HAPPY SPRING!

Welcome to your 70th issue of the SCA newsletter. Spring is just around the corner and even though we’ve had a lot of rain recently it’s slowly getting warmer and dryer and life begins to emerge on the farm.

In this issue we have the usual Farm Report (page 2) in which Mark tells us about news from the veggie and animal front. We also have some news from Sam who has now returned from America (page 3). Also we have a lot of tasty recipes for you to try out kindly submitted by Rebecca and Jules.

**Happy reading!**

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**Dates for your diary!**

**SCA Annual General Meeting**

*12th June, Wednesday*

6:45pm refreshments

7:30pm start

Community Building, Hawkwood Farm

**SCA Barn Dance**

*Early/mid June at Brookthorpe, TBC*

Volunteers needed! Please contact Sam if you would like to volunteer. As a volunteer you will have a free entry to the event. More details will follow soon

**Biodynamic Preparation Day**

*Wednesday 24th April 10AM onwards*

Each year we make the biodynamic horn manure preparation which is sprayed regularly on the land. We have been making larger quantities at Hawkwood in order to supply the Biodynamic Association as well. This means we have a large pit with horns that are filled with cow manure. They have been buried in the ground since October and during this time the manure inside them should have transformed into a sweet smelling compost-like material. On the chosen day we will dig up the horns, take out this 'horn manure' and make it ready to store until it is needed. Time permitting we will also make horn silica and possibly some yarrow preparation.

Do come and join us from 10.00 prepared for outdoor weather and bring a packed lunch. We will continue until the task is finished but you are welcome to stay for as long as you wish. Children are welcome too. We meet by the round house.
Spring Farm Report

Although the farm seems to be have been a bit quieter since Sam has been away, due in part to the natural winter slowdown, but also because we haven’t had Sam at the helm, life still goes on. We have all done well keeping things going these past six months, but are looking forward to Sam’s return (he will be back by the time you read this article).

The sheep have been on a five acre field at Edge for the past few weeks, a field owned by Sam’s sister Anna. They will be moved down to Brookthorpe soon, in time for lambing in April. One of the ewes had to be brought down early as she had collapsed with a condition called Twin Lamb Disease. This is when a ewe in late pregnancy has a drastic drop in glucose levels, often brought on in difficult weather conditions. The ewe in question is now in recovery at Brookthorpe but still has a way to go. All of the other sheep are doing well.

Two calves have been born this year. Both are doing very well. In a succinct illustration of life on the farm, the latest calf was literally born as we waited for the vet to come to attend to the poorly ewe, a prostrate and potentialt dying animal on one side of the fence, and new life emerging on the other side.

Life is also beginning to emerge on the horticultural front too. We have been sowing seeds in the greenhouse, and have thousands of healthy plants that will soon be ready to plant out in the polytunnels, walled garden and field at Hawkwood. The seedlings are kept on heated benches to protect them from the cold and to encourage early growth. We also managed to sow the first outdoor seeds in that unusually warm dry spell of weather in February, broad beans hopefully ready in June.

We still have a good stock of winter vegetables in store and out the fields for the weekly share. The unseasonal early warmth has encouraged many plants to grow very quickly and some (particularly the kales and salads) have bolted (gone to flower) much earlier than they would normally. This is in stark contrast to last year when we had sub-zero temperatures and were struggling to protect things from the cold. We can still pick the leaves of these bolting plants (and the flowers, which are often quite tasty and sweet) but they do lose some their crispness.

We look forward to a warm and settled spring, Sam’s return, (and Samantha’s, she is away on a yoga training course, do look out for her classes to be held in the Roundhouse), and for a productive year.

Farmer Mark
A letter from America

As I sit here, the snow has finally melted. We have had above average snow fall here this winter. It has hampered work but been fun to play in. I have been snowboarding and tried out cross country skiing, which was fun.

The main agricultural crops in the area are pear orchards, however they are slowly being bulldozed and replanted as vineyards. As the climate warms, southern Oregon is becoming an ideal wine growing region. There is also an increasing number of hemp and marijuana grows as it is now legal in Oregon. The hemp is used for CBD oil which is rapidly gaining popularity for treating a wide ranch of ailments.

We are living a 1.5 mile drive through Pear orchards and vineyards from town the edge of sparsely populated hills.

My in-laws’ property is a beautiful place, consisting of mostly forest and dry grassland. They grow a couple of acres of Persimmons and a patch of blueberries. In the Autumn my work involved picking persimmons and packing them. After everything was picked, packed and sold the work moved on to maintenance, landscaping work and general estate maintenance. It has been fun turning my hand to new things and applying my skills to projects here. As much as I have been enjoying my work, I’ve realized just how much I miss the livestock. There are no animals here. There are a few hobby farms nearby but not many commercial livestock farms.

I recently visited a local vegetable farm called Fry Family Farm. They grow vegetables, flowers and herbs on 90 acres. While being much bigger than us we still had several things in common. They also started small and grew, but more interestingly, they ended up growing on four locations! We spoke about the challenges and opportunities that this provides. We spent several hours walking and talking looking at many great inventions and systems they have developed to help them, including a potting soil mixer, seed try moving cart and a vacuum seeder for sowing seed trays.

Before I leave, I will visit another farm that is part of a five farm CSA collaboration. Each producing different things that feed into the box. While here I have also been working on a plan to expand and improve our livestock. I have come to the realization that I want to spend more time working with the livestock at SCA and improving our meat sales.

Farmer Sam
Chickpea and carrot pancake with pan fried greens, yoghurt, harissa and parsley

Ingredients

• 150g Gram flour
• 200ml water
• 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
• 1 scant teaspoon salt
• Generous amount black pepper
• 1 large carrot, peeled and grated
• 2 tsp of olive or rapeseed oil
• 100g purple sprouting broccoli, Kale or cavolo nero
• Natural plain yoghurt
• Harissa or hot pepper sauce such as Tabasco
• Parsley, chopped

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Method

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, water, extra virgin olive oil, salt and black pepper until you have a consistency that is like pouring cream. Cover and put to one side somewhere cool for as long as you can; any time from 2 to 24hrs will do and it is bubbly on the surface. This allows for the flavour to develop and the pancake to be light and airy.

Once you are ready to eat, place 2 large frying pans over a medium to high heat. Add a teaspoon of the oil to each and when it is hot, add the greens to one of the pans and to the other pour in the batter and swirl until it is evenly coated. Scatter over the grated
carrot and once the batter is beginning to look set, flip the pancake over to continue cooking for 1-2 minutes or until golden and cooked throughout. Meanwhile, regularly toss the greens in the other pan until crispy and cooked to your liking.

To serve, carefully tip the pancake out onto a serving plate, top with the sizzling greens, a spoonful of yoghurt and as much or as little harissa as you like! Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve.

Thrifty Salad bag tips (even if they’re looking a bit limp!)

• Wash and roughly shred a bag of salad leaves and stir into cooked pasta with extra olive oil, dried chilli flakes, a little crushed garlic and some finely grated lemon zest. Season to taste and serve with grated parmesan.

• Wash and roughly chop a bag of salad leaves and stir into risotto just before serving with either a knob of butter or some extra virgin olive oil with freshly grated parmesan, some lemon zest and black pepper.

• Using the chickpea pancake recipe. Omit the carrot stage and use half the batter to make a chickpea wrap following the same method. Once you have a thin pancake/wrap cooked on both sides, tip out onto a plate or chopping board and top with a selection of salad leaves, grated raw carrot, grated raw beetroot, crumbled feta, plain yoghurt, harissa or chutney, roll up and serve.

• For a warm salad, serve the leaves tossed with a selection of just warm oven roasted root vegetables such as parsnips, squash, beetroot, carrots and potatoes. Drizzle with a dressing made using extra virgin olive oil, apple cider vinegar, a scrap of crushed garlic, Dijon mustard, runny honey and seasoning to taste. Particularly good with some local goats cheese and freshly baked bread.

Rebecca
Root and Lentil Salad

**Ingredients**

Root veg of choice:
- 1 medium parsnip peeled and sliced to about 1.5cm thick
- OR 3 jerusalem artichokes, scrubbed and sliced about 1cm thick
- OR 1 medium beetroot, peeled and cut into small dice
- 200g puy lentils
- bayleaf
- vegetable stock
- tomato puree
- shallot (optional)
- handful of walnuts or pistachios
- red wine/cider vinegar
- walnut oil
- olive oil

**Method**

You can use a mixture of root veg but I prefer to have just one as there are quite a few flavours in this already. If you have leftover roast parsnip, use that, otherwise mix the raw parsnip or artichoke with a glug of olive oil and a generous amount of salt in a roasting tin. Roast at medium-high temperature until caramelised on the outside and soft inside. At the end of cooking, pop the walnuts/pistachios on a baking sheet and toast for a few minutes. Allow to cool. Cut the parsnip slices into cubes and roughly chop the nuts. If you are using beetroot, I find it is better steamed for about 10 minutes rather than roast.

Cook the puy lentils in stock with the bayleaf until just cooked but not mushy, then drain. Mix together with a bit of tomato puree while still warm and then allow to cool.

Make a dressing of about 2 tablespoons of walnut oil, 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1 tablespoon wine vinegar, 1 teaspoon of dijon mustard; you can add a bit of finely chopped shallot but I usually have some dried onion granules which I use because I'm a cheat. Add something to sweeten: sugar, maple syrup, pomegranate molasses, honey (if not catering for vegans) and adjust to taste.

Mix the dressing with the lentils and parsnips. When ready to serve add in the walnuts (they tend to go soft if you do it too early). If you want to make more of a meal of it (and you're not feeding vegetarians) add a bit of crumbled feta and crispy bacon bits and serve on a bed of leaves. If you have some left over and you want to pep it up a bit, add some chilli or harissa for the second serving.

Jules
Everyone is welcome to join in and enjoy the farm, including non-members. We currently have a long waiting list to join our veg shares, which means that on average you will have to wait 5-6 months.

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.

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