



# WINTER NEWS

Newsletter No 26 WINTER 2007

## *News from our farmers...*

There has been lots of activity on the farm in this absolutely beautiful autumn and winter. Most recently we have had 3 calves born in the last fortnight. They are all in the barn at Brookthorpe so please do come down and visit them. We are due one more in the next few months, and then we will have Dylan the bull visiting from Herefordshire to serve all the cows. Also in the barns are some new calves that we bought in from Oaklands Park. They are there to produce extra muck to fertilise the soil for the extra vegetables we will grow. They will also eat all the extra hay that we have and keep on top of the grass over the next few years. Because we have extra hay I am planning not to make hay at Brookthorpe next year. Instead I will be making either silage or haylage. This gets cut much earlier - May - and then is wrapped in plastic before it dries completely. I don't like to use the plastic, but it does enable us to cut the fields before the docks and thistles establish so that we can get on top of them.

Another extra animal on the farm is Joseph the ram, from Watch Oak farm. He is at Brookthorpe with the three ewes, whilst the three ewe lambs are at Hawkwood as they are too young to lamb. They are all outside and very happy without extra hay or feed. They will also do the grass a lot of good by tidying it up as they nibble their way through the winter. One additional animal that might come to the farm is a working horse. We are currently talking to someone who might have an extra Percheron, which they would lend to us. We could then see if a horse fits into the farm and if we would be able to look after it and have enough work for it.

Other visitors to the farm have been those on two feet. The last two farm days have been very well attended. Maybe it is a winter thing, or maybe because they are now monthly, alternating between the two sites. Whatever the reason then it is very wonderful to have so many people coming to the farm whether to work or just to be there. Two regular groups coming to Brookthorpe since September have been classes 3 and 9 from Wynstones School. The 8-9 year-olds from class 3 have come fortnightly for an hour and join in with any task that needs doing on the farm and have included weeding, digging and mucking out. The 14-15 year-olds from class 9 have come three times, each time for about a day-and-a-half and have been working on the hedge along the main road. They have done great work clearing and already half the hedge is laid. Both of these groups will continue coming, as I hope many of you will!

Our sausages had a mention in the Guardian of Saturday November 3<sup>rd</sup> as part of Matthew Forts 'search for the perfect banger'. They described the 'Mild Pork from Stroud Community Agriculture' as having a 'good, tight texture and finely ground'. See link:

[http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,,2203354,00.html#article\\_continue](http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,,2203354,00.html#article_continue)

### **NEWS FROM THE VEGGIE PATCHES**

To begin this article I would like to say that I am committed to producing fresh locally grown organic vegetables for the local community. This plays our small part in reducing food miles, our dependence on oil, and our effect on global warming. However... I am writing this article 35 000 feet up in the air somewhere between Singapore and Brisbane. Thanks to Laurence and Ute I am able to take three weeks off from the farm to visit my family in Australia. This is one of the wonderful things about CSA's for me, shared responsibility, allowing me to take such a break. But no amount of frugal living and hard work at SCA is going to reduce my carbon footprint for the coming year.

So, now I have to bring my mind back from these claustrophobic heights to the open wet fields of Gloucestershire. This autumn, the lovely, settled dry weather has gone some way to make up for the appalling summer. The crops at Hawkwood are looking very good indeed but unfortunately, the crops at Brookthorpe are still looking quite poor. I mentioned this in the September newsletter. For some reason plant growth at Brookthorpe has not been good. The land there is heavy, and it did become quite waterlogged at times in the summer. But we also think that the fertility and soil structure is not as good as we had expected, and that this has really exacerbated the problems with the wet. We will be doing a series of soil tests over the winter to try to identify any particular problems. We have plenty of composted manure at Brookthorpe so we have the potential to boost the fertility.

What this does mean for you is that we will be short of quite a few crops, and that others may be rather small. We have already been buying in leeks from Ruskin Mill. When you see nice large leeks, they're from Ruskin.

When you see thin small leeks, they're ours. Sorry. We will continue to buy in produce to make up any shortfall, but please bear with us if occasionally the share seems a bit small. A community-supported farm is founded on the principle of sharing the risks and rewards. The land will improve with time. I know from experience that the land at Brookthorpe can produce very good vegetables.

It's not all doom and gloom though. Among other crops, the carrots and parsnips at Hawkwood are fantastic, and the purple sprouting broccoli plants are also looking great (they should start cropping in February through to the end of April; as long as those pigeons keep away).

Looking ahead to next season we will be expanding the areas under production at Brookthorpe, both in the field and in the walled garden. We have been running the pigs on these areas of land and cultivating them over the autumn to knock back the weeds. This land will be ready for planting in the spring. We will also be renovating the greenhouse in the walled garden a little, in order to use it to raise the seedlings. We agreed with the Hawkwood trustees that we would remove the small propagation tunnel at Hawkwood (as a condition of erecting the third large tunnel last winter) so we need to find an area elsewhere. We also need to sort out some irrigation at Brookthorpe. No doubt there will be a drought next summer if we don't.

Well it looks like the northern coast of Australia is coming into view and my jet lagged mind can't think anymore. I wish you all a happy New Year. I will be back for Christmas; you don't need to be too jealous. Thanks to Laurence and Ute for keeping things going whilst I've been away,

Mark.

We still have spaces for new members for veg shares. Please take leaflets from drop off and collection points to give to anyone who might be interested.

### Membership Pack and Contact List

At our recent EGM we changed the wording of some of the paragraphs of our secondary rules. These are incorporated into our Membership Pack, the latest version of which has been emailed. Many of you had your copy of the Membership Pack many years ago, in which case there will be other changes as well that have been incorporated over the years. We felt it was time that everyone had an up to date copy and so this is being sent to all members. Similarly, many of you joined before we started the contact list and, of course, as new people join your list is out of date. This list gives details of all our veg-share-collecting members who are willing to have their details shared. We would encourage you to make contact with other members living in your area and to share your veg collection trips as much as possible.

If you are one of our members not on email please contact Carol Mathews on [membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org](mailto:membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org) and she will send you a copy.

### *Lift sharing for veg. collections....*

*I really love Stroud Community Agriculture and really enjoy going to Hawkwood to get the veg. The only thing I feel bad about is that I know there are quite a few people in the same area as me who are making the same journey and that can't be good for a) our pockets, b) our time, and c) the Earth. I can understand why people don't want their addresses published but wondered how we could facilitate more people sharing car journeys to pick up their veg? This would be good from a sociable point of view as well as an environmental one.*

*I wondered whether people who would like to share journeys could contact Carol with their names and addresses. Carol has kindly offered to include this information in the contact list if people*

*are willing, or if that doesn't feel comfortable, addresses for collection journey sharing could be given out only to people who ask for it.*

*If you would like to share collection with others in the same area as you please email Carol at [membership@stroudcommunityagriculture.org](mailto:membership@stroudcommunityagriculture.org) with your name and address and state which collection you make. Please also say whether you are happy for your address to be added to the contact list or whether you would prefer that it was only given to others who ask for it with a view to sharing collection. Even if we halved car journeys for this project by people doubling up, it would make a big difference to our carbon footprint and be a friendly thing to do, too.*

*Julie Wickham*

### OUR NEW EGG SUPPLIER....

Hello fellow SCA members. I have just begun supplying you with eggs from my smallholding near Frampton Mansell in the Chalford valley. The flock of 100 hens are Black Rocks with 2 Rhode Island Red cockerels for company. The hens are a naturally hardy, disease-resistant and feisty breed well suited to free range life. They have a mixture of tree cover and open pasture for their range. The holding is too small to afford SA certification, however I believe in their principles and follow their guidelines.

I bought the first field 20 years ago which, interestingly, used to be a chicken farm. Half of it is now a 20 year old mixed native woodland and the other half a 12 year old stand of ash, a section of

which I am coppicing for the first time this winter. I run some pigs through these woods, host craft workshops and provide some overnight stays in a woodland shelter, cabin and/or camping. In the second field I have the hens, polytunnel, box nursery, more pigs, barn, orchard, machinery and a yard. Between these 2 fields I run some Dexter cattle and Black Welsh Mountain sheep.

The farming has become half of an occupation - with about one tenth of a wage! My other occupation is as a landscape gardener which has many cross-over points with farming - from design through to the day-to-day working of the land. Managing the land with animals has been a steep learning curve, a strong tie and responsibility, some heartbreak and a lot of work. But it has also brought me much closer to the land, the wildlife, the seasons and given me moments of real inspiration and elation.

I have had some long-term woofers staying on the smallholding which worked really well for them and for me. I am again looking for part-time help in exchange for caravan and barn accommodation in a beautiful and remote spot. If any of you know of an individual or a couple who might be interested please get in touch.

Also, if anyone wants to visit the smallholding, see the hens, or come camping my phone no. is 01285-760190.

Colin Cameron

**Annual General Meeting  
of Stroud Community Agriculture Ltd  
Sunday 2nd March 2008 4.30pm  
Hawkwood**

The coming year's AGM will take place a little earlier in the year due to timetabling possibilities at Hawkwood College. A special guest has been invited to speak to members and a wider audience in the evening. We are therefore scheduling the AGM slightly later in the afternoon. This will be followed by a bring and share supper and a talk at 7.30pm.

Our guest speaker, Nikolai Fuchs, is the leader of the Biodynamic Agriculture department at the Goetheanum in Switzerland which is the global focus for the worldwide biodynamic farming movement. His work keeps him in touch with farmers, growers and many exciting social and community initiatives. He will speak about some of these interesting projects and share some of his own perceptions about biodynamic agriculture today. In the afternoon Laurence will show him the farm before bringing him to the AGM to meet everyone. More details about the AGM and evening talk will be available later.

The AGM is the occasion for electing new Core Group members. The Core Group meets one evening a month. If you are interested in joining this management group or know someone who might be interested, now is the time for nominations. Any member of the co-op may stand. Every candidate needs someone to nominate and second them. We also need a brief paragraph about that person (50-80 words) for members to read beforehand (deadline 25th February). Any member of the current Core Group will be happy to discuss what is involved.

## ORCHARD GRAFTING AFTERNOON

*Let's create an orchard at Brookthorpe!*

SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH AT **DAYS COTTAGE\***  
BROOKTHORPE  
2pm-5pm

*The aim is to learn the technique of grafting fruit trees, and to graft trees which can be planted at Brookthorpe for our future use. This would mean that you won't be able to take your tree home, but that it will have a lovely place in Brookthorpe. Dave Kaspar from Days Cottage will lead the workshop and anybody who has spoken to him about apple trees will know what an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher he is. You will learn a lot about what types of apple varieties are here in Gloucestershire, how to determine the height of a tree and what different types of grafts are possible.*

*In order to cover Dave's cost, the course will be £15 per person. I will collect the money before the course.*

*Please let me know if you are interested, so that we know how many people will attend. If you have a pocket knife with a straight edge, please bring it along.*

*Contact: Nadine Smykatz-Kloss on 01453 840351; [nsk@cooptel.net](mailto:nsk@cooptel.net)  
Also: if you would like to participate in deciding what types of fruit trees we could have at Brookthorpe, please contact either myself or Laurence at [Laurencedungworth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Laurencedungworth@yahoo.co.uk) ; 01452 810763.*

*\* the workshop will be at Days Cottage, which is Dave Kaspar's place in Brookthorpe, as he will have all the materials there. Please ask me for directions.*

*In the last Newsletter we reported on **La Jimena** and their olive and fruit shares. If you are interested in making an order the details of the shares are:*

**Maxi:** £61- 10kg mixed citrus fruits, (plus some extras such as dried figs, nuts...) + 5kg Virgin Olive Oil + 1.5kg Olives in brine.

**Midi:** £54 - 5kg mixed citrus fruits, (plus some extras such as dried figs, nuts...) + 5kg Virgin Olive Oil + 1.5kg Olives in brine.

**Mini:** £42 - 5kg mixed citrus fruits, (plus some extras such as dried figs, nuts...) + 3kg Virgin Olive Oil + 1.5kg Olives in brine.

**5kg** Virgin Olive Oil (no fruit): £36

**3kg** Virgin Olive Oil (no fruit): £24

*Please contact [john.meletiyou@btconnect.com](mailto:john.meletiyou@btconnect.com) or 01453 836134 (day) or 01453 833985(eve) or 07884 336778(mob).*

Blue-yellow pottery bowl left after Harvest Supper. Please call Nadine on 01453 840351

**Thank you to Christoph Rubach for the following poem:**

**Resthaven Juicing Day**

*Gathered under grey sky  
Happy voices floating across the field  
The busy workers cut squeeze grind and juice the tender liquid  
from this fruiting autumn harvest  
Children climb in the well shaped trees*

*Crunching the fruit reached on the farthest branches  
Half eaten, thrown to the ground  
these remains join the piles of pulp  
bagged for the pigs' or cows' hungry consumption*

*As the last apples get washed for cutting  
And the old milk bottles fill all to the brim  
with golden brown flowing sweetness  
Heads dip wet bobbing for a bite  
in the bucket of water bouncing  
apple challenge splashing playfulness*

**Martin Donnelly in concert with Jehanne Mehta and Earthwards**

*A Special Candlemas Concert at Hawkwood  
Sunday 27th January 7.30pm*

*Martin Donnelly is a singer and songwriter. His music and songs reflect a life long connection with the land, sea and skies of Ireland. 'His songs are the music of deep ecology' (Alastair McIntosh author of 'Soul and Soil'). He has published two CDs of his own songs and toured extensively in Germany, England and Scotland.*

*The much loved music of Earthwards is well known locally and their songs come from a similar source. The event will be publically advertised but SCA members are specially invited. Further details later. For more Information please contact Bernard Jarman on 01453 757436*

**Kohlrabi- I'm loving it!** *Somebody told me the other day that they don't like Kohlrabi! For me, to find it in the veg. bag is a true highlight of my vegetable year. And as far as I know this is the best way to eat it, but please let me know if you have any better recipes:*

**Peel the kohlrabi and cut into thin slices. Boil in a little bit of water until the slices become translucent and soft (needs to be tasted). This will take about 20 minutes. Discard the water and add a good dollop of (salted) butter. Stir in, so that each slice is glazed. And then, enjoy! Nadine.**

Everyone is welcome to join in and enjoy the farm, including non-members.  
We work to the following principles:

- *To support organic and biodynamic agriculture.*
- *To pioneer a new economic model based on mutual benefit and shared risk and ensure that the farmers have a decent livelihood.*
- *To be fully inclusive. Low income shall not exclude anyone.*
- *To encourage practical involvement on all levels.*
- *To be transparent in all our affairs. To make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible. To strive towards social justice.*
- *To offer opportunities for learning, therapy and re-connecting with the life of the earth.*
- *To network with others to promote community supported agriculture to other communities and farms and share our learning (both economic and farming).*
- *To encourage Stroud Community Agriculture members, in co-operation with the farmers, to use the farm for their individual and social activities and celebrations.*
- *To develop a non-exclusive sense of community around the farm.*

**Stroud Community Agriculture contacts:**

**General Enquiries & Information:**

Claire and Paul Sheridan- Tel: 0845 4580814

Email [info@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org](mailto:info@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org)

**Membership Admin:**

Carol Mathews - Email: [membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org](mailto:membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org)

***Stroud Community Agriculture core group***

Laurence Dungworth	01452 810763/07799 015499	<a href="mailto:laurencedungworth@yahoo.co.uk">laurencedungworth@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Sue Baker	01453 757259	<a href="mailto:sue.baker@talktalk.net">sue.baker@talktalk.net</a>
Jeannie Ireland	01453 791086	<a href="mailto:jeannie@ravendance.co.uk">jeannie@ravendance.co.uk</a>
Bernard Jarman	01453 757436	<a href="mailto:bernardnkarin@phonecoop.coop">bernardnkarin@phonecoop.coop</a>
Ali and Dave Judd	01453 889069	<a href="mailto:daveandali@phonecoop.coop">daveandali@phonecoop.coop</a>
Molly Scott-Cato	01453-882662	<a href="mailto:molly@gaianeconomics.org">molly@gaianeconomics.org</a>
Nadine Smykatz-Kloss	01453 840351	<a href="mailto:nsk@cooptel.net">nsk@cooptel.net</a>
Richard Swann	01453 765588	<a href="mailto:rswann@tiscali.co.uk">rswann@tiscali.co.uk</a>

## Upcoming Diary Dates

(please note that there will be no singing to the cows this Christmas Eve 2007)

<b>January</b>	<b>6th</b>	Three kings preparation stirring and spraying 2-5pm	Brookthorpe
	<b>26th</b>	<i>Farm Day</i> – hedgework. 10-1pm, bring lunch	Brookthorpe
	<b>27th</b>	Martin Donnelly and Earthwards – see above	Hawkwood
<b>February</b>	<b>3rd</b>	Candlemas celebration (time to be announced)	Brookthorpe
	<b>24th</b>	<i>Farm Day</i> – mucking out/field clearing	Hawkwood
<b>March</b>	<b>2nd</b>	AGM 4.30 Talk: Nicolai Fuchs 7.30pm	Hawkwood
	<b>9th</b>	Fruit tree grafting – see above	Days Cottage, Brookthorpe
	<b>22nd</b>	<i>Farm Day</i>	Brookthorpe
<b>April</b>	<b>Piglets and lambs due this month!</b>		Brookthorpe
	<b>26th</b>	<i>Farm Day</i>	Hawkwood
<b>May</b>	<b>24th</b>	<i>Farm Day</i>	Brookthorpe
<b>June</b>	<b>28th</b>	<i>Farm Day</i>	Hawkwood