

Southwest Biodynamic Group Newsletter

Spring 2022



Frost-locked all the winter,
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
What shall make their sap ascend
That they may put forth shoots?
Tips of tender green,
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;
Telling of the hidden life
That breaks forth underneath,
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

An extract from 'Spring' by Christina Rossetti

Diary Dates:

Saturday 23rd April 2022 – Cholwell Farm, 10am -4pm See Newlwtter for details.

Sunday 24th April 2022 – Huxhams Cross Farm - Digging up preparations – details to follow by email when confirmed.

From the Editor:

Currently it is hard to ignore world events. As well as the human misery the war in Ukraine is causing, there is the real possibility of food shortages which will affect everybody. Prices are rising, both because of the scarcity of fuel and of fertiliser. This will hopefully bring to the fore national discussion about how we grow and distribute food as well as the issue of the huge amount of food waste.

On that note, Marina O'Connell, the farmer at Huxhams Cross Farm/Apricot Centre has published her book entitled 'Designing Regenerative Food Systems'. See P 5 for more details.

I have also had a message from Ros Bourne, the Group's secretary with information which might help if you want to start or increase your vegetable growing.

Biodynamic Gardening Club: 'I have been a member of the National Biodynamic Association for some years – mainly to read the excellent Star and Furrow journal. However I have recently joined the Biodynamic Gardening Club which comes free with membership. This is brilliant for gardeners as it provides loads of really useful information in the form of Webinars (a recent one on container gardening), a Facebook page where you can ask any questions, a weekly email full of useful information and a library of excellent (and very practical resources).

Highly recommended! Got more details go

to <https://www.biodynamic.org.uk/garden/biodynamic-gardening-club/>

Spring Gathering - Saturday 23rd April 2022: 10am – 4pm

Compost Preparations & Horn Silica with Frankie Van Der Stok

Lifting the Autumn Compost Preparations, preparing the yarrow preparation & burying the Horn Silica

By donation (all donations to the SWBD Group) at

Cholwell Farm, Colston Road, Dartington, Devon TQ9 6AD

Details below

The plants and animals on earth, even the plant parasites, cannot be understood in isolation. [...] Life comes from the whole universe, not merely from what the earth provides. Nature is a unity, with forces interacting from all sides. [...] when we are able to find our way back to the macrocosm then we will start to understand more about nature again-and about many other things as well.

Rudolf Steiner Lecture: Koberwitz: 14th June 1924

"How can we make the interconnectedness of all creatures and plants, and all the support they can afford each other to feed and nurture the human being?" Frankie van der Stok

Morning 10am-1pm: we will lift the compost preparations buried in the Autumn last year guided by Frankie through Q&A and practical experience. Followed by burying the horn silica and preparing the yarrow preparation in its sheath for hanging in the summer sun.

Shared lunch 1pm-2pm: pot luck, bring a dish to share (kitchen available but basic)

Afternoon 2pm-4pm: continuing with the preparations from the morning and if time and interest ending with the last hour stirring the horn manure (500) and reading tbc
Bring a bucket if we stir in the afternoon and a container to take your horn manure home
Tea and coffee provided

If possible, please notify us of your intention to attend, thank you. Contact: Rosalyn Maynard:

Email -: rosalynjmaynard@gmail.com / text only: 07966 403 574.

Are Thorenen's Workshop in Stroud. By Helen Dolby

I am a beginner in the understanding of Biodynamics, but I would like to share some impressions of the event in Stroud with On March 4th, 5th and 6th, with Are Thoresen an active spiritual researcher, author and veterinary organised by the Biodynamic Association of G B, together with the Experimental Circle.

There was a very large group of farmers and gardeners from all over Britain including three from Devon. From the invitation, it looked as if the event was really for experienced practitioners of BD, but in fact a number of interested lay people like myself were also made to feel very welcome. The Friday evening was a talk for the general public by Are Thoresen, which brought about 80 people.

The main themes were the Norse God, Vidar, the Nordic path, and finding the 'middle realm', or centre, or still point, between the two extremes of Lucifer and Ahriman: in ourselves, in others and in the whole created world around us. From the listeners, I received an impression of Stroud anthroposophical life as warm-hearted, mature and receptive.

Saturday and Sunday were a focus on the realm of the elements and its connection to Biodynamics. In very rough outline: The elemental world is the foundation for all life on earth. We scarcely realize, in everyday life, that the entire sense-perceptible world is, to spiritual vision, 'maya' or illusion. For example, the so-called 'atomic structure' of matter, (even if one still thinks in those terms), consists really of elemental beings. The redemption of these beings takes place within us.

Stirring the preparations is the making of elemental beings; they still (according to Are) have to be 'christened'. This was really a big question for those present. What does it actually mean? Many were shocked by the Christian terminology and some really good, honest conversations developed over the 2 days, not least during the coffee breaks!

The evidence that Are Thoresen brought was his own clairvoyant observation, seeing how weak and stunted some beings can look, or conversely, the vibrant ones, open - 'all eyes and ears' - to the cosmic forces which they can then mediate and pour earthward, which apparently become so strengthened after the conscious work with this 'christening' process. This is not something which we can all just check out for ourselves, and yet the question remains: how does each person form and work with his or her own perceptions? Is 'the new clairvoyance', whatever it is to be called, the only way? Or are such things as insight, love of one's land, devotion to detail and the thoughts we have whilst working, equally important?

From his 30 years of practice with the indications of Karl Konig for the BD preparations, Frankie Van der Stok had much to bring on this subject. First, 'find the middle' in your field or piece of land- an intuitive process. Place the preparations in the form of a cross. Always, the nettle preparation is in the centre. It is the place of the heart, though, interestingly, Franky says he has always placed it just below the crossing point of the cross. The reason is given in the Agriculture Course. Nettle is the only BD preparation which has no sheath. It is placed just as it is in the Mother earth. Creating this cross as a new figure in the landscape, is the 'priestly' action of the farmer and gardener.

The preparations are healing for the earth and for all who work with them.

So, in the room in Stroud, we decided to place the preparations, in their little clay pots, in the centre of the circle of people in the form of a cross. We all observed as each was given its 'blessing', and then invited to comment. I can only say that I received a vivid sense of something new, as if an ancient rite had been renewed there, like incense arising. Those of experimental mind then undertook to take away the little pots and keep a note of any results in the actual practice.

My vivid impression, as Are became less and less a presenter of personal anecdotes, and more a participant in a living dialogue with those present, was of the beginnings of an exciting new 'meeting of spiritual streams': the partly-unfamiliar (to us) Nordic stream, Vidar, Baldur and its vibrant elementals, and our own, local nature perception, our Celtic heritage. The common ground began to be created here. How? - Through a genuinely Goethean approach.

I realized, listening, for example, to the way Nick Raeside spoke of the bees and ants, or to Vivian Griffiths, Frankie and others, that there is a 'native British way', a skill we have, which begins in exact, loving description of the physical phenomenon and its setting; the actual 'science'. This would be step one of the 'new clairvoyance', or maybe it is already there, in every farmer and gardener's love of the land, the plants, crops and animals, and of how it all speaks to him or her.

Helen Dolby

News from The Apricot Centre

On the farm, after the Spring Equinox we are beginning to sense the subtle seasonal shift and the joy, energy and new life that spring brings. As the tree sap is rising- slowly transporting sugars through the trunk to prepare the tree for leaf- we have been busy gently tapping Silver Birch and Maple to sustainably harvest this clear, slightly sweet sap from a local farm

Our winter pruning of apples and pears has occurred and seen our new fruit and flowers grower Maisie and the trainees developing their knowledge of fruiting tree management and practical pruning skills.

Our annual seed sowing has begun and will continue through until August. Our growing team has been carefully managing the crops to prepare for the hungry gap so we can continue to provide our customers with local, biodynamic and organic produce. We have sown so many seeds this year that we actually needed to put up a propagation poly tunnel to house and protect them all.

The farm recently collected another lot of new chickens to add to our flock to meet our egg demand. Our resident cows, Daffodil and Damson, have been enjoying some of the wet winter months in their shed at the back of the barn. They have been steadily munching through our organic-biodynamic hay supply that we harvested last August and have been creating a wonderful manure mix that will be used on the land next year.

Our education team has been busy since January planning and developing and finally teaching our new Ofqual Level 3 in Regenerative Land Systems: Food and Farming. has seen 23 new trainees days a week for training in ecology, soil ecology, farming methods including agroforestry and livestock We have worked in with Flow Partnerships and to deliver an amazing that the students are really Based on 11 farm



certified
Based
This project
join us two
plant
regenerative
biodynamics,
management.
partnership
INkpot farm
curriculum
enjoying!
placements

the trainees are gaining valuable hands on training in the fields as well. Funded by Devon County Council and Devon Environmental Foundation we hope that this will be an ongoing offer as part of our education arm of Huxhams Cross, further funding dependent.

Our fantastic wellbeing team have been working hard to keep up with the needs of the local community in terms of wellbeing with many new families and children accessing our therapeutic services as well as taking part in woodland wellbeing sessions funded by Badur Foundation, which sees young people who have been through the care system able to come and cook or craft in our woodland to help improve wellbeing.

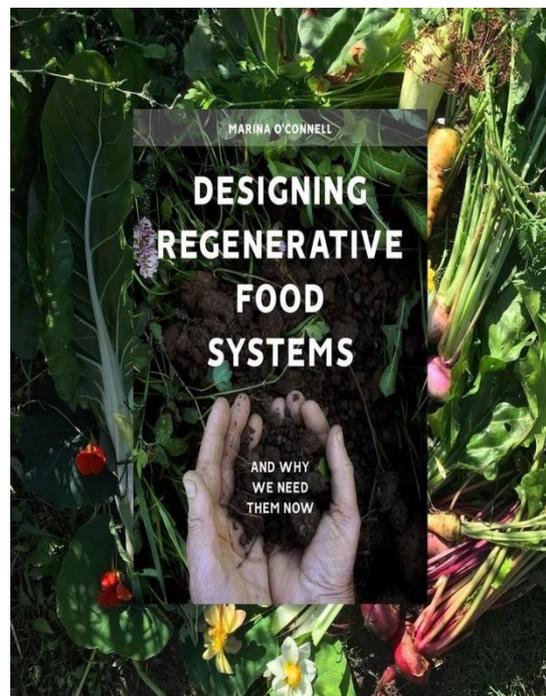
The wellbeing team have also been awarded a National Lottery Grant to work with the local BAME community in Devon where they will develop a community garden

and growing space in Plymouth.

New Book:

Marina has finished her book “Designing Regenerative Food Systems”. The book is a toolkit for farmers and growers of tried and tested agroecological methods for transforming food growing. Marina uses the case study of Huxhams Cross Farm to show how soil was transformed into a thriving fertile land, drawing on a toolkit of biodynamic, organic, agroforestry, regenerative, agroecological and permacultural methods.

The principles, methods and techniques of each approach are explained concisely, with illustrative case studies of successful examples and follow up resources such as film references.



You can buy a copy of the book from Hawthorn Press and at some local Bookshops.

Training at The Apricot Centre.

We are now taking bookings for our up and coming courses including Introduction to Agroforestry, Introduction to Biodynamics and our Permaculture Design Course

If you are interested in learning more about what we are up to and booking on you our courses please visit our website www.apricotcentre.co.uk

News From the Garden at White's Farm.

It has been a very busy few months in the garden. We began the year with the Three Kings stirring on a very wet day in January, huddled around the fire under a makeshift shelter. Since then the weather has been kinder it seems, and we have enjoyed some sunny days on the farm clearing the ground and preparing for the Spring.

Our new regular Volunteer Days have helped greatly with this, which are run every Friday fortnight, and the days have become a real highlight of the week. It has been heart warming to see so many people giving up their time, with some coming from as far as Crediton and Saltash. There is real truth to the saying, "Many hands make light work", and the community spirit has been palpable!

The Farm has slowly been taking shape as a result, and the first sowings were made in late Winter; spinach and lettuce, sown on Leaf days according to the Maria Thun Calendar. These were aided by the relative warmth of a hotbed, constructed from recycled timber from the farm, and with fresh horse manure as the heat source. After many trips to and from a wet and boggy local stables with a trusty neighbour, loading and unloading a trailer, it was relieving for us to see the temperature rise to 60 degrees inside and the bed doing its job. The seedlings have been enjoying cosy nights protected from frost ever since, and have been growing well.

Since then it has been a race to get the beds ready for planting. The outside beds were relatively straightforward, with only some brambles and dandelions standing in the way. The poly tunnel however was more of a challenge, with the ground heavily compacted and full of rocks, being used as a nursery tunnel previously. These were removed gradually, again with help, and raised beds created to provide much needed fertility from compost and manure. Happily the first plantings were made last week of beetroot, radish and spring onions, on root days, and have been bedding in nicely since.

This week we will carry out the first Horn Manure stirring of the year to rejuvenate the land in preparation for the growing season ahead. Hopefully there will be as many people from the community as possible to share in the experience.

If you would like to join our Volunteer Days, the next is on 29th April, with a break on Good Friday, and are fortnightly thereafter. Please contact me if you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive notifications of the days and what we will be doing, which I send out on the Monday/Tuesday before.

Happy Easter!Mark mgordine@yahoo.co.uk

07833453019

Watercress, Goat's Cheese and Asparagus Roulade – serves 6



Required: a 15x10 inch/ 25x38 cm baking tray, lined with parchment.

Turn on oven -200°C/ gas mark 6

Ingredients –

6 eggs, separated

Bunch of watercress, roughly chopped

1/2lb/500 g lightly cooked asparagus, coarse parts of stems removed.

1 goat's cheese, chopped into small pieces

1/2lb/500g cream cheese or ricotta

1tsp crème fraîche

2 spring onions finely chopped

Salt and pepper

1. Whisk egg whites till stiff
2. Mix egg yolks in, then add watercress, season lightly
3. Fold egg whites into mixture.
4. Spread evenly on baking tray.
5. Put in oven for 8 minutes
6. Allow to cool on tray
7. Loosen the cream cheese a little with 1 tbsp crème fraîche and mix in spring onions. Season and spread on the base.
8. Lay the asparagus across the sort length and dot with chopped goats cheese.
9. Roll up like a swiss roll using the parchment as a support.

Blessings on the meal.

Biodynamic Produce for Sale

Hemp and other Tinctures available (all home made)

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

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

Other tinctures currently available:

Stinging nettle (adrenal system booster)
Self heal and yarrow (general healer)
Turkey tail (used for centuries to boost the immune system)

White willow bark (natural pain killer)
Hawthorn (heart healer)
St John's Wort (menopause)
These are available in 10ml samples.
<http://www.evolvedbotanicals.co.uk>

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

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

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

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

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

Hapstead Farm Meat:

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

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

All with organic apple juice--

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

South West Biodynamic Group

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

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

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

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

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

southwestbiodynamicgroup.org