Dates for your diary!

Singing to the cows
Monday 24th December, 5:30PM Brookthorpe

We will be singing to the animals as usual this Christmas Eve. It will take place at our Brookthorpe farm at 5:30pm. 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 throughout. Please don't drive down to the farm yard, park on the Brookthorpe drive where you can.

Three Kings Preparation
Sunday 6th January, 1:30pm, Hawkwood

We will be spraying this special preparation on the land. Meeting point is at Hawkwood barn at 1:30pm. See more details about the event on page 3.

Merry Christmas!
Winter Farm Report

Well, things have been very different on the farm since Sam departed on sabbatical in October. There’s a big Sam-shaped hole in the farm team, we have all had to stretch ourselves to fill the gap, but we are managing to survive, nothing has died yet. The hole is set to get bigger as Else is leaving us at Christmas, and we’re all going to have step up even more. Ruth, who volunteered with us in April, has now joined us for the winter and spring.

All of the crops that survived the drought in the summer are doing very well. We have harvested all of the crops that can be damaged by severe winter weather (such as beetroot, celeriac and kohlrabi) and put them into our insulated store at Brookthorpe. All the crops still in the fields should tolerate the winter weather. We leave the carrots in the ground, as they keep much better there, but we cover them with 5 layers of crop covers to protect them from the frost. As I mentioned in my autumn report, we have much reduced crops of parsnips and artichokes this year due to the drought and far fewer leeks.

We have experienced quite a bit of damage from aphids on plants this winter. All of the salad rocket sown in one of the polytunnels was destroyed by these insects. They suck the sap from the leaves, and are usually much more of a problem in the spring and summer, but for some reason have persisted much later this year. They are also a big problem on the brussel sprouts in the field, damaging the outer leaves of the sprouts. They are present on many of the salad plants in the polytunnels but have not been so destructive. I think we need a bit of colder weather to knock them back.

I would like to finish with a big thank you to everyone on the farm team this year. Samantha, Else, Ellie and Christine, and now Ruth. Thanks for all of your hard work. I have to say a special big thanks to Else, who is returning to Denmark to complete her agriculture course. Thank you so much for your hard work, dedication to the farm, and all round good natured presence, it has been a pleasure to work with you.

Happy Christmas to everyone,

Farmer Mark

Community Building booking

Our Community Building is available for booking. It costs £5 per hour or £40 per day.

If you want to find out more and book please contact Joe at joe.mancell@gmail.com.

You can check the availability on our website: http://www.stroudcommunityagriculture.org/community-building-booking/
**New kids on the... field**

We are trying out a few different varieties of endive, chicory and radicchio this year. These plants are all in the same family as lettuce (as are thistles and dandelion). They all have fairly crunchy bitter leaves, depending on how much they have been blanched. Endive is an annual salad vegetable, which often looks similar to a green lettuce. Chicory is a perennial plant; they will grow year after year. They usually have green or speckled coloured leaves. Radicchio is also a perennial, and has red leaves. Many of them are quite cold tolerant, so we sow them in July, for harvesting late autumn and throughout the winter. This will give a greater variety of salad to put in the mixed salad packs through the winter. Some people don’t like their bitter taste, but they do add colour and variety to the salad packs at a time of year when it is quite difficult to grow salad crops. It is pretty much impossible to grow lettuce in late winter in our climate, so if you see lettuce in the salad, then it will most likely have been imported from the south of France.

*Farmer Mark*

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**Three Kings Preparation**

Each year on January 6th – the day that the three kings of Orient paid their respects to the new-born Jesus child – we stir and spray out a special preparation and pay our respects to the land. Unlike the biodynamic preparations used on the farm, it is not used to bring vitality and enhance fertility. It is an offering to the elemental world and a blessing to the farm around whose boundary we walk.

The Three Kings Preparation was developed by an early biodynamic farmer who had the capacity for perceiving the beings of the elemental world. When the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima he could experience on his farm the shattering effect they had on the earth’s life body and how the elemental beings on his farm became disorientated. He wanted to bring about harmony once again and thought long and hard about what to do. The journey of devotion by the three kings gave him the inspiration and the idea of the preparation was born.

Each of the three kings brought a gift – gold, frankincense and myrrh respectively. These are the substances used in the preparation and which in a finely diluted form are carried out on to the farm. They are combined and dynamised in a pestil and mortar (usually on New Year’s Eve) and then stirred in water for an hour in the afternoon of January 6th before being sprayed out on the land at Hawkwood, Stroud Community Agriculture and Oakbrook Farm. If you would like to participate please just come along. You are also welcome to bring a bottle with you so that you can take some home for your own garden afterwards. It should be sprayed out as soon as possible.

**Meeting point:** The Hawkwood barn at 1:30pm on Sunday 6th January to begin stirring. Immediately afterwards (1:40) we go to spray in groups. One group will go to Brookthorpe and spray along the farm boundary. The other group will do the same around the land at Hawkwood and a third will go to Oakbrook Farm. The aim is to complete the spraying by the time darkness falls at around 4:30pm. While we are stirring I will share some further thoughts about the preparation and how it came about.

*Bernard Jarman*
Among the key thoughts which inspired the founding of Stroud Community Agriculture were questions such as: Can we make a small farm economically viable and provide a decent income for the farmer? Can we find a new economic model which instead of relying on competition builds on the principle of mutual support? By coming together as a community can we sow the seeds of change? For the last sixteen years Stroud Community Agriculture has successfully demonstrated that a farm supported by the community can be economically viable and become a cultural and social focus in the locality.

All over the world new economic models are being explored and developed to replace the mass exploitation of people and planet that underpins so much of our consumer society. Instead of cheap industrially produced food there is growing awareness of the need to have high quality, locally grown organic food free of chemical additives. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a very effective model for achieving this but is not the only one. Cooperative marketing systems, regional associations and the many forms of direct marketing are all effective working models. The many different approaches will be explored during the annual conference of the biodynamic movement held at the Goetheanum in Switzerland.

The conference is in English and German and all German lectures will be translated. It is open to everyone including non-farmers. It is an opportunity for getting to know some of the many new and well established initiatives operating across the world. Full details of the conference and how to book can be found via the following link:


Please get in touch if you would like to discuss this further.

Bernard Jarman

If you were picking your veg up from Hawkwood or Brookthorpe over the last couple of months you might have noticed a big white board with some questions related to the farm. If you wonder what it is all about here are a few words of explanation.

The core group and the farm team are trying to get the bigger picture of where the farm is at the moment and where it is going. After some conversations we decided to undertake a SWOT(H) analysis which would give each of us an opportunity to give an honest feedback about the farm. SWOT(H) stands for Strengths, Weeknesses, Opportunities and Threats and we also added Hopes at the end of it (thanks Simon!). Establishing what we all think of the farm was the first milestone in the visioning. There were a few common points that emerged in the analysis and we thought if would be a good idea to ask the farm members what they think. 'Community' and 'Food' were the first points that came out hence the questions on the white boards. Over the next months we will carry on bombarding you with more questions (we hope you don't mind) until we have a good chunk of material to work with. We will report on the progress in the next newsletter.

I hope that together we can generate the vision of the farm and establish a good strategy for the future.

Aleks Osinska
Mathis Rosenbusch was a visionary and pioneer of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), founder of the farm “La Jimena” in Andalusia, biodynamic farmer and most of all father and husband.

On May 1st 2018 Mathis died in a tragic, work related accident. What we are left with now is the farm, La Jimena, a farm that he himself once called his life’s work. Connected with it is the vision to make it possible to include Mediterranean produce into a CSA model, to create a way of agriculture that respects nature and humans and their cycles. The consumers get the opportunity to reconnect with the land and with how their food is grown.

In the 1980s, during his apprenticeship as a biodynamic farmer, Mathis learnt from his tutor Trauger Groh about the concept of CSA. This was, at the time, pretty much unknown. After 10 years of experience on biodynamic farms in Germany, Mathis moved to Scotland, to the wider community of the Findhorn Foundation (FF). Here he founded, together with Christopher Raymont and the gardeners of the FF, the CSA “Earth Share”. Mathis was the main farmer of the project and gradually developed it to 160 subscribers. As such, it became one of the biggest CSAs in Britain and became a model for other farmers who were looking for a more sustainable way of marketing their produce. The Soil Association decided to promote this concept and Mathis was invited to talk at meetings about “Earth Share”. At these meetings connections were made with other CSAs in Britain, and this became the basis for La Jimena farm.

The subscribers often commented to Mathis that they were committed to eating seasonal, local vegetables, but at the same time were missing olive oil and oranges. Mathis felt that it was a shame that people had to buy this produce from supermarkets. The idea grew to find a way to include these precious fruits into a CSA model. Mathis and his family found and bought a small abandoned farm in the Andalusian mountains of the Sierra Nevada. With lots of enthusiasm, love, skills and an inventive spirit Mathis rebuilt and revived the farm La Jimena. Besides his family, many volunteers, visitors, friends and subscribers came to help and experience a unique lifestyle in a place of paradise.

Steadily Mathis created a network and cooperation amongst the neighbours. People knew that they would always find valuable advice and a helping hand with Mathis. Over the year the contents of the annual La Jimena Box were produced: organic olive oil, pickled olives, herbs, herb salt, sun-dried figs, tomatoes, red peppers and almonds.

The boxes were delivered personally by Mathis to the various pick up points from the south of England to the north of Scotland in February, a time of the year when this messenger of sunshine was most welcome. The CSA concept for Mediterranean produce has worked for 17 years now through the faithfulness of the CSA members in Britain and the quality of the products. Over time the word has spread and we are now also working together with CSAs in Belgium and Germany.

As a father and husband Mathis is irreplaceable. As a visionary and farmer, he is leaving a huge gap.

We, as a family, are intending to continue his work. The vision and task “La Jimena” unites us, gives us direction and hope, and an opportunity to contribute to society. It gives us strength and optimism. We are hoping to be able to cooperate with you all for many years to come.

The Rosenbusch family; Mariann, Fenke, Iko, Birta, Milan, and Florina
La Jimena Olive Oil, Olives and Fruitbox

Will be delivered to the Stroud CSA in February 2019 from our family farm in Southern Spain!

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

- Olive oil of high quality harvested by hand from ancient olive tree varieties. 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.

- Fruit share boxes containing La Jimena olive oil, sun-ripened citrus with the full flavour you would not find elsewhere in the UK and sun-dried figs.

- Olives dried or in brine and more...

**A Standard Fruit share box** contains 5 litres of La Jimena olive oil, and 10 kilos of mixed citrus and sundried figs. **Price £ 89.**

**A Small share box** contains 3 litres of La Jimena olive oil, and 5 kilos of citrus and sundried figs. **Price £ 59.** (please order other items additionally if you'd like them)

**Extras:**

La Jimena olive oil 1l £15 / 2l £28 / 3l £39 / 5l £60 / 25l £270

Dried olives 0,5kg / £8

Extra oranges 1kg / £2.80

Extra mandarines or lemons or sevilles 1kg / £3.50

Sundried Tomatoes 100 g / £3

Herbsalt 200 g / £3

Almonds cracked 100 g / £3 or in the shell 1kg / £3

**Orders:** as soon as possible or the latest by the 6th January to Mark - by email at mark@plumtucker.co.uk or make your cheque out to Marianne Rosenbusch and send it to Mark Harrison (60 Peghouse Rise, Stroud, GL5 1UR). Please include your phone number with your order and please make sure your Cheque is present at delivery.

Delivery is planned for mid February to the SCA farm at Brookthorpe.

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**Starter Farm working group**

Would you like to get more involved in the life of the farm? We're looking for someone to join a small Starter Farm working group, to oversee the starter farm and make decisions about how it will run in future. Current members are farmer Mark, Kit the present starter farmer, and Joe from the Core Group - we'd like one more person to put our heads together with! Our current task is choosing the next starter farmer and deciding how to hand over to them. Next meeting is in early February. **If interested, please contact Mark - mark@plumtucker.co.uk. Thanks!**
Simple creamy-but-vegan celery soup

This is such a simple dish as it doesn't involve a lot of prep or frying off the veg. I'm not a vegan but I love the rich creaminess of almond milk for cooking delicious soups and then I use what's left in the carton for making porridge. You can use dairy milk if you prefer it. If you're lucky enough to get the raw milk from Stroud Micro-dairy, that makes for a super-creamy (but no longer vegan!) soup.

Wash half a head of celery well including the leaves and chop roughly into 2 cm chunks. Roughly chop half a small onion. Put the onion and celery (leaves as well) into a pan and add vegetable stock. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for about 15 minutes until the celery is tender. Cool slightly and then blend to a thickish puree. Return to the pan and add the almond milk (or milk of your choice).

Ingredients (serves 2)
- half a head of celery
- half a small onion
- 250ml of unsweetened almond milk
- 250ml vegetable stock

Depending on how salty the stock is, you may want to add more salt and a little pepper but be careful not to overpower the subtle celery flavour. I have celery salt and use that. You can add more stock or milk to thin the soup down if it is too thick. Then gently reheat and serve with a few croutons or a drizzle of oil. I sometimes freeze it in individual portions which is handy for a warming weekend lunch.

Jules

Pumpkin and swede traybake stuffing

1. Pre-heat oven to 180C (350F) Gas mark 4.
2. Butter a 20cm x 30cm roasting dish.
3. Spread the cubed bread onto a baking dish and drizzle with a little oil. Toast in the oven until golden, approximately 15-20 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, heat 2tbsp of oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a low to medium heat and gently fry the onion and bacon without colouring for 5 minutes. Add the pumpkin and swede and continue to gently fry, stirring regularly for a further 10 minutes. Lastly add the garlic and continue to stir for another 5 minutes being careful not to allow the garlic to burn. Remove from the heat and allow to cool a little.

5. In a large bowl, combine the toasted bread and pumpkin mixture adding the chopped herbs and the grated apple. Season to taste.

6. Spoon the contents into the buttered roasting dish and evenly pour over the stock. Dot with the cubes of butter, cover with foil and place in the hot oven for 15 minutes.

7. Carefully remove the foil and return to the oven for a further 15-20 minutes or until golden and sizzling.

8. Delicious served with cooked meats, salads or cheese!

Ingredients (serves 8)
- 1 large white sandwich tin loaf of bread, sliced into 2.5cm cubes
- 1 small pumpkin or squash, deseeded, peeled and chopped into 1.5cm cubes
- ¼ swede, peeled and chopped into 1.5cm cubes
- 1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 6 rashers of smoked streaky bacon, sliced into 1.5cm pieces
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 30g mixed herbs, finely chopped (such as sage, parsley and rosemary)
- 1 small baking apple, grated fresh when needed to avoid browning
- olive oil
- 150ml chicken or vegetable stock
- 50g butter, cubed

Rebecca
Celeriac slaw

I first tried celeriac as a child in a hypermarket cafeteria during a family day-trip to Calais. Perhaps it was my Breton ancestry or, more likely, the lack of imagination in 1970s British food, but I was amazed at the delicious flavour of this exotic vegetable in a creamy mayonnaise dressing. So I’m always delighted when we start getting celeriac in the shares and I can start making variations of that childhood French dish again. This is my take on Celeriac Remoulade - or Raw Slaw as we call it in my house.

Use a fairly fine hand grater if you have time as I think it provides the best texture but a food processor is fine if you’re in a rush. Vary the proportions of yoghurt and mayo to taste.

Peel and grate about a quarter of an average size celeriac into a large bowl and stir liberally with lemon juice. Add in 2-3 grated carrots. Add a handful of finely shredded cabbage if you have it; white cabbage adds a hint of pepperiness whereas red cabbage provides a romantic pink hue to the slaw. You can also use some raw grated beetroot, again it will go somewhat pink. Add in 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise, 2 table spoons of natural yoghurt (Greek-style is my preference), a splash of olive oil, a splash of white wine/cider vinegar, a generous pinch of salt and a twist of black pepper. Mix it all up thoroughly and add more lemon to taste. Garnish with a bit of chopped up parsley, coriander, chive or celery leaf depending on what you’ve got. This is a lovely side to hot or cold dishes, goes well in sandwiches and keeps for a few days in the fridge. Once you’ve used about half of it, add in a good shake of curry powder and mix well to pep it up for the second serving.

Jules

Celeriac, parsnip and potato mash

1. Bring a large pan of salted water to boil and add the vegetables. Return to the boil and reduce to a simmer for 20 minutes or until the vegetables are very tender.

2. Drain and allow to steam dry for 2-3 minutes in the colander. Return to the pan adding the butter, cream and cheddar. Mash until soft and fluffy, season to taste and serve.

Rebecca
Beetroot, celeriac and cavolo nero slaw with buttermilk dressing

Ingredients (serves 4-6)
- 2 medium beetroot, peeled and finely sliced into matchsticks
- 1 celeriac, peeled and finely sliced into matchsticks
- 200g cavolo nero, stems removed and coarsely shredded
- 1 eating apple, cored and finely chopped
- 50g hazelnuts, toasted and skins removed

Dressing
- 150ml buttermilk
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small clove garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1 tsp runny honey
- salt and pepper

Apple juicing at the Harvest Festival - mini photo gallery

Bring-and-share Harvest Meal has long been an SCA tradition. Every year, usually in October, we gather together to celebrate the crops and eat together a meal that consists of many tasty dishes brought in by the SCA members. We also have a community apple pressing that is especially enjoyed by the younger members of the community. Below are some lovely pictures from the event that were taken by Sarah Peryer who kindly shared them with us. Thanks Sarah!
Stroud Community Agriculture

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 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 cooperation 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 07891 615103 mark@plumptucker.co.uk
- Francis Gobey 07890 042877 francis.gobey@phonecoop.coop
- Simon Hanks 01452 812608
- Sam Hardiman 07531 270206 samueljhardiman@hotmail.com
- Michal Chodasewicz 01453 825103 micho0281@gmail.com
- Tarra Gilder-Rai 07981 760982 tarragilderrai@gmail.com
- Bernard Jarman 01453 757436 orion@phonecoop.coop
- Aleksandra Osinska 07435 344640 creativealeks@gmail.com
- Jane Thatcher 07834 740408 jane@thewildflowergarden.co.uk
- Joe Mancell 07989 382337 joe.mancell@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

Community Building booking and enquiries: Joe Mancell at joe.mancell@gmail.com

Membership Admin: Carol Mathews membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Newsletter: Aleksandra Osinska creativealeks@gmail.com