Welcome to your Winter Newsletter!
Do you know this feeling in late December when you think "gosh, it's nearly Christmas, where did this year go?". We know it very well so it is a good time for reflections of what has happened during the course of the year. Most of our crops did well, and we are still growing some vegetables - mainly lettuces and cabbages to supply us all with some fresh, healthy greens. Our biggest success was a community buy out of the Hammonds Land which we will start cultivating next year (more information in this newsletter). Thank you for all your help - it wouldn't have happened without your support!
We are also excited about our "Together Tuesdays" that we are introducing in the new year. These will be weekly farm work days for anyone who is interested in helping with the farm activities (more information below).

We've got few dates for your diary. Like every year we will be celebrating Christmas by singing to the cows on the Christmas Eve, there will also be the Three Kings and Candlemas celebrations. We hope to see you there!

**Happy Christmas**

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<th>Event</th>
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<td>24th December 2015</td>
<td>Christmas Eve's Singing to the cows</td>
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<td>6th January 2016</td>
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**Together Tuesdays**

Our principles as CSA include offering opportunities for re-connecting with the earth and developing a sense of community around the farm. This has been done in many ways over the years, and now we’d like to try a new way of inviting members to become more closely involved with your farm: **Together Tuesdays**.

Instead of one-off work days where we ask members to help us tackle bigger jobs on the farm (which will continue as usual when needed), the idea is to have a set time each week when any and all members who would like to spend a bit of time on the farm and get more involved can do so. Starting **26 January**, we’ll meet every **Tuesday**, rain or shine, at 10:00 and work until 12:30. Helpers should feel free to bring a packed lunch to enjoy together afterwards if you’d like.

It will be an opportunity to get outside, meet other farm members and get to know your farm better. Jobs will vary throughout the year depending on what the farm needs.

Since our farm is spread over two sites, we’ll try to let everyone know which site we’ll be meeting at on the Monday evening before. We’ll post it on our facebook page so you can always check there (you can read the page even if you don’t have a facebook account, just search for Stroud Community Agriculture facebook) and we’re looking into an easy way to text message members who would like to be informed regularly. We’ll send out an email reminder to everyone before the first Together Tuesday with more details, or feel free to get in touch with me if you have questions - Page (page.dykstra@gmail.com, 07869630376).
Singing to the cows

We will be singing to the animals as usual this Christmas Eve. This year it will take place at Brookthorpe only, starting at 5PM. Please make your way to the barn quietly, there will be carol sheets by the door. This is a very special event with a unique mood of reverence and rejoicing.
To help maintain this, parents please keep your children with you through out. Please don't drive down to the farm yard, park on the Brookthorpe drive where you can.
(If you feel strongly about singing at the Hawkwood barn instead and would be willing to lead the singing there please get in touch).

Three Kings preparation

We will be spraying the Three Kings preparation on January 6th. We will stir them at Hawkwood and spray there, Brookthorpe and the new land next to Hawkwood.
You are welcome to join in. Start time TBC.

Candlemas

Please come join in Candlemas celebrations at Brookthorpe on Sunday, 31 January starting at 3pm.
Candlemas (also known as Imbolc) is an ancient festival marking the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox.
Different cultures have attributed various significances to the day, but it is often thought of as a festival of light, marking the time when the days begin to lengthen. On the farm, this is the time of year when we start to experience the first signs of spring.

Farm members are asked to bring old candle ends to the packing shed a week or two in advance (watch out for the collection boxes), which will be melted together and poured into earth candles around the farm to be lit together at dusk. If anyone has a short reading, poem, song or other offering to make as we light the candles feel free to bring them.

Come join us in celebrating the increased strength of the sun as winter gives way to spring.

The SCA Annual General Meeting

The SCA next AGM will take place on Wednesday 13 March 2016. The agenda will include Hammonds Farm Lot 3 update, progress with the Community building as well a review of the accounts. It will start at 6.00pm with a bring and share buffet and the AGM will start at 7.00pm. Venue TBC.
Winter Farm Report

In my last farm report I wrote about how the weather was starting to feel autumnal, with the leaves starting to turn yellow. Well, the leaves have now fallen off but the weather continues to be very mild and distinctly unwintery! I hope I'm not tempting fate but a cold spell would probably do the farm good.

The mild weather has meant grass is still growing on the farm, so much that the cows at Hawkwood are still outside. They usually go into the barn in early November.
The cows at Brookthorpe have come into the barn. This is because while the weather is still mild we have had a lot of rain and the heavy clay soil at Brookthorpe just gets so churned up by their hooves.

The pigs are in the barn now too. This is because when its really wet they churn up the ground and cause damage to the soil structure reducing its ability to absorb water. However, carefully used the pigs do perform a very useful role on the farm especially in the vegetable rotation.

Sheep are still enjoying the fresh grass at Hawkwood

They help by graze the cover crops we grow over winter and incorporate the residues through rooting around. It is very important that we move the pigs onto new ground regularly. They will be between the top and bottom tunnels at Hawkwood in the next few weeks so you will be able to see their progress.

The farm is involved with the Biodynamic Land Trust to explore what SCA’s role might be in developing the new land. There are also a few different projects looking to use the land, including our own starter farm and we are trying to find the best way that would support these various projects.

You are welcome to take a walk across the new land and explore for yourselves the beauty of the landscape and its amazing trees.

Farmer Sam
We are well into our winter crops now, though the weather hasn’t felt very wintry so far. October was mild and wonderfully dry, but that has all been washed from our minds by a dull wet November. The fields are very wet now, and harvesting at Brookthorpe requires wading into a bit of a quagmire. We also had to bring the pigs that were out on the veg field at Hawkwood, into the barn, as they were starting to damage the wet soil.

As I wrote in the autumn newsletter we have a bountiful supply of most of the winter vegetables; that should keep us through the winter. Our potatoes and onions have run out now though, but we are able to buy in some that are produced locally.

We have now harvested all of the winter root vegetables that need to be stored. Most of the cabbages and leeks etc can tolerate very cold weather, as can the parsnips and swede, but most of the other roots can’t, and so we lift them and store in an insulated room at Brookthorpe. We try to delay this harvest till as late as possible because they don’t keep so well in store as they do in the ground, but eventually we do have to get in there. We don’t harvest the carrots to store though; they just don’t keep so well in the store. If the weather threatens to be very cold then we cover the carrots in the field with straw and plastic to insulate them. Unfortunately this does attract the mice, who for some reason enjoy living in a warm dry place with an endless supply of food.

The polytunnels have for the most part been cleared of the summer crops and replanted with the winter ones. Two of the tunnels are planted with various winter salads, one with chard, and one with cabbage and red kale. The fifth tunnel will be sowed with carrots in February for harvest in June/July. Hopefully we will have enough salad to give you a salad pack each week throughout the winter.

So with Christmas approaching now is the time to begin planning for next year’s cropping. This will be a little bit more involved than usual as we are going to have veg growing on the new, as yet to be named, adjoining field on the starter farm. It is still an exciting thing to do, looking through the catalogues at all of the pictures of perfectly grown new vegetable varieties, with their promise of sun and summer.

Happy Christmas to you all,
Starter Farm update

It feels to me like time’s speeding up. Talking to people about the starter farm, I’ve been blithely saying “in the spring”, with something of the feeling of saying “when I grow up” - a sort of future “once upon a time”. As we head into the depths of winter, that’s changed – suddenly, the weeks between now and April seem very few, with a lot to get done in them!

These next few months will be the transition period, where the starter farm moves from being an idea to a concrete reality. The BDLT now own Lot 3, SCA’s signing a lease with them any day; recent meetings between us starter farmers, farmers Mark and Sam, and the Core Group have nailed down the agreements about how we’ll share machinery, money, and time. After Christmas we’ll work out a proper cropping plan with Mark, and I guess that’s when it’ll start feeling a lot more real to me – when I can close my eyes and imagine the particular things we’ll be growing, and what we’ll be doing with them as the year moves on (mmm, hoeing...).

If all goes to plan, we’ll be busy on our piece of the newly-acquired land from April, learning to grow independently, and our produce should hit the packing sheds in July – allowing SCA to take on 50 new members.

There’s a fair bit of infrastructure we need to put in before the spring – water, brought down from Hawkwood; a secure store for tools and equipment; a small polytunnel to raise our seedlings in. One vital element will be the planting of windbreaks – the wind whips across that field, and will stunt the growth of whatever we plant if we don’t do something to protect them. Once we know where we’ll be, we’ll put in some fast-growing willow cuttings, and in a couple of years’ time, a sheltered little microclimate should have developed.

Sylvie and I went up to the BDLT office and had a look through the great bundle of documents the solicitors had passed on about the new land, to find the records of what’s been sprayed there. We were pleasantly surprised to find that the last time anything was applied to Grange Field (the top, flattish field that runs alongside Wick Street, where the starter farm will be) was May 2014. That was a fertiliser – there haven’t been any pesticides or herbicides sprayed since well before that. So by the time we’re putting our plants in the ground, the land will have had a two-year break from chemicals of any kind, and longer from the nastier stuff.

If you’d like more information, please get in touch – scastarterfarm@gmail.com

A friend of ours who’s had to leave the place where he’s been growing has donated a lot of young soft fruit bushes. They’ll be happy to get out of their pots and spread their roots into the soil, and hopefully will be fruitful for many years to come. Thanks, Frank.

We don’t yet know what Lot 3 will look like in the future – my vision is a mosaic of different ventures, some big, some small, co-operating to use the land together. The starter farm will ultimately be nestled in among these other projects, but for now, we need to find our patch, get going, and watch the rest grow up around us. That’s the next task I’m looking

(cont.)
forward to – walking the field with measuring tools and the imagination, sensing where the starter farm would fit best, going home and drawing out potential plans for it – where would this go, where would that go... The BDLT have got some workshops lined up in the coming months where all potential land users will gather to design the system.

Sylvie and I have been plugging away at funding applications too – there's one quite big one we'll hear back from in the next week or two, and a few more on the boil, so fingers crossed we can start buying the things we need before too long!

I'm really looking forward to this project becoming physical, tangible – to finishing a day's work on the starter farm with an ache in my muscles rather than my eyes and brain... I feel so grateful for the amazing warmth and support so many people are showing to this project – we're incredibly lucky to be starting out with this ready-made community of helpful, positive people around us. Here's to one last push on the plane of ideas, before we raise our first starter farm sweat.

Clare Whitney

As you are probably aware we have suffered for years with break-ins at our Hawkwood packing shed. During this time we have lost over a thousand pounds worth of meat.

We recently installed a new solid door with an expensive and strong key code lock on it that can't be cut off like a padlock.

Hawkwood college has agreed to purchase CCTV to be installed outside the shed as an added deterrent.

I am confident this time we have finally made it secure. I would like to extend a huge thank you to Charles Crittall for helping to fit the new door and lock.

The new arrangement should be easier to use too as the lock can't be left upside down!

Sam
Hello from La Jimena

Just like last year we have some lovely organic products from our close friends at fam La Jimena in Andalusia. For those who don't know La Jimena's story here are few words from Mathis.

I founded Earthshare CSA in Scotland which ran from 1994-2004, and came to realise that a shortcoming with a lot of Community Supported farms is that we try to offer an alternative to buying food from supermarkets, yet often members find themselves with no alternatives but to go to the supermarkets to acquire "mediterranean" food products. I set out to change that by buying a farm in the Andalusian mountains and offering an CSA approach for the supply of mediterranean food - to CSA's in the UK and Germany. We have had great responses, and people do come out to spent a holiday with our farm, or even want to help out at harvest time.

The idea being "to put a face to the food on your plate" or "I'll never again use oliveoil in a mindless way" (these are the comments I do hear frequently) - it's about raising awareness to the way we grow and consume food.

Thus we do not sell locally, but merely produce cooperatively among neighbours and friends to meet the growing demand of CSA members.

Once a year we supply our top quality mediterranean products as a supplement to what you guys are doing "up there!"

La Jimena Olive Oil, Olives and Fruitbox

Will be delivered to the stroud SCA in February 2016 from our family farm in Southern Spain!

Once again we are excited to offer to you our organically grown:

- Olive Oil of high quality harvested by hand from ancient olive tree varieties.
- Fruitshare Boxes containing La Jimena olive oil, Sunripened citrus with the full flavour you would not find elsewhere in the uk, almonds and sundried figs.
- Olives dried or in Brine and more.

La Jimena Olive Oil

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<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 litres</td>
<td>£ 36</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 litres</td>
<td>£ 53</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 litres</td>
<td>£ 240</td>
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- A standard fruitshare box contains 5 litres of La Jimena olive oil, and 10 kilos of mixed citrus, almonds and sundried figs.
- Price £82. please order other items additionally if you'd like them!

- A small box contains 3 litres of La Jimena olive oil, and 5 kilos of citrus, almonds and sundried figs. Price £56.
- please order other items additionally if you’d like them!

A good Olive Oil is an investment in your health and fine cooking!

Orders: as soon as possible or the latest by the 6th Januar to olivelife@lajimena.co.uk
please make your cheque out to Mathis Rosenbusch and send it to
Mark Harrison
60 Peghoe Rise, Stroud, GL5 1UR

Delivery: mid February to
SCA Brookthorpe., GL4 OUN

please note your phonenz, with your order, make sure your Cheque is present at delivery and you’d order in time before 6th Januar

More info at www.lajimena.co.uk
Mathis & Marianns Farm
in Andalucia Spain

La Jimena olives are grown on the sunny slopes of the sierra nevada without pesticides. They are picked from the ancient trees, carefully washed and dried, then milled within 48 hours of harvesting.
Marmalade Musings

Although I'm starting to understand the British obsession with tea (especially when poured hot out of a flask after a morning of harvesting in the rain) it's taken me a bit longer to embrace a love for marmalade. Either too bitter or too sweet, and rarely tasting much like an orange, I've never really met a marmalade I'd eat out of anything other than politeness. That is, until I met a marmalade made from La Jimena seville oranges.

In the journalistic spirit of full disclosure, I did make the marmalade myself so this could be read as nothing more than blowing my own trumpet, but I assure you all credit for the delicious concoction should go to the main ingredient alone.

Having never attempted homemade marmalade before, it took me a couple tries (and some pro tips from Mark) to get it to set, but it was a surprisingly fun and easy process. Several of the jars were shared and elicited requests to have my secret recipe. Alas, I had to disappoint them all as it wasn't a secret recipe but a secret ingredient. One which can only be obtained direct from the source at a few exclusive farms across the country. And, lucky you, you're a member of one of those farms!

Whether you're a marmalade newbie like me or a preserving pro, the flavour of La Jimena's seville oranges will put any other marmalade oranges to shame (and I haven't even mentioned how life changing their table oranges are...).

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Yellow Winter soup recipe

With this recipe you will make four portions of soup.

Put a generous amount of coconut oil in a big thick bottomed saucepan, when oil is quite hot add chopped onions and garlic, stir for a moment and then add ginger, chilli and turmeric. Fry for 5 minutes.

Add squash, carrots and celeriac and let it sweat for 5-10 minutes under cover stirring occasionally.

Add about 800 ml of hot stock (I made it with 2 organic stock cubes) and leave to boil for 20 minutes. Add sweetcorn and peas (I used frozen) half way through.

Then add chopped celery, spices and herbs: ground coriander and majoram (or thyme or any herbs you like), crushed all spice and juniper berries, and lemon juice to taste (I added juice of about half a small lemon). Season to taste when you serve.

Enjoy!

- 2-3 onions, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 1/2" root ginger, grated
- 1" turmeric, grated (or half a spoon of ground turmeric)
- 1 chilli, finely chopped
- small squash, chopped
- 2 small carrots - 1 grated, 1 chopped
- 1 medium celeriac, chopped
- 3-4 celery sticks, chopped
- sweetcorn and peas - 1 cup of each
- 800 ml hot vegetable stock
- herbs and spices: majoram (or thyme), ground coriander, 1 all spice and 4-5 juniper berries, crushed
- juice of half a lemon
- coconut oil for frying
Les Noms Des Pommes

This land was once peppered with
pear mains and pippins
coxes and codlins
kernels and coppins
costards and queenings

russet s and reinettes
tippets and dabinettes

Gilliflower and Nine Square
Forest Styre and Doctor Hare

If a doctor eats an apple a day
will she have an existential crisis?

If GPs their car park extend
where once was an orchard to tend
packed bumper to bumper
no room for a scrumper
on more pills will patients depend

Hammered like beaten copper
flushed or mottled
scarf skinned, streaked or striped
tart or sweet....

Lemon Roy, Strawberry Norman
Gypsy Red, Blood Royal

Royal Turk, Lane's Prince Albert, King's
Acre Bountiful, Court of Wick,
Tewkesbury Baron, Hunt's Duke of
Gloucester, Lord Derby, Colonel Vaughan,

Roundway Magnum Bonum, Laxton's
Superb, Froghmore Prolific, Netherton
Nonsuch, Braddock's Nonpareil
Flower of the West, Pride of the Orchard,
Sunset, Eden

May Queen, Beauty of Bath, Jenny Lind
and Bess Pool, Margil and Evagil

Welsh Druid, Seven Apostles, Ten
Commandments

Arlingham Schoolboys, Kill Boys, Little Herbert
Hard Knock, Northern Spy
Jackets and Petticoats
Pretty Beds and Rustycoats

Parlour Door, Old Tankard, Brandy Snap
William Crump, Tom Putt,
Fox Whelp, Catshead, Sheeps Nose,
Hens Turds
Brown Snout

Ripe apples are there for the taking
Long after the groundsman's done raking
Young fruit trees are ready for staking,
But on the ward waters are breaking -
New life is there in the making:
Motherhood, but no apple pie baking;
Nature's bounty outside all forsaking -
No awareness of free food awaking

This land was once peppered
with pear mains and pippins
coxes and codlins
kernels and coppins
costards and queenings

But now, the apples of our eye
are the ones that we buy
and they are few of these
rather three from the Antipodes:
Jazz, Pink Lady,
and dear old Granny Smith!

Paul Flinn
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.

- Mark Harrison 01453 752484 mark@plumtucker.co.uk
- Jade Bashford 01453 885233 jadebashford@hotmail.com
- Francis Gobey 01453 766339 francis.gobey@phenoecoop.coop
- Page Dykstra 07869 630376 page.dykstra@gmail.com
- Adam Biscoe 01453 759241 a.j.biscoe@gmail.com
- Simon Charter 01453 882114 simon.charter@live.co.uk
- Clare Sheridan 01453 827286 clare@solarious.co.uk
- Sam Hardiman 07531 270206 samueljharmidan@hotmail.com
- Bruno Sabin 01452 507533 brunosabin@yahoo.com
- Matthew McStravick 07739 753956 stravick@gmail.com

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

Membership Admin: Carol Matthews membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Newsletter: Aleksandra Osinska creativealeks@gmail.com