



New Year News

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www.StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Winter on the Farm – Mark & Sam

I am writing this on the day after Boxing Day. It has been a busy time on the market gardens in the run up to Christmas with the weather turning steadily colder and the need to get out a larger veg share for Christmas, but now the team can enjoy a break.

The mild weather of the autumn gave us very favourable growing conditions for that time of year, giving us an extended crop of spinach and outdoor salad in particular. However, the storms that we suffered in October damaged the plastic on the newest tunnel (yes, the one that was burnt in May), and we have had to recover it. Fortunately the Gods that blew it off in the first place decided to give us such a calm and mild day that the job of recovering it was far easier than we dared imagine it would be.

Before the cold set we were busy harvesting vegetables for storage and covering the carrots and celeriac in the field with plastic and straw to protect them from the frost. This work was carried out not a moment too soon. During the late afternoon of Thursday we transplanted the sugarloaf plants (used in the salad packs) to a sheltered site in the walled garden. When we started at 4pm the plants were wet with water, when we

finished at 5pm the water was frozen and didn't really thaw again till Christmas.

We have had a lot of trouble with slug damage on the potatoes this year. We haven't really grown decent potatoes at SCA ever, and you'll be surprised to hear me say

that this year's crop was the best we have grown. But the damage was bad and like everyone I have thrown a lot away when preparing meals at home. We (the staff team) debated whether to grade more of them out or not (and then buy more in) but in the end we decided not to as this is the crop that we have grown and that part of the ethos of community supported agriculture is that we all share in the harvest and take the good with the bad.

Obviously we don't want to produce poor quality crops and we constantly look at ways to improve things. We will grow potatoes again next season. I will do some research into varieties that are less susceptible to slug damage, and we may need to lift the crop earlier than we did this year. But we may have the same problem next year and it maybe that our land isn't really suitable to producing good potatoes.

We'll have to see.



Harvest festival display

You'll be pleased to hear that this season's crop has been used now and that we are now buying in potatoes for the share.

We have the same issue with the current crop of carrots, which are invested with carrot root fly. When we harvest the carrots it is hard to tell how badly damaged they may be. We grade out the bad ones to feed to the animals, and some of the middling damaged ones we put in the share as they are still usable after a bit of extra preparation, but sometimes these turn out to be very badly damaged and not really usable at all. Then there are the damaged ones that we just plain miss (it is often cold and muddy when we lift the carrots!).

We have a lot of carrots this year so this will most likely be an issue all winter. I do hope that you enjoy them despite the added work and annoyance when preparing them.

My next task is to plan the cropping for next season and to order the seeds. This is a time when, in my imagination, the farm runs

As I write this farm report we are truly into the winter routine. The cows came into the barns in mid November, along with three noisy, inquisitive pigs and a very proud sow. My days now are framed by feeding in the morning and feeding in the evening. This time of year gives me a chance to get to know each animal better because I spend so much more time around them.

On Christmas Eve we sang Christmas carols to all the animals. I have worked on many Biodynamic farms but have never actually sung to the animals on Christmas Eve before – it was a very special experience and I am looking forward to doing it again next year. It was especially nice to sing to the piglets only born the previous night. Please stop by and visit them – they are a real treat to watch.



Apples plus press plus people: juice time!

absolutely perfectly. We grow perfect potatoes and the outdoor beans ripen just as the indoor ones finish. This is before Mother Nature and human nature begin messing around things. We are going to expand the cropping area at Brookthorpe to encompass the entire vegetable field, 4 acres in total. We will also cultivate the last plot in the walled garden so that that area will be fully utilised. The areas and crops grown at Hawkwood will remain much the same.

We did hope this winter to be able to begin work on erecting a polytunnel at Brookthorpe and to be able to build rainwater harvest ponds there.

But unfortunately we were unsuccessful with the funding bid that we had submitted and we will have to go back to the drawing board. We would still like to be able to do these things.

I do hope that you all had a restful and enjoyable festive break.

Mark Harrison

We can expect lambs in the 2nd week of April, and calves after the 3rd week of April. Spring will then truly be upon us.

At present we are laying a hedge bordering the veg field at Brookthorpe, a really rewarding job that benefits both wildlife and the farm. Other jobs include repairing farm equipment so it is ready for the spring – and we are always picking vegetables of course.

I would be happy to have any volunteers who would like to share in feeding the animals. Volunteers can feed at Hawkwood or Brookthorpe. You would need to commit to a set time and day for several months in order to make it worthwhile and really get a feel for it. If you are interested please give me a call on 01452 814440 or 07531270206.

Sam Hardiman

Dates for your New Year Diary

Farm Days: Saturdays 10.00 to 13.00 at Brookthorpe 23rd January 2010; Hawkwood 27th February; Brookthorpe 27th March. Come if you can – bring a picnic or hot flask to share.

Annual General Meeting (AGM), Sunday 21st March – all welcome.

Aunty SCA Needs You

Our AGM is on March 21st. This is a time when as a community organisation we review the previous year and make plans for the next, including welcoming new core group members. Last year, the core group, who meet monthly to discuss the management of the farms, dealt with everything from planning the bonfire to recruiting a new farmer. This year they are reviewing employment terms and the SCA constitution – issues needing full involvement from members.

Would you be willing to join the core group for at least a year or two? You would need to be able to attend meetings, deal with the occasional email and, if possible, take on small tasks between meetings. That's all. If you think you might be interested in joining the core group then please contact one of us (see back page) to discuss it further. You are also welcome to come to a meeting to observe (complete with no-obligation tea and biscuit).

Stroud Pound and Community Farming: What's the Connection?

People join SCA for all sorts of reasons—some because they just love the look of the vegetables, others because they enjoy visiting the farm and having close contact with the animals. I joined up to a community farm because I wanted to be part of an economy which is locally based and where relationships really matter. And that's also why I am part of the Stroud Pound Co-operative.

When you join up to the Stroud pound you can buy money one-for-one for sterling, but you can only spend it in the local economy. So you are limiting your choice while at the same time demonstrating your commitment. To me this is just the same principle as the community farm. We could probably find cheaper food some of the time, and we could definitely find more exotic food, but we are choosing to be part of a different kind of production system.



The community farm is also about showing concern for the people who grow our food and the valuable work that they do. Even with fair trade, you cannot really know about

the lives of the people who grew your bananas or coffee, but we can talk to our farmers about how our food is produced, and through the core group we can make sure that they are paid properly and have autonomy and respect in their work. The Stroud pounds means that you can show a similar level of concern for local producers and traders, rather than seeing them wiped out by the chains and the supermarkets. The ultimate goal of the local currency is that the economy of Stroud could become a

closed loop as much as possible—with no value leaking out into the global system and no energy wasting trucking in food and other goods that we could just as easily produce here. For this reason anything that is at the

end of the economic chain—especially things produced direct from the soil—are particularly important to have as part of the scheme.

So is there some way that we could link Stroud Community Agriculture with the Stroud pound?

We have talked about this in the core group and could consider accepting Stroud pounds for meat. Because our farmers have to operate in the sterling economy the system of paying in conventional money through bank transfer to support their livelihood probably cannot be changed, although Carol Mathews who does some admin work has

said that she is happy to be paid in Stroud pounds. Hawkwood also take Stroud pounds, and so does the Exchange where we sometimes hold meetings, so there would be ways of spending the money.

We would like to have your views about whether we should work more closely with the Stroud Pound Co-operative, and perhaps you can think of ways that we might co-operate. You can find out more about how Stroud pounds work from the website www.stroudpound.org.uk or by emailing Molly Scott Cato molly@gaianeconomics.org.

Molly Scott Cato

La Jimena Olive Harvest

John Meletiou will be co-ordinating orders for olive oil, olives, fruit and nuts from La Jimena again this year, so all enquiries should be to John by the end of January: daytime 01453 836134; mobile 07884 336778; home 01453 833985; or john.meletiou@btconnect.com

Letter from Mathis at La Jimena:

Time has flown by and we are already again harvesting the olives! We have lots of helpers and so La Jimena is a busy place. It seems though that due to climate change that we need to start harvesting earlier every year now! By early December we have already milled two times and the olives are falling almost faster than we can pick them!

Most of the past year we have worked on the renovation of the accommodation, and this is still going on. The farm is developing nicely, though, and our latest addition is a social project - working with teenagers - developed by a second family for next spring.

It would be most helpful for us to know soon about your orders for the February delivery as we prepare your produce now.

Lots of love from La Jimena in sunny Spain, Mathis & Mariann



The advertisement for La Jimena Olive Oil and Fruitbox features a central logo with a sunburst design and the text 'La Jimena'. Below the logo, it states 'La Jimena Olive Oil and Fruitbox may come near you end feb 2010 from our family farm in southern spain'. The text describes the organic green olive oil and fruitbox, mentioning ancient trees and supervised oranges. It lists prices for 1 liter, 2 liters, and 20 liters of olive oil, and provides contact information for John Meletiou. A photograph of an olive branch is included on the right side of the advertisement.

Common Wealth Book Launch

You are all warmly invited to the launch of *Common Wealth - for a free, equal, mutual and sustainable society* by local hero Martin Large on Thursday 14th January at 7.30 for 8pm at The SPACE.

Common Wealth addresses the climate, financial and democratic crunches we face, inviting us to push back the 'market'. It includes many inspiring stories from Stroud – such as SCA – as examples of cultural, environmental and political change: practical ways of transforming capitalism, land for people, the citizen's income, freeing education and community engagement.

Stroud's acappella co-op, Circle of Song, will set the scene with songs illustrating the key values informing the commonwealth: freedom, equality, mutuality, sustainability and care for the earth. Then Martin will introduce an overview of the book, and invite a discussion of what common wealth is and could be.

Tickets £5 from STI 01453 760960, gaining a £5 reduction if book bought on the night; pre-publication orders and more book information from www.hawthornpress.com
London launch: 25th January 2010 at Guardian Housing Summit.

Martin Large

Wanted: New Tenants At The Exchange

Philosophy At the Exchange, Stroud Common Wealth seeks to provide affordable shared office space on easy in/easy out terms, linked with the wide range of support services delivered by the Gloucestershire Social Enterprise Centre.

Terms We have had a simple License Agreement drawn up which gives tenants security but also the option of leaving with one month's notice. In order not to accrue "squatters rights" should Stroud

Common Wealth go into liquidation, tenants are required to relocate their workspace every five months within the building, as part of the terms of our Lease with our Landlord.

Benefits & Costs We charge our tenants rent at £6 per day, which is £182.50 per month, per workspace, payable in advance, together

with one month's rent by way of a returnable deposit. For this, tenants get: A workspace approximately 2.5m X 1.5m; Business rates paid; Heat and light; Broadband (wireless or wired); Security; Cleaning; Free tea and coffee; Free reasonable use of the meeting rooms; Access to the services of the Gloucestershire Social Enterprise Centre.

We are negotiating with a national organisation – Peninsula – to be able to provide a group service covering all HR and H&S issues.

Social Enterprise While we welcome any organisation that contributes to the community, we are keen to sign up co-operatives, charities, not-for-profits and other social enterprises, to complement our existing, socially focused tenants.



For more information, please phone Clare Mahdiyone on 01453 762271 or Max Comfort on 07973 635868. The Exchange, Brick Row, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 1DF – info@secstroud.org.uk

Pig Business: Film and Campaign

Four years ago I set out to discover who was paying the true price for the 'cheap' imported pork for sale in Britain's supermarkets. I have produced a film called 'Pig Business' which documents the damaging impact factory farming is having on the quality of our food, the environment and the health and welfare of agricultural communities. Watch the film on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/2SNoTZ>

We need your help to ensure the film results in less but better sourced pig meat being the norm. After watching the film, even environmentalists told me that they had no idea of the extent of harm that factory farming causes; an alarming issue being the focus on soya production in the Amazon, which is not only destroying the forests, but replacing local food production with crops that feed animals.



Far happier pigs at Hawkwood

This reflects Greenpeace's 2009 report 'Slaughtering the Amazon'. The link between meat consumption and climate change was emphasised by Lord Stern. The recent Friends of the Earth report 'Eating the Planet' showed that the world's increasing population can still be fed without intensive livestock production. We need to change the sick system now.

Films have proved to be hugely successful in raising awareness of massive injustices,

Please contact us on info@pigbusiness.co.uk, or by phone 0207 584 6592 where a member of the team will be happy to answer any questions. Thank you, Tracy Worcester, Pig Business <http://www.pigbusiness.co.uk>.

forcing decision makers to change the law and businesses to improve their practices. We want to harness the existing momentum to achieve real legislative changes and increase the awareness of the average consumer. This is why we are asking you to get involved.

OUR CAMPAIGN We are organising an event at the House of Commons between 6-8pm on 27th January to lobby MPs. It will be a chance for MPs to hear what experts are saying and commit to the legislative changes on labeling, on procurement of sustainable welfare friendly meat in schools and hospitals, and on banning imports of pig meat that are of a lower standard than UK laws allow. Zac Goldsmith, Peter Ainsworth MP (Con), Alan Simpson MP (Lab), and Tim Farron MP (Lib) will host the event and many NGOs, small farmers, vets and doctors will speak to the assembled MPs and journalists.

WHAT YOU CAN DO We hope to galvanize enough popular support for MPs to really feel the pressure, by getting as many people as possible writing letters. This is the perfect time, pre- election, for MPs to show that they respond to the concerns of their constituents. Can any Stroud Community Agriculture members do the following?

1. Screen the film to raise awareness in the local community. We can send you a copy – either the More 4 version or a stronger director's cut.
2. Write a short letter to your MP at <http://www.pigbusiness.co.uk/email-mp.php> on how you feel about the film, and ask your MP to: 1) watch the DVD of Pig Business that we have sent them; 2) come to your screening if you hold one; 3) attend the Pig Business event at the House of Commons on the 27th of January 2010 at 6-8pm.

Tell a Friend about SCA

Stroud Community Agriculture has grown steadily and is now producing 190 veg shares each week, eaten by at least 388 people in 188 member households. At the moment the farms have the capacity to grow about 200 shares per week, so some new members would be welcome. We could produce another 10 shares, feeding another 20 people, and the extra income would help SCA to thrive. New members nearly always come by word of mouth, so please ask a friend to join.

New people are welcome to farm events to have a look before they sign up, and they can have a trial veg share. They can then have weekly or fortnightly vegetables. *Jade*

For a membership form ring 0845 458 0814;
www.stroudcommunityagriculture.com

Molly has moved

Molly Scott Cato 01453-298184
Green economist, social philosopher, blogger
Lavender Villa, Beards Lane, Stroud, GL5 4HD
<http://gaianeconomics.blogspot.com/>



Harvest festival display

Photo on page 6 is by Ruth Davey, who is documenting the farm. Contact: ruth@ruth-davey.co.uk
Other photos by Francis Gobey

Email is easiest for me

In the interests of improving communication between members and keeping you all informed, I would encourage you to join SCA's emailing community. I know what a blight a computer can be but as a means of getting information to a lot of SCA members quickly and simply, email is great!

If you currently do not receive emails from SCA and would like to, then please let me have an email address for you - please send it (in an email!). Thank you.

membership@stroudcommunityagriculture.org

Carol, Membership Administrator

Heart-warming story

SCA has just received a membership application for Jennifer D'Aubigny for one years membership plus veg share - it has been bought for Jennifer by her six children as a 60th birthday present. Jennifer's daughter Ysanne writes: "Jennifer is very excited about her present because she has wanted to join the scheme for a while".

Collect your veg in Gloucester

One of our members has set up a new collection point in Linden, Gloucester - so that you can collect your veg from there instead of Hawkwood or Brookthorpe. Matthew will collect shares on Wednesday mornings, which will then be available in Linden from 2 o'clock. Shares will be bagged up and in a locked shed with a combination lock, so you can collect from there at your convenience. If you would like to find out more or get involved, please contact Carol Mathews on membership@stroudcommunityagriculture.org

Stroud Community Agriculture

Everyone is welcome to join in and enjoy the farm, including non-members.

We are looking for new members for the farm. Please tell everyone you know about us. If you know of an event or somewhere that you think would be good for us to promote the farm, please let the core group know. 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 be transparent in all our affairs. To make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible. To strive towards social justice.*
- *To encourage practical involvement on all levels.*
- *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.*

Core Group

There are eight of us on the core group, meeting one evening a month. At each meeting we get a report about the farm and then discuss all those issues that support the smooth running of SCA.

Simon Hanks	01452 812608	
Simon Ryder	01452 504607	s.ryder@artnucleus.org
Andy Jones	01453 840351	metamorph@onetel.com
Molly Scott-Cato	01453 764730	molly@gaianeconomics.org
Justin Tait	01453 762990	justintait@hotmail.com
Richard Swann	01453 765588	rswann@tiscali.co.uk
Sue Dance	01453 752068	susandance@gmail.com
Mark Harrison	01453 752484	mark@plumtucker.co.uk
Sue Baker	01453 757259	sue.baker@talktalk.net

For more information please contact Jade on jadebashford@hotmail.com

General Enquiries & Information

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