



caerhys organic community agriculture

This extract was written in October.....

Heloise and I arrived here at Caerhys just under three weeks ago, and sadly we leave in just a few days time. We weren't really sure what we would find here, or what we'd end up doing, but have enjoyed our time here on the edge of the sea so much that we were very happy to be able to extend our stay by a week.

We've had a great time on Anne and Gerald's farm, and have found the Miles' hospitality and enthusiasm totally inspiring, and really hope that we'll make it back here – Gerald's promised us a pig in return for this 'paragraph', so we'll have to come back to pick him or her up once we've found a suitable farm of our own... and a trailer for our bicycles.

We've been busy working with Gerald and Mick (who's endless enthusiasm and generosity has significantly increased our collective productivity) weeding the chickweed from around what will become the new potatoes that you'll hopefully all be enjoying this Christmas, and feeding it to the ever keen little piggies, that may well accompany said potatoes in due course. We've also

helped with clearing areas of the COCA mega-veg-patch ready for over-winter green manure, and under Andre's expert instruction have harvested and stored your Swedes in a big soil, straw and swede cake. We've also done a bit of planting: approximately 3000 garlic and onions, and 1250 broad beans for harvesting next year.

We've also moved all the onions and much of the beetroot into indoor storage where they should keep well and continue to feature as a staple component of your weekly veg. share through the cold months ahead.

Last week we began harvesting potatoes from the two large plots in the South facing field beyond the polytunnel, which we would be continuing this week but as you will have noticed the weather has taken a turn for the torrential. So we've been keeping busy indoors, making improvements to the COCA shop and readying the barns to provide over-winter shelter to both livestock and veg.

It's been a real pleasure meeting COCA members and working on the farm with them, it's a really exciting project and we hope that more people realise what an amazing opportunity this is and get involved and enthused in producing their own food on this fantastic farm.



Many thanks to all of you for helping to make our visit such an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Written by Heloise & Dan

CAERHYS ORGANIC BEETROOT SOUP



Beetroot soup is not only a fabulous colour but delicious too. Try adding a glug of vodka for the classic Borscht experience.

Ingredients

- 500-600g Caerhys Organic Beetroot, grated coarsely, or chopped into small dice
- 500g ripe Caerhys Organic tomatoes, halved
- 1 clove garlic, chopped roughly

- 1 medium Caerhys Organic Onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 tbsp olive or sunflower oil
- 500ml good vegetable stock
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation method

1. Place the halved tomatoes in an ovenproof dish. Throw over the garlic and drizzle over half the olive oil.
2. Roast for 25-30 minutes in a fairly hot oven (190C/375F/Gas 5) until soft and pulpy. Rub through a sieve to remove the skin and pips.
3. Heat the remaining oil in a pan and sweat the onion for a few minutes until soft. Add the beetroot and the stock and bring to the boil. Season lightly with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Simmer gently for 7-10 minutes until the beetroot is tender.
4. Stir in the tomato purée, transfer the soup to a blender and process until completely smooth. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary
5. To serve cold, chill the soup in the fridge, then divide between six bowls. A sprinkling of grated raw beetroot makes a good garnish for the cold version
6. To serve hot, reheat the soup until thoroughly hot but not boiling. Divide between warm bowls and serve with crusty bread.

Recipe supplied by Kate Icton

UNWANTED VEGETABLES

Please donate any unwanted vegetables to the gift box in the shop so that other members can have extra for free or donate to a friend or neighbour. This will reduce wastage and help others.

I am fairly new to the farm and became a member at the Really Wild Food Festival. Since joining I have become actively involved which has led to meeting like minded people. Many are passionate about the environment and location in which they live and equally passionate in accessing quality organic produce and leading a healthy sustainable lifestyle.



I look forward to being involved in the weekly harvest and consider myself to be very fortunate in being in a field with the

most stunning back drop many can only dream of. Often there are cries of joy when an extra large carrot or a bumper crop of cauliflowers are harvested. At the end of the rows are boxes brimming with delicious vegetables that soon find themselves on the newly constructed shelves (courtesy of Dan, Mick, Gerald and Heloise) in the farm shop. As they are weighed and soon transported home the journey continues. What goodies do we have and what appetising meals are they going to become. I can honestly say that I have read more cookery books for inspiration on how to cook a turnip, roast a beetroot, turn tomatoes into sauce or braise some chard since being a member of COCA. I do not shop anywhere else for vegetables and have to ensure that my share feeds a family of five that often becomes seven. The way I cook, shop and think has altered and I feel the better for it. Thank you COCA for giving me the gentle nudge I needed.

Written by Kate Iceton

STRATEGY MEETING WITH NICK WEIR ON 12TH JANUARY

The core group are meeting with Nick Weir to discuss future ambitions and aims of COCA. If you have any suggestions please email

cocamembers@gmail.com

A detailed report will be available following the meeting

SOCIAL EVENT

Nibbles and Drinks
Pebbles Cafe
St David's
From 7.30pm – 9pm

Members are invited to an evening at Pebbles kindly offered by Jacki Sime. Please bring nibbles and drinks of your choice to help celebrate a successful year at the farm and the Festive Season. Unfortunately the venue is not suitable for children.

"NEW MEMBER FROM GATWICK TAKES FLIGHT TO CAERHYS FARM"

I'd like to think that this brief story of our migration to Pembrokeshire will inspire or at least relate to someone else's life changing ambition.

My wife Theresa and I have been coming on holiday to St David's, for the last ten years and our visit this year in June made us realise we would like to live here and have a change of lifestyle. We took the plunge and sold our house, I left my profession as Project manager at Gatwick Airport and we arrived here in September this year.

Whilst settling into our new life in Wales we decided to allow ourselves to take the rest of the year off to re-charge and create a new vision for our future. In the short time we have been here we have become more aware of community life and are looking to create a more sustainable way of living.

By joining the Caerhys Farm Organic Project we have become more in touch with the community and also the green and sustainable way of growing and harvesting food from the "plot to the plate".

I am a volunteer at the farm which has enabled me to be more in touch with the land and environment whilst experiencing all aspects of farm husbandry, vegetable growing and harvesting in a low impact and sustainable manner.

So, in a nutshell I would like to say "we have landed safely from our Gatwick departure!"

Written by Mick Denney



As of 23rd November 2011 COCA supplies 26 full shares and 11 half shares each week with delicious organic produce.

WEEKLY HARVEST

As you can appreciate the weekly harvest needs to run smoothly to allow the freshest more perishable produce to be selected first. This may mean that some weeks there is not sufficient of one type of vegetable for all members and therefore offered on a first come first serve basis. Unfortunately, this often means that by Sunday and most definitely by Monday the quantity harvested is depleted. The Core Group have deliberated over this for some time and have concluded that the fore mentioned approach is the most practical. So please bare this in mind, as it is more beneficial to harvest a small quantity than leave it to spoil on the field until there is sufficient to harvest for all members.

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS THAT RECEIVE HALF SHARES

Please could you ensure that you collect your produce on a weekly basis rather than fortnightly as each week a half share is being harvested for each member. This will avoid wastage. Many thanks

3rd December 2011

Working Event

Please come along and support this if you are able from 10am – 1pm

Forming a raised bed behind the poly tunnel and laying a walk way around the poly tunnel. However, depending on numbers and weather permitting more potatoes need to be harvested



Really Wild Christmas Market

COCA will be having a stall at the Really Wild Christmas Market on

Saturday 10th December
Oriol y Parc, St Davids

If you would like to come and help give us presence there, please get in touch or just come and visit! We'll be there from 10am-5pm

4th December 2011

Celebration

Please come along to help celebrate

Advent

with family and friends

From 5pm onwards

Candle lit spiral

Refreshments

Caerhys Organic Beetroot Soup & bread
Music & Carols



The advent spiral is an atmospheric way to celebrate the start of advent, especially for small children.

It is a celebration of bringing light & growth to the dark & bare winter season. Anyone who wishes to can take a candle and place it in the spiral of greenery that will be laid out on the barn floor.

Please can you bring a jar with a tea light, a mug for soup, some homemade bread and drink of your choice?



Message to all members

If you are going to be away and unable to collect your produce, please could you either ask another member to collect it on your behalf or arrange for a friend/relative to collect it. If this is not practical please could you notify a Core Group Member or leave a message on the board so a share of produce is not harvested for that period.

MEMBERSHIP IS ON THE UP!

My time promoting COCA is nearly up, with the role coming to an end in January. Personally speaking, it has been a new challenge to get the word out there; but the gratifying thing is that there seems to be a lot of genuine interest. The challenge is converting the interest into a new member for COCA.

Since the last newsletter was written in August, we have gained eight new

members which means there are 38 household members. Not all of these are full members, but this leaves us at about half the membership we need to bring in a full time wage for our grower Caz. However, compared to other CSA's in the UK, many close to more densely populated areas; our growth is just as fast after about 18 months of the project.

We have received some good exposure in the Western Telegraph at the end of September, which has raised our profile. On 27th August we received a visit from the Mayor of St Davids, Chris Taylor, who was very supportive of COCA's aims and impressed with achievements so far. I then made a follow up presentation to St Davids City Council and as a result, some of the councillors will be making a visit to Caerhys Farm on Friday 2nd December.



We've also received a visit from the St Davids over 50's forum, and we would also like to establish links with the Day Centre.

Website

One of Gerald's sons, Rob based in Canada, has been very patiently receiving emails from me over the last few months with details for our new website, which Rob is kindly developing in his own time. I have never developed a website before and I have to say that Rob has put up with me very well so far! The site is looking good, and we hope to have it online in spring next year. You'll then be able to access all the info about COCA and download the membership packs and joining forms. Watch this space!

Help us bring more people to COCA

You may have received a letter with a membership pack and poster from me recently. If you are able to give the membership pack to a friend who you think would like to join COCA, it may help us hugely, for without new members, COCA will not be able to continue!

Funding Success!

COCA has been successful with winning funding from Organic Centre Wales under their 'Sustainable Food Communities' scheme, funded in turn by the Welsh Government.

Our project is called 'COCA Food Co-ops' and will involve COCA helping children in the local Primary schools to run their own food coops, selling bags of

veg, produced by COCA, to parents and other customers. The children will also have visits to Caerhys Farm to learn from Gerald and Caz about organic food production.

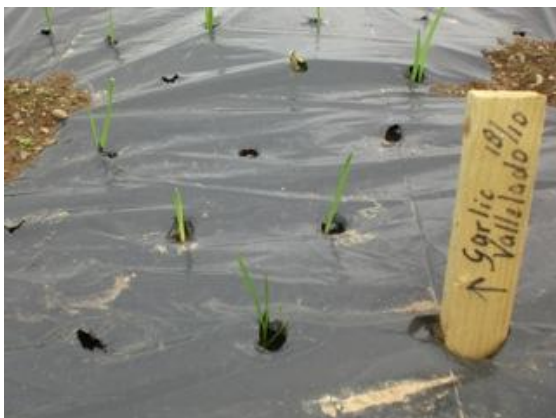
COCA Food Co-ops will run from December-June 2012 and we're really excited about working with our local schools.

Written by Rupert Dunn

PLANTING UPDATE

Well weather has turned wet and we still have not finished picking the potatoes, hopefully weather will dry out for us to finish harvesting.

In mid October, with the help of Heloise and Dan [our recent great Woofers], we planted thousand Garlic bulbs two kilos of Broad Beans [1000 plants] and a thousand Spring Onions, all planted in plastic covered beds. These now look good garlic is pushing through.



and Broad Beans are six inches tall, Spring onions are coming healthy and well.



FARM UPDATE

During October through to January sees the arrival of new born calves from our Welsh Black suckler herd, so far we have had twelve calves. One calf we have been fostering with a bottle of milk twice daily as her mum cow, "Babi" gave birth to twins and she did not have enough milk for two so we had to help her out.



Last litter of piglets have been weaned off their mother and have just been vacated out to the veg-field where they are enjoying the new grass and taking in the view.



Written by Gerald Miles

BEETROOT TONIC

This recipe is called Beet Kvas, an invaluable lacto fermented tonic. It aids digestion, increases the friendly bacteria in the gut, alkalises the blood, cleanses the liver and is a good treatment for kidney stones.

It is anaerobic fermentation. Cut 2 medium sized beetroots chopped up coarsely, whey(water from the curd) and salt and put all in a clean glass container (1.5-2 litre capacity). Add filtered water to fill the container. Stir well and cover securely (no air).

Keep at room temperature for two days so that it ferments and then transfer into the refrigerator. **But first remove and keep some of this as inoculant (jaag) aside for a fresh brew.**

Drink daily a cupful, then when you have finished drinking 3/4 of the brew from this jar, add more water and salt to make a second brew (this will be not as potent as the first) then **discard**. So from one brew you can drink twice and then discard.

Use the inoculant (jaag) that you first kept aside and start again by adding fresh beetroot pieces +salt. This way you continue increasing the acidophilus (friendly bacteria) in the lining of your stomach

Note – Do not use grated beets in this preparation. grated beets exude too much juice and ferments rapidly that favours production of alcohol rather than lactic acid.

Enjoy. This is the most refreshing drink and cooling in summer. Serve to family, friends, children slightly chilled. This way you increase you immunities and keep disease out of homes! This is a must for those who are on antibiotics as it is a probiotic. It helps line your intestines against corrosive chemical reactions from antibiotics.

Recipe supplied by Gerald Miles

