FARM NEWS

It’s early September and the season is starting to change. There is now a nip in the early morning air and coolness in the wind. The summer has been a really good one with plenty of sunshine. We made hay at Hawkwood on the hottest day of the year. While it was great for drying grass I felt sorry for our wonderful willing helpers who surly wilted. At Brookthorpe we mowed hay on a Friday and baled it up on Monday. It’s not often you get to make bone dry hay in 3 days! I would like to thank all those who toiled away helping to bring in the hay, we had a lot of it this year and the many hands sure made it easier.

The cows are doing ok but we are still waiting for one more to calve. They should have all calved back in April/May but unfortunately when the bull visited last year in July/August two of them did not get in calf before I took him back to his farm. This meant he had to come back for a second visit resulting in a drawn out calving.

We do not own our own bull and rely on
hiring one from a neighbouring farm. The advantages are we don’t have to keep a bull on the farm all year long, but we also don’t have any choice on the breed. Hiring one from a hire company is expensive and risks buying in diseases.

I am in talks with Oaklands Park Camphill in Newnam about sharing a bull. They are also Biodynamic and would be interested in the same breed as we need.

The sheep flock is set to expand this autumn as we will be adding five more sheep to the flock that have been raised from the 2012 crop of lambs. This will bring the number of ewes we have up to eleven. They are really starting to look like a flock now. Some of this year’s lambs are now ready to go to the butchers and will be available to buy from late September.

Some of our sheep recently spent the day entertaining the crowds at Stroud Festival of Nature. They were very popular but regularly mistaken for “really cute goats”!!

Arek our apprentice is set to leave us soon. He has been offered a job in Botton Village Camphill to manage a garden up there. He has been a great help to us here and I will be sad to see him go. I wish him and his family all the best in their new place.

Farmer Sam Hardiman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES FOR YOUR DIARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farm Days:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat Sept 28th at Brookthorpe,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat Oct 26th at Hawkwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat Nov 23rd at Brookthorpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(No farm day in December)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30 – 4.30pm with shared tea &amp; cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harvest Supper</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Oct 13th 2 - 6pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Brookthorpe Village Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bring &amp; Share meal</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VEGGIE REPORT

This season has turned out to be one of the best in a number of years. Most crops are growing well and there is a feeling of abundance on the farm. I so often seem to report some kind of disaster in these newsletters, a crop failure or pest attack of some kind, but this article will contain no such thing. As usual some crops have grown very well, and some not so well, but nothing has failed. We have the largest area under cultivation this year than we have ever had, and this has added to the sense of abundance. There should be plenty of vegetables maturing during these next two months to keep us going throughout the winter, though I can’t help but be a bit cautious and add that as I write this at the beginning of Sept it is quite dry and no rain is forecast for the week ahead. We could really do with a good soak.

As I mentioned in the summer newsletter, we have grown many early crops (cabbage, spinach, cauliflower, broad beans, carrots amongst others) and all of the potatoes at Hawkwood rather than at Brookthorpe. We have been very pleased with all of these. The potatoes grew really well and were relatively easy to keep clear of weeds and, crucially, were very easy to harvest. The majority of the vegetables grown for the autumn and winter are down at Brookthorpe, and are doing equally as well as the early ones.

During these next two months (Sept and Oct) we will plant up all of the polytunnels with the winter salads and perpetual spinach, and plant out the spring cabbages and over-winter broad beans in the field. Both of these outdoor crops should grow just enough to establish themselves to survive the winter, ready to grow away early next spring.

There will be some changes in our farm team this autumn. Tim (who worked with us over the summer) has now left to start an apprenticeship on another farm. Arek (our current apprentice) will be leaving to take up a gardening post at Botton Camphill village in North Yorkshire, and Vassilis, who came to work with us for the summer is going to stay on as our new apprentice. Unfortunately, due to her illness, Ute has had to retire from active hands-on work on the farm, but she still continues to administer and provide training for our apprentices. I would like to thank everyone who has worked on the farms this season (including our work-sharers and young students) and wish everyone all the success in their new places.

Farmer Mark Harrison

As we have mentioned in our reports Arek, our apprentice will be leaving us in October. Arek came to the farm in Sept 2011 and has worked with us since then. He has completed the two-year biodynamic apprenticeship scheme and will taking up a post at the garden at Botton Camphill village in North Yorkshire. Arek has been a brilliant apprentice and farm team member, very keen to learn all aspects of the jobs on the farm and great support to us all. So Arek, from me, Sam, and Ute, we wish you, Adilia and baby Arvo all the best in your new home and job. Hopefully you will be able to use some of the skills learned here up there, gardening in the arctic.

Thanks for being such a great work mate.

Farmer Mark
AUTUMN – Time to celebrate the harvest

With the beginning of September the sun travels lower and the light has changed. The days shorten by 4 minutes every day. There is more dew, and mists go up and down until, eventually, the sun wins the battle between light and moisture. In the evenings we begin to see the stars again, with orange golden Venus at sunset in the west, and all the shooting stars at night.

The swallows are about to leave, with their swift swirl awaiting the departure to the warmer south, making us aware that we are now heading for the cold and dark season.

The gardens are full of flowers. Walking along the "pick your own flowers" at Hawkwood, the air is full of the fragrant smell of the nicotiana flowers which is strongest at dusk. The apple and pear trees are full of fruits of which we had some already in the share. There will even be some grapes in the Walled Garden in October.

And in the field there ripen all the vegetables we spend so many hours growing and weeding and protecting them from pigeons, badgers, and other threats. So far it looks good: we will have a good harvest!

It is the time to give thanks and celebrate what nature has given to us. We will do that with our annual Harvest Dinner. We had planned to do it at Hawkwood, but we couldn’t get a room in October. Therefore, it will be held in Brookthorpe Village Hall, which has the benefit of a fully equipped kitchen and been set up for children indoors and outdoors. We plan to start at 2pm with apple juicing outdoors (bring your own apples and container to collect the juice). Then enjoy the ‘bring and share’ meal later in the afternoon when it gets colder outside. The date will be Sunday October the 13th between 2pm and 6pm.

Ute Schlossmacher
THE CUCURBITS: PUMPKINS, SQUASHES, and MARROWS

These vegetables belong to the *Cucurbita* genus, in the family of plants that also includes melons and cucumbers, all fruits and vegetables that love the sun and summer. They originated in America where they were very important in the cultures of the native peoples there. The names pumpkin and squash are quite interchangeable, but we tend to refer to the Halloween-type squashes as pumpkins and all of the others as winter squashes. Courgettes and marrows are in the species, *Cucurbita pepo*. They have been bred from the same plants to produce different varieties for different uses. So if left on the plant the courgette will grow to form a large marrow (but it is best eaten as a small fruit), and conversely the marrow can be picked when it is immature but is best left to grow to a large size. We are also growing custard squashes or patty pan (white scallop shaped squash) this year. They also belong to the *C. pepo* genus and are classed as a summer squash, one that will store for a month or two only.

Most of the other squashes that we grow are winter squash that belong to the species *C. maxima*. We are growing about 15 different varieties this year. They include many varieties such as ‘Crown Prince’ (the big bluey grey one) ‘Uchiki Kuri’ (orangey red onion shape) and ‘Buttercup’ (small green squash). They will all store for some months over the winter. It is this species that includes the huge show squashes. The largest squash was grown in the USA and weighed in at a mighty 911kg. I think that the largest we have grown was about 8kg. We are growing some butternut squashes. These are normally quite difficult to grow in this country as they require plenty of warmth and sun to mature properly. Every year they turn out to be quite disappointing and every year we try again. Maybe this year will be the one.

Anyway, it does look as though we will have plenty of squashes this year. They need to be stored in a cool (but not cold), dry place. We don’t really have good facilities for storing them on the farm so we may give them all out to you in October when we harvest them. That way you can store them in the best possible place - your house - and you will be able to enjoy looking at them for awhile before eating them.

_Farmer Mark Harrison_
THE POTATOES

As I mentioned in the veg report we have experimented this year with growing the potatoes at Hawkwood, rather than at Brookthorpe. One of the main reasons to try this was to see if harvesting them would be easier there.

Sam has a keen nose for finding cheap second machinery from local farms and a couple of years ago he bought an old potato harvester for £75. This machine cuts under a row of potatoes, lifts all of the soil and potatoes up and onto a chain elevator which rumbles everything around so that the soil falls through the chains and the potatoes travel up and off the end, falling onto the ground. When we used this machine at Brookthorpe, where the soil is very hard and cloddy when dry, most of the soil travelled up and off end of the elevator with the potatoes and buried them again. At Hawkwood all of the soil fell through the chains and the potatoes fell cleanly onto the top of the soil. We could then go behind and pick them up very quickly. We had a great farm-day in August harvesting potatoes with children and adults.

The downside of growing the spuds at Hawkwood, where the soil is quite thin and dry, is that we had to water them (and many other crops) constantly in the hot dry weather of July, and they are affected by scab. Scab is a fairly superficial disease of the skin that only really affects the appearance of the potatoes and not the eating quality. It is particularly problematic in dry conditions (which is what we had this summer) and in alkaline soil, which is exactly what we have at Hawkwood. Some varieties suffer more than others. The second-early variety we grew was “Kestrel” (it had a slight purple blush) and it seemed to suffer badly with the scab. The early variety was “Accent” (which I thought was delicious) and it was less affected. There is another variety called “Milva” which we haven’t harvested yet. With experience we can choose those that do better, but I think that it will always be a problem if we do continue to grow potatoes at Hawkwood.

So the harvesting was easy, the yield was not bad, the quality okay, and the farmers fairly pleased with it all.

Farmer Mark Harrison

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss’d cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o’er-brimm’d their clammy cells.

John Keats
SUMMER CAMP

On the bank holiday weekend in August we had our annual summer camp at Hawkwood. It was not so well attended as last year, but those who came had a great time. The tents got pitched up at the bottom of our hayfield by the stream.

The evening started with a bring your own BBQ. There were delicious burgers, sausages, vegetarian burgers, sweetcorn, courgettes and other veggies on the barbecue, as well as potatoes, which were harvested the same afternoon on the farm day. We extended the meal into a glorious sunset and finished at dusk with cake.

As it got darker all the kids and many of the adults wanted to see the badgers at Hawkwood. They set off to the Hawkwood College compost heap where one can usually observe badgers helping themselves to the leftovers of Hawkwood kitchen. Maybe the group was too big or too noisy: none of them appeared. The badger observation turned into a night walk along wood field with two adjacent badger sets which was fun.

Back at the fire the evening ended with a joined story. Everyone contributed one sentence and as it made the round several times the most wonderful story evolved of a man who walked his dog and got into the most miraculous adventures.

Now it was time for the kids to go to bed and for me to go home. On my way back up the hill the buggy died on me. Mark and Bruno came to rescue me and wheeled me all the way up in a wheelchair.

The next day was spent with games in the fields and the woods. I wasn’t there but Rowan Hardiman drew a picture (seen above) of the swing in the woods, the drystone walled shelter they built and the path leading to it.

Ute Schlossmacher
REAL Bread for SCA

‘ChickPeas’ Organic REAL breads are hand made to order from Ruscombe, and available for you at the SCA. With a passion for good, nutritious, REAL bread, using organic ingredients and a long fermentation process, these breads contain NO improvers, preservatives, or artificial additives. You can order your REAL bread via email, and collect from either Brookthorpe on Mondays @ 7.30pm or Hawkwood veg shed on Fridays @ 9.30am. So, all you have to do is register your interest to chickpeas.bread@gmail.com. Two different varieties of REAL bread are offered each week in either Large or Small sizes. You will receive these by email, and simply order by return indicating your preferred collection point. Payment is on collection either by cash or by electronic transfer. For those who are not internet friendly you can telephone 01453 757348 for more information. Thank-you!

*Bread making workshops in your home now available. Please ring for details*

SCA Meal

Before the summer holidays we managed to organise a shared meal for SCA members and potential new members. It was held at the Springhill Co-housing site in Stroud where Nicky Ferguson and a team of volunteers created a most delicious meal. There was a good turnout of people who enjoyed a quick tour of the communal buildings before the meal, which was a complete success. The majority of the ingredients were from our farms ... you could taste the freshness in every mouthful ... and the kitchen team worked hard in the kitchen to deliver the high quality meal for us. It was a great opportunity to meet fellow SCA members, farm workers and future friends.

Due to this success, we will be having a Winter one later on in the year. Look out for details by email and in the packing sheds!

*Claire Griffiths*

APPRECIATION ... thanks to all involved

Well its been a year since we joined Stroud CSA and I wanted to write and say how good it has been. Each week we get a lovely bag of veg that we know has been produced locally by people who care for what they do. We feel part of something. My children are healthier as I now cook far
more veg. We have discovered veg we didn’t even know existed! As my husband brings the bag in each week it is unpacked with enthusiasm. I stop to consider how I will use each one. Last week I allocated the chard to a cheesy garlic dip which has been perfect for lunches with some pitta bread, the squash has sat looking beautiful on the window sill waiting for today when it has been roasted ready to be stuffed with Gruyère and bacon, to be had with a green salad and a French carrot salad. At the weekend I will experiment using the courgettes in a lasagne. The children can’t seem to get enough of the green beans both raw and steamed. The only downside is that I am the only one in the family that will eat beetroot but I am working on it. I am slowly turning my husband to the dark side with a Swedish beetroot salad and a lovely beetroot relish. Occasionally there is a rumour that goes around the house that I have added the beetroot to a chocolate cake, but of course I would never do that(!)

We have not yet joined in any of the social events, we are a bit shy but we are hoping to come to the next barn dance and meet others, then we would really feel part of it all.

The point of this email….ah yes, well please can you pass on my thanks to all involved. It has changed the way we live for the better.

Joanna Teague – SCA member

Biodynamic Association in Partnership with Hawkwood

As part of a raft of new initiatives by the Biodynamic Association (BDA), they have invited Hawkwood to serve as an education/course provider for them.

Hawkwood is developing its programme in nature and sustainability, with a number of courses that offer practical anthroposophical activities, such as biodynamic fruit growing, astroosophy, an introduction to biodynamic food production and a longer course with Bernard Jarman starting in January. Under the new partnership, certain designated courses and events on Hawkwood’s programme will qualify for a 10% discount for people who are members of the BDA. The BDA hopes this will inspire people to join and enjoy the many benefits of the association.
Here is a brief listing of BDA courses coming up. Full details from Hawkwood tel. 01453 759034 or www.hawkwoodcollege.co.uk

• Why Biodynamic Food? A quest for quality - with Barnard Jarman
  Friday 25th & Saturday 26th October (BDA)
  Open to all. £69 including delicious lunch and refreshments

• Talk: The Quality of Biodynamic Food – Barnard Jarman
  Friday 25th October 7.30pm
  Includes food tasting. £7.50 for public. FREE to course participants

• Raw Food for Winter Wellness [Sorry, this course doesn’t qualify for BDA discount]
  Sunday 3rd November
  £70 including lunch, raw food and drinks from Judy’s own recipes

• Food, Land and Healing with Miche Fabre Lewin, Flora Gathorne-Hardy & Barnard Jarman
  Friday 6th – Sunday 8th December (BDA)
  Residential single £235; shared £200; non-resident £160 inc. meals

Biodynamic Farming and Gardening (BDA) - Bernard Jarman. This series of six day courses covers practical aspects and explores the principle ideas standing behind bio-dynamics. Suitable for complete newcomers as well as those familiar with this approach.

£350 for the whole course inc. lunches. Part-time attendance by arrangement.

  • Life, nature and the human being Tuesday 14 January
  • Ecology and agriculture Tuesday 28 January
  • Soil fertility and the nature of substance Tuesday 11 February
  • Farm Animals - the farmer’s assistants Tuesday 25 February
  • The art of compost making Tuesday 11 March
  • The World of the Stars, Moon and Planets Tuesday 25 March

We look forward to seeing you soon at Hawkwood!

Best wishes
from Katie Lloyd-Nunn - Development Coordinator at Hawkwood
SEASONAL RECIPES..

Some simple and delicious warming recipes to keep you going through the autumn...

SQUASH, COCONUT & CHILLI CURRY

This is the sort of thing you can rustle up on a weekday evening, making it as hot or as mild as you like!

800g-1kg squash (butternut/crown prince, or kabocha)
2 tbspns sunflower oil
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
2-4 mild or medium red chillies, de-seeded and sliced
1 good spoonful of your favourite curry powder or paste to taste
400ml tin coconut milk
A squeeze of lime or lemon juice
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Peel and de-seed the squash, then cut into bite-sized chunks.

Heat the oil in large saucepan over medium heat and add the onion to cook gently for about 10 minutes.

Stir in the curry powder or paste and cook for a minute or two.

Add the squash, with some salt and pepper, and stir well to coat it in the spicy, oniony mixture. Cook for a further minute or so.

Pour in the coconut milk, stir well and bring to a simmer. Cover and cook gently for 20-25 minutes, stirring carefully every now and then. You want the squash to be perfectly tender and yielding, but not mushy or falling apart. The cooking time will depend on the squash variety.

When the squash is cooked to your liking, taste the curry and add more salt and pepper if desired.

Finish with a good spritz of lime or lemon juice. Ladle into bowls and serve with rice, naan or flatbreads.

Just a thought ... you can add cut or whole green beans 8-10 minutes before the end of cooking for added colour and texture. Plus some chopped coriander leaves or a scattering of dessicated coconut.

Let us know your recipe ideas... chickpeas@hotmail.co.uk
**CULLEN SKINK**

300g smoked pollack or haddock fillet
650ml fish or vegetable stock
A large knob of butter
2 large leeks, trimmed, washed and finely sliced
500g potatoes, peeled and cut into 4-5mm cubes
4 tbspns double cream
Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper

*This is a delicious Scottish soup. Very soothing, simple and quick from beginning to end.*

Put fish into a saucepan and add the stock. Bring slowly to the boil, then immediately turn off the heat, flip the fish over in the pan, cover and leave for 3 minutes. Turn the fish over again and check if it is cooked – the flesh should all be opaque and flake easily from the skin. If not, leave it in the covered pan for a few minutes longer. Once cooked, lift it out of the pan onto a board, reserving the stock. Take the fish off the skin in large flakes, checking for any bones as you go.

Heat butter in a large pan over a medium heat. Add the leeks and sweat gently for about 10 minutes until soft. Add the potatoes and reserved stock. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 10 minutes until the potatoes are tender.

Stir in the cream and flakes of smoked fish. Reheat gently, without boiling, then taste and add salt and pepper as desired. Ladle into warm bowls and finish with a scattering of parsley if you like.

Serve at once, with a hunk of REAL brown bread and butter.

*You can replace the leeks with spring onions if you like.*

**HOCUS-POCUS PUMPKIN SCONES** *(A Halloween delight - delicious with soup!)*

250g pumpkin / butternut squash 50g butter
450g self-rasing flour 100g parmesan cheese
1.5 tsp salt 125g milk

Peel skin off the pumpkin or squash. Cut into chunks & steam for 10 minutes until tender.
Rub butter into flour & salt. Add pumpkin/squash and parmesan cheese.
Add milk a little at a time until you have mixed to a soft dough-
Turn out onto lightly floured surface and knead a little adding a little flour if necessary
Cut into shapes and place on a greased baking tray. Sprinkle more cheese on top if desired. Bake in a hot oven (220 C) for 20 mins until golden!
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

The core group meets one evening a month. For dates, venues & times, contact Mark Harrison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark Harrison</td>
<td>01453 752484</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mark@plumtucker.co.uk">mark@plumtucker.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Hardiman</td>
<td>07792 934348</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jessica_hardiman@hotmail.com">jessica_hardiman@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alun Hart</td>
<td>01453 790766</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Alun.hart@gmail.com">Alun.hart@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Holtermann</td>
<td>07749518024</td>
<td><a href="mailto:helen@lilou.me.uk">helen@lilou.me.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Ashby</td>
<td>01452 814620</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kevin.ashby@phonecoop.coop">Kevin.ashby@phonecoop.coop</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Charter</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Simon.charter@live.co.uk">Simon.charter@live.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare Sheridan</td>
<td>01453 827286</td>
<td><a href="mailto:clare@solarious.co.uk">clare@solarious.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Daley</td>
<td>01453 755866</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sallydaley@hotmail.com">sallydaley@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruno Sabin</td>
<td>01452 507533</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brunosabin@yahoo.com">brunosabin@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ute Schloesser</td>
<td>01453 757793</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ute@intamail.com">ute@intamail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

General enquiries and information: Clare & Paul Sheridan 0845 4580814
info@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org    www.StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Membership Admin: Carol Matthews membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Newsletter: Claire Griffiths chickpeas@hotmail.co.uk