

Tablehurst Open Day Special

Milking ...



I have just come to the end of my first stint of milking morning and evening for a week at Plaw Hatch Farm. Tom and Julia Ventham had taken a long overdue break from the farm and the milking was left in my trembling hands. I recall that my late father was actually a dairy farmer for most of his early career. He milked about 80 cows in South Africa. That was hand milking but he had a lot of labour. I was quite proud to think that I was doing single handedly what seemed to me, as a three old, to require a small

village of people in South Africa. This is thanks of course to a bit of technology and a really well thought through and streamlined process of milking and washing down at Plaw Hatch. Tom is a seasoned dairyman and has cut a lot of unnecessary work out of the process. The overwhelming point about milking is that it is relentless. Animals must be milked morning and evening.

At four in the afternoon they start looking for a stick-bearing human figure coming down the track. "Cows, come cows" I shout and slowly more heads look up from the grass. Of course their afternoon oats is what they're mindful of. They first stand and contemplate the walk up the track, ruminating as they do. Ida stands in the gateway giving her nose a scratch, or simply staring into the distance. Carrying a fair amount of weight in the herd, Ida can stand as long as she likes in the gateway without fear of a horn in the side. Getting the cows up the track is mostly about clearing such obstacles, usually a larger framed cow with a lot on her mind, or a connoisseur of fine roadside herbs, like big Daisy. Barbie and Rene always bring up the rear. They refrain from herd politics and nibble the hedges. It's been a great challenge for me to slow down to their pace and enjoy the slow stroll in the fresh early morning or the lethargic meander on a hot afternoon. I remembered the sounds of cows on the track from my childhood and the walking songs of the African workers. When I sing to the cows in a similar fashion we seem to be much more in step. During the week I formed a solid image of each cow, their respective names and their characters. I could tell you something about the nature of each cow now. This experience I'll never forget. One of my reasons for doing this placement was to gain the confidence to have a small herd of my own, and I think I can say I have gained this. Thanks, much thanks, to Tom and his herd. A truly remarkable phenomenon at Plaw Hatch.



Tablehurst Farm Cottage

There is a lovely little cottage perched up on a little bank on the left hand side of the road as you drive, walk or cycle in to Tablehurst Farm. Opposite the vet and next to the Waterworks may be an unusual location for a Care Home, but there we reside.

Tablehurst Farm Cottage has been a registered Care Home for well over 12 years now. It all started when Peter and Brigitte moved here with their family, bringing with them years of experience of life-sharing with people with disabilities. Since Peter and Brigitte moved to Mill Cottage it has been run by Jup and Helle then Peter's son Robin and Laura. After them Andrew Carnegie and Charlotte Lueke took the helm and now Max and myself, Lucy, are lucky enough to be living here.

We live with three wonderful men, Clive, Stuart and Terry as well as Holly, a lively and sociable young lady from Australia who is joining us for a year as help in the house and a farm worker. On top of that we have two children, Noah and Lily, so it is a full house with a lot going on and a great atmosphere!

Clive and Stuart have been in the Care Home for 12 years now, and Terry for 7 years. They are fully integrated members of the Farm Team and work full time from Mon-Sat.

Our day starts at 7 am with "Good Morning Holly/Lucy, lovely weather today" from Clive as we knock on his door to wake him...no need though, he is already washed and shaved and dressed and ready to start the day! Stuart finds a nice cup of tea helps him to greet the morning and Terry likes to make sure he is well presented and smart before meeting the world. After some small chores in the house, off they go to the farm for a full days work.

Jobs like cooking, baking bread, chicken plucking, mucking out, fencing, sweeping and teasing the rest of the farm team, all make up the working week. A communal lunch takes place every day except Sunday on the farm, and we all enjoy the time to socialise and catch up and plan the afternoons work.

There are other activities that Clive, Stuart and Terry are involved in too. Clive visits Nutley Hall every Friday for supper and Eurythmy with some friends there, as well as now being a regular server at the Christian Community Church in the village each Saturday.

Terry has regular Eurythmy therapy in the village and goes to Gateway Social club often, when he is not visiting home or travelling somewhere exotic for a holiday!

Stuart also goes to Gateway with Terry, and enjoys helping Lucy with the shopping on Mondays and singing with Holly whenever he can!

Wednesday afternoon the Landrover is ours, and we all head off to East Grinstead so the men can shop for their personal needs and grab a hot chocolate or a milkshake in a cafe, as well as doing some grocery shopping for the house. Friday and Saturday nights are spent either watching TV or a movie of their choice, and other nights sometimes, if they are lucky, Holly reads them beautiful stories!

Sunday is a day off for these hard working men, and we enjoy a nice lunch at home, or occasionally a meal out. We have had some great outings, Clive loves gardens and castles, Stuart loves the sea side and Terry really enjoys riding his bike and swimming, so much fun is had on Sundays. Long walks are also a favourite. When there is a good film on a cinema trip is a must... with not too much popcorn, of course!

The house has a nice strong rhythm and a warmth which supports our three residents and allows them the freedom to be who they are. The work on the farm with the team is fulfilling, challenging and needed, and the ideal place for Clive, Stuart and Terry to grow, learn and therefore thrive.

Lucy O'Leary

What is a *pocket lady*?
Find out at the Tablehurst Open Day

Be the change you want to see

Ghandi's famous quote is a great reminder for those inspired to bring about change that the change starts within. It's good to remember it when there are challenging paths ahead. And there are! We, the Co-op and the farms have work to do. This is not simply a job of standing *against* the conventional industrialisation of farming where a commodity called food is produced, but one in which we seek to offer a viable alternative, rich in good nutrition and hope. Making that alternative a reality is the change we are trying to be. And I think the change is not just related to the visible public differences in biodynamics but is an inner personal process too.

There was a talk recently at Emerson College given by Gary Lachman, an academic and writer, about the nature of consciousness. Anyone interested in Rudolph Steiner will be aware that he focussed on this subject in a unique way. Lachman was exploring the subject with reference to Steiner, and also to Carl Jung, one of the founders of psychoanalysis. Both men developed new views of consciousness and expanded our understanding of what being human is about. The scientific, (Lachman's word) reductive view of consciousness, which people like Richard Dawkins espouse, describes mind as nothing more than a fascinating bundle of firing neurones and complex molecules. In contrast both Jung and Steiner acknowledge soul as part of the human being, though they mean different things by the word. Lachman's talk focussed on his idea that Steiner and Jung used forms of meditation to reach their insights, and in particular he dwelt on the quality of these states and something known as the hypnogogic state. This is the transitional state we all know between waking and sleeping. Lachman's idea was that these hypnogogic states were a catalyst for the creative ideas of both men, and that they spent many hours in them. For Steiner, Lachman suggested, it was from this state that his knowledge and elucidation of the spirit world emerged.

Though I am no expert on Steiner it is obvious that the breadth of his canvas is vast and, to my mind, way beyond that of any other comparable thinkers of his time, including Jung. There is a clear attraction for me here in that precisely because of the great scope of Steiner's thinking he is able to draw together the threads of two such conventionally disparate disciplines as a spiritual understanding and a way of cultivating the soil. The urge to hold such subjects separate, which stems from a European Enlightenment, dualistic view of reality, is one we are growing out of. There is a global paradigm shift taking place alongside the trauma of peak oil, climate change and the gradual breakdown of the old order. Steiner is a unique voice in offering some principled guidance. But my point here, and I think it's Steiner's too, is to suggest, not that the individual become subject to another movement in human history, but that through personal development a new movement will emerge. The social framework for this becomes, *de facto*, a movement; anthroposophy is what Steiner called it. But the emphasis is on the individual.

Lachman's talk linked with something in my own thinking about the way both human psychology and nature seem to work. This is the tendency for something rich and creative to emerge from **between** other, adjacent things. Like the rich biodiversity and beauty of margins between field and woodland, or land and sea, the human mind, in the margin between waking and sleeping, becomes a fertile zone. This is a place in which, for some people universal truths become clear, but it is also a place where answers to questions nearer home can be found. And we don't need to claim these benefits as exclusive to the hypnogogic state, though "sleeping on it" is a well-known technique for problem solving. I would suggest it falls into a general category of what might be called *going within* states of consciousness. The active disciplines of meditation or prayer both come into this category, but so, I think, does the letting go of resting from work, day dreaming, sitting still, looking at the sea, or listening to music to name just a few. These qualities of being are not to be confused with avoiding responsibility or being lazy. In our present culture the opposite state of active, engaged, outward focus increasingly dominates non sleep consciousness and technology accentuates it. As someone who can be pretty driven I am sure I need to listen to these thoughts and not just write about them! But I observe many of my friends often similarly over stretched, and I know its relevant to a collective such as ours, for all of us of all ages, to seek to make this kind of space in our lives sometimes. Making room for it is *part of* being the change. Ghandi himself did plenty of both!

Mark Haughton

Why is *Slow Food* also good food?
Find out at the Tablehurst Open Day

Local organisations

Pericles

Blackthorn Trust

Plawhatch Farm

Emerson College

Tablehurst Orchard

Sussex Bat Hospital

Michael Hall Garden

Learning on the Land

Fire Fighters and Engine

Transition Village Forest Row

Forest Row Greening Campaign



Volunteers Needed!

If you could help before, during or after the Open Day, there are loads of ways to join in.

Please contact Jenny Wright on 01342 826269 if you can help in any way

Talks

Bee-Keeping

Local History

Biodynamic Farming

The Slow Food Movement

A Journey Along the Medway

Food

Falafels

Ice Creams

Teas & Cakes

Shira's Pastries

Tablehurst barbecue

When we moved from London to Forest Row in 1991, I was not aware there was a Community Farm in the village (actually I didn't know anything about farming; I just went to supermarkets and bought food for the family). But walking the local public footpaths with our small children made us soon discover Tablehurst Farm.

One day there was a notice on the gate: 'Open Day, everybody welcome'. I wondered what we would find and packed some sandwiches in a backpack.

Welcome we were: Bernie & Brigitte had baked as never before (our sandwiches never got eaten...), Peter with his team had made the farm full of interesting games; drove the tractor with trailer up to the woods and answered the many questions about the biodynamic way of farming.

Open gates, good food, exciting games (nowhere else to be found) delighted everybody and we met many good humoured volunteers who helped out all day.

Now, many years later, our children have grown up (on good food!) and of course things at the farm have changed. The best change is the excellent new shop with its outstanding products: Tablehurst meat.

I realise, especially when I am away from home, that I take Tablehurst Farm with its core of dedicated, hard working people, good meat and open gates (by this I mean 'accessibility' on the land) almost for granted.

Open Day



Entertainment

Bush Craft

Flying Fox

Town Crier

Storytelling

Pony Rides

Dragon Run

Tractor Rides

Pocket Lady

String Games

Face Painting

Puppet Shows

Sheepdog Demo

Meet the Animals

Nature Awareness

Children's Open Stage

Competitions

Cowpat Grid

Bale Jumping

Welly Throwing

Guess the weight of the pig

Guess the number of seeds

The Pocket Lady needs your help!

Do you have any small items suitable as presents that fit in a pocket? If so, please wrap them up and take them to the shop where there is a box for collection, so the pocket lady can fill her pockets on the day to surprise the little visitors.

Crafts

Felting

Crochet

Spinning

Tree spirits

Woodcrafts

When you read this article, just stop for a moment and think what you yourself actually receive from Tablehurst. I made a little list for myself:

Healthy food that is a pleasure to cook • Hearing the animals in the field • Always somebody I know
A bench with the best view over the village • A chat and giggle in the shop • Lambs in the barn
A wave from Clive • Dancing in a beautiful barn with a tasty BBQ • A feeling of real community
Tasty apples and juice from Steyn • A story, a song and mince pies on Christmas Eve
... and of course those prize winning sausages!

But most of all: it is all the people working on and for the farm who make Tablehurst what it is. There is a low entrance fee, so it is possible for everybody to come and enjoy the farm. All the food on sale will be organic.

I hope you, benefitting from the farm like me, will tell everybody you know about the Open Day and maybe volunteer to help before or on the day.

See you on the day!

Suzanne Hillen

**Sunday
19 July**

Old Plawhatch as an Open Farm



We have reached the longest day of the year, when, according to Rudolf Steiner the earth has breathed out in its yearly rhythm and the nature spirits are dancing at their highest. To us on the farm, this means that activity is also full – hay is being made, milk is in abundance, fruit is ripening and the first tomatoes are turning colour.

Throughout the year, we have many people visiting and working here - learning about what we do and how we can manage to produce the best quality food, always taking care of the livestock, the land and the plants. We do it, I think, with a sense of openness, to the life forces and their continual changing flow, in harmony with forces radiating down from the cosmos. At a deep level, it is experiencing how life works, and how that translates into the result that we all can see. The finest example of this are our lovely cows who show us what it means to be in total harmony with the landscape and can really immerse themselves in the activities therein. A good chance to observe this is on our monthly farm walks every first Saturday of the summer months at 10 am. There is time to learn about the life of a cow and how it reacts to a good environment. Slowly the whole picture comes together and we see there is really no alternative – the quality of the milk reflects how they are being treated. We see time and again the differences of huge conventional farms and our modest but manageable farm.

We host a string of summer placement students, mostly from the continent, who gain valuable life experience and language skills. Many of them grow in confidence and turn into young adults as challenges on the farm are met. There are two Emerson students: John and Claire are here for six months gaining practical experience to go with their biodynamic studies. Liz is our two year apprentice in the garden this year, Janice is a four month summer worker, Laura and Dan are working as work exchange or Woofing and then there are committed volunteers and friends who lend their skills and huge amounts of time and energy. All in all it is a busy place, with visitors, friends looking around and enjoying the orderly chaos that is a working farm. And that is the way we would like to keep it – open to people from all walks of life in a way that demonstrates good practice and a good way of life.

Tony Davis

How can cow pats be used as a form of entertainment?
Find out at the Tablehurst Open Day

Tablehurst Shop News

As this is my first year in the shop, it has been very interesting to observe that it is possible to tell what is happening outside of the four walls by what our customers are buying. For instance, we noticed a dynamic shift in sales from the more expensive cuts of meat to little known joints that were cheaper, such as "hand and spring of pork", during the worst months of the recession. The hand and spring is a cut from below the pig's shoulder to include the lower shoulder (the hand) and jowl and runs down the fore leg to give the knuckle. A very delicious piece, but needs to be roasted very very slowly. Of course it is also possible to tell what the weather is going to be like over the weekend by the sales in the shop!

As many of you will have noticed, we are now increasing our sausage range (almost all the sausages are always available, if not freshly made that week, then frozen, so please ask if you cannot find your favorite on display), as well as trying out different marinades and rubs for the BBQ. So if there are any family specialities and you feel like sharing them, please either email me on rwrap@yaho.co.uk or bring the recipe into the shop.

Finally I often get asked why we do not open for trade on any other days of the week. At present it is not possible as we need the two days to prepare all the sausages and meat. Our sausages are all made from scratch using mixes that we prepare ourselves, rather than ready made mixes and so is very time consuming, (Rosie often starts the process on her day off) involving most of the team on Tuesday. Tuesday is also the day that the freshly slaughtered chickens arrive in the shop from the farm for preparation for the weekend. The rest of the meat arrives back from the abattoir on Wednesday morning when the butchering of the pork and lamb takes place, as well as the packing of the sausages, bacon, cold meats and orders. Before one realises, it is Thursday again and the shop is open as well as having to prepare the beef for the following week.

For those of you who we do not see regularly, we hope that you can make the open day on **Sunday the 19th July**, where the shop will be open selling fresh and frozen sausages and burgers.

Raphael Rivera

Come to the Open Day, and then ...

... if what you experience inspires you, fill in the form below and become a shareholder in your community farms. New shareholders really help make our farms sustainable into the future because they inject new energy, commitment and ideas into the community initiative.

If you aren't a shareholder already, please do think about joining the 500 or so individuals who jointly own our community farms.

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.....

AddressPostcode

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

Where is the best barbecue on this small planet?
Find out at the Tablehurst Open Day

Tablehurst Farm

An Organic Community Farm

London Road, Forest Row RH18 5DP

We are
hosting

the big lunch

www.thebiglunch.com

The farmers and
animals invite you to their

Open Day

Sunday 19th July

11am-5pm

A fun and informative day for young and old
Organic BBQ and refreshments

Volunteers Needed!

If you could help before, during or
after the Open Day, there are
loads of ways to join in.

Please contact Jenny Wright on
01342 826269 if you would like to
help us make it happen.

A special thank you to
Phil Simmons of White Rabbit Designs
who did all the work on the Open Day
posters for nothing other than love.

Janet Pearson

Open Day Photo Competition

Pick your best pic of the goings-on on
19th July and send it to me at
farmco-op@hotmail.co.uk.

The best entries will be published in the next
edition of the newsletter, and you never know,
we might even come up with a small prize!

CO-OP AND FARM CONTACTS

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Tablehurst Farm Shop	823173		Tablehurst Farm, Forest Row, East Sussex, RH18 5DP	