

# TABLEHURST AND PLAW HATCH COMMUNITY FARM NEWS

CHRISTMAS '05



## Tablehurst Farmer's Notebook

So what has been happening on the farm? The cattle are all in their straw yards, fat and contented. We have weighed the young-stock and the cows will be scanned on Friday to check that all are in calf that should be. The sheep have been with the rams and are in good condition as the rain, that did eventually come, brought plenty of late grass. The pigs are still in the field but will be coming in to the buildings over the next couple of weeks. The laying hens are laying inexplicably few eggs, even for this time of year. The table birds are doing well and the turkeys' feathers have a wonderful bloom. They won't be here much longer though!

We have sown fields of rye, oats and triticale. The triticale (a cross between rye and wheat) was sown in early September and came up within days. It was getting too tall so the sheep were put in to graze it down, which they did beautifully. This hopefully will ensure a healthy, heavy crop due to lots of tillers. We have done some coppicing, hedge trimming and fencing. This will continue throughout the winter.

The shop is, of course, very busy at this time of year and there are a lot of animals going off each week: two beef animals, six lambs, five pigs and about 120 chickens. I hope that by next autumn and Christmas the shop team will have the space of the expanded shop to work in. We are still involved in the complicated business of the grant applications etc. and so I hope to be able to tell you of the progress in the next newsletter.

In the last newsletter I shared all the changes that were happening, or about to happen, at Tablehurst Farm Cottage and with the farm team. Andrew Carnegie has now moved into the cottage with Stuart, Clive and Terry. Charlotte Lueke with her 18-month-old son Jacob has also moved in to help run the house. Charlotte has worked quite a number of years in a Camphill Village as a 'housemother,' caring for adults with learning disabilities. Although she has been at a Camphill in Middlesborough she also knows Forest Row and our farm. This is because she studied sculpture for three years at the neighbouring Emerson College and used to walk through the farm, as it is the shortest way to the village. Charlotte is used to cooking for large groups so she will be cooking for the farm team twice a week, no doubt with the help of one of our gentlemen, as well as helping in other areas.

Brigitte has been struggling a bit with her health again. She has had a painful chest for a number of months, which was not getting better despite visiting doctors. She has therefore been to Park Attwood Clinic for two weeks and will return home tomorrow. This has, of course, meant that she has missed most of the term of her speech and drama course.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas. Peter Brown

# Talking turkey

Christmas again, time for all cooks to get excited about the annual turkey extravaganza !! First what size of bird to buy? How many are eating? How much do you like turkey!? When calculating how big a turkey you need, allow  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb oven ready weight per person, and then think how nice it will be when eaten cold. If you want a roast turkey dinner but do not want or need a whole bird, talk to Barry, half a turkey, a crown of turkey or rolled breast may be enough for you. All are equally delicious.

A turkey is usually filled with two different stuffings for which you will find numerous recipes. You can cook the stuffing separately but then it will not benefit from soaking up the lovely turkey juices as the bird cooks. Traditionally the neck can be filled with a chestnut mixture and the body cavity with sausage meat stuffing. An average 12 lb bird will need sausage stuffing made from at least 2 lbs of sausage meat. At Tablehurst we make it very easy for you, try our chestnut and apricot sausage meat or sage and onion.

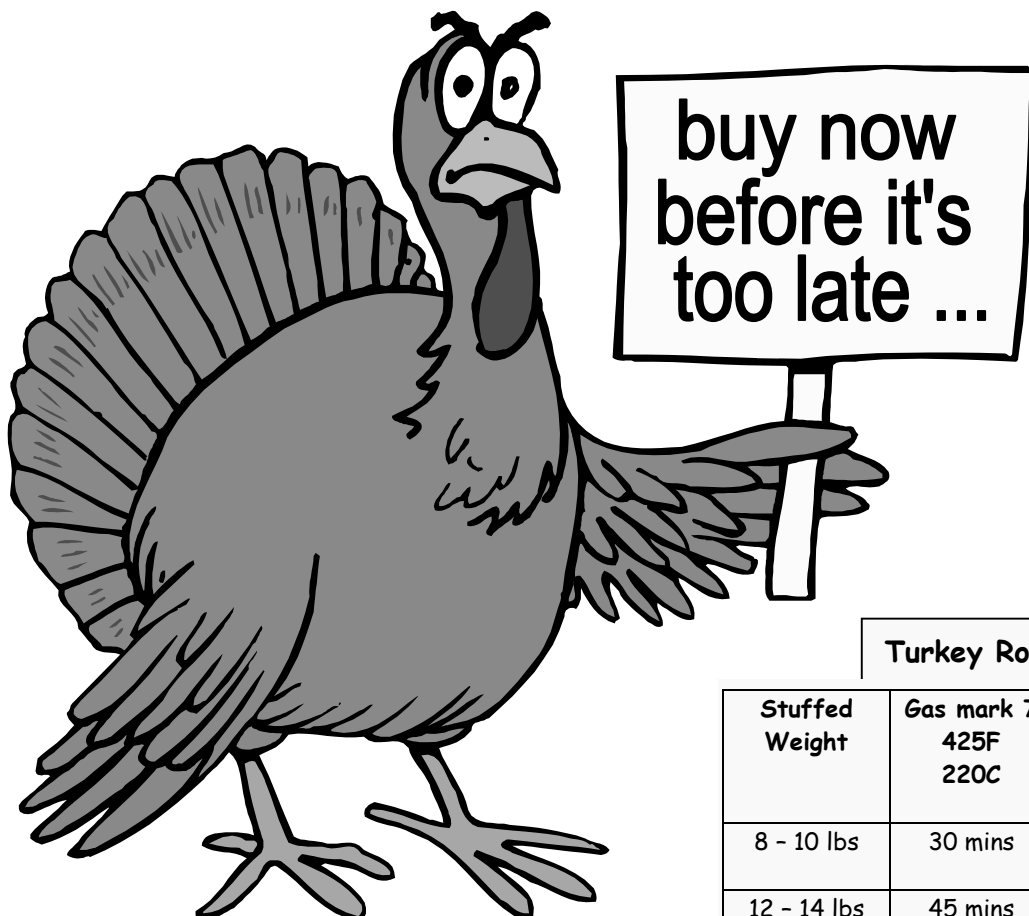
Remove the giblets, wipe the cavity and stuff your turkey with your chosen stuffing. First stuff the neck end, pushing the mixture in with your hands between the flesh and the skin towards the breast (not too tightly as it will expand whilst cooking). Make a nice rounded shape and tuck in the flap of skin under the birds back securing with a skewer or cocktail sticks. Next stuff the cavity.

Generously coat the bird with softened butter, sprinkle with pepper and cover the bird with plenty of our lovely streaky bacon, this adds a wonderful flavour and protects the delicate white flesh. Have to hand the largest, strongest cooking foil and wrap the turkey loosely, making a roomy tent like parcel with a pleat running along the length of the breast line. This will ensure that as it roasts it will not dry out. Half an hour before cooking is complete, you can open the foil to allow the bird to brown - baste it well every 10 minutes.

Once cooked, remove from oven, rescue all that lovely juice for gravy, re wrap and cover the bird to keep it warm. It will benefit from standing for half an hour while you hurry around finishing off the meal.

It is important to bear in mind that ovens vary, as do turkeys. Allow plenty of time - the turkey will not mind waiting for you, wrapped up and relaxing - but you may mind waiting for your turkey. A good test to see if your bird is cooked is to pierce the thickest part of the leg with a skewer and see if the juices run clear.

Bernie Jamieson



Turkey Roasting Times

Stuffed Weight	Gas mark 7 425F 220C	Gas mark 3 325F 170C	Gas mark 6 400F 220C
8 - 10 lbs	30 mins	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 hrs	30 mins
12 - 14 lbs	45 mins	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 4 hrs	30 mins
15 - 20 lbs	45 mins	4 - 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ hrs	30 mins

# Plaw Hatch Farm News

Winter draws in! A time to reflect over the past year, of outside activities, from lambing in the spring, calving cows, grazing cows in very dry conditions, chasing young heifers across the forest, students coming and going, hay making, summer festival, Peter and Pupak getting married by the pond, ploughing, sowing, the departure of six old cows and so on. I don't keep a diary, I probably should do but I can't think who would read it. We enjoy many surprises on the farm, some good and some disastrous! Just a few good ones: the cows milked exceptionally well in the spring; lots of replacement calves born (now outside the shop); Richard Evans making the best tasting bread from our own rye and wheat; Blackie farrowing with eight giving our first Demeter piglets; getting planning permission and a start date for the new entrance.

The farm has a very strong seasonal rhythm, which after some time becomes a familiarity within us. When the animals come in for winter it marks a change of pace and focus. If the weather has been good in the summer then keeping cows fed and comfortable during the winter can be pacifying, allowing us to collect our thoughts and prepare for next spring when it all starts again. Among the routine tasks now is the time for doing the budget, to make sure we can stay financially viable and invest in the right places to keep the farm going. Costs are always going up which the income has to match, while at the same time maintaining the farm as a biodynamic farm is a challenging balance. The farm has its limitations and can only provide so much produce. But there is no limit for the farm to provide a facility for others to witness and experience farm activities, to see what's happening throughout the year. I feel that we are quite privileged to be living and working on the farm, with the opportunity for strong community engagement, sharing lunches, study times and farm meetings. I asked Mike (a student from Germany) when he was leaving having been here for 18 months what his high points were, thinking his answer would be driving the new tractor or milking the cows alone, but he said that his favourite times were when we all worked together on a particular task.

On a more practical note, we are about to see the long-awaited entrance project begin. All thanks and appreciation here to Mike Eichner who has pushed ahead through troubled waters. It will make access to the farm much safer and parking outside the shop less hectic and frustrating. The project has been given to one contractor to carry out all the work and is scheduled to begin early in the new year. The plan is to first establish the new entrance for site traffic adjacent to the milking parlour and to lay a road around the back of the cow shed to a site where two new barns will be built, then to remove the pole barn outside the shop and make a hard standing for cars, build a fence and plant a hedge for screening the road. Finally, we will close off the old entrance. Sounds easy!

Best wishes for the New Year

Tom Ventham

## Website for Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Farms?

From time to time, the possibility of creating a website for the farms and the Co-op is mooted. However, to do this would require money (in short supply!) or expertise. If you have the expertise to help with such a project, and would be prepared to give some time to setting up a website for us, please can you contact Chris Marshall in the first instance (contact details on back page).

Many thanks.

# Tablehurst Farmhouse Appeal

Dear Community, Customers and Friends

Two new farmers, Raphael and Steffi, have joined the team at the farm. The farm needs them because it has taken on more land to meet increased demand for its produce. They are living in a caravan for now because we can't afford to pay the cost of housing out of farm income. But in the long-term we would like to convert one of the old farm buildings to a permanent farmhouse with extra space for our farm apprentices. This would create another much needed living space on the farm for the future. We plan to do much of the work ourselves and, with help from our architect Nic Pople, we will incorporate good environmental and aesthetic specifications and make good use of an underused space.



## But we need your help to make it happen.

For the last few months we have been publicizing our plan and inviting you to become involved by donating to the project. So far you have given us about £40,000 in donations and pledges. We are really grateful. Thanks so much to all of you who have supported us. The appeal continues though; we need to raise £120,000 all together.

Good food grown with care for the environment and the people who eat it is basic to all our lives. It's what Tablehurst is about. The farmhouse is an exciting and much needed project and is an opportunity for more of you to be involved. There will be a farm walk on January 29th and a hot pot lunch; come and find out more about what we are doing and planning.

In the meantime there is a leaflet in the farm shops at Tablehurst and Plawhatch Farms and also in The Seasons shop in Forest Row with more information about the appeal. Do please pick one up and fill in both sides of the white slip inside it with your donation. Alternatively, use the forms on page 6 of this



newsletter. If lots of people give small or larger amounts the building can happen. The plan is to start it summer of 2006, so the fund needs to be in place for that as soon as possible.

With many thanks and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from everyone at Tablehurst.

A house for farmers and apprentices? Some work still to do ...



# Two new farmers for Tablehurst Farm

As a first contribution to the newsletter I would like to introduce Steffi and myself and tell a little about why we have chosen to join the team and what we would hope and like to contribute to the farm.

Many of you already know me from the previous times that I have been here, but for those of you who don't, I was born and brought up on a biodynamic herb farm in the Kwazulu Natal Drakensberg in South Africa. One of the most beautiful places one can ever imagine! After completing my schooling I decided to spend a maximum of six months working as an apprentice at Tablehurst before taking on the farm at home. Those six months quickly turned into one and a half years, but instead of returning to South Africa I moved on to Switzerland to work on a small conventional farm for the summer. That autumn I returned to Tablehurst for another year to complete my apprenticeship. A year later after spending time in South Africa and Switzerland I returned to Tablehurst for a third year. This time though, it was only planned for a year as I wanted to go and study organic agriculture at Aberystwyth in Wales.

After completing my first year in Wales I took the chance to move to Germany as an exchange student and well... met Steffi and ended up staying there to complete my BSc degree. Steffi was born in Bielefeld in Germany and upon completing her schooling spent a year working on a small organic farm in Southern Germany before spending six months on an organic dairy and fruit farm in Argentina. She then returned to Germany, spending another six months working before she started to study at Witzenhausen. This is a very brief introduction but I am sure she will be telling you more about herself when she joins the farm team as soon as she has finished her studies.

I am sure many of you are aware how difficult it is to be a farmer nowadays, with many thousands leaving the business each year as they can no longer make it pay. For young couples like Steffi and me, it is virtually impossible to start off on our own. Therefore our options were either to go to South Africa, which we looked at carefully, but decided against or to start up with a group of friends, but again capital needed to be raised, or to join an already established community farm. When Peter heard that we were not going to South Africa, he suggested that we come to Tablehurst and see if that is what we were looking for. So in February this year we informally met the management team and they offered us the job, which of course we have taken.

Both Steffi and I feel it is very important to work on a farm that is "alive" meaning that there are many people about, not only working there but also having the community supporting it. It is also important for us that there are many different enterprises on the farm, meaning animals, arable production and of course a farm shop. Tablehurst fulfils all these criteria and more. Having worked here before, I could really see the progress that the farm has made over the last few years. Changes that have taken place include, amongst others, the expansion of the shop, which is about to happen again, new barns going up, doubling the amount of land to cope with



Raphael with the Tablehurst apprentices

## Two new farmers (cont'd)

the demand for the meat, new machinery, hedges being replanted and fenced, new chicken houses..... A never ending list of improvements that show how dynamic this farm is. I do however also see no end to the improvements as there are still many more developments that need to take place many of which are in the process of being implemented - such as new housing for farmers and apprentices, community centre, processing rooms, still more barn space. Some of these you are aware of and have contributed towards. A big thank you to those of you who have contributed towards the "Tablehurst is Building" project as it is Steffi and I who are, in the short term, going to benefit from that. I can assure you a caravan can be very cold and I am not looking forward to what is going to be the coldest winter for many years.

Initially, Steffi and I see ourselves taking over the day to day management of a few of the areas such as the pigs, cattle and arable production. By doing this we would take some of the managerial load off Peter and Andrew's shoulders, meaning that each area can be penetrated properly and improved if possible. We both feel that we can offer the farm a lot, in that we have just or just about completed our formal training and so can bring new energy and ideas that could benefit Tablehurst, hopefully for years to come.

I can honestly say that it is just great to be working here again, especially having spent most of the last four years preparing for it. I am enjoying almost every minute of being out and about on the farm, working with the animals, people and community that make Tablehurst the special place it is.

Raphael Rivera

### Tablehurst Farmhouse Fund

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like to give?

I have completed the bankers order form .

I would like to make a donation to the **Tablehurst Farmhouse Fund**. I enclose a cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to St Anthony's Trust

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### BANKERS ORDER

Please fill in and return to us. We will notify your bank.

Name and Address of your Bank/ Building Society

Sort Code \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_  
Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Account name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly payments: please circle one of the amounts shown and delete the others:

£5   £10   £20   or indicate another amount £ \_\_\_\_\_

To my Bank/ Building Society: Please pay the amount indicated above by monthly standing order,

commencing on: date \_\_\_\_\_, and on

the same day each month until, date \_\_\_\_\_, pay to

St Anthony's Trust (registered charity No 264626) sort code 40/20/09 Acc no 31279440.HSBC 1Middle Row East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 3AY from the accounts detailed in this instruction

Ref Number (for us to complete) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Sign here too

### Gift Aid it

If you are a UK taxpayer, for every £50.00 we receive from you, the Inland Revenue will give us another £14.00. All you have to do to make sure we receive this extra money is tick the box, and sign it.

I am eligible as a UK taxpayer and consent to St Anthony's Trust claiming Gift Aid on all donations from 1st April 2005

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

OR

I am not eligible as a UK taxpayer/ do not consent.

#### When you have completed the form please return it to us at:

St Anthony's Trust  
Tablehurst Farmhouse Fund  
Gibbons & Mannington  
Chartered Accountants  
7-9 Wellington Square  
Hastings  
TN34 1PD

Any information you give us will remain with us and will not be passed on to any third party

Thank you very much for your support. We really appreciate your donation however large or small. We look forward to celebrating the completion of the project with you in true Tablehurst style when it all happened....!!

Best wishes from all at Tablehurst

# There is hope after all !

I've spent far too much of my life being convinced that the world might be about to end. I have to admit this. It is a peculiar affliction which comes from an underlying feeling that there is always something wrong and that unless I personally take on the task of putting it all to rights the world will not be saved. Despite war, famine, natural disaster and global warming I don't think most people feel this in their bones the way I have, although I know I'm not alone either. This condition is obviously not unrelated to these awful realities in our world. If that was the end of my story though, I would be a sad individual, but the condition also has a positive side. I am so afraid of the possibility that I might be right that I spend a lot of time looking for things which might prove me wrong. I came across something recently that helped.

It was a very small thing but seemed on reflection to reveal a big truth. It is a statistic that shows that children whose families eat meals together regularly are better adjusted, do better at school and do better in life. I wonder why that should be. Is it true? Statistics must be viewed with some scepticism. Are the families that eat together in this study further up the social scale for example? Were all the extraneous aspects of the case controlled for properly? I don't know. What I do know is that it makes absolute sense intuitively. And although intuition is not always a guide to the truth there is much that supports the idea that regular family meals can give a child many useful tools for adult life.

It's obvious that food is basic nourishment for a child to grow both physically and mentally. But it is perfectly possible today for a child to have this in a bedroom alone in front of the telly. The extra dimension that comes with the shared meal is obviously the social one. From this the child experiences all through its life that food is connected with family.. And also it becomes connected with a sense of belonging to a group. Through conversation at table and the rituals of eating a grasp of language and social skills develop. Food and family become closely associated; nourishment, absence of hunger get linked with something more than a purely physical process.

Obviously a lot depends on the kind of atmosphere at the table. But if, even through the thick and thins of family life, the basic continuity of food eaten around a table is preserved, the statistic might reveal a powerful truth of human psychology. This is that food is not just the physical means by which we live but is positively connected with other levels, cognitive, social and spiritual of our humanness. And if we don't actively and regularly acknowledge by our actions, that food is something we share, we hold back something of our full human potential both individually and as a society. That is a pretty big claim, but what if it is true? How can you know it isn't? The little statistic mentioned above seems to suggest it is. The thought gives me some hope anyway. But in my bid to save the world again I can't help thinking that at least some of the world's ills might be solved if only we could really remember and claim it as true. For example if food was something we really shared poverty surely would be history since there is actually enough of it to go round. Meanwhile there is much to be achieved by celebrating something as seemingly ordinary as a meal together.

Mark Haughton

## Food for Thought

From the Study Group: this meets every second Sunday evening at Tablehurst Farm Cottage:

We have embarked on the study of the "Agriculture Course" by Rudolf Steiner, the basis for all biodynamic farming. To get slowly acquainted with the unfamiliar matter we read introductions and appendices first. There we came upon this poignant dialogue which was held between Rudolf Steiner and his pupil, the microbiologist Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, who is also the narrator of this incident.

Steiner had been talking about the need to deepen spiritual life and in this connection mentioned certain faults typically found in spiritual movements. Pfeiffer asked: "How can it happen that the spiritual impulse, and especially the inner schooling, for which you are constantly providing stimulus and guidance bear so little fruit? Why do the people concerned give so little evidence of spiritual experience, in spite of all their efforts? Why, worst of all is the will for action, for the carrying out of these spiritual impulses, so weak?" Pfeiffer was particularly anxious to get an answer to the question as to how one could build a bridge to active participation and the carrying out of spiritual intentions without being pulled off the right path by personal ambition, illusion and petty jealousies; for these were the negative qualities Rudolf Steiner had named as main inner hindrances. There came the surprising and thought provoking answer: *"This is a problem of nutrition. Nutrition as it is today does not supply the strength necessary for manifesting the spirit in physical life. A bridge can no longer be built from thinking to will and action. Food plants no longer contain the forces people need for this."*

Quote: Rudolf Steiner: Agriculture

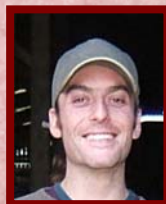
This comment was given 81 years ago. I dread to think what has happened to the forces of our alimentation during that time, and where are we now?

Krista Braun

<b>CHRISTMAS SHOP OPENING HOURS</b>		<b>Tablehurst</b>	<b>Plaw Hatch</b>
	22 <sup>nd</sup>	9 - 5	10 - 6
	23 <sup>rd</sup>	9 - 5	9 - 6
	24 <sup>th</sup>	10 - 4	9 - 1
	<b>Re-opens</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> January</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> January</b>



## Tablehurst Farmhouse Appeal



Please help us to provide permanent housing for our farmers and apprentices  
See pages 4, 5 and 6

### Contacts

For all general enquiries about the Co-op, please contact Chris Marshall in the first instance

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## SHARE APPLICATION

I would formally like to apply to become a member of TABLEHURST AND PLAW HATCH COMMUNITY FARM INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETY (No 28403R) and enclose:

A cheque for £ ..... to buy ..... share(s) at £100 each

Please make your cheque payable to Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farm Ltd and send to:

The Secretary, Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farm Ltd, Trees, Priory Road, Forest Row, RH18 5HF.

Full name..... Signature.....

Address .....Postcode .....

Telephone no.....Email.....Date.....