Biodynamic Association, so relatively speaking, we were looking at a big decision. We had to ask ourselves the question whether we were qualified to do this task.

We could clearly see the financial boundary that we had to put round BDAC – we could facilitate and empower, but we could not subsidise. In time the Council came to squarely face the question of whether we had the courage to take this project on. The Council members here will well remember the late night meeting when we made the decision to do just that. It was a very, very tough meeting and it was an exciting meeting and it was just the sort of meeting that organisation that are on the move have. Of course the next day, I was at Emerson to give a speech at the Graduation ceremony. We made the decision in the nick of time. It was such a powerful moment – it was such a special moment.

The Biodynamic Association has many areas of activity. As well as training there is marketing, membership services, and certification and the last thing I want to say is directly to our members, our warmth body: you are absolutely critical to our success. You are critical to our success in three key ways: first of all you are our ambassadors in the community – you are our sense organs and our spokesmen – through your connections and contacts we can grow, we can meet new people who offer us opportunities and can solve the problems and challenges we face.

The second thing is of course the income we receive from you. We hope you love the benefits that membership directly brings, but indirectly, your subscriptions help us achieve our purpose. Core funding is very hard to win and it your subscription that pay for the core costs of the Association. We are tight knit and effective and make the most of every penny, so we appeal to you to put as much as you can afford in to our organisation because we can make good use of your donations, we can bring about change in the world.

The third thing is to be a volunteer activist or charge a special lower rate when doing work for us. In particular we encourage you to participate in your local groups so that we have a national network of enthusiasts attracting new people to biodynamics and offering people new to biodynamics someone to link up with.

So those are the three areas that we depend on our members for and we appeal to the members to do more and because we are starting to build real momentum. Biodynamics provides the nutrition that people want, but is also creates the landscape that public policy is calling for. The time is right for Biodynamic growing. I want to finish with one thought – the purpose of this college is to educate farmers and growers, but the reality and actually this is a thing that we all have in common and all share, is before you can bring a farmer into being, you have to bring a person into being, a free human being and that is the work that is being done here and that work is out of our Anthroposophical foundation and that is something to be profoundly proud of, so thank you everybody. ■

THE 2010 BIODYNAMIC ASSOCIATION LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IS BEING AWARDED TO DORETTE SCHWABE. DORETTE LIVES AT THE SHEILING CAMP HILL SCHOOL IN RINGWOOD HAMPSHIRE. IN THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW WITH HOWARD SMITH, SHE TELLS A LITTLE ABOUT HER LIFE, WORK AND INSPIRATIONS.

Howard: Dorette, Can we start with the small book in your hand with the inscription 'Memorabillien' on the spine, which has been in your family's possession since 1755. Could you explain what it is?

Dorette: This book was passed from generation to generation, given by the mother to the eldest daughter. It has all the days of the year in it, like a diary, and all important events were written in it, such as births, deaths and marriages. Each day has a little verse or motto. My mother recorded my birth on 21st April 1929. As the eldest daughter, I now have the book. The verse for my birthday is (translated into English): *'Learn from nature how fruits grow and seeds ripen.'*

Howard: Which sets the scene for your life's work.

Dorette: Yes, it's absolutely appropriate.

Howard: Can you tell me about your family?

Dorette: My mother's first child was stillborn. Then followed a sister who died of tuberculosis when she was two. I was the third, followed by a sister and two brothers. We lived in Basel. My mother was what you might call a 'High Society' lady, and my father was a paper merchant. He was also a keen gardener and I was greatly influenced by him, and I loved helping in his garden. He taught me how to observe nature. When I was four I wandered off into Basel town with my little wooden hand-cart to collect horse droppings from the street. I got completely lost, but when they found me, the cart was heaped full!

Howard: I gather your school days were very mixed.

Dorette: The first four years were very happy. We started at age 7 then, and the school was nearby. Unfortunately I caught whooping cough and had to have a lot of time off school. My first report said I had missed 72 days. This set me back a lot, and I had to attend a special class to try to catch up. When I reached Class 6 I was transferred to another school, the 'Frei Evangelische Schule'. I had the same teacher that my mother had had years before, and I hated it. I much preferred to be in the garden with my Father, helping with the delphiniums, lilies and roses, which I loved. After 6 months I was thrown out of the school. Because of my lack of progress, they wanted me to attend a special school for the handicapped. But my grandmother was having none of it, and sent me to the Basel Waldorf School instead.

Howard: And this was a happier time for you?

Dorette: It was. I settled down very quickly, although I still remember being terrified on the first day. There were

Learn from nature how fruits grow and seeds ripen

HOWARD SMITH INTERVIEWS DORETTE SCHWABE



First day of school, aged 7 (1936) under tree planted by grandfather

48 of us in the class. The first main lesson was plant studies, which got my attention immediately. I loved this, and soon found myself in the top end of the class. Quite a change from the last school. This time at the Waldorf school, until I was 18, was wonderful for me, and I was reluctant to leave.

Howard: Did the war have much effect on your family in those years?

Dorette: It was sometimes difficult to sleep at nights! We were sandwiched between Germany and France, and some nights we heard the thundering of the big guns as they shot at each other over us! My father was too old to be called up, so fortunately he kept his business.

Howard: So after the Waldorf School did you start work? ▶

© Dorette Schwabe

Dorette: No, my father wanted me to learn French, so sent me to stay with a family in Geneva. This turned out to be disastrous. I learnt no French. They were an older couple, and they treated me like a servant. I had to do all the cooking and cleaning, and was not allowed to go to church on Sundays as I had to weed the lawn then. This was a very sad three months in my life.

Howard: Trapped like Cinderella?

Dorette: But not for long. One day I waited until they were out, then packed my things and went home. My father was very cross with me, but I refused to go back.

Howard: So you didn't learn French?

Dorette: My father made another attempt, and sent me to another family in Montana (in the French-speaking part of Switzerland) who promised regular instruction in French. This was certainly better than the last place, but I was always hungry. I had to do all the cooking, but was only allowed to eat yesterday's left-overs. They had a large garden which I liked, but I had to constantly weed it. One day the owners said they were going on holiday for three weeks, and they wanted me to care for the house alone. At this, my father ordered me to pack and come home again!

Howard: This brings us to around 1947, when you moved to Arlesheim. How did this come about?

Dorette: Well, we sold the house in Basel and moved to Arlesheim to live with my maternal grandmother. She had a very large garden, which I virtually took over, planting lots of vegetables as food was very scarce. I came across biodynamics from my grandmother. She first heard of it when she had visited the clinic at Arlesheim for her poor eyesight. I remember when I was 12 being sent to Dornach to collect the compost preparations, which had been made by Erika Riese. I was in my new home in Arlesheim for six months.

Howard: How did you hear of the BD training course?

Dorette: I heard from the friend of a cousin that there was a School for biodynamic gardeners in Hünibach, near Thun, and I really wanted to go there. My grandmother was very supportive and helped pay for the course.

Howard: Can you describe the course?

Dorette: It was three years of very hard work! Very intensive, with only three weeks' holiday each year. The facilities were a little cramped, with three of us sharing one bedroom. It was for women only, and run by three dedicated ladies who were excellent teachers. They were Fräuleins Müller, Neuenschwander and Pfisterer. It was a fantastic training. There were large fields for flowers and all sorts of vegetables and herbs. I remember how I had to take a basket of vegetables and flowers regularly to Beatenberg. It was an old people's home where Marie Steiner spent her last years (she died in 1948). I never actually saw her, but had to leave the basket there.



Although the course was privately run, there was some financial support from the state, and so there was a formal examination at the end of it. So I had to take the equivalent of an Ordinary National Diploma in Horticulture to gain my Gardener's Certificate.

Howard: Was there much Anthroposophy in the course?

Dorette: Anthroposophy was very little spoken of. It was mainly practical work. But I had come across Anthroposophy back at the Waldorf School, when someone (not a teacher!) gave me a copy of *The Philosophy of Freedom* during a Class 9 holiday camp. In those days the Agriculture Course was not generally available. I went to Dornach to try and get a copy, and had an interview with a Dr. Schmidt. He wanted to know how well acquainted I was with Anthroposophy before he would let me have a copy. In those days it was very difficult at the Goetheanum, as there was a deep division in the Anthroposophical Society after Steiner's death.

Howard: So you had now achieved your goal, and became a qualified gardener in 1951. How did you establish your business then?

Dorette: I met up with a distant relative, Andreas Barth. He had trained as a landscape gardener in Geneva. He was not trained in biodynamics, but we decided we could work together, and we started our business, which was mainly based in Dornach. We had lots of commissions from Architects, designing gardens for a new generation of post-war large villas which were being built in and around Dornach. We worked on the gardens of Dr. Leroi, Rudolf Grosse, and Dr. Gräflin. We laboured hard in the garden of the Lukas Clinic in Arlesheim, where the soil was very hard clay. We had to lay terraces and granite paths - all of it back-breaking work! After 10 years my health began to suffer.

Howard: At this point you decided you'd had enough?

Dorette: I had developed very serious goitre - a swelling



Dorette in the gardens at The Sheiling School.



of the neck which was quite prevalent in that area. In 1963 I had an operation which left me very weak for nine months. I could do no more lifting, and had to give up the business, though Andreas continued it.

Howard: How did you survive, having given up your share of the business?

Dorette: I was so fortunate. A friend of mine, who I had known since I was six years old, offered me some work. She had a factory making flags, and I had to draw the designs for these, collecting and copying flags from all different areas of Switzerland. It was quite different work, but a very therapeutic time for me. It helped me to recover and regain my health after the operation. I worked for my friend for three years – six months of each year on flags, and six months on carnival masks. I remember on one occasion we had to prepare a massive structure of thousands of flags for an exhibition. My friend also had a large farm, and I did some work there when I was stronger.

Howard: Can we move on to the next phase of your life, after the flag work.

Dorette: It happened one Sunday in the garden at home with my mother, when Eva Sachs and her mother arrived. They had been recommended to visit us by my brother in America. Renate Sachs (Eva's sister) had been offered a

pioneering operation – a kidney transplant – and needed somewhere to wait until a suitable donor turned up. So they stayed with us for 9 months. Eva returned to the Sheiling School in Ringwood, which had been founded in 1951 and where she had taught for some years. She invited me over, as they needed a gardener. When I went to have a look, I thought 'What a terrible place!' It was sparse Dorset heath-land with very sandy soil, which once upon a time had been under the sea. But I decided I could do something, and on 1st April (!) 1968 I moved here. My mother was not very pleased but she agreed that I should go.

Howard: Was the language a problem?

Dorette: Yes! I am very poor at languages and I really struggled. Fortunately Alex Baum was here as Principal, so I could speak German to him and some others, but eventually I had to learn English. I asked Alex, 'What do I do with this poor soil?'. He replied 'How do I know? You're the gardener!' I then knew that my task was to transform this poor sandy soil and create a beautiful environment for our children.

Howard: Had there been a gardener there before?

Dorette: Well, there was this man, also from Switzerland, but he had little idea. There was a tiny neglected garden with half a dozen leeks in it, and that was about all there was! ▶

We borrowed a large rotavator complete with lights, and I stayed up one night preparing the land for planting. I planted cabbage plants in holes containing water, compost and some kind of pig-manure which was there. Eventually we had around a hundred large cabbages – more than we could eat. We had to make sauerkraut with the left-over.

Howard: How many children were at the Sheiling then, and did you involve them in the land work?

Dorette: In those days there were about 100 children on the estate. Funding was only available for them up to the age of 16, and they then had to leave. But Eva had an idea. She had worked with children for 40 years and she wanted a change – working with older ones, up to 19 years old. She saw that landwork could be therapeutic for them, and together we devised a very rich curriculum, in which the young people would spend each morning working on the land. We had private funding from some of the parents, who were very much behind us. We got the children gardening and planting trees, and over the years the barren land became a lush estate. As the estate was gradually transformed, new adjacent land, including an orchard was acquired. And in the afternoons, the children had all the artistic and practical riches of the Waldorf curriculum. We still hear regularly from around 45 of them who left us years ago. I think this was probably the happiest time of my life.

Howard: Did you use the BD preparations as part of this process?

Dorette: Certainly. We got them from Aberdeen at first, and later from Sturts Farm. I found the Down's Syndrome children especially good at making compost. One of these made fantastic compost – he would often disappear for hours at a time and we could never find him. One day we discovered that he had made a large hole in the compost heap and he would crawl inside. When he re-emerged it was as if he was reborn! Through such efforts over the years, the land is now fertile. We never used artificial fertilisers, nor weed killers. Co-workers are often surprised when they smell the

compost – how fresh and beautiful it is. This is the miracle of transformation. Sadly, today, most co-workers do not experience this. But the soil is precious, and we must look after it. It pains me to see more and more potentially fertile soil converted into car-parking areas.

Howard: Can you say a little about your other work for the biodynamic movement.

Dorette: I was a co-founder of the Camphill Seminar for gardeners, landworkers, beekeepers etc. This is a seminar of 8 long weekends spread over two years, each session with its own theme, such as nutrition, the ethers, the planetary influences and so on. A lot of wonderful collaborative work has been collected together, and I hope one day someone will find the time to edit and make this more widely available. Then, for the past 10 years, I have been giving seminars in London at Steiner house for allotment holders and others. This has attracted lots of interest. I went up there three times a year, but unfortunately I have had to stop this, as my eyesight has deteriorated.

In 2001 I designed the Eco-garden for the Lantern Community (part of the Sheiling Trust). This is a major project involving planting over a period of 10 years, which is now nearing completion. I am still active here on the Sheiling estate advising others; for example I recently gave a course in pruning, which is so important for fruit trees and usually so poorly done.

Howard: Finally, how do you feel, now that you are to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award of the BDA?

Dorette: Absolutely thrilled. Everyone has been so kind. Although it's not really my thing, going through an award ceremony, I do it for the Biodynamic Association. I feel it is important to encourage others, to show how vital this work with the soil is. When we work with Special Needs children, we can teach them love and care through working with the land. They learn dignity and morality in caring for the earth.

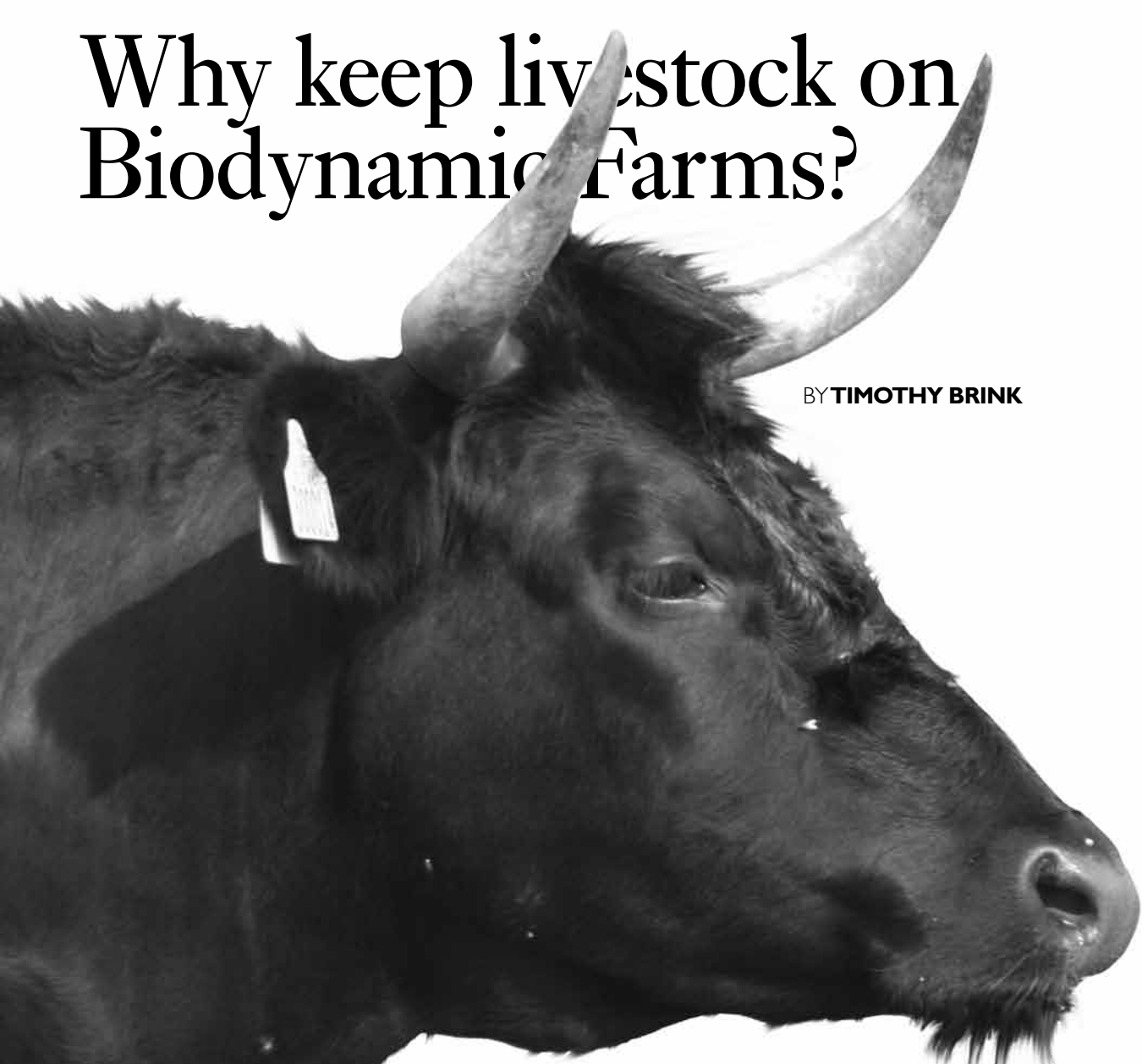
*Dorette in the gardens
at The Sheiling School.*



Why keep livestock on Biodynamic Farms?

BY TIMOTHY BRINK

All photos © Richard Swann



I have spent most of my working life involved in one way or another with biodynamic agriculture. For over 25 years I had the good fortune to be a biodynamic farmer - first in New England in the USA, and then for most of my farming career at Loch Arthur Community in Southwest Scotland. All of this time I worked on mixed and diverse farms with livestock, grassland and crops. And I kept cattle - from a couple of Jersey dairy cows milked by hand on the first small farms where I trained to a herd of Galway and Angus beef cattle at Loch Arthur. I have to confess right now before we go any farther that I love cattle. Strange affliction I know, but it's true - and I know that there are others out there who feel the same way. My wife Maggie used to complain that I never took pictures of the children, just endless pictures of cows and sheep of every size and breed.

Farming in a Community was great, but it did have some challenges. Many young people came to volunteer for a year or so, mostly after finishing school and before going on to higher education. Every year one or two

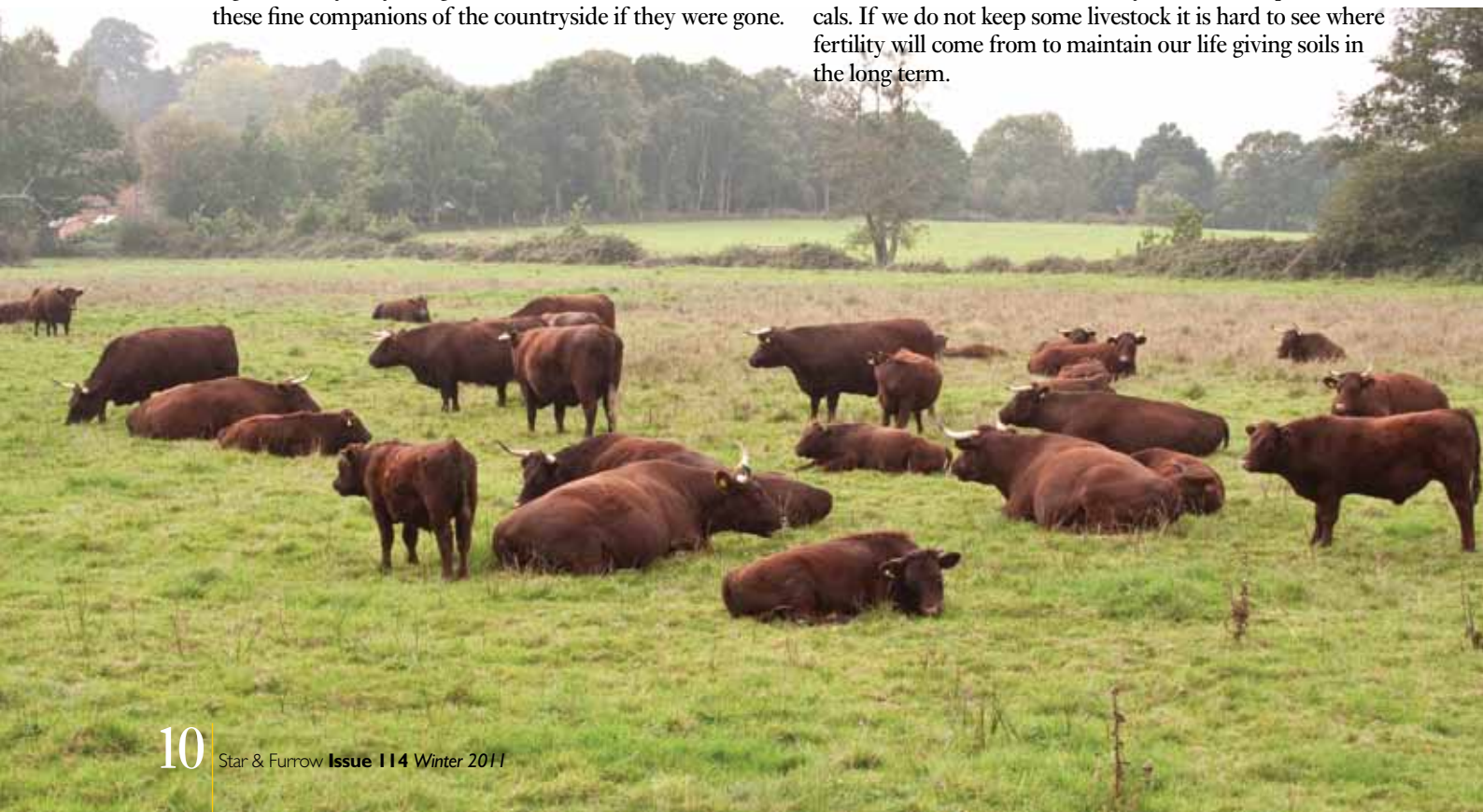
young volunteers would come to work with me on the farm. Many ended up on the farm because they were needed there and seemed to be outdoorsy types, but they were not from farms, had no farming experience, and had no intention of ever farming again when they left. But that was fine if they were willing and keen to learn. Many were also vegetarians or vegans. That was also fine for most, but for some it was a moral dilemma to be working on a livestock farm, especially a beef and sheep farm. We had earnest discussions about meat eating and farming - especially at lambing time when I was exhausted after tending the lambing ewes late into the night. And now in my work for Demeter and the Biodynamic Association I am regularly asked questions about eating meat and biodynamic farming. In particular I have been challenged as to why keeping livestock is a key principle of biodynamic farming. Biodynamic farming is probably unique in its emphasis on keeping livestock - especially cattle. In biodynamic farming the cow is elevated the status of nearly a goddess. Most good biodynamic farmers will keep some cows if they can. But many in our modern Western societies do not agree, especially in Britain. Many do not choose to eat meat and some believe that to kill an animal for meat is immoral. Others are concerned about animal welfare in farming and do not wish to eat meat from farms where animals are kept in ways that cause suffering, ill health or and early death. Still others are concerned about the ▶

global food supply and think that our productive land should be used to feed humans, not livestock. All of these concerns are raised when discussing livestock and Biodynamic Farming. What answer do we in the biodynamic community have to these questions and concerns?

A core principle of biodynamic agriculture is diversity and balance. This is in keeping with the natural world – a healthy natural system is always diverse and balanced. Another core principle is appropriateness – the right choice of crops and livestock to suit the place where we farm or garden. By practice of diversity, balance and appropriateness we build a healthy living system. A farm or garden has a life of its own which is unique and precious. Each farm and garden is different and distinct. This depends on the place itself, the people who work and live there, the plants that grow there and the animals that belong there. Animals are part of this picture of diversity, balance and appropriateness – both wild animals and domestic.

The herbivore belongs to grassland. Cattle, sheep and horses maintain grassland by grazing and bring fertility with their manure. Some farms are best suited to grassland. It is not appropriate to grow crops on these farms. The soil may be too thin or poor, the land too hilly, or the climate too wet. Grass, clover, herbs and wild flowers are the appropriate plants. Herbivores belong to these farms – how can we have grasslands without the cow, the sheep and the horse? Of course we could let these grassland areas revert to woodlands. That would be a radical solution. It would displace people in vast swathes of the countryside, disrupt livelihoods and a way of life, and radically change the nature of our rural landscape. There would be benefits for forests and wildlife, but there would also be losses. One of the losses would be most of our herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Cattle and sheep would become rare. But they are our companions in farming communities. Those of us who know these animals grow to appreciate and value their sense of family and social group, their wonderful instincts, their ability to adapt to the environment and thrive in diverse conditions, and the blessing of fertility they bring with their manure. We would miss these fine companions of the countryside if they were gone.

It is not only on grassland farms that we find herbivores. Herbivores and grassland also have an important part to play in arable or crop farming, especially if one is working with natural farming systems such as biodynamic or organic agriculture. If we wish to grow crops without the use of synthetic fertilisers we need to establish rotations in which grass and clover is grown in fields for two or three years at a time. We cannot grow continuous crops as in non-organic agriculture. That results in depletion of soil fertility, loss of soil organic matter and loss of soil structure. Reduced productivity and increased erosion are the eventual result. We would gradually deplete that most precious natural resource – our topsoil. Grass builds up a tremendous root mass over a period of three years – and this is especially true of our native grasses. Clover fixes nitrogen from the atmosphere in nodules on the root. Nitrogen is an essential plant nutrient. When a field of grass and clover is grown for a period of three years and then ploughed in we build fertility, organic matter and structure in our soils. This is a key concept in biodynamic and organic farming. Natural methods of crop production depend on a crop rotation that includes a period of grass/clover because this brings fertility and health to the soil. And again, grassland and cattle, sheep, and horses belong together. There is a place for herbivores in even the best arable farms. Pigs and poultry also have their place to eat the vegetable waste, and also vegetables and grains that are rejected do to size or quality. Finally and very importantly, the composted manure of our farm animals provides valuable natural fertilisers for our grains, fruits and vegetables. It is hard to imagine a natural crop farming system without farm animals. It is being tried on very good soils with green manures replacing the grass/clover parts of the crop rotation, but it remains to be seen whether such a stockless system is sustainable in the long term without the gradual loss of soil fertility and structure. On other soils with less than optimal soil fertility or structure, stockless farming probably is only possible with the use of artificial fertilisers. This solution has some serious problems because the artificial fertilisers in use today are based on petrochemicals. If we do not keep some livestock it is hard to see where fertility will come from to maintain our life giving soils in the long term.



Animal welfare is a very important issue. We are all too familiar with the abuse of farm animals that takes place on some farms. We have all seen or heard of inexcusable scenes of poultry and pigs being kept inside and in cages for their entire lives. Even cattle are kept inside year round in some countries, but thankfully this is not common practice in the UK. Routine use of antibiotics in feed and the overuse of veterinary medicines is all too common. Very large herds and flocks far in excess of natural tendencies and social groupings has become the norm in modern non-organic agriculture. Routine dehorning of cattle is not even questioned in the UK outside of biodynamic circles. The degradation of our cattle and sheep during the BSE and Foot and Mouth outbreaks in the 90s and early 00s were symptomatic of the abuse of our farm animals. But abuse of farm animals is not a necessary part of livestock farming. Biodynamic farming has at its heart respect and regard for our domestic animals. High standards of animal welfare are a key component of the biodynamic ethos and are built into the Demeter Standards. A recent study of animal welfare by Warwick University bears this out showing that biodynamic farms in the UK achieve much higher levels of animal welfare than non-organic farms, and even significantly higher levels of animal welfare than organic farms. For those that are concerned about animal health, welfare and longevity, biodynamic farming provides an answer.

But can we afford to use our valuable farmland to feed livestock? Shouldn't grains and protein crops be used to feed humans, or even grow energy crops for humans? Can biodynamic and organic agriculture feed the world? It will have to! Oil will become more and more expensive and will eventually run out. It will soon become too expensive to use petrochemicals to make fertilisers. Biodynamic and organic farmers are pioneers who are developing the food production systems for the future. And yes, part of this picture is that we will need to eat much less meat. Our arable crops

should be used primarily to feed humans. Cattle, sheep and horses should be predominantly grass fed. This means choosing breeds that will thrive on grass such as our great British breeds of cattle like the Hereford, Angus, Galloway, Welsh Black and many others. With these breeds most cattle can be finished on grass with the rest needing only a small amount of cereals – not the regular diet of 2 kg or more per day of cereals and protein crops required by some of breeds of cattle that have become common in the UK. A similar case could be made for appropriate breeds of sheep – and that means predominantly British breeds of sheep in the UK. Again, appropriateness is key to biodynamics! The result will be reduced meat production and more fruit, vegetables and grains for human consumption.

As I argued above, a natural system of arable farming needs periods of grass/clover in the fields to build fertility between periods of cereals, protein crops and vegetables. Other farms are best suited to grassland and only very limited areas of crops if any. Our native breeds of cattle, sheep and horses belong to these grassland areas and keep them fertile. Livestock, grassland, and crop production work together – and in a biodynamic farm they work together in a balanced and sustainable way. This kind of farming maintains the fertility and structure of the soil for the long term, and provides us with good food – both vegetable and meat. If land is used appropriately, biodynamic and organic farming can provide us with a greater amount of vegetarian food and much less meat. So it is fine for many people to be vegetarian or vegan, and there is still some meat for the meat eaters, but they will need to be moderate in their meat eating. If we do this we can feed the world, produce lots of high quality fruit, vegetables, and cereals, and maintain our irreplaceable soils for the long term. ■

Timothy Brink is the Manager of Demeter Certification for the UK and Ireland



I have been asked several questions from biodynamic farmers wanting to put their farms into a land trust, by young farmers needing farms and by social enterprises seeking to lease biodynamic land affordably. For example, two hill farmers recently approached me asking how to secure the long term future of their farms for biodynamic farming, one wanting help with securing community investment. Another question came from Andorra. A young biodynamic family farmer is being attracted to Berlin by the prospect of affordable farm land there. Some farmers see that the hereditary principle of family inheritance by relatives who are not practically interested in farming no longer offers a sustainable future for their special farms. They are looking for other options to make sure that their working biodynamic farms continue.

Often these questions come too late. Hence this article to ask what readers think about the need for a biodynamic farm land trust for Britain. If a farm is part of a divorce settlement, for example, it may be too late to consider trusteeship! The older you get, the more difficult it can be to consider one's will and how best to dispose of one's farm.

These questions keep coming my way because of Stroud Common Wealth's pioneering work in developing community land trusts, both locally and nationally. Greg Pilley and I directed the 2005-7 Community Farm Land Trust Action Research Project, which enabled the pioneering community buy out of Fordhall Farm in Shropshire. This has gone from strength to strength. Several farm land trusts were established, and the Soil Association and Land Heritage Trust were influenced to set up the Soil Association Land Trust for holding organic farms in trust for affordable access for organic farmers. At the same time as Stroud Common Wealth, we helped set up Gloucestershire Land for People as a CLT directed to providing affordable housing. The first major project is now off the ground, with plans to build affordable rental and part ownership homes at the former Cashes Green Hospital site in Stroud. This a significant partnership with Kevin McCloud of TV's *Grand Designs* and Hab Oakus, and Westleigh Housing Association, with the government landowner, the Homes and Communities Agency.

The question is, do we need a biodynamic land trust for Britain? Let's look at the US experience first.

My original interest in community farm land trust arose from research on a Churchill travelling fellowship in 2003 in the USA. The first lesson was that CSAs soon

discover that they need secure land tenure, and the community land trust model can offer this security. The first two pioneering CSA farms also pioneered the community farm land trust idea. Starting with Temple-Wilton and Indian Line Farms in the early 1980s in New England, community supported agriculture (CSA) became a rapidly growing movement.

To really establish CSAs for the long term, com-

munities need to secure the mutual, community based ownership of farms so that all the value from farming and from community building work does not vanish with the sale of the land. The Community Land Trust is one such model, which is based on community trusteeship, security of tenure for the farmer, community access and the separation of land ownership from the 'improvements' on the land such as farm buildings and better soil fertility. The securing of Indian Line Farm by the Community Land Trust in the South Berkshires, and Temple Wilton Farm using

A Biodynamic Farm Land Trust?

BY MARTIN LARGE

Yggdrasil Land Foundation for part of its land ownership, offer two different models of putting farms into trusteeship to learn from.

Firstly, Indian Line Farm. Indian. Elizabeth Keen and Alex Thorp farmed Indian Line after the CSA founder Robyn van Eyn's death in 1997. But after two years, her son needed to sell the farm. The South Berkshire CLT owned a 10-acre site nearby, which included the Schumacher Library. The problem was that Indian Line was a prime location for a holiday home, in a gentrifying area. The land was valued at \$100,000 and the run down buildings at \$55,000. The farmers agreed to buy the buildings for \$55,000, planning to spend \$20,000 on repairing the house. Many friends and family helped with work parties. The CLT raised \$50,000 via a local appeal, and the Nature Conservancy spent \$50,000 on buying conservation restrictions on the farm's wetlands—for the land purchase. So the CLT purchased the freehold of the farm, and then agreed the leasehold on the buildings and farm with the farmers.

So the CLT owns the farm freehold and leases it to the farmers on a 99-year lease, thus providing security of tenure. The lease includes ownership of the house, barn, out buildings and the farm improvements. It requires that the buildings stay leaseholder/farmer occupied rather than rented out or used as a second home. The land has to be farmed, requiring a minimum yearly commercial crop production, not just growing for household needs.

The lease ensures the buildings remain affordable at resale to the next incoming farmer. The CLT retains an option to buy the buildings and improvements at no more than their replacement cost and to resell them at the same

price to the next farmer. This condition makes sure that the land, which is owned in trust by the CLT, is excluded from any sale price. Another condition states that the farmers must use organic methods, not necessarily certified, but subject to inspection if there is concern about compliance. The benefit to the farmers is that they are not burdened by land debt. The house and buildings were affordable, not at gentrified resort prices. They can build equity from improvements for when they leave. They can farm appropriately without having to force high yield crop production to pay the land mortgage interest. The benefit to the community is that Indian Line is preserved as a working farm, young people have got viable farming work, the CSA gets its produce and the wetlands are conserved for the beavers.

'It's enabled us get started in farming, without the huge stress of making the farm pay a big mortgage. All expenses come from farm income, we can buy the tools we need, for repairs and the box scheme is successful. We are looking to expand our 5 acre arable capacity with the purchase of a neighbouring 10 acre field so as to further build our viability,' said Elizabeth.

The other original CSA, Temple Wilton Farm offers a different CLT model. 30 families in the early 1980s asked farmers Lincoln Geiger (Dairyman), Anthony Graham (market gardener and business manager) and Trauger Groh if they could produce biodynamic vegetables and milk. Trauger's response was, *'I won't because I don't trust you! Because you are in a hurry, you're short of time, you'll shop at the supermarket and I will sit on the rotting vegetables here!'* So they produced the annual farm budget for agreeing with consumers on July 1 each year. Members were prepared to commit for a year's produce. *'Every year they have to commit afresh, which means we have to perform. If we don't perform, then they all run away! Guaranteeing a budget is different from buying a share. On the first day of July all bills have been paid, something every farmer dreams of. When we auction the \$160,000 budget, we first explain it, then members agree to accept it or not, then we have to cover it in the auction. We invite bids, 'Who wants to bid and how much?' We don't think in terms of equal shares because members' incomes are so different. We have 100 families who are members. Basically we are all partners—the Educational Community Farm owns the lease on the 45 acres at Four Corners, and rents the new purchase of the 43-acre orchard from Yggdrasil Land Foundation. Members fundraised the \$160,000 for this orchard, but because they wanted charitable tax deductions, Yggdrasil owns it as a charity.'*

Yggdrasil, a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation, was founded in 2001 as collaboration between Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, The Biodynamic Farming and Agricultural Association and the San Francisco based Rudolf Steiner Foundation. RSF manages the legal, administration and financial functions, the BDFAA finds the farmers and resources to farm the land, and Michael Fields provides research. One snag is that it may have been convenient for Temple Wilton to use Yggdrasil as a charitable ownership vehicle, but now they have to pay rent, even though Temple Wilton members raised the money for the purchase price in the first place.

Trauger Groh would prefer personally a separate farm community land trust for each farm. He dislikes umbrella trusts, *'because they have several trustees, each with their focus. We want to focus on this particular place and ensure*

this farm thrives. Otherwise it gets diluted and it becomes just an administrative thing. What we need is trustees with real interest, so I always reject an umbrella trust.' Maybe.

But the story of Temple Wilton farm is also a wake up call. Biodynamic farms and CSA farms need to secure their land long term as a priority, otherwise the farm will be lost or they will have to pay much more later, with an increased price because of all the value created by the CSA and by biodynamic practice.

Whilst the three Temple Wilton farmers and the CSA members were developing a successful and unique project, they just did not realise what an asset their sweat equity and gift work had created! A local developer, however, did and made a killing as they say. He bought the 100 acres of Four Corners Farm in Summer 2002, and sold off land for house lots overlooking the picturesque farm, thus realising a huge speculative gain. To agree a 99year lease on the farm with the developer at a \$1 per annum lease fee, Temple Wilton has had to raise almost the developer's 2002 purchase price to keep the farm. They have got a water protection grant of \$200,000, \$80,000 from Wilton Town, a pledge of \$50,000 from High Mowing School, members raised \$130,000, local snow mobilers raised money and there was a Federal Farm Preservation grant for \$120,000. One CSA member said, *'All of a sudden everyone found us the most incredibly attractive project. We just didn't realise what an asset the farm was for the community. We knew that it was an asset for ourselves, and the two Waldorf schools. But it was the last milking farm in Wilton, it had snowmobile trails on it, and the people on the hill overlooking the farm didn't want to see it turned into house lots. The state woke up to preserving farmland, and all of a sudden the farm became popular.'*

So, Indian Line, worked from CLT first principles and developing clear legal agreements with the CLT in the South Berkshires as the farm land steward. This model enables farmer initiative and affordable farmland access. Temple Wilton had a harder journey, and the CSA members had to raise the money to buy out the developer who had cashed in on the value the CSA had developed! And it helps to have a national land trust such as Yggdrasil to draw on.

However, each farm and community is different, so there will be many solutions to designing community ownership by means of a land trust body. One very thorny problem is provision for the retiring owner farmer, and their families' possible interest in the farm equity. On one US CSA farm with farmers retiring after 50 years, one option is that the farmers would stay at their home on the farm. The freehold of the farmland itself would be held by a local conservation land trust for leasing to the new farmers. The money for the farmland purchase from the farmers would come from local fundraising and a state agricultural preservation grant. The incoming farmer would purchase a home and buildings ('the structures on the farm land') as well as agree the ground lease for the farmland with the conservation land trust.

The Indian Line Farm lease is clear and balances the rights of the farmers with those of the community. The farm ground lease, land use plan, management plan and conservation agreement are both clear and helpful. This is important so that 50 years time succeeding generations can understand agreements made now. The ground lease allows for new agreements to be made, and the Community ►



Land Trust in the South Berkshires trustees live locally and can take an interest. Good legal agreements can be helpful structures, especially if there are differences or even conflicts in the future. However, there could be dangers in entering into agreements that lock land away forever, that are not open ended enough to allow for reasonable flexibility.

As for a British biodynamic land trust, as the Chinese say, the best time to plant a tree is ten years ago. So, what is the next step? One way to secure the future of biodynamic food growing in Britain could be to set up a Biodynamic Land Trust on similar lines to the Soil Association Land Trust, though redesigned specially to meet the long term needs of biodynamic farmers and the movement. Triggers to set this in motion could be:

- a biodynamic farm land gift, a CSA or farmer or social/charitable enterprise wanting to purchase a farm for biodynamic farming and needing a trusteeship body to own the freehold
- biodynamic family farmers making their future inheritance plans



- legacies given for start up
- several small biodynamic land trusts pool their resources so as to save overheads.

Initially people and farm bodies interested in exploring the question of the feasibility of setting up a biodynamic farm land trust, could contact either me or the BDAA Office. If there is sufficient interest, we can then invite interested people to discuss the question of feasibility further. There will be much relevant experience, skills, knowledge, resources and connections to draw on.

In conclusion, as small and medium size family farms disappear, with fewer young people able to become farmers because of lack of access to affordable farms, so the need for innovative methods of farm trusteeship grows. It could be vital for the future of biodynamic farming that we consider ways of securing farms through trusteeship to encourage younger farmers to continue to produce biodynamic food and to be at the heart of resilient rural communities. ■

Martin Large manages Hawthorn Press in Stroud. He is also actively involved with developing Land Trusts in the UK. He can be contacted by email: Martinlarge5@gmail.com

References

Large, M., Common Wealth, Hawthorn Press 2010 (See Chapter 10)
 Large, M., From CSA to Community Farm Ownership, Star and Furrow, Winter 2001
 Groh, T., and McFadden, S., Farms of Tomorrow, The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, Kimberton PA, USA, 1997
 Witt, S., E.F. Schumacher Society, Indian Line Farm www.smallisbeautiful.com Resources
 See Action Pack for some resources for setting up Community Farm Land Trust on www.stroudcommonwealth.org.uk

All photos © Richard Swann



Biodynamic Diploma

BY KAI LANGE

Ruskin Mill College term has started and many new students with 'special needs' demand attention. This year my focus needs to include our 'Apprentices', as we are one of the BDAA training centres. Even though I have had apprentices for many years, there is a lot for me to sort out and to adjust. Not because I have taken over the apprentice co-ordination in Ruskin Mill from Berni Courts, but the UK-Biodynamic apprentice training received a new format and a European-wide recognised 'Apprentice Learning Diploma in Biodynamic Agriculture' accredited by Crossfields Institute/Edexcel. This is an exiting time, but wasn't it always exiting?

Twenty-five years ago when I initially worked on a biodynamic farm in Germany, I was deeply touched, discovering how the work on the land let me experience my own body and self in a new and elemental way. The holistic approach to agriculture which touched on all aspects of life, in education, health, economy, connecting the spiritual with the materialistic and trying to find new ways and solutions, inspired me to join the 4-year biodynamic apprenticeship in 1986. I experienced agriculture on a real physical level and in a fascinating 'new' world of knowledge and insight. The two streams of connection flowing from up and below through my body, went right through my heart and had a warming and expanding effect; giving birth to my passion for biodynamic agriculture.

This experience stayed with me and inspired me, to pass on those heart warming forces. Meeting Tyll van de Voort at Oaklands Park in the early 1990s where we shared our ideas and experiences on biodynamic apprenticeships was my first connection to the English Biodynamic Land Training. Since then I have taught many people of mixed age and ability in England, Denmark and Germany. My friendship to biodynamic training pioneers like Tyll and Clemens von Schwanenfluegel (Germany) helped me to discuss and form ideas about a land training that is biodynamic, holistic and recognises the human development in perspective to the earth development. The training of biodynamic farmers is so important for 'our' future that we can't leave this responsibility to traditional educational practice! Already in the 1970s farmers recognised the need for a new Biodynamic Training.

WHY DO WE NEED TO DEVELOP A 'NEW' FARMING APPRENTICESHIP?

- The majority of trainees are not coming from the land and have no experience or knowledge of it.
- The majority are not 16-18 years old but rather 21-30 or often older.
- Trainees frequently come after University or switch from other courses.
- Trainee's interests are wider than 'just' traditional farming.
- Their motivation is based on environmental, political, ethical, health and educational issues.
- Trainees are often in search of connection to the land and the meaning of life.

■ Our environmental, political and economic world is ever changing and farming needs to adapt, survive or pioneer new solutions.

■ Humanity is developing: the incarnation of the ego becomes ever stronger in each new generation.

■ Freedom, self-development and individuality need to be integrated.

■ We have different concerns today, compared to two or three decades ago, when we were trained, or three or four decades ago when 'our' trainers were educated.

■ In twenty years time our trainees will have needs and problems we can't yet foresee. How do we prepare them for that?

■ Biodynamic training and farming benefits from a professional government recognition.

■ Acknowledgement of the connection of the material and spiritual world need to be embedded in biodynamic training.

■ Biodynamic skills and knowledge need to be taught and learned to secure the future of biodynamic farming.

■ Biodynamic farming can heal and develop earth and man.

A SHORT HISTORY OF A NEW APPRENTICESHIP

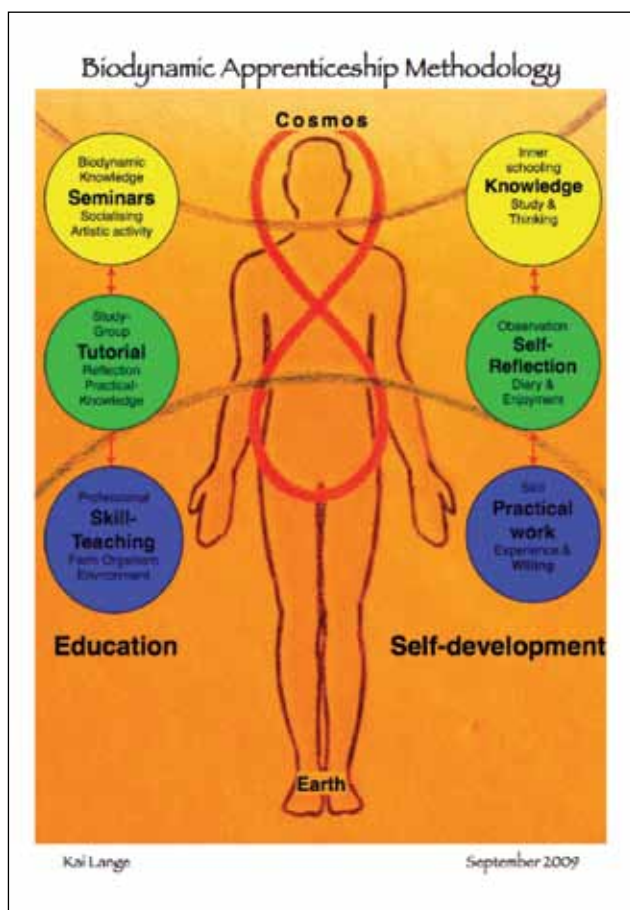
In the 'wild' 60s, biodynamic farmers found themselves overrun by people of all ages and corners of society, mainly coming from cities and towns. They arrived with zero knowledge and experience of farming but with a burning desire to connect to the land. The farmers were challenged, having to teach the basics that they had inherited and thought were general knowledge. Many of those 'future farmers' had never met a cow or pig in real life or used a spade. In fact, the first thing they needed to learn was 'to work.'

This trend of people coming from a non farming back-ground to the land never stopped. In the 70s the first farmers discussed the need for a new form of education to match the needs of those people and the land. In the 80s, first in Switzerland and then in Germany, the first biodynamic apprentice trainings were established and started developing. England joined this stream in the 90s. Since 2000 those trainings started to seek government recognition.

'APPRENTICE LEARNING DIPLOMA IN BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE'

I am very pleased that we, a group of devoted biodynamic farmers, with the help of the Crossfields Institute, managed to establish a European recognised level 3 biodynamic land-based training. Especially because this is the first training where biodynamic principles are embedded in each unit and each part of the training. We tried to acknowledge those points above when developing our Biodynamic Diploma. The training happens on many levels:

■ Devoted and competent biodynamic farmers and gardeners offer space on their holdings to accommodate trainees. They give hands-on learning experience; grounded knowledge and skill; emotional support and space for individual realisation. In exchange the farmers and gardeners get a motivated, interested and engaged 'helping hand'; a lot of thought provoking and challenging questions; joy and satis-



faction to share one's own experiences; a connection to other trainers and the Zeitgeist.

■ Apprentices engage with all their senses and body on a physical level with the farm organism. They experience soil, plant, animal and cosmos. All their senses awaken and develop. Knowledge incarnates beyond the brain. They experience themselves in the world cosmology and develop heart-forces and passion for a better future.

■ 'The 12 Senses' by Rudolf Steiner¹

■ Seminars are provided by professionals in their fields to give the opportunity to deepen biodynamic knowledge through field-trips, lectures, exercises, presentations, discussions and artistic activities. Apprentices from around the country meet and form friendships and circles where they can share ideas and experiences. Seminars use many farms and gardens as venue to give insight in different practices

and ideas.

■ 53 Units build the assessment framework to guide trainers and learners through the course content. They help the farmer and gardener to bring structure and consciousness into their contribution. They give a guideline of learning aims and help to deepen experience and knowledge.

■ Diaries, tutorials and group discussions encourage reflection and feedback.

■ A final project offers: individual expression, practising research, deeper connection to a specific subject and development of creative skills.

■ Farmers and gardeners meet regularly to discuss and develop the training. Improvements and adjustments need to be made to meet the constant changing needs of the Zeitgeist.

APPRENTICESHIP REFORMED

Apprenticeships were developed in the middle-ages: young people copying skills and knowledge from a craftspeople. Working alongside a farmer/gardener in a 'real life' situation is still valuable today. We discourage imposing skills and knowledge. We want to acknowledge the individual, and offer guidance to discover their passion and destiny. We are dealing with adults with a strong need for experience and belonging. Educators should be craftspeople and role models. They should not try to craft or model their learners. Farmers and gardeners should inspire through grounded action and ideas, offer acknowledgment and reflection. Our apprentices are on a path of experience and self-development. To create a positive future they need to act with love and cosmic knowledge.

OUTLOOK

Biodynamic-farmers and friends donated thousands of pounds, hundreds of hours in evenings and weekends, to develop this Diploma. Still, more hours and money are needed to establish it properly into Britain's world of agriculture and make it shine beyond our borders. I hope that eventually a wider group understands the importance of this work and is able to support our work and future. ■

Kai Lange is a farmer at Gables Farm, Ruskin Mill in Gloucestershire.

For more on the Biodynamic Apprentice Training Scheme contact Nir Halfon at nirhalfon@biodynamic.org.uk.

¹ See *Spiritual Science as a Foundation for Social Forms*, by Rudolf Steiner; 18 Lectures Aug-Sept, 1920



Crossfields Institute

BY CHARLOTTE VON BÜLOW



'Accreditation is in essence about Conscious Administration. 'Ad ministrare' means 'to serve'. Accreditation is the task of consciously serving a process, a product or a person.'

Crossfields Institute has had the pleasure of working in close collaboration with the Biodynamic Association and its farmers over the past 12 months. Here I would like to write about who we are, what we do, why we do it and what our continued relationship and contribution to the Biodynamic work in this country and beyond will be. It is my great joy to take on to do so. Firstly, an overview of who we are and what Crossfields Institute represents at this point in time.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The intention and idea of Crossfields Institute was first formulated at Easter 2007. The organisation was named and founded as a legal body in February 2008 and as a charity in July 2008. This happened through financial start-up grants from Camphill England and Wales Economic Sphere Group, Ruskin Mill Educational Trust, the Camphill Foundation, the Raphael Medical Centre and with a loan from the Council for Anthroposophical Health and Social Care. Since its conception, the Institute has grown to encompass 6 Trustees, 11 Academic Council members, 7 members of staff, 71 affiliated organisations and communities internationally and a growing register of learners – projected to be approximately 1,500 people by the end of next calendar year. The institute has its offices in Stroud and the team welcomes visitors – so feel invited to come by when you are around.

The Institute has three active departments: 1) The Course Development Services team, who assist providers in the curriculum development phases and in the formulation and design of the quality assurance framework; 2) the Transformative Awards and Qualifications team, who are responsible for the final accreditation and for the quality assurance of the awards and qualifications as well as the learner register and 3) the Crossfields International Higher Education Partnership team, who run the Research and Scholarly Activities Forum, establish connections to peer-organisations, import, develop and quality assure BA and MA programmes with partners and who prepare the track record and application to become a degree-awarding body on behalf of affiliated organisations wishing to deliver their own degree programmes.

During the last two years, we have established exciting Higher Education partnerships with Alanus University (Germany), Rudolf Steiner University College (Norway), Hiram Institute and Novalis Trust (UK). These organisations are working on the collaborative provision of BA and MA programmes which are based on the above-mentioned approaches and which may be widely available to people from all walks of life. Last year, Hiram Institute and Crossfields Institute launched the first of those programmes – a Masters of Educational Action Research – at Ruskin Mill College in Nailsworth. More Higher Education Programmes will be launched there in 2012.

Through the growing interest in alternative research methodologies, the Crossfields Institute Research and Scholarly Activities Forum is resulting in a growing membership of individual affiliates who seek to network and establish academic partnerships through our conferences and networking events.

In the academic year 2009–2010, Crossfields Institute developed and accredited 12 new professional qualifications from level 2 to level 5. These programmes are now being launched and delivered in their centres and the Institute is keeping in close contact with the programme teams to assist in the implementation of new structures and processes. Over the last two years the Institute had 4 education centres accredited by the British Accreditation Council as to ensure that the providers can now enrol learners from outside of the European Economic Area.

HOW WE DO IT

To give a picture of the accreditation process in concrete terms, the development of an accredited curriculum includes:

1. Affiliation and official Centre Approval
2. Identifying course objectives, vision, values, method, purpose and goals
3. Researching and imbedding relevant national standards and criteria
4. Identifying learning outcomes
5. Designing fit for purpose assessment criteria
6. Designing quality assurance procedures
7. Drafting new policies
8. Creating learner handbooks
9. Creating faculty handbooks and tutor/trainer manuals
10. Identifying links and progression pathways to other qualifications

11. Unit writing
12. Submitting units for initial scrutiny by subject experts and the Transformative Awards and Qualifications team

The above tasks are a collaborative venture between the education provider and the Crossfields Institute Course Development Services team. After the unit submission, the project is in the hands of the Transformative Awards and Qualifications team and it is the task of this team to make the application for final approval and accreditation by Edexcel. Each application is enhanced with a rationale for why the curriculum is designed the way it is and what the method and purpose of the programme is. In essence, this stage is where we put to the test how the sector will react to the specific educational impulse of the provider. The Institute plays a key role in the formulation of the intention, vision and values of a new or revised programme. It is therefore part of our method to ensure that we understand those fundamental principles from the outset.

The Crossfields Institute teams offer mandatory workshops in quality assurance, unit writing, assessment planning and internal verification. We also offer optional workshops in vision building and programme administration.

For the accreditation of professional and vocational programmes Crossfields Institute has established a strategic and immensely fruitful partnership with Edexcel, the largest Awarding Body in the UK, through which we have a license to create and accredit our Transformative Awards and Qualifications. Our qualifications are designed to offer a sector-recognised framework around education, training and research inspired by integrative, holistic and anthroposophical methods and practices and approaches. Our partnership with Edexcel represents the academic and professional rigour of the quality assurance and their logo and on our certificates gives graduates a passport into other further and higher education programmes and to employment. Therefore, Crossfields Institute can offer education providers and individuals a sector recognised and individualised accreditation framework which is based on what you wish to provide and which at the same time will stand up to external scrutiny. The Institute furthermore has Edexcel centre recognition to provide BTECs and offers itself as an umbrella centre for Colleges who offer Foundation Learning, Apprenticeships and other funded programmes.

The Institute also offers to apply for submission of new qualifications to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). This process is done in close collaboration with Edexcel and the final decision on such applications is largely in the hands of the relevant Sector Skills Council. Units (up to level 3) that end up on the QCF can potentially get recognised for funding and for some providers this additional element is vital. QCF submission is somewhat restricted by the criteria that the framework will not accept any proposed units that resemble existing QCF approved units.

WHY WE DO IT

Elsewhere in this issue you will read about the accredited Apprenticeship-Learning Diploma. The process of creating this accredited BD farm-based programme has been extraordinary both in terms of the development of the farm

trainers, the programme itself and indeed also the Crossfields team. This is a good example of the work we have set up Crossfields Institute to do.

The intention and the essence of our work is to bring light where there is darkness. If we understand 'light' to represent insight, understanding and knowledge, we may consider the 'darkness' that which we don't understand, areas of ignorance, the impenetrable – which often leads to confusion and fear of the unknown. Accreditation can be defined as a third party attestation of an activity, a product or a person.¹ The accreditation process calls upon the following actions and attitudes: dialogue and collaboration, research and development, accountability and above all conscious administration. The accreditation process furthermore involves: asking the world to bear witness to what you have to bring to it. 'Ad ministrare' means 'to serve'. Accreditation can thus be understood as the task of consciously serving a process, a product or a person and making sure that the world can understand it and bear witness to it.

When in the last academic year Crossfields Institute was asked by the Biodynamic Association to carry out the accreditation of the Apprenticeship-Learning Diploma, we were under no illusion as to the level of importance and responsibility imbuing this task. In the process of forming the working group of farmers and educators, teasing out the vision, the values and the spiritual intention of the programme, identifying the all important learning outcomes and assessment criteria, writing learner and trainer manuals, designing a quality assurance framework, drafting and reviewing policies (...and we could go on...), we learned how these vital (yet seemingly practical) decisions pointed to a set of standards of good practice which tells the world something about what Biodynamic Agriculture really is, what it does, how it does it and why.

And this is exactly what a conscious ad-ministrative process creates: a heightened awareness of who we are and what we do, how we do it and why we do it!

The continued involvement of Crossfields Institute with the Biodynamic Association and Demeter is therefore just that – to contribute to and coordinate the development of further transparency and accountability around the uniqueness and wide applicability of the Biodynamic Agrarian Culture in the form of research and development, the creation of standards, the sharing of good practice and the dissemination of the philosophy, the method and the applications of this work.

Our organisation is honoured to take part in and contribute to this important work and we look forward to continuing what has become a warm and productive relationship with the Biodynamic Association, its council, farmers, trainers, researchers and members. ■

Charlotte von Bülow is Director of The Crossfields Institute. For more information about their work contact info@crossfieldsinstitute.com or Painswick Inn, Gloucester Street, Stroud GL5 1QG; tel: 01453 808118. Or visit their website: www.crossfieldsinstitute.com

¹ This definition is developed from a standard dictionary definition



Crossfields Institute



The Biodynamic Agricultural College officially opens and receives its own home

BY **JESSE** AND **NIR** (FROM THE COLLEGE)

On Saturday 9th October, on East Sussex's rolling green hills, a small blue-green building was brought into a new life. It became the only college in the UK solely dedicated to teaching Biodynamic and Organic methods.

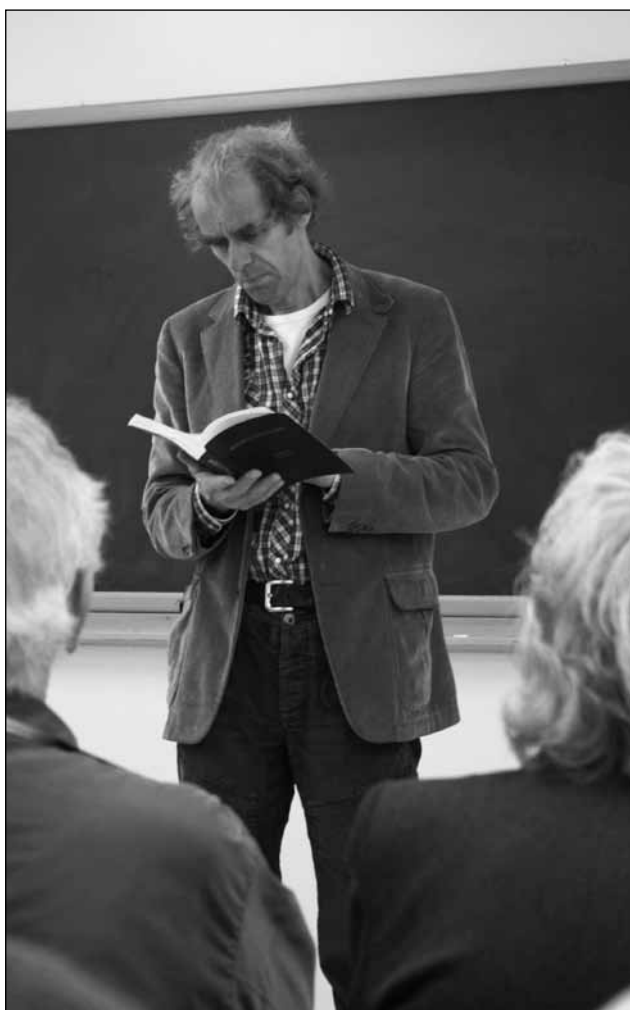
Its crowded halls were filled with joy and wonder, focus and concern. The walls echoed murmurs of new deals and excited whispers of hope. The people within its rooms looked out of its windows onto a world they aim to change.

The building is the Rachel Carson Centre, home of the newly rechristened Biodynamic Agricultural College (BDAC). This new name is representative of the reasons for the day's celebration – change and growth. Representatives from Warmonderhof College in the Netherlands, JSH College in Norway, the Biodynamic Association, St. Anthony's Trust, and Emerson Village, as well as a large group of students, alumni and well-wishers, gathered on to celebrate the College's official separation from Emerson College and subsequent emergence as an independent, vital institute. Though this transition had been a rough and uncertain affair, that day was unquestionably a celebratory day. Sebastian Parsons, chairman of the Biodynamic Association Council, and Ruud Hendriks, director of Warmonderhof College in Holland, each gave a speech on the College and biodynamics as a movement.

The men spoke of the difficult road that had led to this moment, and of the challenging circumstances in which we now live. In each speech, the importance of the continuation of the institute was stressed – apart from issues of survival, there are pressing global matters that call for the skills of caring, well-educated, biodynamic farmers.

In his talk Ruud gave an animated talk about his own observations of the duality in the development of the biodynamic movement. He looked at different splits: the individual and the community, the individual and the farm individuality, mineral content of food and the conventional mind set in opposed to actual nourishment and the biodynamic aim to feed a developing human being.

Interestingly, he was able to compare some trends he has observed to IT and the computer world. He talked about hardware versus software. Hardware being a stream of biodynamic practitioners who concentrated on the use of the preparations and peppers, developing new preparations and new ways of working with them, while software related to a stream that works with the spiritual forces on the farm and the farm organism. Another example is of people who 'go by the book' (the agriculture lectures) which he metaphorically related to using a Windows operating system. Most of us use Windows and consider it as something which is reliable, known and familiar. On the other hand there are the ►



Ruud Hendriks



The moment when Arjen received 'the key' to the building

All photos © Richard Swann

more adventurous individuals who are seeking to expand and share new insights to Biodynamics these he compared with using 'open source' software (Linux). It is something which is new, still being tested and developed. He could see the IT generation in his students, the ones who sit in the library and read books and the ones who move from their mobile phone, to the laptop then to the ipod and back again.

It was interesting to hear the way the biodynamic movement is developing in the Netherlands. There Demeter has separated from the Biodynamic Association and after a relatively difficult separation period, they are finding common ground again.

It was a pleasure seeing Rudd again and hearing him talk. It was very valuable to listen to such an experienced teacher and to the lessons learned in an experienced college like Warmonderhoff, particularly for a young teacher in a young college in the UK.

The evening was highlighted by a key-giving ceremony, wherein Robert Lord trustee of Emerson Village handed the key and deeds of the land and building to Bob Wills, a board member of St. Anthony's Trust, who later handed them over to Arjen Huese, director of the Biodynamic Agricultural College.

Amid applause, the College was reborn.

In addition to the building 20 acres of land was transferred. These will be farmed by the neighbouring Tablehurst Farm.

Even though being the director takes most of his time, Arjen said in his acceptance speech, it still allows him to be a 'grower' - only now he grows farmers.

To be a grower is to provide, as much as possible, the ideal conditions for growth and development. However, the grower cannot do the actual growing. After you have toiled and sweated, you can only watch and wait.

The Biodynamic Agricultural College has been given its new home and new conditions, and now we must all watch for its growth. ■

For further information on the College:

www.bdacollege.org.uk



The New Leadership of the Agriculture Section in Dornach

BY RICHARD SWANN

Earlier this year Nikolai Fuchs announced that he would be stepping down as leader of the Agriculture Section at the Goetheanum in Dornach. Three people took his place: Ueli Huerter, Thomas Lüthi and Jean-Michel Florin. What follows is an interview with the new the new group who are responsible for holding the consciousness for biodynamics at the Goetheanum.

Can each of you say how you first encountered biodynamics? What first inspired you? Was there any particular individual (living or dead) that inspired you? Or even a significant 'moment'?

Ueli I wanted to be completely independent and free, that was the way I first found my way to agriculture and biodynamic agriculture. Producing purely out of the conditions of the locality and out of my abilities, that was my starting point – and actually this is repeated every year, it is a struggle and a celebration at the same time.

I have the impression, when I look back, that in each phase of my development I have found exactly those people in the biodynamic arena who enabled me to make this step of development. Especially important for me was Ernst Becker from the Dottenfelderhof in Germany.

Jean-Michel Just as Obelix fell into the vat of the magic potion I fell, so to speak, into the vat of biodynamic cultivation. My father was one of the pioneers of biodynamic agriculture in France. However, I had to get to know biodynamic agriculture as well as the Goethean method as an adult afresh in order to assure myself that it was my own thing too. And in this respect, meeting Jochen Bockemuehl and Georg Maier from the Science Section was very inspiring. I took the Study Year in Dornach and have kept the connection.

Thomas My father had an allotment which he cultivated biodynamically, but that did not interest me quite so consciously. In my training I was also taught biodynamic agriculture. Then, here in Sweden I encountered three personalities who have made biodynamic work their life content, the researcher Bo Pettersen, the adviser Kjell Arman and the farmer/gardener Jerker Engborg. Their joy, commitment and conviction made a huge impression on me so that I wanted to concern myself with it.

Briefly, what has been your main work since then? And what has been your motivation?

Ueli I have been through training to become a biodynamic farmer in Switzerland, in Germany and in France and in 1989 at 28 took on the responsibility for the Ferme de l'Aubier in Montezillon/Neuchâtel, Switzerland. The farm and I have been together now for twenty years. For many years I have been involved in the running of L'Aubier (www.aubier.ch), in the Council of Demeter Switzerland and a partner in the management of Getreidezuechtung Kunz (Kunz Grain Growers). Through these commitments I have

become familiar with the consumer aspect of our work: for whom do we produce the food, how do our products find their customers, how is enough money returned to agriculture from society?

Jean-Michel My greatest motivation for the work has always been to help people to find a really profound connection to nature. This thread runs through all my activities.

After three years working in the teaching of environmental science I have been working for 22 years for the biodynamic movement in France. Gradually I have developed the journal *Biodynamis* with the Council and colleagues (initially I was on my own) and the publication of books as well as the training work (a 2 year bd. training, a large programme of courses, seminars and field trips, etc.). I am working especially in the area of training. Besides this I have been a member of the Council of Representatives of the Agricultural Section for over 20 years as well as member of the Sektionskreis for 6 years. Apart from this I am active in several networks for the work of the three-fold social order and the development of organic agriculture.

Thomas Then I worked as a gardener and increasingly in teaching and training. The work each year with the students on The Agriculture Course has led time and again to new questions and discoveries. The study of it threw up new aspects repeatedly each time, which had, in fact, been there, printed in the text all along, but which I had not been aware of. This has accompanied me consistently and the questions, which have not been fully answered, have made work and life more interesting and opened my eyes more.

How did this decision come about to have three people leading the Section?

Ueli Not to have a single head but three people running it was a picture that several members of Council expressed. We have not analysed where this comes from, but there has only been approval from biodynamic circles for this picture. The Goetheanum, on the other hand, wanted one person as a head. Now, we have been confirmed as three joint heads for three years and after three years we shall have to review it and see how it continues.

What are your different areas of responsibility within the new leadership group? How will you work together?

Jean-Michel Each of us has their own tasks. For example, I am more the person for training and research (within the framework of the Research Institute in collaboration with the Science Section). I am not a proper farmer (I have studied conservation) and will maintain the contacts more with gardeners, landscape gardeners and other such 'border-line areas' of agriculture.

Ueli is the real farmer and he will maintain these contacts. He keeps an eye on finances, fosters the relationship to the High School within the framework of the ▶

High School College and at present is especially busy with the preparation of the big conference.

And Thomas is especially concerned with activity at the Goetheanum and is always there when we are dealing with major questions.

We have also endeavoured to 'divide up' the countries, but this is flexible too. I shall accompany more the Mediterranean countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy, etc.) and Ueli more the English-speaking countries (Great Britain, USA, etc.) and South America. Thomas has contact especially with the northern countries and with the East (China, etc.).

Can you outline (for UK readers) what are the main tasks of the Agriculture Section?

Jean-Michel For me the Section has first and foremost the task of being an organ of perception for the whole biodynamic movement and a forum where everyone can meet completely freely so as to work on the spiritual foundations of biodynamic agriculture. The agricultural conference is an important possibility for doing so.

A second aspect is the co-ordination of the biodynamic work world-wide in co-operation with Demeter International and IBDA.

The other important tasks are research in the spiritual and intellectual realm, especially the deepening of the anthroposophical and Goethean foundations as well as further professional development. This needs to take place in connection with the national associations so that we can complement each other.

How can we create a stronger link between the UK and the Section in Dornach?

Thomas Twice a year Council meetings take place with representatives of the biodynamic work from several countries. Our wish and hope is to continue with a strong and uninterrupted representation from the UK. In the Council questions of the respective countries and their working environment can be brought up and discussed. On the other hand, questions that have been discussed in Council can be taken back to people's home countries. Thus, a lively co-operation can come about between the Section and the UK.

The circular which appears regularly is also suited to uphold the connection between the Section and the UK. The Agricultural Conference in February, which is organised by the Section, is translated into English and is an excellent place to meet people. We hope that people will be well informed about the respective themes and that plenty of people from the UK will participate. People visiting Dornach from the UK are, of course, warmly welcome to visit the Glasshouse there (the seat of the Section for Agriculture).

Looking towards next year's conference, what hopes do you have?

Ueli The conference from 2nd to 5th February will be different from the past ones: there will be hardly any lectures and no clearly demarcated theme. All who come will be protagonists and bring their themes with them. We want to

go through a process with everybody, in which the burning issues that we bring with us from our farms are transformed into beacons. The burning is meant to turn into shining, because we bring ourselves in completely in a personal sense and receive new strength from the future. This process in the 'laboratories of the future' will be led by Claus Otto Scharmer (USA) and Nicanor Perlas (Philippines). The only lecture will be held by Vandana Shiva (India). We hope that lots of people who are engaged in the practical work and above all young people too will come. Every participant will get a chance to speak!

What are your individual personal visions for the biodynamic work in today's world? What do you feel are the main priorities?

Ueli There are three levels that are equally important and it is our task to hold them together: firstly, we are an important partner and should work actively with others in civil society towards a viable partnership of man and the earth. Secondly, our farms are supposed to be sources of strength for society around them, especially with good produce. Thirdly, it is definitely the need of many of us to strengthen the inner work and to make it a part of our daily lives.

Jean-Michel We are at a turning point. On the one hand, with the 'older farms' it is striking that lots of aspects that have been effective until now are no longer effective in the present day. Here we must work on the foundations in order to bring about a proper renewal by helping one another reciprocally to gain an inner feeling of confidence about our methods and approach. The challenges coming towards us are many, social, agricultural, economic, etc. On the other hand, there are countries where lots of farmers would like to convert to the biodynamic approach (e.g. lots of wine-growers in France or farmers in South America or Asia). We must spread biodynamic agriculture without being dogmatic in connection with other 'Michaelic' impulses in civil society.

Thomas It is a priority to have an increasing demand from consumers that enables lots of farmers to convert to biodynamic cultivation. On the one hand, this involves the spreading of the biodynamic work and on the other hand, with the growers an increasing level of work on and understanding of the subtle approach of the idea of biodynamics. In the application of biodynamic principles it is a matter of forming a personal relationship to the processes of nature; this needs to be worked on continually.

The organic sector is well developed in many countries, which is very positive as it has led to a greater consciousness for the earth. However, it has become very commercialised. What place does biodynamics have within all of this?

Ueli The biodynamic movement is small, on the one hand, but it encompasses all possible positions. In relation to the commercial side we have two current phenomena that are actually opposite tendencies. On the one hand, we have the great interest of the wine growers, and these people are having great commercial success with biodynamic wines. On the other hand, at present the bees are dying en masse

because agriculture and bee-keeping are being run too commercially. The biodynamic bee-keepers are almost the only ones in the world who can vouch for a non-commercial approach to bee-keeping and can understand a bit what the bees want to tell us with their vanishing. Just today I have seen excerpts from a new film by Taggart Siegel, *Queen of the Sun*, What are bees telling us? Thus, the biodynamic work has one foot in the commercial camp and the other foot quite consciously in the non-commercial camp. We must put up with this tension.

The Agriculture Course was given in 1924. Many new challenges have arisen since then. Do you feel the Agriculture Course responds adequately to these challenges or do we need to develop new spiritual insights? If so, where do you see these arising?

Ueli I think the perspective, which is addressed in the Agriculture Course, is a huge one. And for great impulses nearly a hundred years is, of course, not a long time span. For me the Course is still keenly relevant even today. However, the course is not the only source of the biodynamic impulse. Every individual who works biodynamically is a source too. There is a *subtle weaving to and fro between the historical source from Rudolf Steiner and the present source within myself – it is authentic to live this weaving between the two poles in an existential way.



Ueli Huerter



Jean-Michel Florin



For the Agriculture Section at the Goetheanum: www.agricultural-section.org.

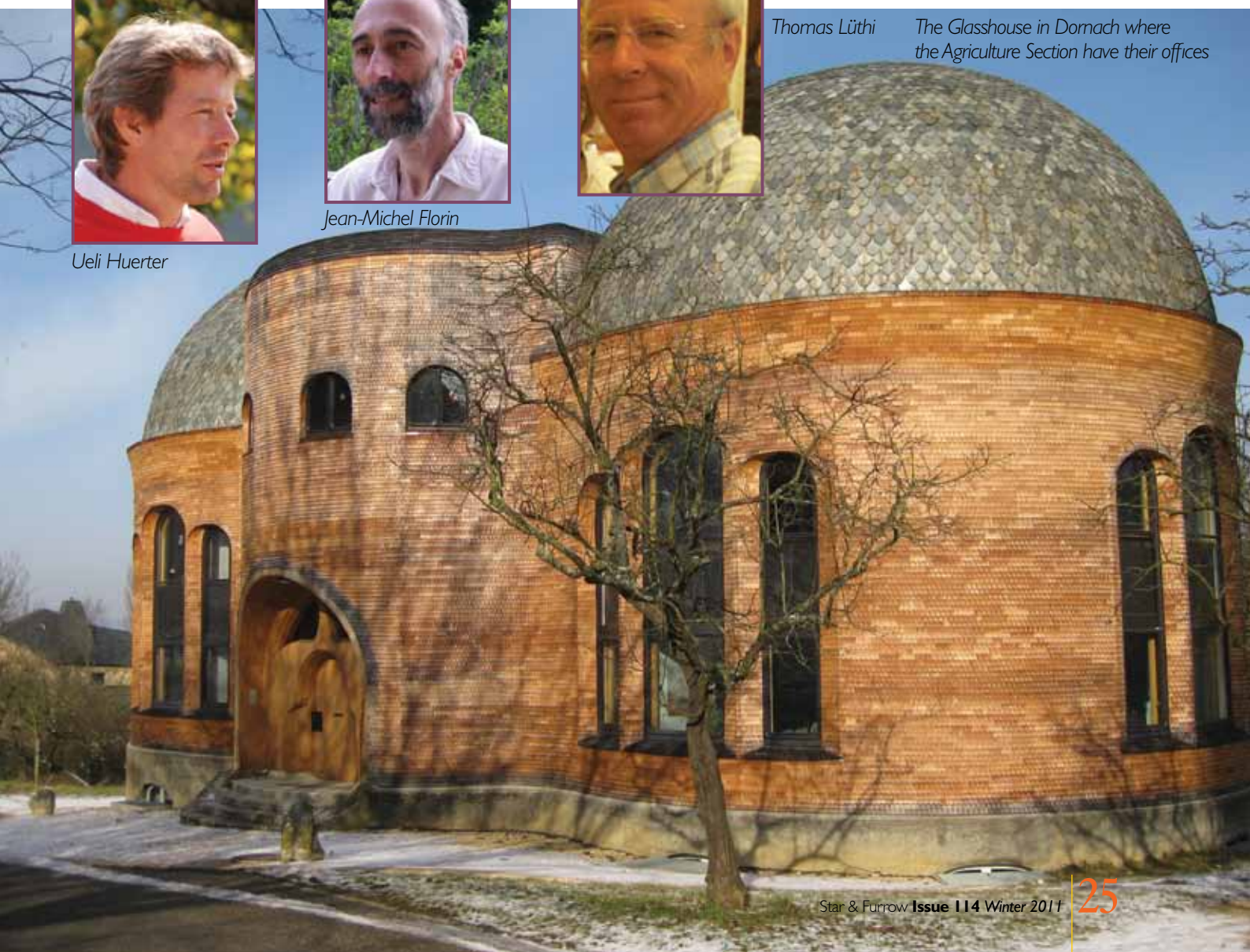
Thomas Lüthi The Glasshouse in Domach where the Agriculture Section have their offices

Jean-Michel I have the impression that the Agriculture Course is becoming more topical with the inspirations that it can give, even when particular facts are perhaps sometimes antiquated. I am repeatedly surprised how many tasks it sets us (which we have to solve through practical research and practical work). We cannot simply treat Steiner's indications as ready-made recipes but as vistas for our orientation; Steiner often shows us the way and this way needs to be taken individually. Thus we can develop new faculties of perception and thus better (more inwardly) understand the indications in the course of time.

Thomas The Agriculture Course can be a source of inspiration for working as an individual with biodynamics and understanding the connections in nature. The Agriculture Course is for me material to work with, a challenge to work continually on my own, if modest, spiritual insights. The way I see it, this is the core of biodynamics. Thus this work can be done in every place where someone is farming biodynamically. ■

The interview was carried out in October 2010 by Richard Swann by email and was translated by John Weedon
Information about the 2011 Biodynamic Conference can be found in the Events section of the Biodynamic Association website: www.biodynamic.org.uk.

3 photos courtesy of the Biodynamic Section at the Goetheanum



Bees in winter



BY HEIDI HERRMANN

Having bees in one's life is somewhat different from having a dog, or sheep or a horse, all of whom one may amply enjoy - in the world of the senses - all year round. Not so with bees. These creatures, inextricably linked as they are to the life of plant and blossom, cannot but elude our physical senses, slowly but surely, from about the time of the autumn equinox.

As we watch them bringing in the last of the year's pollen, we may feel a bit sad, reluctant to say farewell, inclined to worry about what is ahead for them. It makes us uneasy to know that they will be disappearing out of our sight ... just ask any beekeeper. However, it is autumn, and we know that it is time now - high time - to accommodate ourselves to the prospect of months ahead with no bees around. It happens every year, and yet ... The hives will be all still, there will be none of their sweet song in the air for some time to come, and we shall miss the bees, their lovely sounds, the evocative fragrances of the hive, all these things that give us so much joy and pleasure as we wander among the hives in the bee live time of the year, and make us feel at one with the world. And yet, our task of caring for them continues. How, on earth?

It can be quite sobering to realize how much of our feeling of connectedness with the beautiful bees is, in fact, mediated by what we experience of them through our senses. They really grab you through your senses! The mere sight of a beautiful heart-shaped comb is enough to put one in a swoon. The smells wafting from the hive as nectar is transformed into honey, the enchanting hum of young bees' first orientation flight - all these evoke complex feelings in us and make us feel connected. All is well when the bees are 'about'. There is a clear challenge here: how to relate to, how to support our bees through the coming months, how to evoke that sense of connection. What can we know of these silent hives in winter? One might ask oneself what it is that one connects to in the case of a hive of bees. Where is the 'Bien', the bee soul-being that animates the hive? It is not in the sense world, that's for sure, we don't see it in the summer, either, when there is so much to delight our senses. When the bees draw in we feel a greater need to get to the essentials of our connection with them, with the Bee. And for that, it would appear, we have to take leave of our senses, as it were. And 'lest we forget that there is life beyond our

senses, the gloomy prospect of months with no bees to be seen or heard brings it home to us.

As the colony prepares for winter, sealing the hive with extra propolis, carefully designing a new ventilation system appropriate for cold and damp weather, the nurse bees of the hive embark on a challenging task. They are now raising the 'winter bees' whose role it will be to take the colony through the colder months of winter and into early spring, maybe Easter time. These winter bees will live for up to six months, in contrast to the four to six weeks' life-span of a summer bee. They need raising in sufficient numbers and their need for pollen is great. The colony's main activity in winter is clustering, keeping one another warm by cuddling up into a roundish ball, around their queen. The outermost bees form a 'skin' by interlocking their wings and the bees within the cluster uncouple their wings from their flight muscles, and generate heat by flexing these powerful muscles. All the bees slowly change places until the innermost bees reach the outside, forming the protective sheath around them all, and all are kept warm.

The winter cluster's warmth is maintained precisely whatever the temperature outside - a perfect miracle, just one of the many which the bees perform in their bid for immortality, mostly out of range of our ordinary perception. What we cannot see, we may find fruitful to ponder deeply. Winter lends itself to pondering their unfathomable ways. It's a good time to wonder about the bees, the bee, to conjure up the essence of the hive. What might they be up to, deep inside their hives, as they dream their sweet ways towards Easter. Are they still feeding 'royal jelly' to their mother, even though her egg-laying will eventually cease, for a while, to be resumed at the 'turning of the days', the winter solstice; could it be that she is put on a diet less extraordinary, for a while? Are they tasting the summer as they feed and warm each other? Do they know of us?

Royal jelly, bee milk is made in the head glands of the young nurse bees - now here is some food for thought! It is said that a diet composed of a rich variety of pollen is needed to produce this substance. Bee milk is prepared in the hypopharyngeal glands of young nurse bees' heads and it is an elixir of tremendous transforming power. Imagine, if you can, that the fundamentals of colony life are prepared in the head glands of the 'worker' bees, the female bees, whose metamorphosed reproductive powers pave the way for the

wisdom-filled cooperation, for the love that is hive life. It is the composition of the 'bee milk' fed to the young larvae which determines whether it becomes the one female bee capable of reproduction (queen), or a female bee with special organs and glands which enable it to prepare bee milk, feed the off-spring, secrete wax, collect nectar and pollen, etc. (worker bee), or, indeed, a male bee, a drone. It's all down to bee milk and highly specific cosmic forces and other things not easily discerned.

Bee milk ... just one of the deeply enigmatic phenomena of bee life we can choose to think about as we ponder in our hearts the bees when they are not about. And watching them carry the last pollen of the year into the dark of their nests, we might ask them what they would like us to contemplate. Bee milk, honey, love, biodynamics? The bees will have a view. They had a major part in enticing us to this earth, after all, as Rudolf Steiner tells us. And if we let pass before our inner eye the grand pageant of miracles which is bee colony life, repeatedly and with utmost concentration, we will keep strong and live our warm-hearted connection with the bees through the time when we cannot see them with our eyes. They may well need our warm-heartedness. And they also like to be asked about things, and hear our vital news.

Musing about these bee matters I am no longer sure now which one is the active season for the beekeeper or guardian. As our minds become more awake towards winter our 'bee work' can become active in a different way, can be boosted infinitely ... and then miraculous things can happen. But that's another discussion. One can see it in the glow of some ancient beekeeper's faces. The more we attend in heart and mind to the wholeness of bee life and what sustains it, and to what they have and we do not yet have, the stronger grows our sense of awe, of wonder. This is one of their gifts to us. Without the bees' gifts, their fructifying, their poison, their enlivening acids, life on earth would become waste and void. That we all know now, or are beginning to understand. We might tell them that. And, not to forget: the bees will love it if we also tell them – when the time comes – that we know that it is Christmas. And Easter, when the time comes, by which time the beautiful bees will be back in our life once again, so God will, to be seen and smelt and heard.

Finally I would like to share with you a message of congratulation received on the occasion of establishing the Natural Beekeeping Trust together with friends from a 'Bee Lectures' study group, one year ago now. It was sent by Roger Druitt, who led that study group over some years, to 'honour the new venture'. It has honoured us, indeed, and the 'venture' of sharing the bees' mysteries and their concerns in relation to Rudolf Steiner's insights with wider circles of people has been a privilege, to say the least. It has led to working together with many people who, like ourselves, seek to connect to bees in more fruitful ways than have gained ground in our times. There is a growing awareness of the serious demise of bees' vitality in tandem with the depredations visited upon Nature by man. Hopefully, through the bees' mysterious education of us all, we shall become ever more able to truly care for them, and contribute to their wellbeing – by way of better understanding our place in Nature.

'Even in the autumn, at the hive entrance, we see the bees carrying pollen into the darkness of their own home, actually of their own body within its box. Even at the end of the day, as twilight begins, pollen is still going in; and as the light fades, the pollen shines all the more: a light going into the darkness. We, and they, are comforted that there will be plenty of food for the winter! The winter bees will be fed and the colony will be strong in the spring. Where does this perception lead us?

Summer is for us a wakeful time of activity, while we think of winter as more enclosed; but is our mind not more active during the winter? Are not our thoughts clearer and more awake? Autumn is the season in which we realise this is beginning to happen. The outer enclosing or drawing in is accompanied by an inner expanding.

The hive is truly enclosed in the winter time, even to the point of hibernation if the weather is sufficiently cold. What a contrast to the summer, when the inside of the hive, that is the true bodily organism of the colony, is full of activity, without rest! Can we not imagine that the winter rest, the winter silence and stillness within the hive means something very spiritual for the colony? Comparable to our times of meditation, when we are connected with something higher than ourselves? Surely this time of nothingness is vital for the colony to enable it to function properly during the rest of the year and vital for us too to make our way in inner light.

So winter for the bees is like our own state of total wakefulness, with mind fixed on higher content. We do this during the daytime but in so doing we prepare for an unconscious enlightenment during the night. When we awaken and go into the next day, we are alive with the content of those periods. But how does the pollen get into the hive, into the cells? During the forage these insects pause and use one pair of legs to wipe it all down to their 'pollen baskets', special hairs on their back legs where it sticks together in a little lump. Then these grains are handed over to the hive bees who put it in a cell of the same flower source. So the main store is like the bread bin, but the larder also contains the condiments. Bee larvae have a very mysterious diet...

Bees take pollen from the world into their 'higher consciousness' in the hive. Later it is transformed, to emerge as new life. Our quiet moments in the day are our pollen-gathering that we take into our sleep, our unconscious higher consciousness. There, the higher beings that support us in life (Guardian Angels, Saints, Ancestors and other departed souls and other, higher beings still) sort everything out and put it through metamorphosis, whence we bear it, transformed, into the next day of our activity. Is this anything to do with what love really is about? A bright idea, a reconciliation, a hard decision become straightforward, a new perspective on someone we care for, or hated? Thank you world.' ■

Heidi Herrmann is the founder of the Natural Beekeeping Trust. For more information on their work see: www.naturalbeekeepingtrust.org

Sedlescombe Vineyard – *the producers of the first UK Demeter wine*

BY RICHARD SWANN



As we go to press the first UK Demeter certified biodynamic English wine has gone on sale. It is a white wine called First Release and is made at Sedlescombe Vineyard in East Sussex. On their website they describe its qualities as ‘Concentrated fresh aroma, with tropical, zesty flavours of gooseberries, grapefruit and lemon-grass. Accompaniment to seafood, light meats and Asian cuisine, or simply enjoy on its own’.

The vineyard is owned and managed by Roy Cook and his German born wife Irma. They have been producing award winning organic wines there for nearly 30 years and decided this year to convert the vineyard to Demeter.

I visited them twice in the past year. The first time was in spring as the buds on the vines were tentatively opening to the spring sunshine. The frosts had passed and the bluebells were in full bloom. Both guided as well as self-guided ‘Nature Trail’ walks were available for visitors to not

only taste the wines and see the vineyard and bluebells, but also to enjoy the woodlands and its many species of birds.

In October the grapes were being harvested in the autumn sunshine amidst the first sharp frosts of the season. Sedlescombe manage several sites, with the main ones being at Cripps Corner, near to Sedlescombe as well as at Bodiam Castle and Spilstead. In all there are over 7 ha of grapes.

When I visited the Bodiam Castle site, good-humoured chatter filled the air with the pickers making their way along the lines of grapes. They were carefully sorting and selecting the grapes as they picked to ensure that no bad grapes would go to the press.

The long rows, covered in netting to keep off the birds, are 'sandwiched' between two historical buildings that typify the East Sussex and Kent landscape. At the top is an old, oast house in good condition with its newly painted white cowls. But the outstanding view is the one downhill towards neighbouring Bodiam Castle and moat. It is from the farm at the top that the vineyard is rented.

It all started in 1979 when Roy and his wife wanted to make a living growing organic vegetables. There was a bit of a vine revival at the time and they discovered their land would be suitable for growing vines. It is south facing and sheltered from south winds and extreme frosts. So they planted 2000 vines across one and a half acres.

Since then things have developed enormously such that they now manage three vineyards with an area of 7.3 hectares. They converted the land with organic certification being granted in 1982. Since that time they have (until Demeter conversion this year) been certified with the Soil Association.

Roy says: *"I first made enquiries about converting to Demeter back in 2001, so it had been on my mind for some time before we finally decided to take the plunge in 2010! What finally convinced me that it was the right way forward for us was coming across a list of well known previously organic vineyards belonging to an international grouping of biodynamic vineyards known as 'Return to Terroir'. (See <http://www.biodynamic.com/>). The members of this 'renaissance des appellations' organization are striving to retain the individuality of wines from different countries and locations around the world and are against the current trend amongst the large wine conglomerates seeking to standardize wines so that they are virtually identical irrespective of their origin.*

I was amazed looking down the list of the members of this organization to see so many names that I had known from years ago as organic vineyards that were apparently now Biodynamic! That really made me sit up and take note! If it was good enough for them, then surely it was the way forward for Sedlescombe. After 2 years practising biodynamic methods we can apply to join this prestigious grouping ourselves – the first English vineyard to do so.

Although at the start of the year I only had a fairly sketchy idea of what Biodynamics was all about, my knowledge has increased dramatically during the year, and I am pleased to say that the more I have found out about it the more convinced I have become that it is the best path for us going forward. I think it will make us focus even more on achieving a healthy soil and learning more about composts in the vineyard and in the winery we will be able to develop even further our minimal interference philosophy and look forward to experimenting using indigenous

yeasts and seeing the effect they might have on enhancing wine quality.

From a marketing perspective there is a tremendous story to tell which will lend our wines an element of mystery and 21st century style which is bound to enhance their desirability."

The land has thus had many years of organic management. The underlying soil is a sandy, silt loam type derived from Cretaceous deposits. It is thus susceptible to compaction. To help against this and to improve fertility they use a variety of both temporary over-wintering, and perennial green manure cover crop plant mixtures involving both deep rooting and nitrogen fixing plants and herbs in the alleyways between the rows. This together with PAS100 approved municipal compost mulch under the vines and chicken manure pellets provide the necessary nutrients. The vine prunings are also allowed to de-compose between the rows. During the past year they have started to use the biodynamic preparations as part of their biodynamic conversion. Demeter Certification was granted in the autumn in time for the first harvest.

Sedlescombe also operate a so-called Rentavine scheme. This is a social initiative whereby people can rent a vine and thus become a member of the Sedlescombe Vineyard Rentavine Club. In return members receive a newsletter, are eligible for a discount on wines and can if wished help with the harvest. More details can be found on their website: www.rentavine.co.uk

Roy grows a mixture of old and newer varieties, all of which are best suited to the cooler climate of the United Kingdom. The white varieties are Solaris, Reichensteiner, Bacchus, Rivaner, Auxerrois, Faber, Ortega, Optima, Regner, Seyval Blanc and Kerner. For the red he grows: Regent, Rondo and Pinot Noir.

The grapes are crushed, pressed and blended on site using equipment and methods that mostly come from Germany. Apart from wine they also supplement their range with excellent organic fruit juices, liqueurs, ciders and vinegars. These can be sampled and bought in their shop, otherwise online from their website.

They have won many awards over the years with more recently the Regent red wine being 'Highly Commended' in the UKVA (United Kingdom Vineyards Association) Wine of the Year competition in 2009. A couple of the fruit juices also won medals in the Guild of Fine Foods Great Taste Awards in 2005. ■

To find out more about Sedlescombe Vineyard visit their website: www.englishorganicwine.co.uk.



Weingut Dr Bürklin-Wolf profile

BY MONTY WALDIN

Anthroposophically-oriented, therefore teetotal Star & Furrow aficionados may wonder why articles on wine are needed when for example the declining health of the world's bees is a more obviously deserving subject. I would argue that if consumers are to change their environmental habits eco-warriors must offer a happy future to look forward to rather than a bleak one to avoid. Biodynamic wine is one of those everyday yet also rarified products capable of encouraging, even leading that change. Bee-loving anthroposophists read on!

slopes of the Haardt, a mountain range (up to 670-metres) which acts as a rain-shadow. The Haardt become the Vosges across to French border in Alsace immediately to the south. Bürklin-Wolf's vineyards are mainly in the Pfalz's renowned wine villages of Wachenheim, Forst, Deidesheim and Ruppertsberg.

When I started at Bürklin-Wolf I found the staff were absolutely pro-biodynamics. Despite its immense size the whole estate could be sprayed with the biodynamic field sprays in three days. There are dedicated biodynamic sprayers and two 600-litre clay-lime mortar (i.e. metal-free) dynamisers for stirring.



I began writing about biodynamic wine in 1995 when the subject was unfashionable, almost laughable. Now attitudes to biodynamics have changed. In 2007/8 for instance biodynamic wine was the subject of Channel 4's six-part series *Chateau Monty* featuring yours truly. This was the first time the making of a biodynamic wine from vine pruning to bottling had ever been filmed for mainstream TV. Leading wine estates in renowned wine regions in Bordeaux, Chile, California, the Loire, Alsace, Austria, Tuscany, Australia and New Zealand are working biodynamically. Even the world's most famous wine estate, Romanée Conti in Burgundy, recently converted to biodynamics.

In 2006 I began advising Weingut Dr Bürklin-Wolf, Germany's largest biodynamic vineyard, on biodynamics. Bürklin-Wolf has been certified since 2005 by Lacon for France's Syndicat International des Vignerons en Culture Bio-Dynamique (www.biodivin.com) or SIVCBD. The SIVCBD is the world's first dedicated organisation for vineyards practising biodynamic methods with EU organic certification.

Bürklin-Wolf has 80 hectares (200 acres) of mainly Riesling vines in the Pfalz sub-region of south west Germany. This is a 30-minute drive east of Mannheim (served by high speed rail link), or a 60-minute drive south of Frankfurt's international airport.

The Pfalz is unofficially known as "the Tuscany of Germany" because of its sunny dry climate (less than 600 mm rainfall annually). The vineyards lie on the south-facing

For horn manure 500 (see top right hand picture) an existing sprayer was adapted so that this preparation could reach the soil in large rain-like drops as suggested as ideal by biodynamic literature. Horn manure 500 is sprayed in autumn and spring. Around 150 horns for this preparation are buried at Bürklin Wolf each year using manure from the winery's own cows (see top left hand picture). The horns are buried in the cow pasture, so the manure is buried in the same field in which it was initially excreted.

Horn silica 501 is sprayed in spring over the tops of the vine at flowering, in late summer as the grapes are ripening and sometimes at leaf fall. Around 15 horns for this preparation are buried each year using silica purchased from the late Christian von Wistinghausen's successors. The horns are buried in a south facing vineyard in Deidesheim called Kalkofen ('lime-kiln'). This site exhibits the lime-silica polarity because it has limestone and sand (silica) soils, so it is a place which exhibits biodynamic balance.

Normal (and organically approved) vineyard sprays include liquid sulphur for powdery mildew (sprayed up to 8 times per season from budburst onwards) and Bordeaux Mixture (no more than 3kg/ha copper per year and no more than 500g/ha per treatment) for downy mildew. Grape berry moth caterpillars, which pierce grape skins leading to rot and vinegary flavours, are controlled by *Bacillus thuringiensis* capsules hung along vine supporting wires. Other sprays include potassium bicarbonate or baking soda which inhibits fungus spores which cause rot or mildew. The main teas or

liquid manures are chamomile, stinging nettle and common horsetail 508 (*Equisetum arvense*).

Soil management aims to do as little as possible as often as possible. Every other vine row is left permanently grassed using a cover crop mix — mainly fescues (*Festuca rubra*, *Festuca ovina*) plus salad burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) and golden marguerite (*Anthemis tinctoria*). Grassed rows act as driving rows for tractors allowing access to the vineyard without compacting soil even when wet. Organics/biodynamics is about prevention rather than cure, and if you are cannot get into the vineyard when you need to spray you give yourself a problem. The sward is occasional lifted and aerated by sub-soiling. After 5-7 years grassed rows are ploughed in, and the alternate rows are then sown with the same seed mix for their 5-7 year



turn as driving rows.

Every other non-grassed row is left open from spring to summer but between autumn and spring winter cover crops (vetch, clovers, legumes) are sown to prevent erosion and leaching during the wet season. These are ploughed in during spring, releasing nutrients to soil micro-organisms and thence to the vines. Over summer some open rows may be sown with a bee-friendly mix. This includes phacelia, buckwheat, mustard, various clovers, mallows, dill, calendula, cornflower, borage, fennel, corncockle, coriander and serradella. Home-made insect and bee hotels or “bee hives in a barrel” have been added to the vineyards.

Soil micro-organisms are stimulated and soil structure improved by biodynamic compost 502-507. Around 500 tonnes of compost is made annually using estate grown manure, locally sourced manure from extensively grazed herds, green waste generated by Bürklin Wolf’s private gardens and leftovers from wine-making like grape skins and grape stems. Biodynamic compost preparations 502-507 have been purchased from the late Christian von Wistinghausen’s successors, although from 2010 Bürklin-Wolf began making some of its own. All the herbs needed grow wild in or around the vineyards; bovine animal organs can be sourced from the estate’s own animals; stag’s bladders can be sourced from local, licensed hunters. At winter pruning weak vines may be sprayed or painted with pruning paste (see top middle picture). Tree paste is to vine trunks what compost is to soil. This follows Rudolf Steiner’s idea that tree (or vine) trunks

are elongated mounds of soil raised up above the ground, while the tree’s shoots and leaves are like grass or other annual plants growing from the bark which represents the soil surface. Tree paste, or tree compost if you prefer, is made by combining the three basic components of the soil which are clay, sand and cow manure with horn manure 500.

Compost is spread at a rate of 5-30 tonnes per hectare depending on the needs of the vineyard and the soil type (red sandstone, limestone, clay, sand, loess, basalt). As compost is not spread on every vineyard every year Maria Thun’s barrel compost 502-507 is sprayed once in autumn on those vineyards which have had no solid compost spread on them. Thus all vineyards receive the influence of the six biodynamic compost preparations 502-507. Thun’s recommendation of using barrels for this preparation is cumbersome so we are switching to Peter Proctor’s directions for what he called his cow pat or brick pit prep. This uses shallow brick-lined pits dug in the ground. The basalt needed for this prep is abundant locally, as a quarry crater formed by a meteorite 30 million years ago in hills behind the winery shows.

Bürklin Wolf is still owned by the founding family. Current incumbent Bettina Bürklin has a degree in wine-growing from Germany’s top wine university, Geisenheim. She saw biodynamics as a way of making the terroir-driven dry Riesling white wines which Bürklin-Wolf had always seen as its signature. ‘Terroir-driven’ simply means that a Riesling from the village of Wachenheim should taste different to one from Deidesheim or Forst, because each of these villages has its own mix of soils, micro-climates and so on.

Furthermore each individual vine plot within each village should produce a distinct-tasting wine. However Germany’s 1971 Wine Law said the quality of a wine should be based on how much sugar the grapes contained when picked, rather than on what kind of flavour the grapes actually contained. This would be like sending German children to different schools according to how tall or short they were rather than according to how clever they were. Bürklin-Wolf was the first German winery to ignore the national wine law by labelling its Riesling white wines according to which bit of ground the grapes come from (just like they do in France, Italy, Spain and so on) rather than according to how much sugar they contain.

This makes sense from a biodynamic perspective. Vine roots take up mineral flavours from soil via soil microbes. These microbes live and feed off the vine roots but also allow vine roots to feed from the soil. By allowing soil microbes to express themselves in each individual vine plot biodynamics allows each vine and each vine plot to find its full expression in the resulting wine because the taste of the soil in that particular vine plots can be expressed.

That is why biodynamics is such a perfect fit for wine whose aromas, flavours and tastes are so important for its evaluation and enjoyment by professionals and the general public alike. ■

Contact Details

Weingut Dr. Bürklin-Wolf, Weinstraße 65,
D-67157 Wachenheim, Germany
Tel (+49) 6322.95330
Website www.buerklin-wolf.de

Pictures © Monty Waldin

Monty Waldin is a wine critic, writer and broadcaster. He featured on the Channel 4 documentary Chateau Monty two years ago. His new book Monty Waldin’s Biodynamic Wine Guide 2011 has just been published and is reviewed on page 50.



**DEMETER
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS
ASSEMBLY MEETING -
BAIRRO DEMETRIA,
BOTUCATU, BRAZIL**

BY
**RICHARD
SWANN**

In June I left the unusually warm and balmy British summer behind and flew south to Brazil where I was plunged into their winter with fresh night temperatures of 6 degrees.

However there was plenty of warmth to be found at the Demeter International Members Assembly, which took place near Botucatu, three hours from São Paulo. One of the strengths of Demeter is that it is an international organisation and so it is vital that we meet each other and if possible on each other's soil. This gives a chance to understand the individual agricultural and social situations. Each year the Members Assembly meets in June in a different location to consider strategy, developments and to vote on changes and amendments to the Demeter Standards.

Bairro Demetria, where the meeting took place, is a conglomerate of anthroposophical initiatives all operating from the same neighbourhood but with independent properties about 10 km from Botucatu. There are two farms, a large market garden, Waldorf School, Christian Community church, home for special needs adults, training centre, as well as an organic food shop and a couple of restaurants.

On top of that there are several condominiums where people can buy a plot of land to build their own house. This affords the possibility of loose community living and serves as a means of security in the Brazilian context. In total about 800 residents live in Demetria.

Despite it being a chilly mid winter the bright winter sun brought out the humming birds (beija flor), which flitted amongst their favourite pink flowers pollinating them. Papaya (mamão) hung pendulously from their trunks and oranges were in good supply. As we discovered, the Brazilian winter is a good time for growing for some crops and vegetables as the weather is not so hot and irrigation can be easier managed.

The two farms, Sítio Bahia and Estância Demétria are respectively about 40 ha and 155 ha, but are run under one management by Paulo Cabrera. The former is mostly pasture land where they keep morose buffalos as well as some very fine boned heifers. They also grow herbs for drying for teas. The land is fairly flat with a red light soil, typical of the region, punctuated by termite hills.

Estância Demétria is a short distance away. There,

field crops such as manioc, beans, maize and so on are cultivated. These provide staples for both the animals as well as the people living there (beans, rice and manioc are vital components of Brazilian cuisine). The two metre high elephant grass dwarfed the cows grazing there. The majority of the milk is provided from there, which is mostly sent to the dairy where cheese, ice cream and yoghurt are made.

The shop or bio-loja is one of the main hubs of the bairro where people drop by to sit in the shade to drink a coffee or a fresh suco (smoothie) made from delicious Brazilian fruits. It is well stocked with Demeter fruit, vegetables, beans, dairy products and ice creams. They also sell cakes and breads from the adjoining bakery.

The Biodynamic Association of Brazil (Associação Biodinâmica or ABD) also has its main centre nearby. It is a very active organisation with one of their tasks being to make biodynamic preparations for sale in the country. As the preparation plants are not indigenous to South America they then cultivate them. It was thus quite fascinating to see beds of nettles, yarrow and dandelion all being carefully nurtured on raised beds, and in the case of the nettles sheltered with netting from the strong sun. Growing valerian is also a challenge as it prefers a damper cooler climate and so it is unable to flower there. Where they are unable to make their own preparations they import materials from cooler countries.

The Association is also a research centre where they are experimenting with potentisation and homeopathic treatments. Of particular interest is the work with equisetum for treating parasites in animals. They have also started to work with potentised biodynamic preparations. More recently they began a seed conservation project where they collect seeds from farms across the country. We were shown a room full of bottles and jars filled with seeds of many colours such as maize and beans. If they can acquire funding a small seed supplying company will be set up.

The Demeter and organic certification body for Brazil is IBD (Instituto Biodinâmico), which is managed by Alexandre Harkaly and Paul Espanion. They are a large organisation that have their offices in nearby Botucatu, where they employ 30 people. IBD started out in 1983 as a biodynamic inspection body but since then have diversified and now inspect and certify (also in partnership with other organisations) to various international organic standards including EU and USA. They have also developed a programme that audits social and environmental enterprises. This is their EcoSocial Program, which is an important growth area and is finding more licensees not only in Brazil but also throughout the world. Altogether IBD certify around 700 licensees (many of which are group certification so that includes 3000 small farmers) of which about 5% are Demeter certified.

The Assembly itself lasted just under a week and was represented by delegates from 15 countries. The focus this year was on debating and discussing a few key topics. These were Biodynamic Principles, Social Charter, Trade-mark development, climate change and a proposed product database.

For the past two years Demeter International has been very actively taking a long hard look at the Standards. Each year new suggestions for standards changes are proposed and agreed resulting in more standards and more complexity. Many farmers, growers and processors are

becoming increasingly concerned and stressed by all the legislation.

The question has thus arisen as to whether we could start to think in terms of biodynamic Principles. The idea would be to try and express biodynamics through simple words, which would be filled out with explanations. IFOAM came up with the four principles that underlie organic agriculture. These being health, ecology, fairness and care. What then are the Principles of biodynamic agriculture? With those in mind could we reduce the Demeter Standards to just a few key points elaborated by guidance notes?

Two sessions were spent on this issue with the overall agreement that we want to see the work continue. The question of expressing biodynamics through Principles will continue through the International Biodynamic Association (IBDA). A small task force will meet to see whether the Demeter International Standards can be simplified.

This only concerns the Demeter aspect of certification. In many countries the Demeter inspection is carried out separately to the organic one. Here in the UK they are combined and we are recognised by Defra as an organic certification body. We thus need to ensure organic compliance with the EU Organic Regulation 834/2007.

Two more key issues were looked at in Brazil. One is the Social Charter. Along similar lines to the Principles can we evaluate non agricultural questions as the Fair Trade Foundation has? Can we assess whether workers on a farm are being treated and paid fairly? Can we assess whether a fair price is being asked for produce? Again proposals are being worked on for next year's Demeter International meeting.

The third aspect looked at was the question of how to assess the carbon footprint of biodynamic agriculture. We received a presentation by Tobias Bandel of Soil and More that included some early results of work at Sekem in Egypt.

An integral part of the Assembly was a presentation by Alexandre Harkaly on the Soul of Brazil. This was a fascinating overview of a country that we usually associate with football and samba. He concluded his presentation with a video of the following song:

CIO DA TERRA

Milton Nascimento/Chico Buarque

Debulhar o trigo	<i>Thresh the wheat</i>
Recolher cada bago do trigo	<i>Harvest each wheat corn</i>
Forjar no trigo o milagre do pão	<i>Forge from the wheat the miracle of bread</i>
E se fartar de pão	<i>And satisfy yourself with bread</i>
Decepar a cana	<i>Cut the cane</i>
Recolher a garapa da cana	<i>Collect the cane juice</i>
Roubar da cana a doçura do mel	<i>Take from the cane the sweetness of honey</i>
Se lambuzar de mel	<i>Spread yourself with honey</i>
Afagar a terra	<i>Touch the soil</i>
Conhecer os desejos da terra	<i>Know the wishes of the earth</i>
Cio da terra, a propícia estação	<i>Heat of the earth, the right season</i>
E fecundar o chão	<i>Fructify the soil</i>

■ For further details of the biodynamic work in Brazil:

Biodynamic Association of Brazil - www.biodinamica.org.br (Portuguese only)

IBD Certifications - www.ibd.com.br (Portuguese and English)

ELO - www.elo.org.br (Portuguese only)

Bairro Demetria - www.bairrodemetria.com.br

Tree Pasting

BY TOM PETHERICK

A tree pasting was one of the first biodynamic activities we undertook on arrival at Cholwell Farm in the winter of our first year 2007. I had completed Lynette West's six-day course that spring and was enthused with the biodynamic way. Starry eyed we had entered our land into the Demeter scheme and begun conversion; by that winter our biodynamic journey was definitely under way.

Something called us to do it. Certainly the condition of a youngish oak tree was concerning us, and the orchard, such as it was, also looked like it could do with cheering up. So with the help of our neighbour Jeremy Weiss of Velwell Orchard, who was working with us at the time, we decided to have a go.

Whilst far from neglected there had been little in the way of gardening or farming happening at Cholwell for quite a number of years when we arrived. The garden around the house had been kept tidy, while the land sloping up to the west which formed a seven acre meadow had been home to some sheep, on and off, down the years.

Tucked away in a corner behind the 1970s concrete panelled garage was an orchard of nine apple trees. Planted far too close together they did not appear especially productive and we felt a task was to try and help them emerge from the gloom. When we heard about tree pasting it seemed precisely the way to reinvigorate trees and get the compost preparations active on the land as soon as possible. We had been using the field sprays, BD500 and BD501 through the year but we had only just treated our first compost heaps and they would not reach the garden until the following spring. We felt the need to bring the influence of the compost preps into play and tree pasting seemed like a perfect means to achieve this.

Across the drive stood two other trees from the garage, one unidentified and the other a Cox's Orange Pip-

pin. This last named is not a good tree for the West Country as it is prone to the fungal and bacterial diseases that stalk this land such as scab, blackspot and the various cankers. Tales abound of smallholders who on moving west planted orchards of Cox only to watch the trees succumb to their inherent weakness and quickly die.



A look at the old maps of our area, which Jeremy dug out from the library, showed that much of the steeply sloping ground of the farm was covered in trees as far back as the eighteenth century. Cider apples, we presumed, as this was the beverage that sustained the populace before the consumption of tea became widespread in the early twentieth century. The cider was probably weak and may have had little commercial value, rather grown for home consumption, it was simply what there was, just as there were hops in the east of the country for beer.

As to the varieties in our orchard we have identified a few. There is a single Discovery, an apple that remains popular because it is one of the first to be ready towards the end of the summer. Its only fault is that it does not keep well, going woolly quite quickly once picked. It therefore needs

to be eaten up and is indeed delicious straight from the tree. There is also a Laxton's of some type that has the same trait although it ripens later. Then there is a variety called Devon Longkeeper. This appears to be a dessert apple. It has the colouring of Greensleeves or French Golden Delicious and like a lot of west country apples it has the tell-tale distinguishing mark of a very tough skin which leaves a strong and not overly pleasant after taste in the mouth. It may be a cider apple with ambition. It certainly stores well.

And so to the tree paste itself. Why were we drawn to it and how did we think it might invigorate the orchard. Firstly it seemed like a strong gift to the elemental beings that we were already working with before we came upon

biodynamics. The plight of the mildewy oak that had put on so little growth in the previous few years was also a reason. When we started using the two field sprays it quickly became apparent to us that the energy of the place was changing. The intent with which we accompanied the stirrings and sprayings seemed to be having a strong effect and we were in no doubt that a tree pasting would achieve similar changes.

This was enough for us. We needed no further encouragement to galvanize us so we set forth for The Robert Owen Foundation at Sharpham Barton Farm for manure from their herd of milking Jersey cows. We added sand from the builder's merchant, a pinch of each compost preparation and some unpasteurised milk. And those, quite simply were the ingredients.

We mixed them in a wheelbarrow to a fairly sloppy mix, thick enough to stick to the tree without running off yet loose enough to get good coverage with the liquid and value from a barrow load. Once you start pasting trees with biggish trunk girths the raw material can start dwindling fast.

Faced with a gigantic barrow of cold muck there was nothing for it but to get stuck in so that's what we did, slathering the mix over every inch of the tree that we could possibly reach, even using the ladder on occasions. Nothing was spared – trunk, branches, fruiting spurs, buds, although I remember concentrating on the cracks in the gnarly trunk bark on the vague assumption that over wintering pests and diseases would be troubled by the brew. On reflection it was probably more like an elixir for the woolly aphid and any fungal spores that were holed up for the colder months.

Given that most people have the apple as a first choice for a fruit tree in the garden it is worth touching for a moment on what are the main problems likely to be encountered. By far the worst pest to cause damage is the codling

moth the grub of which burrows into the fruit, while aphids will cause shoots and leaves to curl and stop growing which is a big preventative to tree health. Of the diseases bacterial canker gets right into the cambium layer and prevents the flow of sap, while scab and mildew are common problems. Scab appears as black spots on the fruit and whilst it does

not get to the flesh it is unsightly. Bitter pit is much worse making a brown indentation into the fruit not dissimilar to scab but marking the inner flesh as an added nasty side effect.

By pasting the trees we felt the power of the gift of both the compost preparations and the manure. It brought me in mind of time spent in South India where, in Tamil Nadu and indeed throughout the country, a light wash of cow muck is often applied to the earthen walls and floors of dwellings. Mostly on high days and holy days but generally when the place needs cleaning up as well. It is the equivalent of getting a spiritual Hoover out, such is the reverence for the scared cow in Hindu India.

I cannot say whether there was any marked difference the following year to the trees in our orchard but I did feel that it was of great benefit to the life and spirit of the farm and

also great fun. How often does one spend time rubbing the bark of a tree and coming into very close proximity with that being? The trees still thrive and this year, after a very good spring for pollination, we had record crops. ■

Tom Petherick is a gardener and writer living near Totnes in Devon
www.tompetherick.co.uk



All photos © Melanie Eclare

Visiting Biodynamic Initiatives near Wiesbaden

BY JACKIE CROMPTON

In August 2010 it was our good fortune to join with 7 others on the German Biodynamic tour organised and guided by Bernard Jarman, visiting well established centres of excellence in the Biodynamic movement. We rented a cottage in the Taunus hills near Frankfurt and travelled each day to a different project.

The first day we visited the 'Green Goetheanum' designed by Christian Hitsch, Michael Hahn and others. We were met by Michael Hahn and Artur Sarabér who 9 years ago had generously donated the land into a trust. Michael Hahn welcomed us and supplied hot coffee and delicious cake and umbrellas – it was a wet and overcast day.

The plantation is now eight years old and as most trees were planted as three year old saplings it has already formed a beautiful, peaceful, enigmatic enclosure¹. Michael had gone to great lengths to gather the ingredients for the Carbon Preparation – developed by Hugo Erbe 'to enhance the etheric breathing process of the Earth'. The basic ingredients being charcoal made from the seven planetary trees, well sieved guano (bird droppings) and whites of eggs.² We happily stirred buckets of the preparation next to a field with camels and llamas grazing contentedly! This is a project of Artur's daughter where people come to take therapeutic, meditative walks with these beautiful peaceful animals

While we were stirring Michael showed us drawings of oak leaves and how their form differed according to which planet stood in opposition to the moon when the seeds were sown. With Jupiter in opposition, the leaves became rounder while with Saturn they became narrower and more pointed.

After stirring for an hour we returned to the Green Goetheanum and wandered through it spraying the preparation.

Later in the day we took part in an exercise to experience the relationship between the larger and smaller circles of the Green Goetheanum as it was expressed by the positions of the seven planetary trees. We all spread out and stood by a tree in the larger circle then together wove our way through the middle to the corresponding trees on the opposite side of the smaller circle. Each time we met at the crossing point before moving on and outwards again. We repeated this with each tree (pillars in the original building) until we had moved through the entire space.

SCHWALBENHOF - www.schwalbenhof.de

We visited 'Schwalbenhof', the family farm run by Clemens Dorn along with 15 others and 4 trainees/apprentices. The farm has 33 'Simmental' dairy cows and 37 of their offspring. Also pigs, chickens, ducks and a goat who runs with the cows. She is kept as a kind of herd guardian to forewarn the farmer of any pending problems that may occur for in-

stance by contracting any illnesses ahead of the cows before they become a serious hazard. They grow rye, wheat, spelt, potatoes, onions, and for the cows clover, lucerne grass and fodder beet.

We were met by Clemens who gave us an extensive tour and detailed history of the farm. We particularly enjoyed seeing the cows coming home for milking, like a beauty parade, with the girls heading to their stalls labelled with their complementary names-Loretta, Helga, Jasmin and Bella of course, there's always a Bella. Cows looked after biodynamically live approximately 12 years compared to their exhausted sisters in 'conventional' farms who live a sad 3 - 4 years. The cows are groomed regularly. This improves their health and well-being and according to Clemens, helps them to take in nourishment through their skin.

Schwalbenhof takes in groups of about 40 (14-16 year olds) on 14 day farming 'internships'. They arrive from the cities feeling pretty disgruntled and unimpressed but after a short time get into the swing of things. By the end really don't want to leave. After lunch we were given a very informative demonstration and talk by Robert Friedrich the master bee keeper. He favours the 'Langstroth' hive with the deep brood box and longer frames. We have one 'Warré' hive at home which has worked very well (with windows to be able to check if things are OK) but on seeing the ease of checking each frame in the 'Langstroth,' we are thinking of trying out this hive for our next colony. When we asked Robert what was the best thing we can do to help our bees get through the winter, he said 'you have to give your heart'. A series has been filmed for German T.V. entitled 'A year in the life of Schwalbenhof'. It is being shown regularly during the year on SWR. For a write up in German see www.svr.de/schoenemist.

WEINGUT KÜHN -

www.weingutpjkuehn.de

Day 3. We were met and shown round the beautifully kept and managed vineyard by Angela Kühn. Her husband Jakob was at the Wiesbaden Wine Festival. Both of them came from local wine growing families. She led us on a tour of the extensive vineyards, explaining for us with great clarity and knowledge, the art of grape growing. She also told us of their commitment to the biodynamic principles even beyond the certification requirements. After the tour of the immaculately kept vineyards we entered a very stylish wine tasting chamber /meeting place attached to the large villa. We tasted a selection of their white wines and though I personally prefer red, I was very pleasantly surprised. The wines were floral, fresh and fruity and gave a very pleasant lift and inner glow without being too intense before lunch. I was impressed also by the wine glasses hung 'chandelier-like' in a suspended metal rack to save on space. Several members of our party then bought wine to take home with them.



Posing at the stall



Cheese stall at Dottenfelderhof



DOTTENFELDERHOF - www.dottenfelderhof.de

Day 4. What a treat to see this wonderful thriving vibrant community at Dottenfelderhof comprising of approximately 100 residents (including several families), on 170 ha of land. The land has 1,000 year history of agricultural use. The community was established in 1968. The whole time I was there and since then, I see it as the perfect model, of how it is possible for everyone to be able to live in harmony with the planet. We were fortunate to meet with Manfred Klett (a founder) and hear his words of wisdom. He stressed how Biodynamics are so vital to take human beings forward in the next stages of our development – not backward with the blinkered limited scientific views so prevalent.

The courtyard houses the jewel of a bakery, with the old, well maintained, wood burning ovens churning out a variety of delicious breads, pastries and cakes. As well as for the community use, they are sold in the café and in their dream of a small supermarket, which stocks almost every biodynamic and organic quality product you can think of. It is obviously very popular for miles around as they have plans to build an even larger store. This is not to everyone's approval however as a bigger store means more car-parking space means less farmland – but on the plus side access to

biodynamic produce for more people.

The cows here aren't groomed but groom themselves with two car wash style rotating brushes operated by the cows themselves. It was lovely to watch the cows standing around in the courtyard then gently step up to take their turn on the brushes in strict hierarchical order. The dairy has whole fresh (unpasteurised) milk on tap (as did Schwalbenhof), with bottles for customers to help themselves. What a delicious luxury denied to so many. There is of course a warning notice that you have to boil the milk for health and safety!

We were given an enthusiastic tour of the cheese making facility which had ancient cellars where the cheeses were ripened and stored. We sampled a large variety and there was no mistaking their quality.

They also conduct seed research and plant breeding as well as extensive vegetable growing, farming, and fruit growing. When we arrived at Dottenfelderhof we drove down a long lane bordered by a great field of amazingly vibrant vegetables. The farm also grows a range of grains for the bakery and animal feed. They grow their own variety of carrot in large enough quantity to juice and bottle for sale.

►

FORSCHUNGSRING - IBDF -
www.ibdf.de

Day 5. At this well known Institute for Biodynamic Research we were welcomed by Uli Johannes König. He gave a very interesting lecture about the work of the Institute and the many areas of research which have been and continue to be worked on covering a vast range of subjects. This has included the collation of all research carried out on the biodynamic preparations, long term comparative research trials, quality research, plant breeding, soil improvement and many others. There was also a presentation given by Uwe Geier whose specialist area is quality research.

Outside on this first sunny day of our tour, we sat under the trees and had lunch. Uli showed us the Flow Forms used in their research work.

DEMETER INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
www.demeter.net

It was very interesting and encouraging to hear of the many varied Biodynamic Projects worldwide. I was intrigued to see Dominican Republic with 1,386 ha over 246 farms compared to Great Britain with only 107 farms. Anette Jorj told us this was down to one German man's influence working with biodynamic bananas. We were pleased to see Nepal with 101 ha on one farm, and one of their products being incense, of which she gave me a very nice quality sample.

DARMSTÄDTER FORSTBAUMSCHULE -
www.forstbaumschule.com

Just around the corner is the large wooden, light-filled airy building, the offices of this long established biodynamic tree nursery. We were greeted by Paul Oeding who led us upstairs to a stylish comfortable conference room. With a table laden with coffee, cold drinks and a selection of fantastic cakes, Paul talked engagingly about the history, politics, economics and practicalities of this huge tree nursery. He had a selection of interesting saplings in pots, including a specimen of their own 'Resister Elm'. He then took us out for a tour of the vast seedling beds and the large carefully composed compost heaps. Paul told us how they had the contract to supply trees for a shelter belt around the new runway at Frankfurt airport.



BINGENHEIMER SAATGUT -
www.bingenheimersaatgut.de

Day 6. We arrived early to be met by Gephard Rossmannith who invited us to join some of the residents having a going away party. This is a co-operative community and an educational centre for people with special needs. Gephard then gave us an overall presentation before taking us on a tour of the 'state of the art' machinery for seed cleaning, drying and sorting. Then onto the packing and temperature controlled storerooms. Everything is very carefully computerised so that every seed can be traced to be sure that everyone gets what they ordered. Next stop was the laboratory for testing germination and vitality.

After a very good lunch with the community in the dining room of a 14th century castle, Ute Kirchgäesser gave us a tour of the vegetable growing and seed production areas. Bingenheimer Saatgut is one of the largest Biodynamic seed producers in Europe. They grow 10 - 20% of the seeds in the catalogue and network with over 100 seed producers in Germany and other countries.

Ute is doing research into the effects of playing musical intervals to plants. At this stage of her research she is finding distinct and undeniable differences in plants that have been treated with certain intervals and that the same intervals affect different types of plants differently. She believes that with more research it may be possible to use musical intervals in plant breeding to achieve desired traits in plants for size, shape, colour or health benefits.

We then went to see the place where quality testing is carried out. We were given a detailed presentation and shown several examples of results using 'rising pictures' and the crystallisation technique. These show the extra vitality in Biodynamic as compared to organic and especially conventionally grown fruit and vegetables. To me it's excellent proof for the people who need to have 'scientific data', what anyone with experience of quality food products can judge readily with their own senses. ■

To conclude - We found the whole trip to be very interesting and inspiring. Everyone we met involved with Biodynamics shared their knowledge and experiences whole heartedly. We often reflect on the people we met and what we learnt and try to pass on some of this knowledge to others. thank you very much Bernard and everyone involved.

The above tour has been the first one carried out for many years. It was certainly a fascinating experience. If sufficient people are interested I am willing to organise another one next summer. To express interest please send a message to bjarman@biodynamic.org.uk, tel 01453 757436 or write to the office. Bernard Jarman

¹ See article 'The Green Goetheanum Project'

² 'Hugo Erbe's New Biodynamic Preparations' available from BDAA bookstall

The Green Goetheanum Project

BY BERNARD JARMAN

During our trip to Germany in August we visited an unusual planting of trees high up in the hills to the north of Frankfurt. It is known as the 'Green Goetheanum' project and is now eight years old.

THE FIRST GOETHEANUM

The first Goetheanum was a large wooden structure which once stood on the hill above Dornach in Switzerland where the present Goetheanum now stands. It was a building designed and commissioned by Rudolf Steiner in around 1912. Its size and complexity was such that nearly ten years were required to bring it to completion. An army of craftsmen, artists and builders from all over Europe were employed in its creation. The materials needed (mainly high quality building timber) were brought in from all corners of war torn Europe. It was an international effort carried out while the tragedy of the First World War was playing itself out in the trenches. The beauty and significance of this building expressed in its form and structure a profound spiritual message, and a powerful challenge to the all pervasive contemporary materialism. Within its sculpted forms, mural paintings and glass windows it presented the human journey in its spiritual context. Yet, barely two years after it was completed, in December 1922, the whole building went up in flames. The second Goetheanum which was built in its place some years later is an entirely different structure not least since it is built almost entirely out of concrete. Its glass windows (saved from the fire) and the newly painted ceiling of its great hall offer a glimpse of what once briefly lived in the first Goetheanum.

The first Goetheanum was conceived as a building formed with two interlocking cupolas of different sizes. The size ratio between them has the proportion of the golden mean. Interestingly the ratio is the same as that of the two stone circles on the hills above Penmaenmawr in North Wales. The larger space was to serve as the auditorium and the smaller as the stage. These cupolas were supported by beautifully carved wooden pillars – two sets of seven in the larger space and 12 in the smaller. These pillars representing the seven planetary forces were made using wood from the seven planetary trees (see below). Under the large dome one kind of wood was used to make each of the pillars. Under the smaller dome each pillar was composed of two woods – one inside and one surrounding it. Much could be written about the pillars, the space, the murals and indeed the whole building. Suffice to say this building contained hidden within its form many secrets of human and world development. That building is no more but the plans and photos remain to show how it once stood in the landscape on Dornach hill. These can still be viewed and studied.



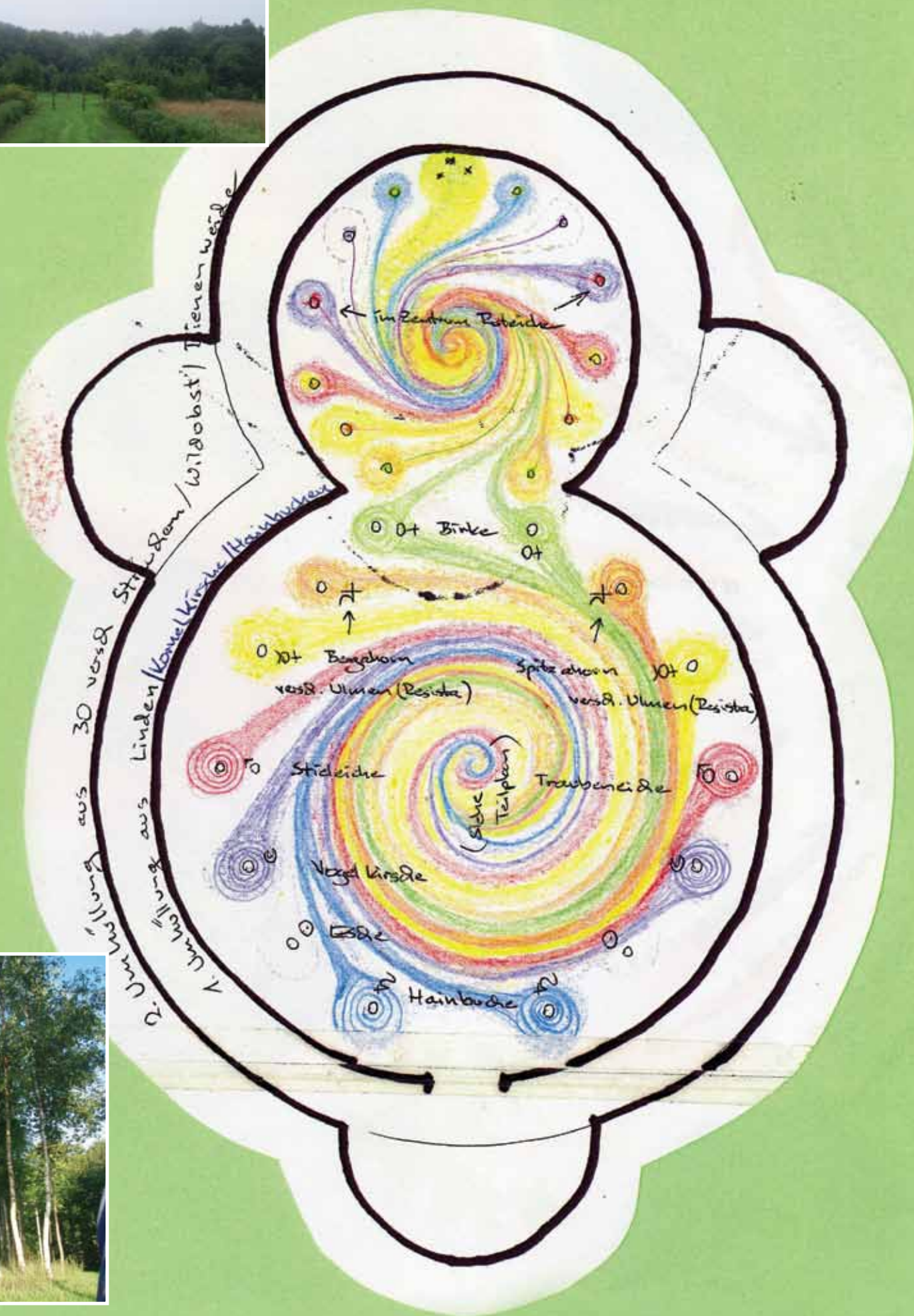
GREEN GOETHEANUM

Some eight or nine years ago the idea was born of creating a living Goetheanum using trees while observing the design principles of the original building. An area of land of approximately one hectare was sought upon which this 'arboretum' could be planted. A suitable site was eventually found high up in the Taunus hills to the north of Frankfurt. The land was purchased by a wealthy benefactor and placed into a trust. Christian Hitsch, an architect who had made a special study of the Goetheanum building, worked together with German-Michael Hahn, a biodynamic forester, to create what will one day become an outdoor 'building' formed by growing trees. The ground plan follows exactly that of the first Goetheanum and its aspect too lies west to east. The walls confining the space are planted with a closely set single line of alternating hornbeam, lime and cherry trees. Beyond it is an outer wall made up of various fruiting trees and bushes. The planetary trees are planted as 'pillars' and spaced exactly as the wooden pillars that once stood within the original building. They will eventually grow over and form a roof. Leading in to the entrance of the larger dome space from the west is a passage hedged on both sides with yew while at the entrance stand two copper beeches.

At the eastern end of the smaller 'stage' space is where in the original building, the sculpture of "The Representative of Man" stood. This sculpture shows the human being poised in a dynamic balance between the powers of Lucifer on the one hand and those of Ahriman on the other. These two beings represent the dual temptations which humanity faces – Lucifer who inspires pride and arrogance and Ahriman who brings fear. In the struggle to resist them the representative of man with divine support maintains and nourishes what is truly human. To represent this sculpture in the planting was very difficult. In the end three trees were chosen to represent something of the archetypal qualities present in these three beings. These qualities form the dynamic of life and are linked to the fundamental polarities of light and dark, warmth and cold. The trees chosen were holly, a bringer of light into a forest and yew, a tree with a continuous dark, still shade. Between them is the elm, the mediator.

When the Goetheanum was built new building techniques had to be researched. It is similar with this planting too. The big challenge in this 'construction' is how to form the pillars in the small dome space. Would it be possible to incorporate the idea of having one type of wood with another surrounding it? The decision was taken to try it. For each 'pillar' six trees have been planted closely together about a metre apart – five of one species surrounding one tree of another species. Will this work, how will they grow together? It remains to be seen but after 7 years and with only a little pruning here and there, it looks promising.

In the immediate surroundings of this 'building' between the outer 'wall' and the perimeter fence (also ►



planted with mostly native flowering and fruiting shrubs), a variety of natural habitats are being developed to encourage wild birds and insects. There are damp shady areas and dryer zones and places where the wind blows strongly. Boundaries between one habitat and another always have the richest diversity and these transitions are being nurtured. The whole is sited on the forest edge and is currently being securely fenced to keep out deer and wild pigs. An adjoining field which also belongs to the trust is planted as a wild flower meadow. Here for added interest two labyrinths have been created. Once the trees are large enough to be safe from wild animals, the intention is for the planting to be open to the public and especially to those walking the European long distance footpath which passes alongside it. The whole site could also one day become a wonderful outdoor theatre venue.

THE SEVEN PLANETARY TREES

Many plants have traditionally been linked to one or more of the seven planets (including sun and moon). This draws on an age old wisdom which could experience the qualities emanating from and connected with the planets. Planets have also been linked to the metals the seven cereals, human organs as well as with trees.

Planet	Trees	Cereals	Organs	Metals	Days of Week
Moon	Cherry	Rice	Brain	Silver	Monday
Mercury	Elm	Millet	Intestines	Mercury	Wednesday
Venus	Birch	Barley	Kidney	Copper	Friday
Sun	Ash	Wheat	Heart	Gold	Sunday
Mars	Oak	Oats	Lungs	Iron	Tuesday
Jupiter	Maple	Rye	Liver	Tin	Thursday
Saturn	Hornbeam	Maize	Spleen	Lead	Saturday

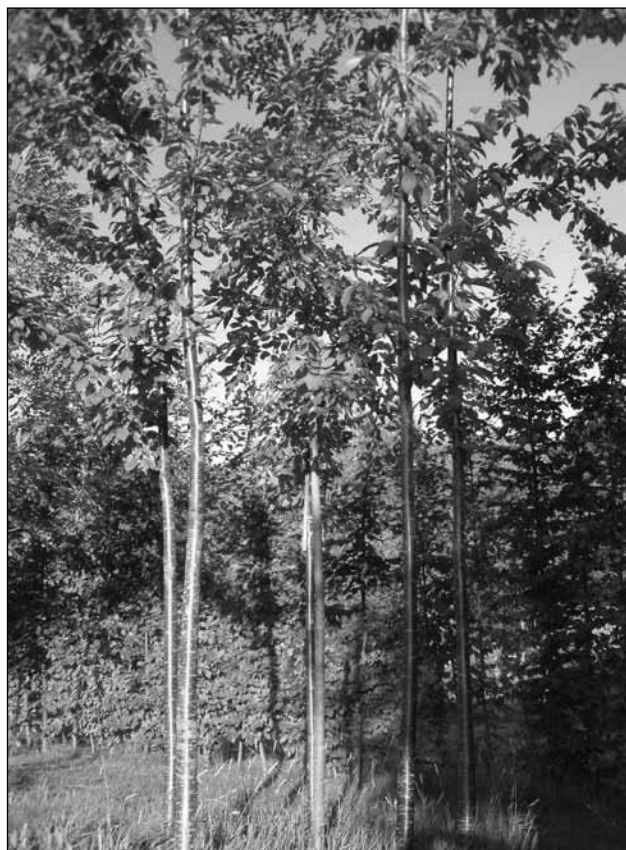
The links between the planets and these specific trees have been verified by Maria Thun and also by Lawrence Edwards. In his research Edwards measured the subtle expansion and contraction of tree buds during the winter. He found that their form changed from being slightly more pointed to being slightly flatter and then back again over a period of one lunar month. He discovered however that it was not determined purely by the lunar rhythm since different trees peaked and flattened at different times each month. After carefully observing the phenomenon for a long period he discovered that the monthly relationship between the moon and particular planets was important. Thus bud movements on the oak corresponded to the Moon's position relative to Mars and those of maple to that of Jupiter. Further investigations showed that the so-called seven planetary trees really did have a clear relationship with those planets. With other trees it was found to be more complex with sometimes two or more planets having an effect. See www.vortexoflife.org.uk

GREEN GOETHEANUM FOR UK?

Several years ago this project was described at the first conference of the biodynamic forestry group. Michael Hahn shared the ideas behind the project and showed drawings. This inspired great interest and a wish by some to visit the planting in Germany. It also led a few years later to the idea; could a similar tree planting happen in the UK? The main conditions for this are:

- Interest and enthusiasm to carry it out and care for the trees
- A site suitable for planting and growing these particular trees
- A piece of land held in trust for perpetuity

A few suggestions have since been made regarding a possible site. It was only having visited the planting in the Taunus that a new idea emerged. Could a Green Goetheanum be planted and developed on Holy Isle close to the Isle of Arran in Scotland? The island is owned by a Tibetan Buddhist centre which appears really keen to bring this idea to realisation. Perhaps by this time next year the trees will be planted.



Manure of cow and horn transform
Through vortex awaken and magic perform
With forces alive the cosmos so strong
The sun takes a bow, planets burst into song.

In Steiner we trust two realms do exist
The fruits of their labour too apparent to resist
Though sharpen we must our power of perception
To encapsulate a vision of organic perfection.

Terrestrial and Cosmic, both forces combine
While earth breathes relief and seasons entwine
The soil is alive with process in place
Best yield most thee favour the smallest of space.

Through waxing and waning the moon takes the stage
Transplanting a force too powerful to gauge
Organic, Dynamic, so complex the need
Simplicities of nature, two realms indeed.

With changing seasons come rain and shower
The harvest in bloom from universal power.
Through Steiner behold this organic birth
The energy of L I F E enriches the earth!

STEPHEN WATSON

INISHFREE - A RESIDENTIAL SMALLHOLDING LOOKING TO GROW BIGGER

INISHFREE is the first anthroposophical community working with people in recovery from addiction. It has been running now for 7 years on a small holding (3 acres) based in Stroud and provides accommodation support and land based activities for up to 9 people. It has been quite a journey for Trustees and Co-workers over these years in its pioneering phase to establish a small farm and social enterprise that is needed to sustain itself in the future. Three years of pioneering prior to opening, secured government funding to provide the programme. However, this funding is continually under threat year on year, and we live with the uncertainty of whether we may be closed down. So the need to expand and grow into a small farm setting is ever greater - that's the bigger vision!

So far we have provided open access (no funding needed for anyone to access our service) for people to come straight from detox into a complete life changing community environment for up to 2 years. Our programme has been pioneering this 'new approach' engaging people in work rhythms and activities

such as horticulture, agriculture, DIY, education in healthy eating, diet and cooking from garden to kitchen growing all our own organic vegetables. Our clients known as Trainees also bake all their own bread, cakes and biscuits. On our small holding we have a very small flock of sheep, 20 or so chickens, 4 ducks and 2 cats! We also provide therapies that accompany the outer journey with the inner one. Counselling and group therapy, Art Therapy, Eurythmy and Massage are woven into daily/weekly life.

While Trainees are with us they can gain skills through all the different activities that help to build up their confidence while discovering new meaning and purpose in their lives, that may not have been there before. This can enable people to find independence from drugs and alcohol addiction long after they have left, our success rates have been very good and even better than other forms of rehabilitation.

Our team endeavours to provide a 'feeling of home' at Inishfree while Trainees are with us, where time plays a key role in the healing process, digesting difficult and painful past events and supporting them to rebuild their lives. Some people have stayed a few months and others much longer, recognising their own longer term need of community life, that is safe, supportive and has a future. It is for this reason that we need to expand

onto a small farm with more flexible accommodation that can accommodate those people who see themselves living community life perhaps indefinitely. We want to reach those people who fall through the net and, more often than not relapse and cannot find anywhere for long enough to support their longer term need, if not lifetime need to live in a safe community.

The horticultural/agriculture element is fundamental to the ongoing success of Inishfree as a drug and alcohol free community, as well as the further development of Inishfree as a model of rural diversification in an area that has been in agricultural and economic decline for some considerable time. For example, Trainees have supported local farmers with lambing and general farm labour, such as ditch digging, fence repairs, hedge cutting and building. This has proven very successful saving farmers money and giving Trainees real work experience. We now have a Shepherdess (Trainee Graduate) who is passionate about animal husbandry who oversees the land, movement of animals and sheep shearing in times of need. This is where Inishfree can make a real difference in the local farming community and where Trainees have an experience of contributing on a broader scale - it's a win win all around.

The problem we face in our present

location is twofold. Having established that the local farming community have a real need for our support, we are struggling to provide it! The property we have can only house up to 8/9 Trainees and no possibility of a move on, on site. So we can only offer one or two people at any one time to a local farmer, otherwise it has too much of an impact on the daily running at Inishfree. Also, Trainees need to be stable enough to go on work placements which can take up to six months.

Inishfree needs to find bigger premises with land and outbuildings to increase flexible independent accommodation to develop its vision through a Community Farm and Social Enterprise. We want to set up workshops in carpentry, bakery, craft shop and cafe, as training facilities for both Trainees and the wider community. All our Trainees have the potential to become entrepreneurs when given time and scope to rediscover or discover for the first time hidden passions and talents.

If you are a farmer/landowner and could provide land and buildings or possibilities of self build projects for agricultural use, or could be of any help please contact Lyn Townsend 01453873624 or email enquiries@inishfree.org.uk.

Lauriston Farm – *‘This is a place of worship’*

BY RICHARD SWANN



Lauriston Farm near Goldhanger in Essex, lies under the wide open skies of the Blackwater Estuary. There the land is flat and open to the strong south westerly winds which shape the nature and the farming methods. ▶





The estuary is a valued wildlife habitat area and is known for its particular plant species and sea birds. The main economic activities are traditionally fishing and oysters. Today, however, one can see that the surrounding farms are mostly arable growing such crops as wheat and maize.

The farm is based around an old farmhouse and comprises a large headland of reclaimed salt marsh, which was won from the sea some five and half centuries ago. All the farmed land is enclosed within the bounds of the old sea wall. Some of the land also extends out to some of the small salt marsh islands and sand spits.

Spencer Christy has been farming this land since 2004, even though the land was purchased by his parents in 1993. He wanted to use organic methods from the beginning and was especially taken by biodynamics since a chance meeting in Costa Rica several years previous. This year, 2010, the land officially finished its biodynamic conversion and is now 100% Demeter certified. It is a fact of which he is justifiably proud. Even though there is organic farming activity in the area, he is the only biodynamic farmer.

There are 225 acres of mostly grassland, 25 acres of which is still rough marsh sea meadows. It is quite clear which is which as you stumble across it with the reclaimed land being more level than the rough. These hillocks provide the only variation in what is otherwise a very flat landscape.

The stock do not look out of place in this wind-swept landscape. He has chosen hardier animals that usually have their home in Scotland. All the animals he keeps are rare breeds which he feels suit the challenging winds.

There are around 70 North Ronaldsay ewes who are kept company by 3 Shetlands. They look very resplendent with their very distinctive horns and beautiful brown, black and grey fleeces.

The cattle are also a Shetland type, some of which looked very proud of their very long, impressive horns. These are raised mostly for beef production. Whilst I was visiting four were in calf.

The chickens are Black Rock layers and are four years old.

As well as animals he has also been growing vegetables for the past five years, but finding it too much Spencer decided to give it a break and concentrate his efforts on the animals. The land is also a haven for wild fruits such as rosehips, sloes and blackberries and one day he would like to take commercial advantage of that by making juices and jams to sell at the local market.

He has however some beehives and so sells honey at the local market in Maldon along with meat and eggs.

Apart from farming Spencer is also at heart an educationalist and is developing facilities for visitors to see and experience a working biodynamic farm. When I visit in late summer he had already hosted 26 groups all of which

heard about the farm by word of mouth. He does not advertise his farm tours apart from the annual Blackwater country show.

He shows me a building, which he is developing, into a meeting space for school children. This will be completed by Christmas. As well as that one of his dreams is to develop a small Waldorf kindergarten/school on site. He feels it is important that children can be educated on a farm setting.

Spencer is a local Essex boy having been born in nearby Maldon but also spent some time in Jamaica. He studied Environmental Science at University of East Anglia before setting off on his travels again. These took him to Costa Rica where he met a Belgian man who told him about biodynamics, which inspired him and set him off on his current path.

He is also a very deep thinking person with strong spiritual principles. One source of his inspiration are the Quaker meetings that he has attended since childhood. He is interested in religions and studied Rastafarianism whilst in Jamaica.

He lights up when I ask him what are the main motivations for him as a farmer. He tells me that three things come to the top:

1. To see the whole farm as an organism.
2. The importance of meditation as part of the farmers daily practise
3. Practical work – he likes to do things

Spencer is very convinced by the biodynamic approach to farming. From the very first time he sprayed the horn manure preparation 500 he could feel the change in the elemental world. He feels the Biodynamic Preparations make a stronger connection to the land. He cites the Three Kings 'mantram' This is a place of worship'. A driving force and a major part of his vision is to demonstrate to neighbours an alternative way of farming.

He has never trained in biodynamics and feels the need to develop his biodynamic knowledge and so this year has enrolled as an apprentice on the Diploma Apprentice Scheme. He was also elected to the Biodynamic Association Council this autumn and will be involved with the work at the Biodynamic College.

Financially things are a bit tight. He thinks it is because people do not realise the value of the produce from rare breed animals. He hopes it will start to make a profit next year. His meat is slowly getting a name locally with sales in the local pub being a recent activity.

If you are in the area Spencer assures a good welcome and would be happy to show you around. ■

Contact: Spencer Christy Tel: **01621 788348**;
email: spencer@thewaterboatman.co.uk

Biodynamic Sanctuary— *growing your own in central London*

BY RICHARD SWANN

Not too far from the busy Hampstead Station and High Street in London is a ‘secret garden’. It is a magical space with its own special nature and atmosphere. Entering it is like stepping into a painting by Henri Rousseau, with its richness of foliage, eccentricity and artefacts. It is there that Allan Jenkins and Howard Sooley from the Observer have been working their allotment for the past four years.

Allan is the editor of the Observer Food Magazine and together with photographer Howard has been bitten by the bug to ‘grow their own’. In doing so they decided not only to work it organically but also to use biodynamic practices. The inspiration to do so came from two directions.

Allan had for many years been buying his vegetables from Jane Scotter from Fern Verron in Herefordshire, who runs a biodynamic fruit and vegetable stall at Borough Market and Tower Bridge. Their quality and taste impressed him, so it became obvious to grow their own vegetables biodynamically. Jane also encouraged him to treat the soil with “the best care it deserved”.

Early on in the project the Seed Ambassadors (<http://seedambassadors.org>) visited the garden. This is a travelling project from Oregon, USA, that travels around the world teaching about and encouraging seed saving. Their visit was also a further incentive to use biodynamic methods. As Allan explains, “*Biodynamics gives us more than we originally thought so we have stuck by it. We have been careful to follow the (sowing) calendar and use the (biodynamic) sprays. We have been able to see the benefits to the soil, which has a vibrancy to feed. We can feel the benefits in the food*”.

Equally important they also share their experiences on the Observer Allotment Blog. There they post stunning pictures and offer seasonal notes (as well as tips from invited experts) on the garden. As Allan says, the aim is to share experiences with other allotment enthusiasts and not to set themselves up as an authority. They receive comments and contributions from as far away as Thailand and Australia.

The actual plot is very unassuming and quite small, but it has provided a rich harvest. For two years they worked adjoining plots before being asked two years ago to part share with Mary who needed some extra help. This they took on willingly and one could see quite clearly the fruits of the season’s labour and joy.

When I visit in late summer, the year’s work is coming to an end with the last colourful Borlotti beans gently maturing in the late summer warmth. Allan tells me had I arrived the week before I would have seen their first homegrown tomatoes, of which they are very proud.

As I can witness (and

as you can see if you visit their blog), colour plays a very important part. It brings a nice energy to the garden and helps the children to connect with it. “*Every year we have done it has been such a joy – a revelation of colour. That in turn helps the food and tastes better for it*”, says Howard.

The land, on which the allotments have been developed, once belonged to a large house. It was ‘the dump’ full of broken glass and housed a Nissan hut. Now it is a sanctuary where bankers, retired gardeners and journalists can co-exist and find sanity with the foxes and kestrels. The high surrounding trees reverently bend over to protect the space. At one moment I look up and see a plane heading east from Heathrow. Somehow it seemed to be from another time.

“*This is an antidote to the pressures of working on a national newspaper. It reminds me of the seasons. When I first came here the first thing I encountered was a fox. It was so exciting!*” says Allan. “*There is lots of nature here such as owls and newts. In fact there are newts living in the cow pat pit we made*”.

The whole allotment site with its 29 plots has been dedicated to organic means since the beginning 22 years ago. It is managed by Camden Council. There was a 40-year waiting list for a place, but that has now closed.

You may wonder where such a garden gets its fertility from, especially when the nearest farm must lie outside the M25 corridor. I was proudly shown their mature heap that was made from manure from Roger Pauli’s biodynamic farm in Staffordshire. As you can read on the blog, this was ceremoniously dug into the garden in late October:

“*But the afternoon is all about manure of the non-green kind. Proper prepped muck from Roger Pauli’s glamorous pedigree cows on his biodynamic farm in Stourton, Staffordshire. Truthfully, we haven’t turned the manure as much as we would have liked. It was heavy, hot and stinky in the summer with its own cloud of persistent flying things, so there is still more straw in it than is ideal. But the acidic fog surrounding around it has gone and the heap’s alive with speedy little pinky-red worms that quickly disappear when exposed to the sun. Around fifteen or so barrowloads later – one for every square metre or so, but who’s counting – we have a rich mulch to add heat and worms and nutrients to the soil. Howard and I stand back satisfied and take in our afternoon’s work. It is good to get hot and sticky (and not just with manure) on a cool sunny day, and it is even better to give something meaningful back to the land.*” (Monday 25 October 2010 12.29 BST)

Both Howard and Allan love to drop by the garden on the way to and from their work as well as weekends. Early mornings are very special. “*Sometime I come here around dawn and just sit and commune with the space*”, says Allan. He also says how joyful ▶



Allan and Howard taking a break in the garden. Picture: © Richard Swann

it is to spray the Biodynamic silica preparation (501) at 5.30 a.m. on a summer's morning. Children often help out and especially enjoying stirring and spraying the Preparations, *"It is so natural to them"*.

They reckon on spraying the Preparations three to four times a year and find the Three Kings Preparation very special and regard it as an acknowledgment to the earth. He elaborates: *"We enjoy stirring the Biodynamic Preparations in their own right – it is very like yoga – very meditative"*.

The garden is also a community endeavour and thus about sharing. The vegetables are shared out amongst welcoming family and friends. People on the site helps each other out and the tools are kept in a communal shed. It is a

community where everyone knows each other and willingly offers advice, and exchange plants and surpluses. So important is the social aspect that next to their garden they have a small table with some chairs, that would not look out of place in a French bistro, where people can sit, drink coffee, share tips and muse on the wonders of the timeless space they are in.

So how is that with their colleagues back at the office? Doesn't it smell a bit of muck and magic? *"Well", explains Allan, "they are open minded and we are very matter of fact about it"*. And that is how biodynamics should be perceived in the world today. ■

To join in the fun go to the Observer Organic Allotment

Blog: www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/allotment

**OBSERVER
ORGANIC
BLOG**



© Howard Sooley

BIODYNAMICS IN PRACTICE - LIFE ON A COMMUNITY OWNED FARM

Tom Petherick and Will Heap

Published: Rudolf Steiner Press, November 2010

ISBN: 1855842505. 128 pages

£20 (available from Biodynamic Association web shop)

Review by **Laurence Dungworth**

Tom Petherick and Will Heap have come up with a real gem here. Their book, *Biodynamics in Practice - Life on a Community Owned Farm*, is one of immense beauty, thanks largely to Will's sumptuous photography, meaning it must be a joy to leaf through (unfortunately I have had to review a virtual copy of the book). However, once you actually start to read the text you become aware of not only the beauty in the words, but also the depth, meaning and feeling that they are imbued with. Tom has used a very personal style, relating his own recent experience with biodynamics and his connection to Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch - the two farms that are the centre of this book. However he has not shied away from his stated aim of attempting to show 'how they are different from organic farms and why the difference is important'. This is the old chestnut that all biodynamic practitioners and supporters wrestle with whenever in conversation with those new to biodynamics: how to encapsulate the real and important differences in such a way that the other person does not question your sanity. Sometimes it works, sometimes not, but Tom focuses the discussion on the salient point:

'Yet organic growing does not venture beyond a view of the physical world as governed entirely by quantifiable, physical processes'. He then spends a good amount of time showing what this actually means in practice in biodynamics, while often admitting that there is much more and it is 'beyond the scope of this book'.

This is fair enough, as this is not set out to be a 'How you should practice biodynamics', but rather as a 'How they practice biodynamics'. The 'they' are Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch farms, near Forest Row, in Sussex and three-quarters of the book is dedicated to them, their history, their diversity, their working together, their hopes. Through the wonderful photography and Tom's insightful text we are really able to meet the farmers who have carried such strong vision through to reality. We meet the stock, that enable the farms to exist in so many different ways - the MRI and Sussex cattle, the Lleyn sheep, the pigs (Tablehurst's own crosses), the poultry, the bees. And maybe most importantly, we meet the teams that put all this into practice and create 'inclusive and transparent' centres for the wider community. In the pictures we see endless faces full of joy and dedication. Some we see a few times and others just once - playing in a band, collecting eggs, around the table, in the dairy, in the field... and so many of them. This is a wonderful representation of a pair of farms created through community endeavour so that a 'consciousness of the farms and their place in the locality and community can grow as a sustaining, nurturing awareness in which all participate'. Long may it last. ■



**'A MODERN QUEST
FOR THE SPIRIT'**
Ehrenfried Pfeiffer

Published by Mercury Press 2010
£12.99

Reviewed by **Alan Brockman**

A translation by Henry Goulden of 'Ein Leben fur den Geist' by Thomas Meyer, Perseus Verlag, Basel, 1999. It should be noted that Pfeiffer's Autobiography was written in English after settling in the U.S.A.

For those interested in biodynamic farming and gardening and its background this book will be most welcome. Dr Pfeiffer is probably best known for his book 'Soil Fertility Renewal and Preservation' originally published under the title 'Biodynamic Farming and Gardening'. He was one of the early pioneers in developing the ideas and suggestions of Rudolf Steiner for better agricultural practice based on a deeper understanding of the forces of life involved. In the scientific realm Pfeiffer's contribution to the development of sensitive crystallisation testing, as described in his books 'Formative Forces in Crystallization, and 'Studies of Formative Forces in Crystallizations' has led to pioneering research in both medicine and nutrition'

The book itself is divided into sections:

An introduction by Thomas Meyer followed by

Part 1 The Memoirs of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer

Part 2 From Pfeiffer's Letters

Part 3 Personal Memories of Pfeiffer

It gives an inspiring account of life-long dedication to the development and application of biodynamic ideas. The fact of Pfeiffer's personal connection and mentoring by Rudolf Steiner for his studies brings a glimpse of the warm humanity out of which this radical new approach to agricultural problems has sprung.

The introduction by Thomas Meyer gives a wide ranging overview of the situation into which Pfeiffer was born, on the very day when Kali Yuga (a 5000 year period of spiritual darkness according to occult teachings) ended - Feb 19th 1899. Meyer himself compiled the original German book 'Ein Leben fur den Geist' from Pfeiffer's autobiographical memoirs and his articles on; etheric research and nutrition, the etherisation of the blood, the function of the heart. It includes supplements by Lexie Ahrens and Paul Scharff, M.D. Meyer's introduc-

tion is already a short biography in itself and contains many insights into relationships within the anthroposophical society. This life lived in both Europe and the U.S.A. was full of intense activity, spiritual training and research and ended in 1961.

Any autobiography allows us to see life from the perspective of the author in a unique way. The author himself becomes the subject and so we are allowed in this book to come into a close connection with the inspiring forces behind the drive and enthusiasm which Pfeiffer brought to his work. Many insights point to the strong desire to let the phenomena themselves show relationships rather than working from hypotheses and conjecture.

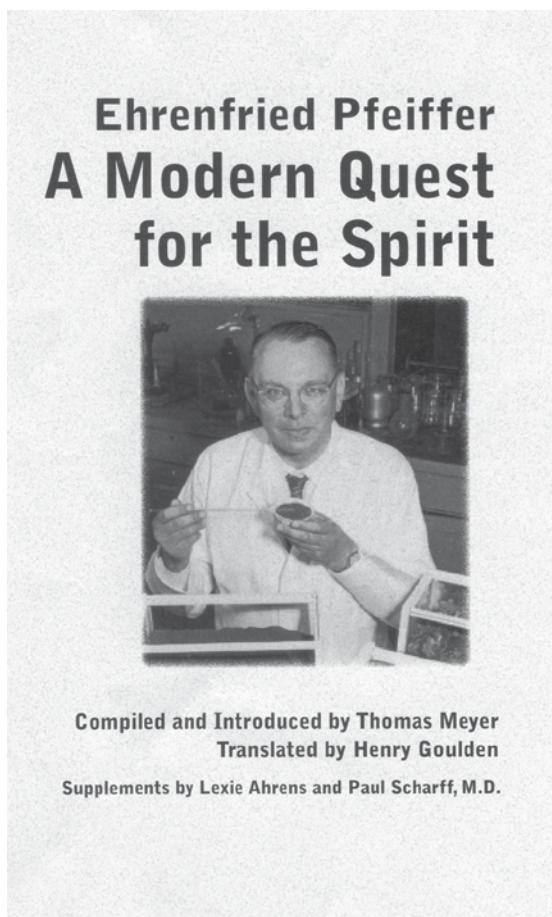
Pfeiffer's own account is written partly in a very modest third person style. His childhood was a difficult one. His health prevented normal activities and led to much time alone with nature. He had a very independent view of others judging them in a manner based on how he experienced their true being. He had an extremely good ear for music and the inner nature of beings and as he had the capacity to read other's thoughts his respect for them, including most of

his teachers was not high. This did not always endear him to others. It was only through the humanness of Dr Rittlemeyer that he found some balance in the duality in which, at the age of confirmation, he was living.

This was a duality of the outside; - the world of technology, the intellectual fascination developing into a cold direct feeling less analytical observation and the inside, the soul-life of feeling, of dreams, of ideals, living with natural forces and beings later known to him as the spiritual and elementary worlds, 'about which one could never speak to anybody.' He lived in a world protected from outer things at that time, 'in pure innocence' as he describes it.

At 14 or 15 his health improved and he developed an interest in experimenting with electricity and magnetism. This led to a study in electrotechnics after school. At 14 his mother remarried, Herr Binder, both had become keen followers of

Rudolf Steiner leaving Pfeiffer greater independence. At 18 life changed and he quitted school and worked in a machine factory becoming a toolmaker. This led to an awareness of problems of labour, about Socialism and Communism etc. Being drafted into the army he experienced the ravages of war and had a life changing experience during a fatally dangerous situation, which he describes, and comments, 'From this experience streams forth all that which I am and became...' At the time he was not clear as to its meaning.



'When I met Rudolf Steiner for the first time, he said. "O, wir kennen uns ja schon lange" (O, we have already known one another for a long time.)' An enigmatic remark only understood later. Music played an important role and led him on. He makes some significant comments on sounds and listening- creative silence. In 1919 Pfeiffer started his study in electrotechnics and physics and attended a lecture by Dr Carl Unger 'About Courageous Thinking'. This led to an intense study of Steiner's 'The Philosophy of Freedom' followed by his 'Knowledge of Higher Worlds' and other books. Now attending all possible lectures by Steiner he found it hard to relate to those who only philosophize. . Already then, and more so later, what counted for him was what was spoken out of experience rather than theories that are constructed.

The lectures on the Threefold Social Order were a great revelation since one could see that something could actually be done with these ideas. In summer 1919 Pfeiffer was personally introduced to Rudolf Steiner which was followed by the words quoted above. It was only years later that the meaning of these words dawned on him- that this was at a level not concerned with physical acquaintance. In Autumn 1919 Pfeiffer arrived in Dornach and was offered the task to arrange stage lighting for 'The Goetheanum'. An inspiring description of the aims for a new approach to stage lighting and the problems involved throw light also on many aspects of life there.

Destiny led Pfeiffer to a close relationship with Steiner, his mentor, which allowed him to be present and supportive at perhaps one of the most critical points in Steiner's life - the burning of the Goetheanum building in Dornach -Switzerland which embodied many new artistic impulses and was intended to be, and is in its rebuilt form, the centre for the whole of Steiner's work. The account of disappointment when Steiner always spoke to him about nutrition and related fields instead of more esoteric matters pointed to the fact that Pfeiffer's life's destiny had already been acknowledged and his studies were guided with this in mind. The importance of this preparation for Pfeiffer's later work and bio-dynamics which is only now becoming more widely appreciated, is immense. The whole question of proper nutrition -of attention to the living forces contained in food, and the understanding of how to enhance these is becoming an ever bigger one.

Pfeiffer brings some very interesting facts about the movement of substances in the body. Salt can appear even in tips of the hair after only a minute! This cannot be explained in ordinary natural scientific terms. One cannot thrive on junk food, a very basic observation but widely disregarded till now when an epidemic of obesity highlights the fact. The accumulation of fat in the body inhibits its dynamics and slows down the life processes being one of the problems of ageing. Rudolf Steiner is quoted as saying that the fat in the body forms a wall against the 'spiritual'. Another reason to slim! In Pfeiffer's article in the book 'We experienced Rudolf Steiner' again we have Steiner's comment that the problem of nutrition must be solved before it is possible to affect spiritually the etheric impulses in man, to transform them into action. This transforming of ideas into action was the fundamental keynote of Pfeiffer's life. His desire to let the phenomena of his researches teach him

the truth by observation only served to complete what he had from the spiritual insights of Rudolf Steiner, which he did not use as a hypothesis.

Regarding experimental work this was performed with the backing of nature forces. They helped but not with the intention of proving the existence of a hidden world of life forces but to lead to further development of imaginative cognitive forces so these nature forces - beings could be directly experienced and worked with. This hidden support allowed ideal conditions to arise for the first attempts to develop sensitive crystallisation methods where the joint efforts of Pfeiffer and his co-worker Erika Sabarth's, with her very sensitive fingertip feeling', 'chanced', as later proved, on the very best arrangement to demonstrate formative forces. Many were wanting his work to prove in a materialistic sense, that there is a hidden world of etheric forces. Such proof would negate human freedom. It can only come for each one of us out of our own experience through developing higher faculties. This was made clear to Pfeiffer by a 'delegation of spiritual beings' as he had to describe it.

The whole process of digestion formed an important aspect of his work. This led on to work on protein, the building blocks of life. It showed that an enhancement in the protein content of wheat could be attained. Biodynamic wheat was shown to have protein of a very high quality. Aberration in protein formation is the cause of much ill health including mad cow disease! A further stimulus to support biodynamic development worldwide. Composting and the development of town waste composting led to possible large scale operations which were hindered by setbacks. The field sprays and 'compost starter, were developed in this connection.

Radioactivity and its use was a great concern and his calculations showed that within 3000 years, without any further atomic explosions, life would become impossible on earth. This points to the destructive nature of these anti-life forces. We have to develop powerful creative forces to ensure mankind's future.

Further interests concerned the wider significance of heart forces and the etherisation of the blood. This is particularly interesting for those with wider concerns for the future where it is shown that a fifth chamber of the heart is in process of development. (see 'New View' Summer 2010) The heart is a world organ! Perhaps heart warmth is the driving force behind all our work on the land and garden! Two of Pfeiffer's own colour pictures of the heart in 'systole' and 'diastole' are included.

In the section on his letters Pfeiffer's connection with Rosicrucianism is touched upon with some insights into the thoroughness with which he pursued the subject. Many other insights into Pfeiffer's spiritual experiences are mentioned. Further thoughts on Johannine Christianity and his own experiences have to be read at a quiet time; sacred and not profane, as he requests.

The personal memories include those of Paul W. Scharff, in which the view of Dr. R. Swinburne Clymer (a physician and leading Rosicrucian occultist,) is quoted namely that Pfeiffer had not received the recognition that he should within the anthroposophical movement and that he had managed a self unfolding for the good of mankind which surpassed anyone he, Swinburne, knew. Light is ►

thrown on the attacks upon Steiner and the intention not to kill but to discredit his work by imposing incapacity. As an appendix a tribute which appeared in the 'Sir Albert Howard Memorial' Issue of the Organic Gardening Magazine in 1948 shows Pfeiffer's regard for this other great pioneer and his hard fight for recognition of the life in the soil.

This book widens the perspective into the dangers facing us and the urgency of working consciously with life forces. It allows the reader to become aware of the true greatness of this selfless pioneer in the work of furthering our knowledge of our relationship to the earth and its fruits. That this is of fundamental importance for the continuance of our life on earth cannot be overstated. That humanity is under attack from opposing forces demands that we wake up to the dangers of inaction. Readers will find how Pfeiffer set about bringing the spiritual ideas behind bio-dynamics into practice.

The growing sense of responsibility for the earth and nutrition that has developed since Pfeiffer's time reinforces the value of his work. This book is a challenge to the English speaking world and brings a question- a quest -for each one of us - How can I be active?

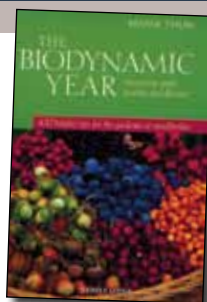
The book is well referenced with a bibliography, name reference and copious helpful footnotes with relevant dates. Our thanks go out to those who have made it possible for this English translation to be available. ■

THE BIODYNAMIC YEAR

Maria Thun

Published by Temple Lodge Press, 2010
ISBN 9781906999148 £14.99

This book is becoming something of a 'classic' and has been reprinted. It is a very handy and practical book that is based on Maria Thun's 50 years of research. It makes a great gift for both the newcomer as well as the more experienced gardener.

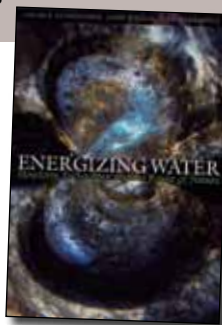


ENERGISING WATER

Jochen Schwuchow, John Wilkes and Iain Trousdell

Published by Sophia Books, 2010
ISBN 9781855842403 £14.99

A concise but very informative and scientific outline of flowform research work. It draws on 40 years of research work and shows the inspiring ideas that lie behind the development of flowforms as well as the results of more recent research. It comes in a nicely presented format with plenty of illustrations and pictures.



MONTY WALDIN'S BIODYNAMIC WINE GUIDE 2011: A Guide to the World's Biodynamic and Organic Vineyards

Published by Monty Waldin
ISBN: 978-0956667809
600 pages £35.00

This is Monty Waldin's second Biodynamic Wine Guide (the first was published back in 2004) and once again is an invaluable source of information on all aspects of biodynamic wines compiled by the leading authority on the subject.

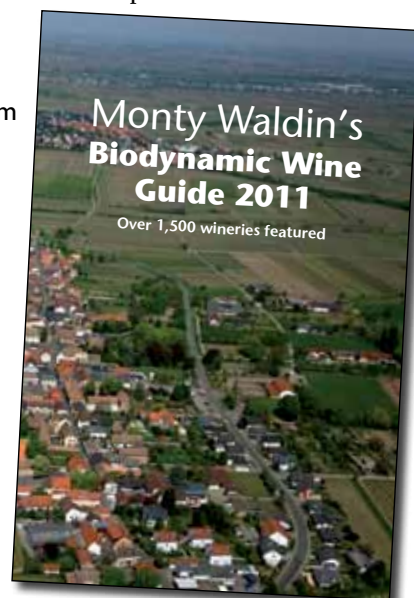
Wine is usually defined by its colour, style, or origin - rarely by how it is grown or made. This book explains what makes biodynamic winemaking so distinct from conventional and organic methods.

It is more than just a wine book because the first section (about a quarter of the book) goes into great depth in easy to understand language about the origins of biodynamics and Rudolf Steiner's influence and moves on to the biodynamic preparations and composts. He also covers other biodynamic sprays and teas with explanations about dynamising, celestial rhythms and Demeter biodynamic and organic certification before focusing very specifically on biodynamics in vine growing and winemaking. This section certainly has a more hands-on feel than Monty's first book, probably because of his experience in his biodynamic vineyards in France. There is also an interesting chapter about drinking biodynamic wines and what to expect.

The second part of the book offers in-depth profiles of over 1,500 of the world's bona fide certified biodynamic producers as well as certified organic wineries practicing biodynamic principles. There are also a handful of wineries who are certified organic and don't practice biodynamic principles but who Monty feels are the likeliest biodynamic wineries of tomorrow. Each winery has their contact details, biodynamic certification, details of the vineyard location and grape varieties and any notable comments about specific wines or winemaking practices.

This book will appeal to wine lovers interested in biodynamic principles as well as to wine professionals needing hard facts about biodynamics, and which wineries are doing it. I personally found Monty's first book an invaluable bible and am delighted it has been updated. ■

Jane Christy
Pageant Wines Ltd
www.pageantwines.com



THE BEE-FRIENDLY BEEKEEPER - A Sustainable Approach by David Heaf

Published by Northern Bee Books, 14 September 2010
ISBN: 978-1-904846-60-4
Paperback, 170 x 244 mm, 160 pages
80 colour illustrations and 16 line drawings
£25.00 post paid

Reviewed by **John Haverson**

This substantial book sheds refreshing new light on modern beekeeping.

In recent years I have been struggling to reconcile much of my conventional beekeeping and its adverse effect on bees. On occasions I have voiced my opinions that all was not right; these have often been met by calls of disapproval, as well as conflict with fellow beekeepers; sometimes there has been a glimmer of support. David Heaf offers an insight into the area of agricultural ethics applied to beekeeping. This describes a range of attitudes towards bee husbandry, all of which are acceptable, depending on the free and informed choice of the individual.

To inform this choice, Heaf examines bee husbandry against the natural requirements of the honeybee.

Initially, he focuses on the provision of healthy living conditions for bee colonies; essentially, shelter, seclusion and sustenance. In these areas he discusses the importance of retaining nest heat and atmosphere; non-intrusion into the comb structure and the availability of a nutritious, varied diet. Later coverage of disease and pests examines the impact of chemicals, not only on pests and pathogens but on the bees, beneficial microbes and human beings. The chapter on breeding and making increase examines various options, one of which is artificial queen breeding. The long term impact of this practice, with relatively few breeding

stocks, raises risks of in-breeding and reduced genetic diversity which may already be affecting honeybee populations.

The hive favoured by the author is the Warré hive, which offers optimum functionality and requires minimum intervention; its design principles can be traced back to 1677. In his coverage of the hive, Heaf provides a modern supplement to Warré's book, translated as 'Beekeeping for All', which will assist beekeepers to manage the hive. This includes a number of modifications in use by beekeepers in different countries and climates, as well as drawings of hive parts to enable self build.

David Heaf has an impressive pedigree. He is a Doctor of Biochemistry, a long time biodynamic gardener and architect and manager of the Warré Beekeeping website. In the last four years, besides managing the web site and mentoring a growing e-forum, he has provided articles for magazines around the world, translated a couple of beekeeping books into English and written this book. He has also found time to build and populate a dozen Warré hives as well as manage, in total, some twenty bee colonies. His zeal and energy impresses me as does his eye for meticulous detail. He insists that any beekeeping comment, if not personal experience, is supported by evidence, preferably peer reviewed scientific papers.

This book is a significant piece of work. It logically challenges much of current bee husbandry; at the same time it enriches the reader with a deeper understanding of the honeybee nature. For those who decide to follow a bee-friendly path, it offers substantial practical advice; much of which has been gleaned from worldwide beekeepers.

The book is printed in an easy to read font on good quality paper with colour photographs throughout to illustrate text. The use of pictures taken by beekeepers around the world gives a tremendous feel of group ownership. ■

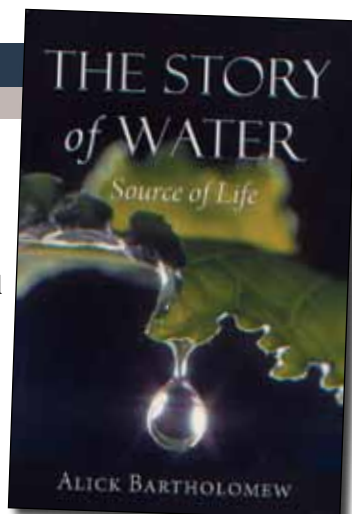
John Haverson - Andover and Hampshire
Beekeeper Associations



THE STORY OF WATER Alick Bartholomew

Published by Floris Books, 2010
ISBN 9780863157387 **£12.99**

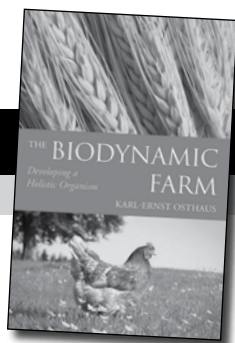
A rich tapestry that describes the story of water from its many aspects and appearances. It explores the cycles and circulations of water and its importance for life. It helps give a deeper appreciation of water so that we can give it the respect it deserves. The book starts with a lovely meditation.



THE BIODYNAMIC FARM

Karl-Ernst Osthaus

Published by Floris Books 2010
Reviewed by **Spencer Christy**
ISBN: 978-0863157669
£7.99



This beautiful, simple book takes the reader on an intimate journey with the author as he shares some of his experiences of developing and running a Biodynamic farm. One is struck immediately in the opening chapter entitled, 'The Wider Background' of his compassion towards producing food that truly nourishes the human as well as his love of the practical work involved. He also makes clear the link between the wider cosmos, the whole spiritual world and agricultural activities. This theme runs through the entire book and one is continually reminded that, despite the materialistic trends in food production, farmers cannot work in isolation from these influences.

Indeed, one gains a sense that the importance of linking the entire holding to the wider cosmos is absolutely key to producing a healthy farm. In chapter two, 'Perspectives for Farming', very clear, practical advice is given on three key aspects – animals, hedges and insect life. It is here, and only here, that he gives actual numbers of cows (twelve), horses (four), pigs (six), sheep (ten) and hens (one hundred and twenty) for a holding of sixty hectares split evenly between grassland and farmland.

In the following chapter entitled, 'Farm Animals' he makes clear that the actual numbers depend on many factors, especially soil type and the interrelationships of the farm animals. For example, "The amount of waste accumulating on the farm determines the number of pigs" (p.46).

In this chapter one starts to feel the author's attention to detail in the care of his animals, most notably that of the new born calf.

There are two startling pages showing images of crystallized milk samples from cows with horns and cows that have been dehorned. Images from the latter demonstrate "degenerative processes" and "that a region of the animal's body is not fully integrated" (p.41). A clear, heartfelt understanding is used to explain the causes of the inferior milk quality from an industrial, dehorned cow.

The next chapter entitled 'Wildlife' focuses on insects, birds and life within the soil – bacteria, earthworms and moles. As in all the chapters, spiritual aspects run alongside the material with seamless ease.

'Fields and pastures' is the subject of the following chapter in which very considered advice is given on the application of the horn manure and horn silica sprays. There is also a clear demonstration of the benefits of permanent meadows and pastures compared to temporary ones – "Natural meadows and pastures are most valuable...it was formerly regarded as sinful folly to plough up old pastures for temporary tillage" (p.59). However, the attention given to the question, "Should I plough or should I work without ploughing?" (p.63) excited me most. In summary, soil needs to be 'moved' to enable them to gather cosmic forces. Ploughs can be used, but ancient ploughing "never consisted of turning the soil, only mixing it" (p.64). The chapter also explains how to harvest grains and other seeds as well as the role of woodland.

The final chapter on 'Compost and Manure' gives a useful summary of the biodynamic preparations and their production as well as manure management.

The book is rounded off with some personal experiences which made me realise that what I have read is only the tip of the iceberg of both Karl-Ernst Osthaus agricultural knowledge and the power and potential of the Biodynamic methods. ■



THE AGRICULTURE COURSE KOBERWITZ, WHITSUN 1924 By Peter Selg

Published Temple Lodge 2010
ISBN 978190699087
£12.99 from the Biodynamic Association webshop
Reviewed by **Richard Swann**

Over the past few years there has been a proliferation of books by Peter Selg. He is the Director of the Ita Wegman Institute for Basic Research into Anthroposophy in Arlesheim, Switzerland. He has turned to several anthroposophical personalities and impulses and more recently focussed on the Agriculture Course.

It is a fascinating book where he outlines the world and European political context into which the Course was given. Traditional methods of farming were dying out and something new was needed. He quotes Steiner as saying there was an "Exhaustion of tradition...which went in hand with the 'exhaustion of soil'". The course was thus very timely.

The scene is set with a detailed description of the

first approach towards Steiner to hold a course for farmers. As well as the early trials using the moons rhythms for sowing by Ernst Stegemann, others were also working in their own way using indications given by Steiner. However it was two young people, Immanuel Voegelé and Erhard Bartsch, who in 1922 presented Steiner with the results of a questionnaire that they had sent to farmers. Steiner replied, "Yes an agriculture course will certainly be needed at some point, but for the time being the project does not have sufficient strength to sustain it".

The two young men saw this as a challenge. We are now so used to moving fast with the help of emails and mobile phones, but the run up to the course in Koberwitz in June 1924 was made using the more pedestrian letters, telegrams and occasionally telephone. This thus adds an element of 'thrill to the chase' leading to up the event with the dates still not being fixed until only a few weeks before! The outer as well as the inner aspects of the course are expanded on in a very concise way. Some of the material has already been published in 'The Birth of a New Agriculture' by Adalbert von Keyserlingk. However it is supplemented by other sources to give a rich picture of both the setting and the main themes of the course.

Despite his failing health, Rudolf Steiner not only delivered the lectures to the farmers but also gave other esoteric lectures. He met with young people who were beginning to feel the full impact of scientific materialism and the effects that was having on them and their encounters with other people. He gave them inspiration and hope.

In the esoteric karma lectures, he gave at nearby Breslau, it was interesting how he used some similar themes to the Agriculture Course. In the latter, Steiner starts with the cosmic perspective of the way the planetary forces work into the earth. In the karma lectures he spoke about the effect of the stars on the human soul. Taken together this gives a fuller picture of the way the cosmos works into the human being and the earth.

Putting all these elements together brings the Agriculture Course out in a new refreshing way that makes it still very relevant for the time we live in now. ■

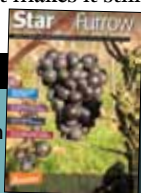
ADVERTISE IN THE STAR AND FURROW!


Star and Furrow reaches not only the membership of over 1000 people. It is also read by a wider audience in the organic movement and in educational institutions around the country and abroad.

The advertising rates are as follows: The charge for small advertisement is 12p per word for members of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association and 25p per word for non-members. The charges for display advertisements are:

Outside back cover	£300	1/4 page	£50
Inside back cover	£200	1/8 page	£25
Full page	£200	INSERTS	£65 (per 1,000)
1/2 page	£100	(all prices inclusive of VAT)	



Discounts are available on request. Cheques and money orders should be made out to the Biodynamic Agricultural Association or BDAA. Foreign advertisers are requested to pay by international money order. The closing dates are: 1st April for the summer issue and 1st October for the winter issue. Advertisements not received and paid for by these dates may not be accepted. Please send advertisements to the Editor's address (see inside front cover).







Demeter Seeds Stormy Hall

Supplier of Bio-Dynamically Grown Vegetable, Herb and Flower Seeds

Catalogue available on request

Stormy Hall Farm, Dunby, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO21 2NJ
Tel 01287 661368 Fax 01287 661369
E-mail : stormy.hall.botton@camphill.org.uk

NEW PERSPECTIVES IN SCIENCE 2

(Weekend conference organised within the Science Group of the Anthroposophical Society)

Lectures, whole-group and smaller discussions - plus time to talk

FEBRUARY 25-27, 2011

GLASSHOUSE COLLEGE

Wollaston Rd. Amblecote, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 4HF

EVENING LECTURES:

FRIDAY 25TH, 7:30pm
Water and the Working of Formative Forces - Manfred Schleyer

SATURDAY 26TH 7:30pm
Is Physics Committed to Particles? - Nick Thomas

Cost for whole weekend: £70 including meals

Individual evening lectures: £5 suggested donation on door

For more details: www.naturalscience.org.uk or 020 7193 4697

From the BDAA Office...

WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF LETTING YOU MEET THE PEOPLE YOU TALK WITH ON THE PHONE:



Biodynamic Association Office – JESSICA STANDING

As you know Jessica is our administrator. She is the one to contact for membership, joining, renewals and inquiries, leaflets, book and preparation sales (or use our webshop), questions and queries, promotional literature for farm shops/shows etc.

Tel: 01453 759501

Email: office@biodynamic.org.uk



Biodynamic Association Certification Office – ANGELA WILSON

Angela is the administrator for the Demeter and organic certification schemes. Contact Angela for information on the certification schemes, certificate queries, Standards queries as well as any general questions on the schemes we certify.

The office recently moved and is in the same building as the

Association office. The address is: Painswick Inn Project, Gloucester Street, Stroud, Glos. GL5 1QG.

Tel 01453 766296

Email: demeter@biodynamic.org.uk



Apprentice Training – NIR HALFON

Contact Nir for any enquiries, questions about becoming a biodynamic apprentice, from training centres who wish to join the scheme or existing centres who want to update details or have student questions etc.

Email: nirhalfon@biodynamic.org.uk

BIODYNAMIC PREPARATIONS

The Biodynamic Preparations form a unique and integral part of the biodynamic approach to farming and gardening. Their use helps to increase soil vitality, regulate imbalances, improve plant health and bring the garden or farm into harmony with its surroundings. The Preparations can be purchased ready made as well as the materials you need to make your own from the BDAA Office. We stock:

- Horn Manure (500) & Horn Silica (501)
- Compost Preps (502-507)
- Equisetum (508)
- Maudsford Compost Starter
- Barrel Preparation
- Three Kings Preparation

Plus: materials for preparation making.

For a current info & price sheet please contact the BD Office or download it from our website at www.biodynamic.org.uk. The link is at the bottom of the home page.

NEW BOOKS

WHEN WINE TASTES BEST 2011:

A Biodynamic Calendar for Wine Drinkers

Maria Thun and Matthias Thun

When you buy a bottle of wine to enjoy at home, wouldn't you like to know when it's going to be at its best?

Based on Maria Thun's biodynamic calendar, this handy little pocket guide tells you which days are optimum wine-drinking days, and which days to avoid if you want to get the most out of your glass. At least two supermarket chains only do their wine tastings on the best days as indicated by this calendar!

Includes a bonus month, December 2010, to cover the Christmas season.

SENSITIVE CRYSTALLIZATION:

Visualizing the Qualities of Wines

Christian Marcel; Translated by C.J. Moore

Price: £14.99 NB Publication Date: 21 Apr 2011

Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, who introduced biodynamics into North America, developed a method in the 1930s to visually demonstrate the presence of formative forces - that is, forces acting on living organisms which emanate from the Earth, the Sun and other planets. He arrived at the sensitive crystallization method using copper chloride crystals mixed with samples of the particular plant.

Sensitive crystallization is of great consequence to winemaking and winemakers. Its vibrant, beautiful images startlingly illustrate different qualities of a wine: its tasting qualities, its grape type and the nature of the terroir from which it originates, as well as its ageing potential. The method also reveals the influence of environmental factors and cultivation, whether intensive, organic or biodynamic.

Sensitive crystallization is a valuable new tool which can objectively portray the characteristics of a wine, complementing the subjective assessment of professional wine-tasters. ■



Star & Furrow is printed by Severnprint Limited - ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT LEADERS

Severnprint has been working on environmental improvement at our factory in Gloucester since the early 1990's. Big, brave moves keep us at the forefront of environmental improvement.

Our two moves with the biggest impacts are our most recent - we have just stopped using alcohol entirely on our presses and last year we saved 400,000 litres of water by doing away with a whole platemaking process!

Severnprint were one of the first UK printers to achieve FSC certification and ISO14001 registration.

We are looking for a mature, experienced, MULTI-SKILLED, reliable and trustworthy Rural Estate Management Person or Couple to help us to run a tranquil rural estate with a small firewood business near the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland.

MAIN ASPECTS OF JOB AND KEY SKILLS

- You will be responsible for the effective and efficient day to day management of the Estate and will work in partnership with the Director of the company.
- You must be able to work under your own initiative and ensure that projects are managed on time. You will not be afraid to get “hands on” as the job needs and have the ability to deal with all situations with a ‘can-do’ attitude.
- You will be the first point of contact for residents on matters concerning tenancy conditions, this needs good communication skills and experience of residential lettings.
- You will deliver a responsive repairs and assistance service for our residents by identifying and resolving building defects and be capable of working on minor building repairs or escorting specialist contractors on the estate to ensure that good quality work is undertaken.
- You will need to be computer literate with a good working knowledge of relevant software, Word, Excel and Web (e-mail).
- You will be dealing with budget controls and you must be able to stick to budget.
- You will manage incoming telephone calls, invoicing, reports, dealing with outside companies and organising contractors. A basic understanding of Company Accounts would be an advantage.
- You will ensure all Health & Safety obligations and Duty of Care are met effectively and that all routine checks are in place and carried out (to include regular auditing).
- You will be familiar with woods (with a basic knowledge of Continuous Cover Forestry) and wildlife and how to best manage both. From fences and gates to waterways and drainage, you will complete regular site checks and help to control bracken and rhododendron. This will include tree-felling (chainsaw licence), fencing and general maintenance and keeping an up-to-date knowledge of the estate.
- You will need to have already 5 to 10 years experience in a similar estate management role, but most important is enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.
- You will need a car for this position, although there is a generous mileage allowance.
- You should provide effective answers to emergency queries out of normal office hours.

Job Type: **PERMANENT** – We must stress that we want a person or couple who are looking for a long term position.

Your accommodation will be on the Estate.

Start Date: 1st May 2011 - Salary: Negotiable – depending on experience.

To apply for this position, please email your CV to: claudiagert@aol.com

Only successful candidates will be contacted.

