

GENIUS PERSONAE REPORT

Biodynamic Agriculture in the UK

2021

(Appendices removed)

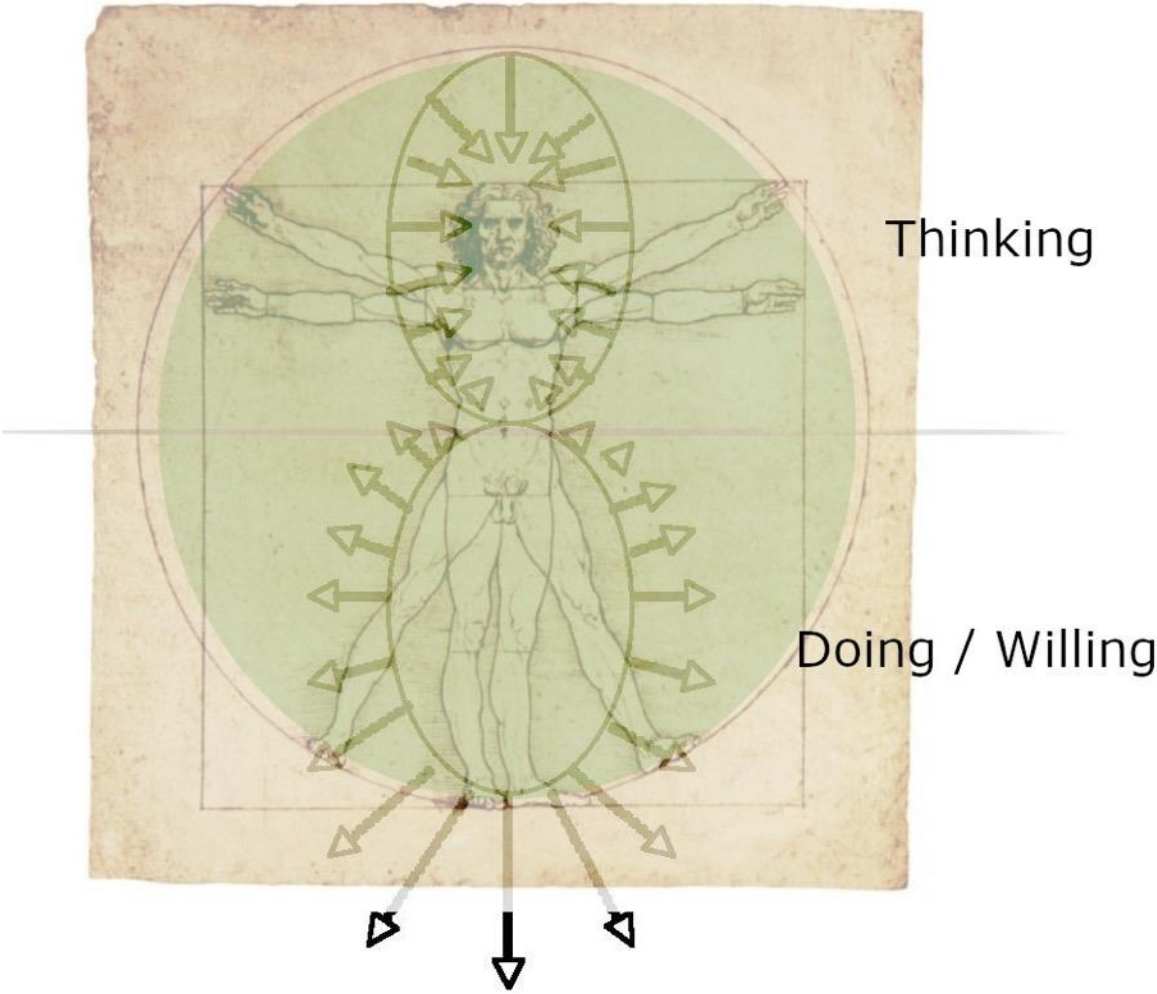


Table of contents

Introduction

Background/challenge

Methodology

Results ('The History')

- Pre-pre history: The school of Michael
- The Agriculture Course
- Prehistory 1: 1928 – 1935 biodynamics in the UK before the BDA
- Parallel-pre-history: 1925 – 1935 in Europe
- Prehistory 2: 1935 - 1950 biodynamics in the UK before the BDA
 - Before the war
 - During the war
 - After the war
- At last, the BDA/A by decade
 - 1950s
 - 1960s
 - 1970s
 - 1980s
 - 1990s
 - 2000s
 - 2010s

Analysis (Applying the GL template to the history)

Discussions and Conclusions

- i – (Mark Moodie)
- ii – (Vivian Griffiths)

Appendices (removed for this version)

- Appendix 1 - "Terms of Reference"
- Appendix 2 - Meetings and interviews: GL core group
- Appendix 3 - Time line transcript
- Appendix 4 - Digitised documents

Introduction

[Biodynamics](#) is the name that [gradually settled](#) on the work inspired by Rudolf Steiner that relates to agriculture. [Dr Rudolf Steiner \(1861-1925\)](#) wrote and lectured extensively, initially in the discipline of philosophy with particular focus on elucidating the approach of Goethe, then after the turn of the 20th Century, creating an immense output that is known as [Anthroposophy](#) or [supersensible science](#). This body of work sets out the method and implications of supplementing exact observation of material phenomena with equally disciplined observation and control of our internal experiences as co-contributors to 'reality'. Philosophically this embraces the possibility of transcending mere subjectivity to achieve '[objective idealism](#)'. This re-embeds humans into the community of beings of the cosmos and has transformative implications in all areas of endeavour.

In both his philosophical and anthroposophical works the question of what distinguishes something alive from that which is not alive is considered in this light, at length, and from many different perspectives. Steiner's contribution to making this point of view practical in the field of agriculture was not presented until shortly before his death: persistent students asked Steiner to make time in his crammed schedule to formulate and share his input because they were concerned about soil degradation, the decreasing longevity in seed strains, and increasing susceptibility to disease in animals. Could his insight and approach offer them a way of dealing with these issues? Dr Steiner addressed these concerns in 8 lectures in June 1924, now known universally as [The Agriculture Course](#).

These lectures certainly do not surrender all their secrets on first acquaintance, but have been the nucleus for strenuous attempts to understand, proceeding apace with efforts to realise the practical fruits of this biodynamic agriculture.

Dr Steiner died 9 months after giving the course, with much of his diminishing energy spent on other business. There was little or no opportunity for clarification of obscure points in the Agriculture Course, so the responsibility for steering his indications towards practicality and for introducing them to the wider world rested primarily upon the shoulders of [Ehrenfried Pfeiffer](#) - then 26 years old - and a few co-workers. Dr Steiner had suggested that most farmers would not have the background to appreciate the ideas he had presented so it was of primary importance to establish that these were effective by familiar parameters. Once the impact of biodynamics was obvious there would not be a problem disseminating the approach and techniques no matter how 'odd' they might appear. The benefits would speak for themselves. However, and in contrast to the advice to prove things first, he also suggested that the approach to agriculture needed to find its way around the world with overriding urgency.

Those with confidence in Dr Steiner and his work – anthroposophists – were keen to be part of elucidating and grounding biodynamics. In the UK, a lecture was given in July 1928 by [Carl Mirbt](#), a scientific advisor to the Koberwitz estate which had hosted the original Agriculture Course. This lecture was a seed crystal around which an English-speaking '[Experimental Circle](#)' was established, and the work in the UK began.

The Agriculture Course was translated into English and, whilst it was agreed that the content should not be made public, [The Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation \(AAF\)](#) was formed for communication amongst experimenters and supporters building up the body of results. For 6 years an overlapping membership of UK-based anthroposophists worked in the Experimental Circle and in the AAF.

Meanwhile at The Goetheanum, [the HQ of Anthroposophy](#) in the village of Dornach, Switzerland, those responsible for maintaining and promoting Dr Steiner's work and impulses were trying to recover from the death of their unique founder. The main building was being resurrected following

the fire which destroyed [its predecessor](#) on New Year's Eve 1922. The less visible but more pressing issue was that the five members of the Vorstand were struggling to work together. In the stormy 10 years from 1925 - 35 the Vorstand split and the cleavage propagated through the large international membership. The impact in the UK was that the AAF fell out of favour at Dornach, and those in the ascendant at the Goetheanum seeded a second and approved UK organisation called the Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association. The two UK organisations were aware of each other and there was even occasional mutual assistance, and to some extent Dr Pfeiffer continued between and around them.

Meanwhile the Nazis were getting organised in Europe and [German biodynamics](#) had to go underground, relocate, goose-step along, or suffer the fate of anyone in Hitler's way¹. In the UK, the war-effort required manpower, and understaffed farms had to focus on short-term production whatever the side-effects of the artificial fertilisers they used, and so the development of biodynamics was essentially put on ice.

As the UK emerged to the hollow realisation that 'we won', the UK BD organisations realised that chemical agriculture was not going to go away, that Dr Pfeiffer was now based in the USA, and that the appetite for division was sated. However, it took 5 more years and a flying visit from Dr Pfeiffer before the AAF and the BDAA amalgamated to emerge as the organisation that is [the BDA today](#).

In 1951, 27 years after the seminal lectures, there was once again a single UK body for the promotion and development of biodynamic agriculture in the UK. This BDAA (now known as the BDA) has its own 70 years of history. A study of the BDA's history could start from 1951 but it would not be complete without the story of what gave birth to it and the struggles that had such a dramatic impact on its creation.

Papers relating to all this history, both before and since the formal establishment of the BDA, were stored in boxes in the [BDA's office](#) in Stroud in the SW of England, and in various collections around the country. The first task was to find these, retreat to a COVID-secure place where they could be examined without getting in the way of the ongoing work, and to search through looking to place the essential elements of the history into order. A team have shared their findings and stitched together a core of facts. Gaps exist, but there is sufficient structure so that flesh can be put on to this ['timeline'](#)².

It is hard not to get impressions from the text and from '*reading between the lines*' of the restrained minutes of meetings across the decades, which are brought to life further by differing emphases in parallel accounts, and by correspondence between the main players. Trying to animate the dry data points of *where* and *when* by a provisional weaving in of the deeds and sufferings that make up the biography of the BDA gives the curious reader hope of greater insight - whilst also opening up the possibility of greater error. One hopes that the former may be useful and the latter forgiven and corrected in an attempt for this *Being of the BDA* to be able to be appreciated in the round.

The purpose is not just to satisfy curiosity. The goal is a UK biodynamic movement that knows its own history and so can flourish in a world that seems to need something like biodynamics to meet the challenges of the present.

¹ In 2021 The Goetheanum felt moved to counter some of the attacks on Anthroposophy as supporting racism and white supremacy etc. [Their paper can be found here](#). There is also an interesting article about the subject [here](#).

² Most of the blue-type in this report offer hyperlinks to that timeline at <https://www.considera.org/wpwp/>. A copy of the entries is in [the appendices to this document](#).

Background/challenge

From the 'Terms of Reference'

“In its ongoing work to grow and expand biodynamic farming, gardening, food production and consumption in the UK, the [Biodynamic Association](#) (The BDA) is currently undergoing a reflective learning process with the support of [Ruskin Mill Trust](#) (RMT). This piece of work, termed the *Genius Personae*, explores the historical development of biodynamics in the UK, looks for cycles and patterns that may help or hinder its advancement, and aims to culminate in a clean and healed *persona* and a freer direction for the movement in the future. Its framework for exploration is that of the fourfold being, comprising the physical, the etheric, the astral and the ego.”

Methodology

Since the foundation of this project is to find pre-existing information and to present it in various accessible forms for consideration, the first phase was dominated by archive searches. The majority was in the BDA offices in Stroud. Later, access became available to the Sunfield library, and then the private library of Barbara Saunders Davies. This being the 21st century the internet was the other great archive.

The history of the BDA is relatively recent, even ongoing, so much also resides in memories: the last great resource was accessed via personal communication. Some of these discussions were organised and focused in the weekly meetings of the core group and a record of these is in [the appendices](#)³. Gaps were identified in the emerging narrative so attempts to fill these manifested as emails and letters and phone calls.

As the information accrued it was sensible to try and organise this chronologically first and so, after more traditional methods revealed their shortcomings, an on-line [time-line](#) was established on a friendly server. This adaptable chronology of data offered the bonus of using links to 'drill down' into greater detail. These second level posts form the first non-exhaustive attempts to follow themes weaving in and through the chronology.

Having established more or less objective historical dates and places, the raw material was sufficiently clear to commence the *genius personae* process per se. This process is described in some detail in [one of the core group's sessions](#) - "... for exploration is that of the fourfold being, comprising the physical, the etheric, the astral and the ego."

³ Most of these were held in confidence so those transcripts are not available in the public version of this research.

Pre-pre history: The school of Michael

Dr Steiner asserted that those who found their way to Anthroposophy did not do so by chance. Rather these souls attended a 'school' before birth to become conscious of the needs of the times. These times and the school were under the rulership of the newly promoted Archai known as [Michael](#) in the Western esoteric tradition.

This coincided with the end of a 5000 year-long *kali yuga*⁴ during which the Gods - the beings of the spiritual world - had withdrawn from human communication. The result of this was that ideas became less available through inspiration but were forged through the human thinkers' own efforts. This meant that individuals became responsible for their actions and so it was a time in which individuality *per se* came into bold relief out from the background of blood ties. Steering this necessary evolutionary step towards the possibility of a healthy conclusion required a fundamental shift for which this school offered orientation.

The new situation into which these folk would incarnate required individuality to be retained as a prize of their evolution, but the isolation and egotism that this risked had to be transcended with love. It also required materialistic convictions to be reconsidered and recast. The new arrangement was one in which the beings of the spiritual world would first have to be re-discovered and then made welcome as collaborators. No longer were the heavens to be either silent or an inscrutable source of divine whim, and the human role in the drama was no longer just to suffer impositions from on high. Forging the path to loving and free collaboration and co-creation was the goal of this diverse group of souls. *Diverse*, because these souls came to the school after of all sorts of histories – Platonic, Aristotelian etc – and *diverse* because all outer classifications were of diminishing relevance. Gender, ethnicity, artistic or scientific propensity - just not an issue ... except for the challenge of recognising and communicating effectively with colleagues across specialisations and differing combinations of temperament.

All these challenges would be faced within and against the currents of the Western mainstream whose sources were Kant, Bacon, Newton and Darwin. The dominant assumptions hardened to a conviction that there never was and is not such a spiritual world, that even such talk reveals the lingering superstitions of a world not yet blessed by science. The incarnated alumni of the School of Michael would need to forge a new path between a culture of the absent or inflated self, and a world convinced that the ultimate reality is material - a culture that would consider these paragraphs to be senseless drivel.

Some of these incarnating souls focused on biodynamics and some did so in the UK. This paper focusses on what has been achieved in the light of this challenge.

⁴ Note: - not the [432,000 year period](#) of the same name recognised in other traditions.

The Agriculture Course

The run up to the Agriculture Course started as early as 1920 according to Wachsmuth, Stegemann recalls 1921, but according to Pfeiffer⁵ the seminal event took place in 1923.

Pfeiffer: “In 1923 Rudolf Steiner described for the first time how to make the bio-dynamic compost preparations, simply giving the recipe without any sort of explanation — just “do this and then that.” Dr Wachsmuth and I then proceeded to make the first batch of preparation 500. This was then buried in the garden of the “*Sonnenhof*” in Arlesheim⁶, Switzerland. The momentous day came in the early summer⁷ of 1924 when this first lot of 500 was dug up again in the presence of Dr Steiner, Dr Wegman, Dr Wachsmuth, a few other co-workers and myself.”

Wachsmuth: “We must mention as belonging to 1922 the birth of the agricultural movement later called the biological dynamic method in agriculture, now known widely over the earth. Mention has already been made in connection with the years 1920 and 1921 of the aid Rudolf Steiner gave to Ehrenfreid Pfeiffer and to me, who were initiating work in the biological research laboratory. It is, therefore, for all of those who apply with gratitude and with success these methods for the benefit of humanity that we have called back into memory the initial moment at the Goetheanum in 1922.

Stegemann: [My first memorable conversation with Dr. Steiner.](#) I began work on the farm. My first shock: “No need to use artificials.” Dr Steiner gave suggestions. My conversations with Dr Steiner in October and November, 1921. I came to Dornach, waited for a time in the Schreinerei. Dr Steiner came out, beckoned, said I could meet him at half past six. As a farmer accustomed to rising early, I said: “In the morning, Herr Doctor?” He replied: “Oh no, in the evening!” ...I inquired: “If a man eats and gains health from plants he must understand them. How can one work without nitrates, potash and magnesia, without artificials, Herr Doctor?” He told me how to set about it. We began to work.

Undisputed is that those working around Rudolf Steiner were given the bare-bones instructions of making some of the preparations and the first exhumation of them was by Günther Wachsmuth, Ita Wegman and Ehrenfried Pfeiffer. At about the same time, pressure was gathering on Dr Steiner to give growers some focussed guidelines. Only in early 1924 was a space in Dr Steiner’s already bursting timetable made for the course that Whitsun. It was given to between “some 60” and 111 or 135 people at Koberwitz in Poland (then Silesia, Germany) at the estate of Count Carl and Countess Johanna Keyserlingk – who put out 130 chairs for the attendees⁸.

⁵ The Creeger Gardner edition of *The Agriculture Course* brought Pfeiffer’s dates back a year to accord with those of Wachsmuth

⁶ Sunfield near Stourbridge was said to have been named after Sonnenhof.

⁷ Dr Steiner mentioned in the first discussion at Koberwitz that this occurred a little later than required – “... this year we started rather late and a certain amount [of spraying 500] was done after the sowing.” In the questions after lecture 4 he said: “In Dornach we had twenty-five cow-horns; to begin with we had a fairly large garden to treat. First we took one horn to half a bucketful. Then we began again, taking a whole bucketful and two cow-horns. Afterwards we had to manure a relatively larger area. We took seven cow-horns and seven bucketfuls.”

⁸ The Birth of a new Agriculture. Koberwtiz 1924. Includes “Twelve Days with Rudolf Steiner by Countess Johanna Keyserlingk. Edited by Graf von Keyserlingk. Temple Lodge 1999. ISBN 1-902636-07-4

The [course content](#) itself is well documented⁹ as is the immediate context¹⁰ in which it was offered. Of interest in this context is that no UK-based¹¹ person was amongst the participants. The person upon whose shoulders the legacy of the course would initially rest – Ehrenfried Pfeiffer – had been asked by Rudolf Steiner to stay in Switzerland¹² to attend to other duties and so, paradoxically, he was not at Koberwitz.

During the course, the host, [Count Keyserlingk](#), was asked how he was coping with Dr Steiner’s instruction and The Count confessed that he hadn’t understood a word¹³: that’s where that tradition was founded!

Dr Steiner seems to have been more upbeat about its comprehensibility.

“It seems to me that the agricultural lectures have succeeded so far. I approached it all with scant hope. But now I am succeeding just there, too, in drawing points of view out of the spiritual world that will perhaps be extremely fruitful for practical agriculture. As far as I can see, the farmers are getting the point, though these thoughts do represent something quite foreign in the context of present-day views.”

Letter to Ita Wegman from Koberwitz

The course embraces the world view that organisms are linked to and are based on the model of their whole environment – that even a humble weed is a microcosm within the macrocosm¹⁴. Steiner points out that this is not yet a very practical guide to farming. He clarifies that such things as some human diseases and the menstrual cycle share the periodicities of the heavens but do not run their course in synchrony with the movements of the heavens. Such partial emancipation from the cosmos is clear in the case of a human, slightly less so for the animal, whilst...

“... the plants are to a great extent still embedded in and dependent on what is occurring in their earthly surroundings. That is why it is impossible to understand plant life without taking into account the fact that everything on Earth is actually only a reflection of what is taking place in the cosmos.”

⁹ “The official stenographer for the course was Kurt Walther, and his shorthand transcription was supplemented by that of Lilly Kolisko, and possibly other participants.” [Paul 2011](#). A new (2021-2022) translation is in preparation after the rediscovery (in the Goetheanum archive) of more of the shorthand notes Lilly Kolisko made whilst at Koberwitz. [Details here](#). Walther’s original transcriptions are currently AWOL.

¹⁰ *The Birth of a new Agriculture*. Koberwitz 1924. Includes “Twelve Days with Rudolf Steiner by Countess Johanna Keyserlingk. Edited by Graf von Keyserlingk. Temple Lodge 1999. ISBN 1-902636-07-4

¹¹ [Lilly Kolisko](#) was there but did not make her home in the UK until 1936.

¹² [Pfeiffer’s introduction to the Agriculture Course](#) “I myself had to forgo attendance at the course, as Dr Steiner had asked me to stay at home to help take care of someone who was seriously ill. “I’ll write and tell you what goes on at the course,” Dr Steiner said by way of solace. He never did get round to writing, no doubt because of the heavy demands on him; this was understood and regretfully accepted. On his return to Dornach, however, there was an opportunity for discussing the general situation. When I asked him whether the new methods should be started on an experimental basis, he replied: “The most important thing is to make the benefits of our agricultural preparations available to the largest possible areas over the entire earth, so that the earth may be healed and the nutritive quality of its produce improved in every respect. That should be our first objective. The experiments can come later.” He obviously thought that the proposed methods should be applied at once.”

¹³ “I hope it was also only a special kind of polite modesty that made Count Keyserlingk say he did not understand me” – [Dr Steiner](#)

¹⁴ “Of course, if we tell people that human life is a microcosm which imitates the macrocosm, they may well reject this as nonsense.” Lecture 1 p33 of Creeger Gardner edition

With this, the essential orientation of the course is defined and the point of departure from mainstream assumptions then – and more so now – is established. Modern agronomic sciences are focussed on microscopic ‘causes’ for the plant, the animal and even the farmers and their woes. Genetics and genetic manipulation show this in the extreme but this assumption is inherent in the rationale for fertilisers and in defining phytopathology and so forth. For Steiner and biodynamics this is like hoping to understand a compass by analysing its components rather than supplementing content with its defining context.

Clarifying what biodynamics is *not* - putting clear water between biodynamics and mainstream understanding - still does not assist the farmer and gardener. The rest of the course attempts the first steps to challenge or round out the one-sided verities of the standard ways of thinking about agriculture.

Then, perhaps uniquely in Steiner’s vast output, he describes how to make some new tools. The descriptions are relatively clear in respect of what should be done, but less obvious in describing their rationale. These are known as the *biodynamic preparations*, more akin to alchemical products than any modern formulation, and used in doses more familiar for homeopathic remedies than fertilisers, thus opening up a whole fresh front for scepticism. This is perhaps why Count Keyserlingk could confess to not ‘get’ the course and why many thoughtful people have followed in his wake.

After the third (June 11, 1924) of the eight lectures the participants *came together*, no doubt in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and uncertainty, with the common goal of acting “as a carrier for the experiments involved with the guidelines to be given here in these lectures, so that these guidelines - and they cannot be more than that - can be confirmed and demonstrated in practice.” They wanted to test this ‘new’ approach to agriculture, to ground the talk, to make it practical.

Dr Steiner shared his opinion with this ‘*Experimental Circle of anthroposophical farmers of the Anthroposophical Society*’ at that second¹⁵ meeting about how the work might gain traction in the wider world. However, over time he gave mixed messages about how to disseminate the method that we now know as ‘*biodynamic agriculture*’¹⁶. At the end of the course Dr Steiner suggested that it might not be ideal to talk openly about the contents of the course – certainly at first, but that this circle would be the forum to ground the lectures in practice. With guidance from Dr Steiner and his Dornach-based team and once the results of the practical implementation from the experimental circle were in¹⁷, then these results would speak for themselves and the strangeness of the preparations and so forth would not be such a barrier to adoption.

One condition for success, however, was strongly and repeatedly emphasized: for the time being, the content of the course must remain the spiritual property of the Circle of practicing farmers. Although some people only casually interested in agriculture were also present at the course, they were not permitted to join the Circle and were expressly instructed not to fall into the usual anthroposophical habit of immediately talking about everything with everyone. These things will only be able to live up to their true potential if the content of the course remains in the hands of the specialists and is tested by the farmers. Some things will require four years to try out. In the meantime, the practical pointers that were given are not supposed to

¹⁵ An unrecorded meeting was held on June 7th in “Bock” hall at Breslau, at which Stegemann and Keyserlingk had strongly expressed but differing opinions. Some notes have surfaced in 2021 from Lilly Kolisko so perhaps we will soon learn a little more of what was said. See footnote 8 above.

¹⁶ Nicolai Fuchs: “In 1929 a conversation with Erhard Bartsch gave rise to the name “biodynamic”, which does not go back to Steiner: Erhard Bartsch had voted for the anthroposophical method Agriculture to be called “organic farming”. Ernst Stegemann, however, advocated the term “dynamic farming”, which is probably related to his deep connection to astronomy and weather events. The term “biodynamic farming” is attributable to the combination of these two approaches.”

¹⁷ Developing Biodynamic Agriculture: Reflections on early Research. Adalbert Count Keyserlingk. Temple Lodge 1993. ISBN 1 902636 13 9

stray outside the agricultural community. These things are meant to enter right into practical life, so it does no good just to talk about them. Anyone who heard these things and goes around talking about them will be doing them an injustice.

Steiner's report to members June 1924

Count Keyserlingk, the iron Count, pushed this point harder and a cloak was cast over the contents of the course that wasn't fully lifted until the 1960s.

On the other hand, Günther Wachsmuth reported that Steiner emphasised that one should not hide Anthroposophy.

"Another thing which has caused us the greatest difficulties is the fact that the power of impulse in the Anthroposophical Society itself has not always been estimated in a thorough manner. It is possible to hear once in a while, opinions which are utterly false to the Anthroposophical Movement, which place it side by side with the very things which must be eliminated by it for the sake of human evolution. Only in the last few days I have had the experience that someone said to me that, if that which Anthroposophy provides is introduced in the presence of these or those persons, then even the most practical persons accept it; only, one must not mention to them Anthroposophy or the threefold social question, but must deny these. You see this is something which has been practiced by many persons for a number of years. This is the falsest thing that we could possibly do. In whatever realm it may be, we must stand before the world as representatives of the Anthroposophical entity under the banner of complete truthfulness, and we must be aware of the fact that, to the extent that we are unable to do this, we cannot further the Anthroposophical Movement. All veiled representation of the Anthroposophical Movement leads in the end to nothing wholesome."

Ehrenfried Pfeiffer recalled that the emphasis was on getting the preparations out "*as our first objective*" and that "*The experiments can come later.*" Steiner reported:

"The most important thing is to make the benefits of our agricultural preparations available to the largest possible areas over the entire earth, so that the earth may be healed and the nutritive quality of its produce improved in every respect. That should be our first objective. The experiments can come later." He obviously thought that the proposed methods should be applied at once.... In discussing ways and means of propagating the methods, Dr Steiner said also that the good effects of the preparations and of the whole method itself were "for everybody, for all farmers" — in other words, not intended to be the special privilege of a small, select group. This needs to be the more emphasised in view of the fact that admission to the course was limited to farmers, gardeners and scientists who had both practical experience and a spiritual scientific, anthroposophical background. The latter is essential to understanding and evaluating what Rudolf Steiner set forth, but the bio-dynamic method can be applied by any farmer."

Dr Steiner emphasised to the Circle that the course could only give hints and indications:

Naturally, you must take what is presented in these lectures and use it as you do the letters of the alphabet, because only in bringing things together will you find what you are expecting.

*

A major issue arose: Dr Steiner died within a year of giving the course without further elucidation of the opaque lectures. No *BD for Dummies* was found in his papers. A young team was left grieving and reeling in the massive void he left behind, whilst squaring up to the responsibility for bringing unwieldy subject matter to an unreceptive world, with contrasting instructions still in their ears.

The impact upon these disorientated souls and how this then affected the future of biodynamics in the UK will be [considered below](#), after tracing the first enthusiastic steps of biodynamic agriculture in the UK.

Prehistory 1: 1928 – 1935 biodynamics in the UK before the BDA

[Daniel Nicol Dunlop](#) was an enterprising Scot, readily identified by the black ribbon attaching his glasses to his suit and by his Al Capone spats¹⁸. In his professional life he was instrumental in creating international standards for electrical supplies and appliances. Dunlop was greatly taken by Dr Steiner's approach to life and took a leading role in the Anthroposophical Society in the UK. No doubt he and others had heard of Steiner's agricultural input – one of Dr Steiner's last trips abroad was to the UK, organised by Dunlop, after the Whitsun work at Koberwtiz in 1924.

In 1928 Dunlop co-organised and then hosted a *World Conference for Spiritual Science* in London and asked Count Keyserlingk to speak. The count was too busy and his English was not good enough so he sent along his scientific advisor to give the lecture. [Carl Mirbt](#) was engaging company with infectious enthusiasm¹⁹ and he spoke sufficiently good English. After his contribution²⁰ various figures in the UK Anthroposophical world (primarily Marna Pease, Daniel Dunlop, George Kaufman Adams, Maurice Wood and Carl Mirbt) came together to form a *UK Experimental Circle* to develop the practical implications of the agricultural course, and an *Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation (the AAF)* to support this work by coordinating and communicating. Carl Mirbt was enticed to return to the UK and carry out the daily tasks of both of these organisations, which he did with great gusto.

This is widely acknowledged to be the start of biodynamic activity in the UK.

The AAF was supported by other anthroposophists, some of whom found accommodation for Herr Mirbt²¹ and for his young family when they joined him a little time later.

One of the first activities of this small band was to [translate the agriculture](#) course lectures into English. The backbone of this was achieved in Huby between Leeds and Harrogate where [George Kaufman](#) stayed at Sleights Farm, the farm of his friend [Maurice Wood](#) – the UK's first biodynamic farmer in 1929. The agreement was honoured that the course would not be publicly available in deference to the suggestions of Steiner and - more so - Keyserlingk. Copies were typed out by Marna Pease and members of the Experimental Circle who wished to have access to them had to agree to the restriction in circulation and to promise to hand the copies back should they find it no longer to their requirements. This involved signing an 'undertaking', binding upon associates and even upon family should the owner in question die.

The AAF and the Experimental Circle²² met frequently and regularly to try to develop the new discipline, publishing and updating draft guidelines for each other, and making and sharing the biodynamic preparations. All this is clear from the *Notes and Correspondence* circular that Carl Mirbt typed and copied to the membership from 1929 onwards.

¹⁸ D N Dunlop A Man of our Time. T H Meyer Temple Lodge 1992 ISBN 0 904693 38 4

¹⁹ "One of my main memories of those pre-war days is Carl's enthusiasm and his capacity to make human contacts." [D Clement 2002](#)

²⁰ [Alan Brockman](#) said that Mirbt's lecture was entitled "*Agricultural Depression - Its Causes and Means for its Relief*"

²¹ Originally Carl Mirbt was [accommodated](#) at Sleights Farm, then at Bray, before Clent, Cambridgeshire and Kirkudbrightshire – and finally became one of the founders of Botton Village in the North York Moors

²² "From the beginning, the Experimental Circle owned nothing. It was financed by the Foundation ... The Foundation was from the beginning largely financed by gardeners. Farmers were very thin on the ground and we had many more private gardeners". - [D Clements 2002](#)



Figure 1 The Sleights, Huby near Leeds, in 2022

The first AGM was held on November 23rd of 1929 at 46 Gloucester Place in London. There were 50 members. Elisabeth Vreede spoke about a Steiner lecture on *Chaos and Cosmos*. George Kaufman was in the chair, Marna Pease was honorary secretary. “*Experimental stations are developing in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northumberland²³, Hertfordshire and Kent.*”

For 6 years the AAF and the experimental circle of anthroposophical farmers carried the biodynamic impulse with focus and energy. Then international troubles began to have an impact on these islands.

*

Here are a few other episodes from this time with importance later or outside of the narrative offered above. They can be followed up further via the [timeline](#):

1. Biodynamic practitioners were not alone in being concerned about ‘modern’ agriculture, and even about the nutritional impact it was having. In 1926 The [Peckham Experiment](#) was initiated by Dr George Scott Williams and Innes Pearce. Wikipedia calls it...

“... an experiment designed to determine whether people as a whole would, given the opportunity, take a vested interest in their own health and fitness and expend effort to maintain it. The experiment took place between 1926 and 1950, initially generated by rising public concern over the health of the working class and an increasing interest in preventive social medicine.”

Scott Williams and Innes Pearce, like BD pioneers, were one part of a larger group of fellow-travellers who were not unreservedly enthusiastic about all that modern technology brought forth. They would, for instance, be contributors and participants at the [Betteshanger Summer School](#) of 1939.

2. As mentioned in a footnote above, the name ‘*biodynamic*’ agriculture became the default for what had been known as Anthroposophical Agriculture before. Nicolai Fuchs said this was a portmanteau term arising from a compromise between [Erhard Bartsch](#) and Ernst Stegemann:

²³ The Northumberland station was presumably at Otterburn. John Paull has recently released [a paper about Marna Pease](#) which suggests this location vies with Maurice Woods’ Sleights Farm for the honour of having made the first preparations in the UK

“In 1929 a conversation with Erhard Bartsch gave rise to the name “biodynamic”, which does not go back to Steiner: Erhard Bartsch had voted for the anthroposophical method Agriculture to be called “organic farming” [*biologischer anbau* in German]. Stegemann, however, advocated the term “dynamic farming”, which is probably related to his deep connection to astronomy and weather events. The term “biodynamic farming” is attributable to the combination of these two approaches.”

This plants a flag in the timeline, a ‘christening’ date for what was conceived around 1921 and born in 1924. But it also points to an ongoing thread that has lasted through the whole of biodynamic history: how should biodynamic agriculture best present itself to the world? – a question which will be explored in the [discussion section](#) of this report.

3. In the [parallel history section](#) of this report it will be clear that even in the early days of BD-UK’s youthful enthusiasm, the storms in Europe were beginning to create turbulence across the channel. For instance, from what is written above, it might seem that Dunlop’s World Conference was a joyful festival bathing in the warm and unconditional backing of Dornach: [Marie Steiner](#) sent her team of Eurythmists and some of the Dornach glitterati gave talks alongside Carl Mirbt. However, in the background there were significant misgivings and, in retrospect at least, critics of the ‘super Vorstand’ were [openly critical](#):

“... when the “World-Conference” was discussed, which was planned to take place in London in the coming summer. Serious doubts were expressed against the “World Conference”. Many members felt a certain amount of mistrust because the organisers and their helpers were the same persons who had already caused so much harm as founders of the World School Union, as the upholders of the “Manifestation²⁴” and as “super-Vorstand “. They dreaded a new attempt to lead the anthroposophical movement away from the Goetheanum. Herr Steffen had certainly been informed officially this time, and a printed advance-programme had been submitted to him, yet the Vorstand was not consulted when the plans were worked out, in spite of it being a “world-wide” undertaking, to be carried out on a large scale and with tremendous expenses. The actual discussions were carried on with Dr Wegman alone, whom the organisers considered as the only personality that counted after Dr Steiner’s death. Apart from this, great dissatisfaction was felt because the World Conference was to take place about six weeks before the celebration of the inauguration of the [second] Goetheanum, and the question had to be raised whether time, money and energy would not be better spent for the Goetheanum. The English organisers justified their action by referring to a wish expressed by Dr Steiner during his last visit to England in the summer of 1924. He had, as a matter of fact, expressed the wish for a conference on a larger scale. Nevertheless, it remained a question as to whether Dr Steiner would have welcomed the fact that the Conference was to take place at a time when preparations were afoot for the opening of the Goetheanum. Dr Steiner’s words also acquired another meaning when one remembered – and many could remember this – that he had demanded a Conference on a larger scale, and above all a better organised Conference, declaring that he would not return come to England if future Conferences would again be arranged so badly, and would have such a scarce attendance and such a poor reception as the Summer Course at Torquay in August 1924.

Owing to the cares connected with the difficult preparations for the opening of the Goetheanum, Herr Steffen could not be all too happy about the World Conference. However, he acknowledged the initiative and promised the official cooperation of the Goetheanum. The General Meeting at least induced the organisers to make some changes in their programme, so that it acquired a less partisan note.

The World Conference took place from July 20 to August 1, 1928 Herr Steffen sent an official letter of welcome which was read at the opening. Frau Dr Steiner sent the Eurythmy-group, who contributed with performances, and Dr Wachsmuth held a lecture. Also Dr Unger, in view of Herr Steffen’s attitude, had not refused, and had even extended the invitation to the German members in the name of the German Executive. The chief lecturers were Dr Stein – who was still waging his campaign against Dr Steiner’s Will – Dr Kolisko and Dr Zeylmans.

²⁴ Presumably this is the Manifesto or [Declaration](#) – see next section

The "World Conference" was held in London at the Friends' House, a medium sized hall. Out of 1000 seats, about 600 were occupied, most of them by members, of whom many had come from other countries. It was hardly possible to speak of a public success, and the deficit was of course considerable.

Dr Wegman, who had taken an interest in this World Conference as if it were her own affair, also wrote the official report which can be read in the "Mitteilungsblatt" No. 34 of August 19, 1928.

4. The host of the Agriculture Course and Carl Mirbt's old boss, the 'iron' Count [Carl Keyserlingk](#) died on December 20th 1928.

5. On 15th February 1929 Ehrenfried Pfeiffer gave a [lecture in Bradford](#) on the work of the Research Laboratory at the Goetheanum. It is believed that this was Pfeiffer's first time in the UK.

6. In the Experimental Circle's *Notes and Correspondence* (N&C) of [May 1929](#) it was noted that Elisabeth Vreede's Mathematical-Astronomical section had created a calendar and Carl Mirbt wondered if readers were sufficiently interested to have this available and for him to translate the notes that go with it. Indeed, in the next N&C of [June 1929](#) Mirbt said that Frau Vreede's calendar "*proves more and more essential for our anthroposophical agricultural work.*" Subsequent N&Cs held translations relevant to the time of publication. The calendar became fully available in English from [September 1932](#).

7. Early [results were already emerging](#) from European farms such as Loverendale in Holland where Pfeiffer was in charge (10 UK members [visited in 1932](#)), and from Stegemann's Marienstein ...

"... a farm of 500 acres, very intensively managed. Partly BD since 1922 and in a larger scale since 1924. "Out of the experience of seven years during which time Herr Stegemann followed Dr Steiner's methods on his farm, one must come to the statement that the soil as well as the plant are more seriously ill as one expected. Therefore, our work will go on slowly. But the results obtained in Marienstein justify all the efforts. A spiritual reality must be also a reality on Earth. The economic point of view ought not to play the first part in our considerations, but we cannot ignore it. The members of the Experimental Circle must never forget the great task they are given by Dr Steiner to save the civilisation." Sugar 1.5% above average for the sugar beet factory. "The figures show that the biological dynamic methods prove applicable also from the economic point of view... The concluding remark of Herr Stegemann that he has not sufficient workmen on his farm, I know that it will need serious and long discussion how we can here in England solve this most difficult but also most essential question in accordance with the needs of our methods."

A circle of 400 growers around Lake Constance were active in experimentation according to the [N&C of October 1929](#)

8. In 1929 Pfeiffer and Wachsmuth [came to Bray](#) (the home of Marna Pease) to open and bless the new laboratory created there.

Herr Pfeiffer gave practical advice and help – the first experiments have started. "They go in the direction to come to a practical knowledge about the Etheric World, to show the influence of the Etheric Formative Forces on agriculture, to study the effect of our biological dynamic preparations in a scientific way." Not cheap.

This laboratory was renewed or [extended in 1936](#) when Lilly and Eugen Kolisko came to the UK and the laboratory was opened again!

9. On October 14 1931 Mahatma Gandhi visited the Sunfield Children's home on his way from London to talk to the mill workers of Lancashire. Sunfield moved to the Stourbridge / Clent area of the Midlands from its first location in Birmingham in 1932, and Broome Farm was added in 1933

In a conversation with Dr. Ita Wegman and Mr. D. N. Dunlop at the Summer School at Bangor, it became evident that one of the great needs of the moment was a farm where the agricultural methods given by Rudolf Steiner could be carried out on a fairly large scale and where it would be possible to produce the kind of food needed for instance by children such as ours. Within a few days we had made enquiries and found that a very suitable farm within two miles of Clent Grove was to be sold. We also found that no artificial fertilisers had been used on it for many years, and so by the end of 1933 we were able to make arrangements to purchase it for just under £8,000.

The purchase of Broome Farm however, was not strictly speaking the beginning of our farming activities, for in April of the same year a neighbour of ours with a real love for farming, had offered to get our small home farm into working order, and we had purchased our first cow, an entirely new kind of venture for me - and had begun to provide our children with home-produced milk.

10. The 3rd AGM of the AAF in 1931 saw the adoption of a new constitution and a subscription was set at £1-0-0 per year.

11. Maye Bruce, a member of the Experimental Circle, used her farm at Sapperton near Cirencester, for research within the experimental circle but was frustrated that something as important as the preparations were not in the hands of every farmer in the land. She kept her promise not to divulge the recipes of the preparations but made homeopathically potentised versions of the herbal ingredients instead, and went commercial with her Quick Return or QR compost activator.

12. An interesting link to later BDA history occurred in July of 1932.

I was bicycling over the Mendips and he was in my mind all the time. I looked out over the plain of Avalon towards Glastonbury Tor to the west of me. The sun was just setting behind the Tor and I had the extraordinary impression that the Tor was the base, the church tower the stem and the sun the cup (because the cloud took the top out of the sun). I was riveted. This was a picture of the Grail and my brother was showing to me what should I do. I told this to Dr Wegman and asked 'What should I do?' She asked me what was my most important problem. I said 'How to find your way into life and that is the way of my generation now. We do not follow our fathers any more but we have to find our own way'. So she said that I should ask one or two experienced anthroposophists to help organise a conference for young people. She said that if I arranged it properly it with 'proper people' she would come. So we did and it was held in Glastonbury in 1932.

I was absolutely astonished that Dr Wegman came, as did many other well-known anthroposophists both from England and the continent. About 100 people came. I was absolutely shattered. I had to organise it with the help of the people at Sunfield where Dr Wegman had suggested I should go. When I arrived at the conference they said that I should take the chair. I was scared stiff but everyone was very kind. Now, when my brother died, he left about two or three hundred pound and my mother gave me £100. That's all the money I had, I normally managed on 10 shillings a week. When I paid the bills and came to settle up at the end, I found that I owed nothing and it had cost £100 exactly! I felt that was a confirmation that it was right.

Dr Walter Johannes Stein lectured every morning on the history of the world and we had no programme apart from this lecture. We then met in the evening with Wegman and reflected on the conversations we had had that day and formed the programme for the following day. We had one day devoted to education, agriculture, medicine and so on.

That was a 21 year old David Clement processing the death of his brother and channelling it into his passion for anthroposophy. It will be clear that his interest was not exhausted by this event.

13. In November of 1933 the UK BD growers held an exhibition of produce, crystallisations and honey at Rudolf Steiner House to coincide with their 5th AGM. Pfeiffer and Wachsmuth were present.

14. Perhaps as a taster of what was about to come a few weeks later in Dornach, a special meeting was held on March 1st 1934. *“Special meeting of some members of experimental Circle as members of the United Groups Branch challenge the right of the AAF and find fault with its methods.”*

This is soon followed (May) by a visit from Pfeiffer and Wachsmuth “Visit of Wachsmuth & Pfeiffer to London to institute a 2nd centre & enquiry office – presumably the BDA – for anthroposophical agriculture without reference to the existing AAF. *“A new situation exists following the General Meeting in Dornach.”*

In the AGM of the AAF that November, item 4 on the agenda was: *“In view of what has occurred during the current year within the Anthroposophical Society, & the effect upon all Anthroposophical activities, including those of the AAF, to consider the most effective way of carrying our work in the future.”*

The section below focusses on what did occur and how it arose ...

Parallel-pre-history: 1925 – 1935 in Europe

Following the death of Dr Steiner on March 30th, 1925, the future guidance of the Anthroposophical Society fell to the officers of the 'Vorstand' – [Albert Steffen](#), [Marie Steiner](#), [Gunther Wachsmuth](#), [Elisabeth Vreede](#) and [Ita Wegman](#).²⁵

Should one of these become President, and be seen to dare to step into Steiner's shoes? A President was a legal requirement and Albert Steffen was vice-president so surely it must be him by default, or was 'the poet' really there only because the authorities needed a Swiss person in charge in Switzerland? Perhaps there was a clue to Dr Steiner's own intentions in that his longest-serving companion was on the Vorstand – his wife! But hold on a minute, should it not be Steiner's Karmic bestie²⁶, his companion through incarnations, his 'recorder' in the High School for the First Class? Surely this role was a *de facto* investiture of his successor who continued to offer the *Leading Thoughts*! Perhaps there should be one leader for legal reasons and another to carry the esoteric baton for Anthroposophia? Or should it be that no-one could and so no-one should fill those unique shoes? Was there to be collective responsibility – and what was the impact of that on responsible autonomy of the sections? What if someone went over the line, why should the others suffer the consequences?

Ita Wegman gave Class Lessons²⁷ in Paris and Prague but this was not welcomed by the whole Vorstand. She continued where Steiner had left off with *Leading Thoughts* in the *Mitteilungblatt* (the 'message sheet' for communicating to members) and spoke of *missions* and *investitures* from Dr Steiner. This presumption was challenged and not always in calming language. Wegman felt abused, and framed these challenges as challenges against Dr Steiner's choices. The retort was that Dr Steiner's name could not be used to cover all criticisms of one's own shortcomings ... and justifications and attacks spiralled. Personalities dominated over issues, and personalities across the incarnations at that! As the squabbling intensified, members' names began to cluster on different sides – already in the year of Dr Steiner's death.

Marie Steiner withdrew into her own Section (arts, drama and eurythmy) and worked on publishing the copious writings and transcriptions of her late husband rather than join the fray. She suggested that Dr Eugen Kolisko might take up some of her duties in the German Anthroposophical society but this was not welcomed by all the Vorstand.

Indeed when Dr Eugen Kolisko, Dr WJ Stein and Frau Dr Kolisko heard of a suggestion from Count Keyserlingk to have Marie Steiner made the honorary president they rushed to Dornach and made it very clear to Marie Steiner that this was not acceptable to them – for 5 hours. The *Leading Thoughts* issue was thrown in as well as Ita Wegman's inferred authority.

All this was given extra heat by varied interpretations of the significance of [the 1923 Christmas meeting](#). Some considered all agreements made before this threshold-event were void, and only those forged since 1923 were of any importance. This re-evaluation would include Dr Steiner's will

²⁵ Originally [Edith Maryon](#), the English sculptor who assisted Dr Steiner in the creation of the [Representative of Man](#), was a Vorstand member responsible for *plastic arts* but she died in May 1924.

²⁶ That Rudolf Steiner was close to Ita Wegman cannot be in doubt as for example is plain from a [letter written by Steiner to Wegman](#) whilst the former was giving the Agriculture Course. For more see "Who was Ita Wegman" – written by Dr Zeylmans.

²⁷ These were lessons restricted to the most serious esoteric students of Dr Steiner's Anthroposophy (Class members). To hold these lessons, even to assist, was a great honour and responsibility. These lessons are now publicly available.

which had been written before 1923. It had to be produced physically in the growing furore, but it was still declared void by some due to its age. Papers and notebooks went missing. The book, *Fundamentals of Therapy*, came out under the joint names of Ita Wegman and Rudolf Steiner without clearance from Marie Steiner's publishing house that was still expected to foot the printing bills.

The legal necessity of having a president could not be debated away. Albert Steffen was elected at the AGM of December 29, 1925. What then of his rights, his responsibilities, his powers? Should he, Steffen, have authorised an English edition of the *Das Goetheanum* paper in competition and over the heads of the organisers of the English-speaking news sheet?

On January 24th 1926 Albert Steffen appealed to the members over two major concerns. The first was a growing campaign against Marie Steiner. The second was the foundation of a *World School Union*. The founding group, led by Drs Stein and Kolisko from the Stuttgart Waldorf School, said that Dr Vreede had approved it on behalf of the Vorstand, and that Dr Steiner had suggested it. On the 27th Herr Steffen faced up to them. Dr Stein sent a letter of apology to Frau Steiner but it was deemed to fail the test of sincerity. The Dutch anthroposophists under Zeylmans von Emmichoven were also considered to be agitating against Frau Steiner. Dr Zeylmans arrived in Dornach on the 28th and agreed to meet with the Vorstand, but only after setting conditions. This was considered by some to undermine Steffen's authority. Dr Zeylmans offered a report written on the 12th of January which Herr Steffen only received on the 25th saying that Dr Vreede had not objected to the Union and had even consequently agreed. The Vorstand said that Dr Vreede did not have that authority. A carbuncle of mistrust was lanced and Drs Carl Unger and Stein were asked by Steffen to establish and present the agreed facts: Dr Vreede had indeed been the representative of the Vorstand and had complained to the Union that they had jumped the gun, but did not report this to the Vorstand.

Dr Zeylmans, von Grone, DL Dunlop, George Kaufman, de Haan, Dr Lehrs, Dr Stein and Dr Kolisko who founded the World School Union went on to form a *Verien Freien Anthroposophischen Gruppen* (United Free Anthroposophical Group). As a result they became known as the *Super Vorstand* – not a label of their choosing. They were the signatories of the 1934 [Declaration of Intention](#) which challenged Dornach's right to have the addresses of the members in the national associations, and to decide who would have access to the *Goetheanum*, and to centralise the executive's power within 3 of the 5 members of the Vorstand who could veto membership applications.

The consequences of this division played out over the decade until Dornach gave power to Herr Steffen, Dr Wachsmuth and Frau Steiner to be responsible for the society – a decision reached at the [fiery meeting of March 27 & 28th 1934](#). National associations split, members bypassed their national associations and became linked directly to Dornach, and others were expelled.

A '[Memorandum of some events in the Anthroposophical Society during the years 1925 – 1935](#)', ('Denkschrift') went out from Dornach to members of the Society. These 148 pages were assembled from contributions by 12 people, one of whom was Ehrenfried Pfeiffer. Much of the above has been drawn from this source. This document is unapologetically partial. They wrote:

"The gentlemen of the "Super-Vorstand" tried above all to subject the Anthroposophical Society to their own will, and later on, when this proved impossible, they tried to claim a special position for themselves in the Society."

The case for the defence²⁸ – it soon was as polarised as a courtroom drama – was set out in the Declaration mentioned above. Concern was raised about who now would sign membership cards

²⁸ This case was made again even 25 years later by Lilly Kolisko in her [500-page biography](#) of Eugen Kolisko – not yet available in English

and whether non-desirables would not be allowed membership status, and they were supported by Elisabeth Vreede in person and by a letter from Ita Wegman who was ill.

The debate raged around collective responsibility, whether the President is liable for all who call themselves Anthroposophists or, if not, has he abandoned the sections who should be free to run their own business.

As the struggle played out at the general meeting of March 1934, Dr Steffen laid down the presidency and Marie Steiner said she would now go too! Both walked out of the meeting. Dr Wachsmuth remained in the meeting and proposed a resolution – passed - which he would present to Herr Steffen.

The Memorandum reports:

AFTERNOON SESSION. – Herr Steffen read the following statement: “The President of the General Anthroposophical Society felt obliged to lay down the Presidency during the General Meeting, owing to unjustified reproaches made by Mr. Kaufmann and in view of many things that had gone before. He handed over the Presidency to Frau Marie Steiner and left the Meeting. Frau Marie Steiner declared, however, that she would only continue to be in the Vorstand if Herr Steffen remained First President, and also left the Assembly.

Dr Wachsmuth was then entrusted by the General Meeting to hand over to Herr Steffen and Frau Marie Steiner the decision of the General Meeting carried by an overwhelming majority of votes, namely that the Society should be reconstituted by these three persons, Frau Marie Steiner, Herr Steffen and Dr Wachsmuth

The constitution of the Society is contained in the Foundation Meeting. for those entrusted with this task, who have the work of Rudolf Steiner at heart, there results accordingly the following question which they now submit to the General Meeting:

“Is the Anthroposophical Society willing to allow these three persons to continue the work in the sense of the Foundation Meeting and to consider the decisions to which they come, as binding for the Society?”

This question was answered by vote in the affirmative: 774 pro; 94 con: 23 abstained from voting.

The Motion for changes in Clauses 6 and 13 of the Legal Statutes was then put to the vote and carried by a like majority.

Dr Wachsmuth put it to the vote that the meeting be now closed. This was carried. Dr Kolisko asked to be allowed to read a brief statement on behalf of the minority. Put to the vote and voted down. Dr Wachsmuth said that the motion for changes in the Legal Statutes must be formally carried in the presence of a Notary. Dr Kolisko said that he would be obliged to make a statement in the presence of the Notary. Herr Steffen asked Dr Kolisko to read it now and he did so, as follows:

“In the name of the representatives of the Groups and Members who have here brought forward the Declaration, I hereby state:

“We cannot acknowledge as binding for our Groups and Members who number some 2,000, the new exclusive Leadership of these three persons. We do not recognise the changes that have been accepted in the Legal Statutes by a majority decision and will eventually announce this to the Notary. We regard ourselves as Members of the General Anthroposophical Society founded in 1923 and claim all rights of Membership in the Society, at the Goetheanum and in connection with the Sections. As free and independent Groups we will continue our work within the General Anthroposophical Society and at the Goetheanum.”

... Dr Vreede now declared: “I shall continue my work at the Goetheanum in the name of Rudolf Steiner and by virtue of the power with which I serve him.” She then left the Hall.

*

One can place this worldly soap opera against the background of the school of Michael and it's aims of bringing together such a diverse team. Years later, supporters of Vreede and Wegman [noted](#):

In his 1924 lectures on karmic relationships, Rudolf Steiner describes how souls from all the Old Mystery streams who sought the Christ-Impulse had gathered around Michael in the spiritual world. For the salvation

of all earthly civilization these souls wanted to unite the most diverse karmic and spiritual streams at the end of the 20th century and together guide the cultural activity of anthroposophy to a culmination.

From this, we can conclude that Rudolf Steiner had assembled significant representatives of these streams in the original Executive Council of the Christmas Conference 1923/24. The expulsions in 1935 “eliminated” important spiritual pupils of Rudolf Steiner from the Executive Council. But distinguished colleagues in the fields of science, medicine, and medical therapies were also cut off from their Sections and their professional tasks within the General Anthroposophical Society. In addition to the approximately 2,000 members who were also excluded from the Society in 1935, it should be recalled that these actions on the earth led to entire portions of the supersensible anthroposophical movement being cut off as well. It is almost impossible to assess the true extent and enormity of this act—and to determine which developments have been hindered or prevented since then.

F W Zeylmans van Emmichoven wrote that Rudolf Steiner wanted the members of the Vorstand to recognize themselves and each other against the background of the spiritual streams to which they belonged, “to cultivate fraternal feeling even between strongly contrasting personalities.”

*

A British reserve seems to have minimised public responses to these events. A reflex to avoid discussing such unpleasantness is reflected in the publications of the time. However, Owen Barfield could not submit himself to this “sort of affectation” and wrote in the *Anthroposophical Movement* periodical of December 1935:

SINCE the separation of this journal from the fortnightly News Sheet, which is now sent to all Members of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, it has fortunately been unnecessary to refer to matters which are subjects of dissension in the General Anthroposophical Society. I cannot help feeling, however, that there would be a sort of affectation in passing over without any comment at all the fact that the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain was, on April 14th last, declared by a large majority in General Meeting at Dornach, to be no longer a recognised Group of the General Society, while our own General Secretary, Mr. Dunlop, and Mr. Kaufmann were (with five other leading Members), declared to be no longer Members.

While the identity of the Society which passed this resolution with the Society founded by Rudolf Steiner is no longer admitted, it would, nevertheless, be stupid to make light of this event, idle to pretend that the manner in which it has been brought about does not affect our spirits and tend to sap insidiously our very faith in the power of Anthroposophy to mould character and foster community. I do not feel called upon to expatiate further on the event itself or the long disputes which preceded it, but as editor of an Anthroposophical Journal I do feel disposed to comment briefly on the document entitled *Denkschrift*, 154 pages long, which has been translated into English under the name *Memorandum*, and is, I am told, receiving an extensive circulation among Members in this country and elsewhere.

In truth, comment is difficult enough. What can one say of a book, signed by twelve well-known anthroposophists and purporting to give a sort of inner history of the Society for the last ten years, which is, nevertheless, pervaded throughout by a sustained ebullition of personal rancour that would be disgusting even if the facts were as represented? Nor is this the whole of the matter. Those who have not actually seen this astonishing “White Book” will hardly believe that the plentiful charges which it brings against named individuals (serious charges of more than one of the seven deadly sins) are interlarded with (*horresco referens*) playful, almost kittenish, slaps of sarcasm bodied in epithets, asides, dashes, exclamation-marks and inverted commas. The style in which this affair is conceived and written is to me the most baffling thing about it. It is not content with insinuating clearly and repeatedly that the persons against whom it is directed are unmitigated egoists and liars; it cannot refrain from poking them simultaneously in the ribs; it chucks them under the chin; it taps them archly on the shoulder with a fan and looks coyly away with a side-glance down. I have never met anything like it before and hope never to do so again. Here is one example of the way in which ill-nature, in its anxiety to lose no opportunity of stinging, degenerates into a positive silliness, that is unanswerable because it is unintelligible.

On page 96 a Report signed by eight members of the Executive Council of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain of a meeting held in Dornach on November 29th, 1930, is quoted in full. This Report contained the following sentence:

“With great earnestness Dr. Wachsmuth placed before the members the picture that had never been absent from the minds of many—the Goetheanum – the needs of the Goetheanum on the physical plane and the liability of the Society for its maintenance.”

On the next page of the Memorandum this sentence is described as “a peculiar example of Mr. Kaufmann’s sentimental style.” Nothing more is said of it. Just that. No reason is given for saying it; no inference drawn; no suggestion made. Simply: “Then follows a peculiar example of Mr. Kaufmann’s sentimental style.”

I confess that this sort of remark produces in me a great sense of hopelessness than do the pointed, and of course libellous, comments which precede it, accusing the eight signatories to the report of conspiring to deceive the English Members; for this sort of remark appears to me to be not only motiveless, but actually meaningless. I simply do not understand it at all. I follow the grammar and syntax; everything else about it is totally incomprehensible to me. Of what kind of consciousness can it be the expression?

One can remonstrate even with malignity. One can respect indignation – even mistaken indignation and endeavour to avoid irritating it further. One can argue with a person who has lost his temper, for one is at least still in communication with him. But to those who speak as if they had lost their reason at the same time, there is no reply but silence. Incidentally, I happen to have not merely signed, but actually written this Report myself; but I do not think that is of any particular importance.

As to the facts alleged it requires no legal training, the most rudimentary sense of natural justice will dismiss this Memorandum as worth considerably less than the paper it is written on. If the authors themselves believe what they say (and I must believe that they do), there is reason for a proper judicial enquiry at which both sides would be heard. Meanwhile, calumnies uttered not in the presence of the accused by witnesses who have not stood up to cross examination are not evidence one way or the other. They are simply mud.

Here at any rate I am concerned with this ill-starred Memorandum only from the point of view of the object for which this journal exists, that is, the furtherance through the Anthroposophical Society, founded by Rudolf Steiner, of the spreading of the knowledge of Anthroposophy among English-speaking peoples. Now this knowledge is also spreading in other ways. Rudolf Steiner’s books are published and their greatness is such that it cannot fail to be perceived more and more clearly as time goes on. It cannot be doubted that there are already in this country many close students of Rudolf Steiner’s writings who take no notice whatever of this Society or any other. It is possible to look, say fifty, say one hundred years ahead and to ask oneself whether by that time what is now known as the Anthroposophical Society will have anything more than a historical connection with the main stream of Anthroposophical thought in this country. Will it still comprise the main body of the students of Rudolf Steiner’s work or will its membership be limited to a small and outlandish sect? If the Anthroposophical Society becomes identified in any way with documents of this amazing description, the answer to this question admits (the English temperament being what it is) of no doubt whatever. When mud is thrown, some of it always sticks. But the most powerful and the only lasting effect of this very very muddy Memorandum, as far as England is concerned, must be to render Anthroposophy both ludicrous and odious in all eyes. If it is placed by well-meaning zealots in the hands, let us say, of people who are deliberating whether to join the Anthroposophical Movement or not, then the difficulty will be, not to convince these persons that Herr this did really (or did not really) say this that and the other to Frau so-and-so, and all the rest of it (a question in which they will not be in the slightest degree interested) – the only difficulty will be to reassure them that it is possible to become an Anthroposophist working in association with other Anthroposophists without going completely off one’s rocker.

Reputations, especially questionable ones, are easy to acquire, hard to dispel. Artillery which destroys the base from which it is discharged is not worth employing, even if it does some damage to the target. Will not the authors, publishers and disseminators of this deplorable document think carefully whether the damage which they hope to inflict on their now openly declared enemies is worth the damage which they must inflict on themselves, on the name of Rudolf Steiner, on all of us? I do not know whether this is “a peculiar example of Mr. Kaufmann’s sentimental style.” I do know that I mean it.

*

The immediate impact of all this in the present context is that the majority of those who had organised themselves and taken on the responsibility for biodynamics in the UK were no longer

considered part of the Anthroposophical society as run by Albert Steffen, Marie Steiner and Gunther Wachsmuth²⁹.

George Kaufman, the Koliskos, Daniel Dunlop, WJ Stein - the power-hitters of the UK BD and Anthroposophical world - were no longer invited to the main party and had to organise themselves separately.

*

Whilst the massive rupture spreading from Dornach must receive attention, it was not the only thing happening. For instance and on a much more upbeat note, in January of 1935 Mr H J Heywood Smith went to the [Agriculture conference](#) in Dornach and took [extensive notes](#):

Dr Wachsmuth explained that this was the fourth Agricultural Conference held at the Goetheanum, and that it could not be expected that we should deal with the more elementary questions that had been considered in the earlier years of our work.

Members of the Circle who desired information on such matters should approach individuals who have gathered experience in our methods and gain instruction from them. In the first Annual Conference they had dealt with the Plant World; in the second year with the Animal World: in the third year with the soil; and now we were about to consider the subject of The Agricultural Individuality.

On another positive note, the majority of biodynamic research was complete which Ehrenfried Pfeiffer was compiling into *a form fit for publication* - to echo Dr Steiner's own request. The AAF were preparing to publish this in the English-speaking world – or at least that was the arrangement up until the events above. It is indicative that when “*Biodynamic Farming and Gardening: Soil Fertility Renewal and Preservation*” was published simultaneously in 5 languages in February 1938, the channel for distribution in the UK was the newly establish Biodynamic Agricultural Association.

1920s Precipitous: The Agriculture course is presented. Efforts to ground this in practice led by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer. The Anthroposophical Society shudders under the blow of Dr Steiner's death. Daniel Dunlop and sisters Marna Pease and Eleanor Merry bring Anthroposophical Agriculture to the British Isles via Carl Mier's enthusiastic presentation.

Historical context: Post-WW1 Europe now has 'artificial' – Nitrogen from the Haber-Bosch process. Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue. League of Nations, Prohibition, BBC, USSR, Walt Disney, Mein Kampf, The Jazz Singer talkie, the Chareleston, Penicillin, Wall Street Crash and great depression, World Population - 2 Billion,

²⁹ This may have even trickled down into the accepted theory of biodynamics in the English-speaking countries. Wachsmuth, for instance, proposed that the 'Ethereic Formative Forces' were responsible for the forming of plants and since these only had a physical and etheric body that was the whole story. Ernst Marti – also *persona non grata* post 1935 – was of the opinion that the etheric forces were those of undifferentiated growth as in a tumour, and the 'formative' part of *etheric formative forces* was macrocosmic astrality and even macrocosmic egoity. Therefore, Wachsmuth's books on the etheric are not so neatly integrated in the story English biodynamic theorists tell themselves! See '[Discussion...](#)' section below

Prehistory 2: 1935 - 1950 biodynamics in the UK

Before the war

Dr Pfeiffer was faced with some major issues after the split at Dornach.

At the same time that people like the effectively-excommunicated Koliskos were emigrating to work in the UK, Adolf Hitler was newly in power and was making things increasingly uncomfortable for anything to do with Anthroposophy. This meant that when the Switzerland-based Pfeiffer addressed a [study circle in March 1936](#), (held at The Priory, Kings Langley, the home of Miss Cross and therefore in the BDA camp) he reported that whilst the agricultural work in Germany was not yet officially *verboten*, it was a discipline which dare not speak its name.

Herr Pfeiffer brought greetings from Dr Wachsmuth and the Goetheanum. He then spoke of the situation in Germany in connection with our work. The Agricultural Work has not been molested. The members of the Government are not united against us. The secret police are against us. The books published by the Philosophisch-Anthroposophischer Verlag are forbidden. The Agriculture Circle has been obliged to change its name because of the title "anthroposophical." Herr Pfeiffer had conversed with the head who is against us, who said that everything connected with the name "Anthroposophy" must be destroyed. Therefore, we have had to change the name of the Circle from "The Experimental Circle of Anthroposophical Farmers and Gardeners" to "The Experimental Circle of Biological Farmers and Gardeners," - omitting the word "anthroposophical." The outer organ of the Circle in Germany is the "Reichsverband." This still exists but we do not know how long it will last. The Medical Circle is also untouched so far. If we wish to help Germany in any way we must avoid the word "Anthroposophy."

At the Conference of Farmers at Dornach in January there were only five farmers from Germany. At the other Conference there were present only fifty members instead of five hundred. Therefore, we must strengthen the work in other countries to balance this. The work in England is one of the keys for the work in the whole world in the interest of bio-dynamic farming and gardening.

The hopes of the civilised cultures in Europe were following the refugees to England³⁰. At the same time the internal struggles of the Anthroposophical Society meant that a large proportion of the UK anthroposophists – the primary organisers and inspirers of UK-BD - were not seeing eye to eye with Pfeiffer. Where then was Dr Pfeiffer going to be able to develop biodynamics?

So much for Pfeiffer's burden. What did this all look like from the UK perspective?

With Europe and Dornach falling down around them, the divided UK team was having to face up to their dramatically new circumstances and world responsibilities. The biodynamic work was

³⁰ Anke Weihs. [Fragments From The Story Of Camphill](#) - "The annexation of Austria by the Nazis in March 1938 turned thousands of people into refugees, among them Dr König ,.... Britain at that time was the humane one of the European countries. British Quaker and other organisations saved hundreds of refugees from the fate of being returned to Germany, and individual British citizens extended invitations to and stood as guarantors for hundreds of Austrians and Germans whom they had never met to ensure their safe progress to Britain... Mr and Mrs Houghton, the owners of Williamston Estate north of Aberdeen, were among those who extended such invitations and threads were spun which ultimately brought it about that the diverging ways of Dr König and some of his young friends from Vienna began to converge upon a bleak little manse on the Williamston Estate in March, just a year later.... Dr König himself was one of the prominent Austrian doctors granted a home in Britain, but before his family and friends were able to enter Britain, months of effort, patience and anxiety had to be experienced. [\[More\]](#)

continuing under the aegis of four organisations: two Experimental Circles, the AAF, and the brand-new Dornach-approved BDA.

The Biodynamic Association for Soil and Crop Improvement – BDA

It was already mentioned that in May of 1934 there had been a visit from Pfeiffer and Wachsmuth ... “... to London to institute a 2nd centre & enquiry office for anthroposophical agriculture without reference to the existing AAF. They said, “*A new situation exists following the General Meeting in Dornach.*”

The new BDAA took a while to square up to the task inherent in being told that “*The work in England is one of the keys for the work in the whole world in the interest of bio-dynamic farming and gardening.*” No pressure there then! The formidable Margaret Cross (Miss Cross) initially became secretary of the BDA at Kings Langley. The association accepted Dornach’s recommendation of a new advisor and secretary, [Hermann Popplebaum](#), who held the post for a year or two before going [absent in the USA](#) from 1938 onwards. [Miss Cross](#) started a News Sheet – a task she maintained with remarkable tenacity for 15 years. The biodynamic preparations are made by [Lady Mackinnon](#) who also set up an information centre at her home in Kent. The minutes of the BDA meetings – which [were not kept](#) for the first few years of the BDA – show that these two people were extraordinarily faithful in turning up to every meeting across wartime London.

An early meeting (June 11th 1938) revealed:

30 members including Mr Saunders Davies (Chair), H Popplebaum (Hon sec), Lady Merthyr (President), also Mr Collison, Mr Ferguson, Lady Mackinnon, Miss Cross, G Bacchus, J Thornton (66 active members 36 associated)

Less than 2 years later the minutes lament that “...the conditions of war have made it impossible to hold meetings or to arrange conferences and lectures”. They nevertheless proclaimed that “the knowledge of the bio-dynamic methods has steadily spread”. At the Third Annual General meeting of the BDA (20 April 1940): “The Chairman expressed his regret at the absence of Dr Pfeiffer who had been unable to obtain a French transit visa for his journey from Dornach”. The proposal that “Dr Pfeiffer should be appointed official adviser to the Association” was “unanimously adopted”.

Indeed the 4th AGM was held 3 years later [and the 5th](#) not until June 1945. Minutes of the 6th AGM were not found [but the 7th](#) at the Alliance Hall in London boasted 176 members and a lecture from Lady Eve Balfour.

The (incomplete) record of the individuals who held positions of responsibility are shown in the chart below³¹.

³¹ Thanks to Bernard Jarman for compiling the data for [officers of the AAF and BDA](#), and then for sharing.

	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
BDA													
President	Lady Merthyr		J Ferguson			E Pfeiffer							
Chair	O Saunders Davies					J Ferguson			R Gardiner				
Secretary	H Poplebaum		Lady Mabel MacKinnon					K Thornton					
Treasurer			Lady Mabel MacKinnon					E Drew					
News sheet	Miss Cross												

Clearly the war and the shock of the in-house disruption from Europe were almost unimaginable challenges. That said, the impression left is of a few diligent individuals trying to live up to the good will and enthusiasm of the members, meeting over cups of tea in various London hotels and halls and holding a space for biodynamics.

However, they do have Dr Pfeiffer's support and, for instance, he gave the [round-up of biodynamics around the world](#) in 1936 including the snapshot of Nazi activity which started this chapter. It is an interesting meeting because he also mentions the issue of the chemical fertiliser industry. I.C.I. and I.G. Farben were on the case of BD but now it is not so much the nitrogen industries as the potassium industries that are giving Pfeiffer a hard time. Professor Neubauer in particular was using the chemical giants' infrastructure and wealth to disseminate anti-BD propaganda. *"He has damaged us very much in Holland, France, Switzerland and Italy. He set the Dutch universities against us. At the Congress in Amsterdam, when English visitors were present, they were turned against us by this man; so he is already beginning to produce an effect in England."*³²

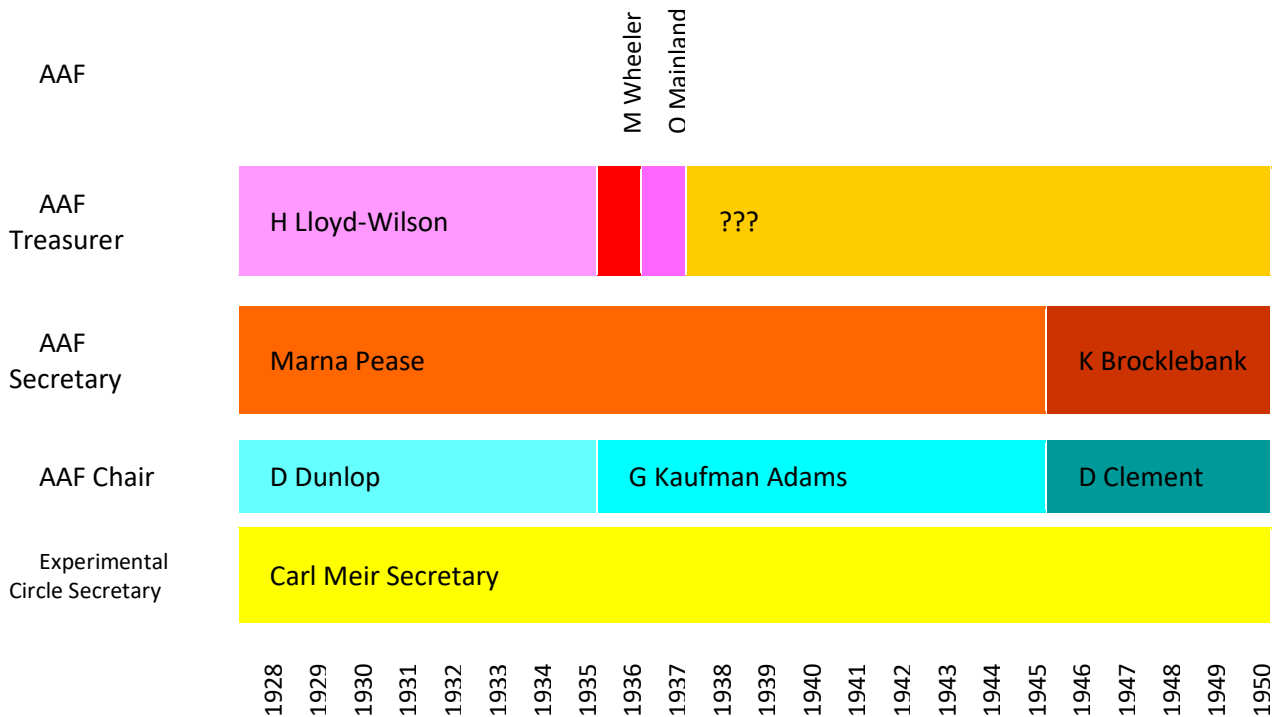
The Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation

The established AAF were reeling from being excommunicated from Dornach and no doubt from losing many of their members, friends and colleagues, particularly their chairman and sponsor Daniel Dunlop who died in 1935.

The AFF retained some of the momentum that had accrued before the blows landed from Dornach. George Kaufman continued his extraordinary work with etheric geometrical spaces with support from his wife Mary and Olive Whicher, and with sponsorship from the Goethean Science Foundation from the Wilsons. The Kolisko's came to the UK, initially to Kings Langley in 1936 and then to Stroud in 1940. Carl Mirbt continued as secretary. Walter Johannes Stein was part of the

³² Ehrenfried Pfeiffer continued his UK travels after his March 1936 meeting in Bray. He went to Wales at the [invitation of Barbara Saunders-Davies](#), possibly to get some distance from the politics of anthroposophy. She had been impressed by the practical work manifest in the wheat that Mr Heywood-Smith brought back from the Dornach conference of 1935. In this and subsequent visits, Pfeiffer who reveals his fascination for Druidic culture. More of this in the [discussion](#) section.

team, often giving lectures at events. After Daniel Dunlop's death in 1935 George Kaufman-Adams took over the role of chairman.



It was mentioned above that at the [AAF AGM](#) of 1934 item 4 on the agenda was: *“In view of what has occurred during the current year within the AS, & the effect upon all Anthroposophical activities, including those of the AAF, to consider the most effective way of carrying our work in the future.”*

The [1935 AGM](#) held in October in the presence of 70 people, notes some fundamental changes and allegiances. Drs Vreede and Wegman - fellow exiles - both attend. Elisabeth Vreede briefly encourages the Federation to establish its own being. The death of DN Dunlop is marked. Carl Mirbt has moved to Broome Farm and he is taking on some of the administrative work from secretary Marna Pease's (now aged 68). Despite the inevitable loss of about 50 members, 30 new ones have joined and total figures are only down to 146 from 165 in 1934. There was a summer school in Harrogate and some money was raised and sent to assist Lilly Kolisko's work.

The Experimental Circle (/s !?) of Anthroposophical Farmers and Gardeners in Great Britain and other English speaking countries

If there are records of what happened between 1933 and 1945 they remain stubbornly unavailable, and the notes for the 1945 meeting reveal that that it was the first meeting since 1942. It also seems there were now two experimental circles! This is [an inference from a 1947 letter](#) in which Pfeiffer expresses pleasure to Lady Mackinnon that the two experimental circles are now one. Post-war minutes of both AAF and [BDA council](#) seem to reinforce this.

I am glad to hear that there is now one (only) circle i.e. The General Experimental Circle. In this age of splitting apart everywhere we should really show the world that we are of a different kind.

*

The AGMs and meetings of these bodies provide rungs along the broken ladder of the time-line up to and including the war, from which the following highlights can be gleaned:

1936

- November: - Eleanor C Merry (Marna Pease's sister) wrote: "A small bungalow, adjoining the gardens at Bray, near Maidenhead, which represent the nucleus of the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation, has been purchased. It is intended later to build on to it an adequate laboratory where Mrs. Kolisko will be able to carry out extensive experiments in various fields of this most fascinating form of biological science."
- Eugen and Lilly Kolisko move to the UK in 1936. They live for a while under Marna Pease's hospitality at Bray and establish their work in the laboratory that had been set up for work under Dr Pfeiffer. "...conditions abroad make pursuit of this work increasingly difficult," - a remark which, without the context of the Dornach situation, has often been assumed to refer to the rise of National Socialism.

1937

- April. The Notes and Correspondence (N&C) of the Experimental Circle says "The times are indeed changing"
- April – the AAF published "[Metamorphosis of the Plant](#)" which is serialised in the N&C
- September – Marna Pease addresses a BD summer school in Derbyshire – presumably an AAF event
- October – an upbeat 9th AAF AGM is held in Rudolf Steiner House. Deryck Duffy's work at Sunfield is noted. "School of Spiritual Science, the Summer School & AAF all increasing vigorously. There is a strong new impulse at work."

1938

- February - '*Biodynamic Farming and Gardening; Soil Fertility Renewal and Preservation*' was published in 5 languages simultaneously. Fred Heckel undertook the English translation and it was published by the Anthroposophic Press in the USA. This is all handled by the BDA in the UK who publish the revised second edition
- June 11 – the BDA holds its first recorded meeting at the Coburg Hotel in London. 30 members attend.
- October – the 10th AGM of the AAF
- November – Lilly Kolisko's work has caught the attention of homeopaths and she is invited to [tour the East](#). Her work is described in the [Modern Mystic Magazine](#) and *The Present Age*.

1939

- April - The [Haughley](#) (Eve Balfour) and [Farleigh](#) (Lord Lymington) comparative trials are initiated. Neither are great successes for differing reasons, but the War was common to both.

- June – Ehrenfried Pfeiffer becomes Dr Pfeiffer after an honorary doctorate is granted by the Hahnemann University in Philadelphia in the USA, primarily for his work on sensitive crystallisation.
- July – the AAF holds its summer school at Homerton College on “The individual & Society”
- July – The [Betteshanger summer school](#) is part of Dr Pfeiffer’s tour which otherwise includes
 - High Quarry,
 - Hosking’s farm,
 - Miss Sargent Larkfield Hall,
 - Finn’s Farm Canterbury,
 - Lord Lymington,
 - Mrs Becke Hartford Hall,
 - Ferguson Scotland,
 - Pentre Pembrokeshire
 - R Gardiner Dorsetshire
- September – The 3rd: “I am speaking to you from the cabinet room at 10 Downing Street. This morning the British ambassador in Berlin handed the German government a final note stating that unless we heard from them by 11 o'clock that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.”

*

The events of July 1939 above deserve attention. Clearly biodynamic practitioners never have had a monopoly on concern for the environment and for the declining health of people, animals and plants. As today, there are many fellow-travellers looking for better ways to feed us and make the best of the human condition in its widest sense.

For instance, other ‘humus farmers’ gathered occasionally. One such event took place in 1937 at [Middle Wallop](#) where [Lord Lymington](#) hosted many with similar concerns. Here, for the first time, [Sir Albert Howard](#) and Pfeiffer met. Pfeiffer reported:

“The purpose of the symposium was to bring together and merge into one great endeavour all the different organic points of view and movements. It was felt that differences of opinion in the organic field could be bridged over, in fact, were healthy and a stimulus for the creation of future research and cooperation rather than opposition and stubborn disagreement. Field tests, laboratory experiments and health studies were decided upon. The need to extend soil studies into the analysis of products, their health and nutrition values, in short, a broad program of future research was instituted. Many valuable experiences and observations were contributed.

Such a spirit of cooperation, mutual stimulation and enthusiasm to give momentum to the organic cause reigned there as the writer has rarely experienced at any other scientific conference. The meeting radiated a truly creative atmosphere. It was at this meeting that the writer, as the representative of the Biodynamic Movement, met Sir Albert Howard for the first time, although he had followed his ideas with the greatest interest before. In fact, one purpose of the conference was to bring the organic idea of Sir Albert Howard and the biodynamic method into peaceful cooperation.

Mutual experiments were discussed, thoughts exchanged and results agreed upon. This acquaintance was continued with several visits of Sir Albert to the writer's former biodynamic farm in Holland, where he inspected and acknowledged the results of the biodynamic endeavour."

One result of this '*truly creative atmosphere*' was the Farleigh experiment which got going in 1939.

In 1939 [Walter James](#) (Lord Northbourne), Albert Howard, Ehrenfried Pfeiffer and George Stapleton joined at Farleigh [Wallop] to implement an experiment comparing Biodynamic, organic and chemical fertilization methods. "The Farleigh Experiment", had been planned since initial meetings in 1936 including ten participants. The experiment was cut short due to the fact that Biodynamic compost was not available until after the [Betteshanger Summer School](#) event, the disruption of the impending war, and lack of funding.

Lord Northbourne was very interested in biodynamics. He had in mind for Pfeiffer to come instruct his own workers and various other interested people at his own property called [Betteshanger](#).

The purpose of the School is to give some British farmers the opportunity of meeting Dr Pfeiffer and his colleagues, and of learning something of their work." The number of attendees "will be limited to 40" and those "by invitation only." The "chief feature of this work has been the practical application of every-day farming problems of a remarkable insight into the processes of nature, and sympathy with living things ... The School will have primarily a practical basis.... Neither the farm nor its attached market garden had hitherto been run on the bio-dynamic method ... Nevertheless, some thirty-six heaps of very varying materials, size, shape and age were available for inspection ... Experimental work on the farm and market garden had been started nearly a year previously, so some mature examples were available.

In the January of 1939 Northbourne went to Switzerland to finalise arrangements:

"I had a very good day with Pfeiffer in Switzerland on the 20th of this month. I have now got fairly complete details of lectures and the general arrangement of the course; also work which it is desirable to do on the farm by way of preparation. I am making arrangements for the necessary assistance from the B.D.A."³³

Miss Cross, Lady MacKinnon, George Bacchus and Miss Fisher from the BDA were in attendance. Notable by his absence from the invitation-only event was Sir Albert Howard who certainly seemed happy to have his name associated with the *muck*, but not so much with the *magic*.

And the AAF? It will be noticed that the AAF summer school started on the same day, completely unaware of the Betteshanger event. [David Clements](#) wrote in 2002:

"An unfortunate consequence [of the Dornach split] was that we did not know of a conference held shortly before the war at which Ehrenfried Pfeiffer was present. It was a meeting held by several big landowners who were greatly concerned at the way farming was developing. George Stapleton and a number of other interesting people were there. We only heard about it some years later from Mr Rasmussen of Denmark who was himself present."

³³ From Northbourne's private papers. As with much of this particular section, but also in this whole report in general, we are benefiting from [the labours of John Paull](#) to whom many thanks.

The nine-day programme of the Betteshanger Summer Course included, besides the formal lecture content³⁴, “four mornings and two afternoons ... devoted to practical work” and “Two days were occupied by excursions to farms ... The programme included a demonstration of the biodynamic treatment of fruit trees [at Wye College]. Northbourne mentions the use of the biodynamic preparations: #500, #501 and #508. He comments that the stirring procedure, “*tends to arouse a certain amount of mystification and even skepticism in the uninitiated*” ...

Lord Lymington: “It was one of the most exciting weeks I ever spent. We would work part of the day on his biodynamic methods, and then both for recreation and refreshment Pfeiffer would lecture to us in the evenings”

Lord Northbourne: “The last Saturday afternoon (July 8) and evening were occupied by a large party at The Home Farm for members and all farm and estate workers and their families, in all some 200 souls. Sports and games, tea, a play given in the barn by the boys of Betteshanger school, supper and dancing provided a gay and harmonious conclusion to what must remain, at least to most of those who were present, a very memorable week ... the spirit of friendliness, happiness and unity which prevailed. That was a striking and perhaps not the least important feature of the school. It is true to say that for nine days the possibility of war was scarcely alluded to; things more real and more constructive absorbed attention.”

Lords Northbourne and Lymington tried to entice Dr Pfeiffer to the UK, because everyone knew that war was looming and, later (1942) Northbourne declared himself leaning towards biodynamics:

You will see that I am prejudiced in favour of the B-D [Bio-Dynamic] method, and if asked ‘how best can our ideas be expressed in terms of farm management ideas’ could only answer accordingly; though I don’t pretend to understand it fully.

Lord Lymington offered to use his contacts to get Pfeiffer back:

“I am Vice-Chairman of the County War Agricultural Committee which is responsible for the whole farming policy of about a million acres. The line I am taking is to try and snatch some form of salvation from disaster and encourage a type of cultivation which will enable us to have the land after the war in a better state of fertility with a more natural balance than it has today ... I have many times in the last few weeks longed to have you here and to ask your advice on many of the questions coming up”.

Lymington assured Pfeiffer that:

“ ... we will do our utmost to see that you get a visa. Please do not hesitate to quote myself or Lord Northbourne as an introduction. I am certain also that the Ministry of Agriculture could be got to approve.”

34

1 July Essentials of the Bio-dynamic Method Dr E. Pfeiffer

2 July The Soil as a Living Organism Dr E. Pfeiffer

3 July The Farm as a Biological Organism Dr E. Pfeiffer

4 July The Biological Requirements of the Human Organism Dr Scott Williamson

5 July The Health of Livestock and its Dependence on Feeding the Soil Dr E. O. Eckstein

6 July Discussion of Lecture

7 July The Fertility of the Earth: Its Preservation and Renewal Dr E. Pfeiffer

[Transcripts available](#)

As it turned out Pfeiffer got a better offer and moved his family and all to the USA for the duration of the war and beyond.

The Betteshanger conference is notable for several reasons. First it was a real meeting between biodynamics and organic growers in the UK who were not Anthroposophists. Second, it demonstrates the gulf between the AAF and the BDA. Third it is regarded as a pivotal point in the 'coming out' and transformation of biodynamics. Inspired by the course (*'though I don't pretend to understand it fully'*) and sharing the motivating concerns behind biodynamics, Lord Northbourne went on to write a seminal book called [Look to the Land](#) in which he embraced what he could of biodynamics. John Paull says:

Northbourne's *Look to the Land* delivered a message congruent with [Pfeiffer's 1938 book](#) and with the 1939 Betteshanger Summer School, while nevertheless excising any Germanic or Anthroposophic heritage, although his book did acknowledge (on page 173) the efficacy of biodynamic practices. Northbourne's was a secularized British manifesto³⁵ which presented fresh insights while drawing much from biodynamics including its nominative core motif of 'the farm is an organism'.

That last sentence alludes to the fact that Paull's and other scholars' research reveals that Northbourne's *Look to the Land* contain the first published instance of the phrase '*organic farming*'. Paull in particular is of the opinion that this lasting and defining nomenclature originates from the basic biodynamic concept of each farm being a living organism, from the conviction that a farm can only be really healthy if it has a diversity of functioning and cooperating parts. "Northbourne coined the term '*organic farming*' (James & Fitzgerald, 2008; Paull, 2006; Scofield, 1986)."

As a result there are a series of papers by Paull around this point:

- [Lord Northbourne: The Man who Invented Organic Farming.](#)
- [The Betteshanger Summer School: Missing Link Between Biodynamic Agriculture and Organic Farming](#)
- [The Farm as Organism: The Foundation of Organic Agriculture](#)
- [The Pioneers of Biodynamics in Great Britain: from Anthroposophical Farming to Organic Agriculture 1924 to 1940](#)

The word '*organic*' will be considered further in the [discussion](#) section.

1930's Precipitous: The Agriculture course is translated into English for members of the Experimental Circle. Anthroposophical Agriculture becomes known as 'biodynamics'. Pfeiffer publishes 10 years of research. As the Anthroposophical Society splits the British pioneers are out of favour and Dornach establishes its own organisation to carry BD.

Historical context: City Lights and Looney Tunes released, Guernica. Hitler becomes chancellor, Spanish civil war, FD Roosevelt, Stalin's purge, Pluto discovered, atomic nucleus split, Empire State Building, Chinese Soviet Republic, Amelia Earhart, Brave New World, Hobbit and Superman published.

³⁵ "Organic Pioneers who knew biodynamics through Pfeiffer but lacked access to the Agriculture Course were thus not confronted with Steiner's 'Cosmic' challenge in all its radicality. Still, the publication of Pfeiffer's book marked an important transition: a movement that had been growing in partial secrecy was now mature enough to be shared publicly." Dan MacKanan. *Eco-Alchemy* p39.

During the war³⁶

There are no formal AAF council meetings or AGMs during the war: the 10th AGM was in October 1938, the 11th in January 1946. However, minutes of a gathering report that a thin *Notes and Correspondence* was still published three times per year by Doris Davy who took over from Carl Mirbt who worked monitoring German broadcasts for the war effort. Marna Pease carried out the duties of honorary secretary from Bray. Two new advisory centres were established in addition to Sunfield and Bray – at Sleights Farm, Huby nr Leeds and Harbour St Bride, Durlston Dorset.

David Clement wrote:

Throughout the war the Foundation just ticked over, kept alive by Mrs Pease - Carl Meir, as he now was having been naturalised, monitored German broadcasts for the BBC. Deryck Duffy who, since 1937, had run Broome Farm, moved up to Scotland to begin his work there and I took over Broome.

The BDAA was slightly more active making efforts to find a legal structure for itself and to make available Dr Pfeiffer's books.

1939

- September – The 3rd “... I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.”
- October – Deryck Duffy leaves Broome Farm and moves to Scotland. David Clement and family move into Broome Farm under Worcestershire War Ag Committee Guidance, but are allowed to farm ‘naturally’.
- November – The BDA starts getting its official act together: “No formal record was kept of the Council meetings prior to November 1939.”
- November – Eugen Kolisko dies
- November – “Miss Cross laid before the council the proposal to leave her property – The Priory, Kings Langley – to the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings with the proviso that the society should lease the property to the Biodynamic Association at a nominal rent in order that bio-dynamic research and training should be carried out there. The council expressed its deep appreciation of Miss Cross’s proposal which would, in the future, provide the centre needed for the bio-dynamic work and, meanwhile, would give an aim towards which it would be possible to work.”
- *Agriculture of Tomorrow*³⁷ completed (but not published until after the war!)

1940

- January - *The Labouring Earth* by Alma Baker is published

³⁶ Dan Mackinan says: “Erhard Bartsch, who edited the Demeter journal during the Nazi period, was an enthusiastic collaborator. A biodynamic garden was established at the Dachau concentration camp.” *Eco-Alchemy* p33

³⁷ “It is a rather strange moment in which to write a book. England has declared war on Germany and nobody knows how long it will last. It is still stranger perhaps, that the book I am about to write originates from the German spirit, the true German spirit which has always been appreciated in the cultivated world.” – *Agriculture of Tomorrow*, Foreword

- [An Agricultural Testament](#) – Sir Albert Howard published
- April – BDA Meeting. It has become apparent that the BDA needs to assume a legal status. Proposed that Dr Pfeiffer and H Popplebaum be honorary members and that Dr Pfeiffer become the official advisor to the Association.
- *May - Lord Northbourne's Life to the Land* is published
- Lilly Kolisko moves to Gloucestershire
- Dr Ehrenfried Pfeiffer accepts an offer to move to the USA
- Carl Mirbt changes his name to Carl Mier
- George Kaufman uses his mother's maiden name and is usually now known as George Adams

1941

- Nothing!

1942

- A 2 page '[Secretary's Report](#)' was put in the minutes book dated April 1942 on B-D A headed paper and the address of the Hon Secretary as High Quarry, Crockham Hill, Edenbridge, Kent – Tel Crockham Hill 313 - Lady Mackinnon. It refers to the last meeting being April 1940 just before the AGM. Then there was a short report of the work of the Association in News Sheet No 11. "This report therefore covers 1940 and 1941 for the benefit of the Council of the Association. There are no sensational events to be recorded "
- Miss Cross working on a translation of Dr Pfeiffer's new book 'A Fair Garden of Vegetables and Herbs' (US translation) which Miss Cross was calling 'A Fair Garden Plot.' Some financial assistance would be needed. Publication was approved. Different publishing laws in US and UK since the US had not signed the Geneva Convention

1943

- March – Ita Wegman dies.
- April - Mr Saunders-Davies has resigned from the Chair owing to pressure of work, Mr Ferguson to be Chair until the AGM. *Maye Bruce: nothing to be done since Dr Steiner's work was not called into question ...* Mr Duffy of Home Farm Clent short of preparations due to demand. Lady Mackinnon to send some of surplus from Information centre. What should she charge? No charge!
- August – Elisabeth Vreede dies
- October – Deryck Duffy hosts a [conference](#) at Heathcot House, Blairs, Aberdeenshire at which [WJ Stein](#), [Ernst Lehms](#) and [Karl König](#) giving three lectures each.

1944

- Pfeiffer reported on some of his life in a letter to Barbara Saunders-Davies: “Then it appeared in 1943 that the owner of Kimberton Farm became more and more hostile, (the sponsor turned into a shark) and this led to our separation under rather depressing circumstances. The Pfeiffers were just plain on the street, could not return to Switzerland and except for a few well-meant promises which lead nowhere, nobody helped in the beginning. Finally a few friends contributed a loan on easy terms so that we could buy a farm. The moral church, disappointments and the physical hard work on the new farm (I had to do all the heavy work myself) produced a complete breakdown of the body - first with diabetes which was followed by pneumonia, pleurisy and then permanent damage to the left lung. I spent two years in bed, half of it in hospitals, several painful operations and am still only in convalescent state. I will, on account, have pleural adhesions and will never recover to full strength nor be able to do physical work but I may be able to do mental work (of this later).”

1945

- June - [BDA 5th AGM](#) - “A great satisfaction to call a general meeting without fear of enemy interference”. The cessation of war presents uncertainty of livelihood. The urgent need of the association is for a centre for demonstration work & for training students.
- July - On Sunday morning, July 1st, the Circle met at Rudolf Steiner House in London—the first reunion since 1942.
- September 2 – VE day

After the war

At the experimental circle ‘reunion’, a month or so before VE day (July 1945), there was a different mood:

- a very good attendance, to coincide with Mr. Deryck Duffy’s three agriculture lectures.
- Dr Mier spoke for a few minutes, recalling most vividly and movingly those days twenty-one years ago when Dr Steiner gave the course, and the work of the earliest members of the Circle. We who begin with simplified instructions and ready-made preparations are apt to forget the debt we owe to these pioneers who first worked out experimentally the indications Dr Steiner gave at Koberwitz in 1924.
- Tributes were paid to Mrs. Pease, who for so many years has been a principal support and pivot of the bio-dynamic work in this country.
- Several members described their wartime farming and gardening experiences and Mr. Duffy gave some account of the Westhall Farm Schools, and the research work he hopes to initiate there.
- There was a strong feeling among the members that some new positive and vigorous activity is required of us now that the paralysis of the war years is lifted. Partly as a wartime necessity this country has lately become compost-conscious, and is probably more open than it has ever been to new ways of thinking about the soil.
- It was agreed that the Experimental Circle should, from now on, meet more frequently, and that the members should try to bring to the September meeting some

definite and practical suggestions for expanding and strengthening the agricultural work.

- From this time on – despite the paper shortages of the post war era – Carl Meir wrote both the Notes and Correspondence (N&Cs) of the AAF, and a new *News Sheet of the Experimental Circle of Anthroposophical Farmers in Great Britain and other English Speaking Countries* (first issued in October 1946) and a *Secretary's Letter*. This reflects the new post-war enthusiasm of the circle and the ongoing sense that the scientific research behind biodynamics was not yet sufficiently robust.

David Clement noted:

“When the war ended Mrs. Pease wanted to retire; and she asked me if I had George Adams’ help, I would take on her job? We called a meeting at Rudolf Steiner House for all those interested. We needed Carl to return and appealed for support to make that possible. Commander and Mrs Brocklebank then and there offered home for Carl and his wife Gertrude and his family of three children to live in their house with them at Longbridge in Wiltshire for no charge. What inspiring, heart-warming generosity.

We met at Rudolf Steiner House every month hosted by George Adams and Olive Whicher in her studio – the large room at the top of Rudolf Steiner House. We were a group determined to develop BD. We began each meeting with the study of a lecture. I remember we began with the lecture cycle on “The Four Archangels and the Seasons”. We then took “Man as Symphony of the Creative Word”. They were inspiring meetings. Carl and I would stay at the Farmers Club and the following morning in the empty club lounge (it was a Monday morning) we would work out all that had been decided the previous day. Those were basically Experimental Circle meetings; and by meeting every month we formed the basis for the continuation of the work.

Sadly, after not much more than a year Commander Brocklebank died. A home was found for Carl and his family at Clent, so our work went on. “Notes and Correspondence” was edited by Doris Davy, the wife of Charles Davy, herself also a professional journalist. She had already helped Mrs. Pease and was a great asset to the movement. The Foundation was from the beginning largely financed by gardeners. Farmers were very thin on the ground and we had many more private gardeners. Some of them had very beautiful gardens.

Mrs Pease’s was the most outstanding, at Bray-on-Thames. She was also a keen beekeeper and had a lovely bee garden We had a number of bee-keeper members in those days. One I remember called Nichols wrote several articles for “Notes and Correspondence”. The Brocklebanks too had a beautiful garden and I remember hearing how particular their gardener was that Dr Meir’s instructions should be carried out “to the letter”. Carl now had a car and was travelling round the country meeting people advising and lecturing.

Already in 1946 or 7 we started holding annual Circle Conferences. The first seven or eight years were at Michael Wilson’s Goethean Science Foundation at Clent. We had visiting lecturers. Among them were: Ernst Lehrs, Herman Poppelbaum, Rudolf Hauschka, Bernard Lievegoed, Karl Konig. They were warm, enthusiastic occasions to which about twenty members and invited guests came. Four lectures were given between Friday evening and Sunday midday and one session for members questions and any business that had to be done. From the beginning the Experimental Circle owned nothing. It was financed by the Foundation. In subsequent years we met at Camphill Thornbury and Newton Dee; following which, we met for a number of years at Peredur, East Grinstead invited by Siegfried and Joan Rudel - I remember George Adams giving a course there also Willi Sucher and for a second time Rudolf Hauschka and gradually we provided our own content. They were important meetings which really provided us with the enthusiasm to work through the year as each of us was largely on his own. Originally we met in January but changed to the autumn after a difficult journey home in the snow.

“Notes and Correspondence” became the journal of the Circle when Doris Davy edited and produced “Star & Furrow” for the Foundation.”

True to this new spirit the [next meeting](#) was in September of 1945 and healing was in the air. George Adams brought up the great division.

“The question of the relationship between the Experimental Circle, the Agricultural Foundation and the other Bio-dynamic groups in this country was raised by Mr. George Adams. It was proposed that there should be a weekend of meetings in which the situation could be reviewed, including a meeting of Foundation members and an open meeting for all groups and individuals associated with the Bio-dynamic movement. This was provisionally arranged for the weekend of October 20-21. (Since then it has been found necessary to postpone the Foundation meeting, but the Experimental Circle, and probably other informal groups interested in the agricultural work, will meet during the week-end.) Notices will be sent out when arrangements are complete.” A [joint meeting](#) of the Experimental Circle and the AAF was held in October – at which the poor finances were discussed.

The following year, 1946, Lady Eve Balfour published her book “The Living Earth” and, as a book must, it set out its stall in the introduction. This stall filled more space with quotes from Northbourne’s *Look to the Land* than original input. The ‘*secularized British manifesto – biodynamics ‘excised of any Germanic or Anthroposophic heritage’* – was, at a step removed, also the basis of Lady Eve’s approach!

David Clement wrote in 2002:

By this time Lady Eve Balfour has launched The Soil Association and written her book “The Living Earth”. We had a good connection with her and she visited us several times. I remember on one occasion, her saying to George Adams that the organic movement looked to us to provide the philosophy behind the organic movement³⁸. Maurice Wood was a member of their first counsel and Deryck Duffy on their panel of experts.

The editor of “Mother Earth”, the Soil Association journal, Sam Waller, once said that B.D. was the poetry of the organic movement. So, from the start, we had our connections with the Soil Association - though from the start we also experienced opposition.

The same year, the Kolisko’s book *Agriculture of Tomorrow* was finally published, having been ready for 6 years. The foreword to this unique and extraordinary body of work was written in 1939.

It is a rather strange moment in which to write a book. England has declared war on Germany and nobody knows how long it will last. It is still stranger perhaps, that the book I am about to write originates from the German spirit, the true German spirit which has always been appreciated in the cultivated world.

We are in the midst of destruction; the powers of war are relentless; they are destroying the life of man, of whole populations; they are destroying masterpieces of art and cultural life. In such a moment it is imperative to acknowledge the immense need of constructive and regenerative powers.

I want to write therefore about the regeneration of agriculture, which is the basis of the physical existence of men. Without proper food mediating life-forces to the human organism, human beings cannot grow strong and healthy, nor become able to develop the clear minds and moral strength we so urgently need.

The task of agriculture is overwhelming. The farmer and gardener help to build up the physical body of mankind. They work with the most valuable material we can think of - Mother Earth. Out of the earth the plant-life grows. The plants nourish the animals, and plants and animals contribute to our life.

This book will contain an account of scientific work carried out since 1920. Until the year 1936 I worked in the Biological Institute of the Goetheanum in Germany (Stuttgart), and since then in the Biological Institute at Bray, near Maidenhead.

In 1924 Rudolf Steiner, well known as scientist and founder of the Anthroposophical Movement, entrusted me personally with the task of making all the necessary scientific investigations in connection with his Agricultural Course. Since 1924 I have studied all his suggestions for regenerating Agriculture. Many farmers

³⁸ “I asked her [Lady EB] what she thought of biodynamics. Her response was that it was “as good as the best organic, if not a little bit better”. She went on to say that she thought the future lay with a focus more on processes than substances.” Direct Communication from Colin Moss Sept 2023

and gardeners all over the world practise his methods; and for this there exist various associations bearing various names. I do not belong to any of them and have in mind to speak only of my own scientific investigations, holding myself responsible for them.

It is to be regretted that the original lecture course of Rudolf Steiner is not yet published and is only entrusted to a relatively small group of farmers, gardeners and other personalities in the form of a private manuscript. I restrict myself to the shorthand notes I was entitled to make during this course, held at Koberwitz (estate of Count Keyserlingk) and the innumerable personal suggestions I received from Rudolf Steiner. I am convinced that this will be sufficient to make the importance of the subject quite clear to every earnest reader and to enable him to benefit by this new agricultural method. Nothing will be withheld; this is no time for secrecy. Rudolf Steiner meant his suggestions for the whole world, not for a small group of privileged farmers. Only a real understanding of the wonderful organism "Agriculture" will make it possible to grow healthy food.

L. KOLISKO. London, 28th September, 1939.

Note the independence! I belong to no association; ... entrusted me personally; I am responsible for my own investigations; Nothing will be withheld: I work from my own notes from the course.

Pfeiffer wrote a most revealing letter to [Lady MacKinnon](#) in January of 1947:

I am glad to hear that there is now one (only) circle i.e. The General Experimental Circle. In this age of splitting apart everywhere we should really show the world that we are of a different kind. There are of course grave problems like the book by Frau Kolisko and I wonder how the Mier group feels about it?

Our tendency should always be to put the practical aspect into the foreground as far the as the public representation is concerned. The publicly discussing of the aetheric and astral or cosmic forces in our movement lacks still a solid basis of a scientific representation and is apt to create too much the odour of mysticism. This is my main criticism on the other group.

Internally of course we should intensify our studies on the anthroposophical subjects. Outwardly they should be presented in a way that everyone can accept them.

This reveals that

- even the experimental circle had been divided by the events of recent years
- Kolisko's publication was a 'grave problem': because the public mention of etheric and astral and cosmic forces issues were premature. ("Nothing will be withheld!")
- The 'other group' were considered a little too slack in this regard

Some of the latter is even more explicit in Dr Pfeiffer's letter to [Miss Fisher](#) in December that year.

I see a better possibility of cooperating with the Soil Organizaton [sic] than with Dr Mier's organization [AAF]. Dr Meir makes no clear line between the purely Anthroposophical endeavour and what is needed for the outside. He always asks through his way of publishing things that the outside has to take part immediately in Anthroposophical matters. This, I think, is not possible and also it is not right to ask the average farmer or gardener to show Anthroposophical interest at once. However, it should be our endeavour through the way in which we represent our practice and background in a business-like manner that people gradually become interested.

Lilly Kolisko was not the only person with concerns about the secrecy that still surrounded biodynamic's inner story. In the same year (1946) Maye Bruce published her "Common Sense Compost Making", and alluded to similar misgivings:

The Steiner Method seemed to me to be too complicated to have a universal appeal. The literature was too obscure. The process of making the 'preparations' used as activators is secret and is the property of the Association. Moreover, these preparations can only be obtained by a member of the Association.

Lilly Kolisko and Maye Bruce were not the last potentisers to be assigned to the sidelines.

January 1946 saw [the first AGM for the AAF for 7 years](#). At the contiguous experimental circle meeting a determination to meet every month was minuted. At the [early March meeting](#) the circle minutes note: "Lady Mackinnon and friends to be invited to the Circle" and the minutes of the [late March meeting](#) note: "Lady Mackinnon wrote to express her thanks for being invited to the Circle." There are no notes of this in the [BDA council minutes](#) of May.

The next experimental Circle meeting in May of 1946 notes an important change:

"Since the last meeting was held and the 6th Report issued, Frau Marie Steiner and the Natural Science Section at the Goetheanum have decided to lift the restrictions hitherto imposed on the distribution of this Course [the Agriculture Course] and to make it available like other lecture Cycles. This decision will have important repercussion upon the future work of our Circle, and we shall have to discuss this very fully at the Conference in October."

This does not seem to mean that you can get copies at local book shops. This final relaxation does not occur until 1963 according to the Creeger-Gardner edition of the Agriculture Course. It means that it is generally available to members without having to sign anything.

In the summer there seems to be something afoot but not ready for frank discussion. The minutes of the BDA council of June say: "Possible reformation of the society so no point electing new officers."!

The AAF's Secretary's letter #5 of November 1946 is enlightening:

A very important event has taken place which will have considerable repercussions upon our whole work, even beyond the Circle itself: The two groups of the Experimental Circle which for many years had worked quite independently and with but little knowledge of each other, have decided on a fusion, so that henceforth there will be only one Experimental Circle of Anthroposophical Farmers and Gardeners in this country. We can be deeply grateful for this having become possible.

One of the Circle's most important tasks, also in future, will be the trusteeship of the Agriculture Course, now no longer of the book as such, but of its content. This work has two aspects: one is directed inwardly towards the study and further elaboration of Rudolf Steiner's gift, the other is directed outwardly towards enquirers. This latter task is in the hands of two organisations for the furtherance of the practical application of the bio-dynamic methods: the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation and the Bio-Dynamic Association. You all will be glad to hear that close contact has been established between these two organisations.

This is confirmed in the Experimental Circle [News Sheets of that year](#). These show that the initiative came from the BDA as a result of the wider accessibility of the Agriculture Course. These reports also show that the Experimental Circle formally shortened its name from 1947 onwards.

Inter-association cooperation is confirmed by the BDA council in their [minutes of November 1946](#). This confirms that the two parts of the experimental circle are now one, and that proposed legal protection of the making and proper use of the preparations is sought. Once agreed, a letter is proposed to Meir, Duffy and Clement - and all parties meet on January 22 to discuss just that. Lady Mackinnon offers her resignation but it is not clear if these occurrences are linked. A letter to Albert Howard was read – no copy found. The AAF holds its 12th AGM in the same week; "cordial co-operation with BDA & Soil Assoc mentioned." David Clement is elected as chair of the AAF.

Not to be outdone in cordial relations with the Soil Association, the BDA's 7th AGM in May boasts a lecture by Lady Eve Balfour.

In August 1947 a national agriculture bill is passed.

The government committed itself to permanent cultivation of fertile land [in this bill](#) through subsidies and guaranteed prices. "The government's aim was to maintain high levels of agricultural production through a system of guaranteed prices negotiated annually by the Ministry of Agriculture and the [National Farmers' Union]. The government subsidised shortfalls between market prices for food and the income requirements of farmers. It actively promoted the marketing of foodstuffs through the marketing boards, which had been set up before the war."

The BDA council of November 1947 was busy.

- Lady MacKinnon submitted a letter of resignation as treasurer and secretary. Council must accept and she was thanked profusely. Perhaps she could become vice-president? Unanimously approved. Lady MacKinnon accepted.
- Miss Fisher's resignation as acting secretary accepted from the end of the year and co-opted until the AGM.
- Protection of preparations to remain in abeyance
- Miss Cross finding difficulties in leaving the Priory to the BDA
- Mrs Murray Usher spoke strongly of putting our house in order before considering amalgamation with any other association. She did not approve of affiliation with the Soil Association but it might be possible, later on, with the AAF. There must be a very deep spiritual feeling in the work of the Bio-dynamic Association. Mr Gardiner wanted to avoid difficulties and would have like to consider some form of affiliation with the Soil Association which was a powerful body with a strong financial backing and in which the Bio-dynamic Association was well represented. Miss Cross gave a short account of the forming of the BDA and the AAF and said that she felt the SA was too 'exterior' a body to make a suitable home for those who were really trying to carry out the methods indicated by Rudolf Steiner. Mrs Murray Usher said that she saw the advantages from a practical point of view of working with the SA but let that there was a danger that the other side of the work – the spiritual – might be swamped. After some discussion it was decided that the present time was not suitable to consider any form of amalgamation or affiliation.
- Miss Cross reported on the BD exhibit at [the Chelsea Flower Show](#) on the Soil Association stand and thought had not be of much use.

Here it is absolutely clear that the BDA is courting the soil association and other associations – presumably the AAF.

The AAF holds [its 13th AGM](#) at the end of the year and mourns the death of Marna Pease. Carl Meir wrote an obituary outlining her pivotal role in biodynamics in the UK.

MARNA PEASE 1868 – 1947

Dear Members,

When on the evening of Sunday, 31st August 1947, Marna Pease died, the Foundation lost its President, and many Members lost a dear friend and counsellor. I hope you will allow me to write of her quite personally as one who owes her very much, but also as one who for many years was most closely connected with her in her work.

I met Marna Pease one evening during the World Conference on Spiritual Science and its Practical Applications, held in London in July and August 1928, It was characteristic that she was described to me not so much as Mrs Pease, but as 'the sister of Mrs Merry! (who had taken so active and prominent part in preparing this Conference). This modesty and reluctance to come into the limelight was typical of her and

throughout the following years Mrs Pease rather kept in the background and was most concerned that others should get full credit and that the work as such should not be overshadowed by her personality.

In 1928, Marna Pease stood at a kind of turning point in her life. For years she had been closely associated with occult studies and especially with Anthroposophy. Her husband, Howard Pease, had died not long before and now she was able to devote her full energy to anthroposophical work, and at the time of the World Conference she was not yet aware how important a part she was to play in the development of the anthroposophical agricultural work. She had always been a very keen gardener and was well known in gardening circles for her erudition as much as for her success e.g. in raising certain types of Lilies from seed. With quiet authority she could speak on these matters, and quite in passing she would mention her personal contacts with such people as David Farrar and others.

During the World Conference a small group of friends banded together to see to the implementation of the plan of developing bio-dynamic work in this country. Mrs Pease, from the very beginning, took upon herself a most generous share of the financial obligations. But it did not occur to her at that moment, as she often told me later, that this would lead to her taking any prominent part. She preferred, as I said, working in the background, and the emphasis was always on 'working'. One of her first practical contributions was the typing of further copies of the Koberwitz Agriculture Course which had just been translated by Mr George Adams. She spent hours and hours at her typewriter, making copies which later she would bind so very neatly and carefully.

The centre of gravity of the BDA has moved to Clent including Carl Meir – physically - due to the death of Major Brocklebank who had hosted the Meir family since the war.

Rolf Gardiner corresponds with Dr Pfeiffer who [writes back](#) from the USA on December 27, 1947:

We are cooperating with the Organic Gardening movement, and have found that for the average gardener and farmer this is sufficient. If somebody wants to go into the details of the Biodynamic method then he can still join the Bio-dynamic Association. As you know the Biodynamic Association has sprung out of the Anthroposophical Movement of the late Rudolf Steiner. There are Anthroposophists who in a more or less experimental way try to work with the Biodynamic method, in order to improve it and make the original ideas of Steiner more and better understood. This more internal work is also going on in England, where we have an experimental circle of Anthroposophical Farmers and Gardeners, which comprise the internal group. Then we have the external group which is represented by the Biodynamic Association for Soil Improvement on one side and Dr Mier's movement on the other side. The soil Association is more or less meant for outsiders who do not wish to enter any of the Anthroposophical problems connected with farming, but just want to take advantage of our general experience and want to apply the preparations. Dr Meir in his movement does not draw this line of internal and external work, therefore it has always been difficult for us to Join our movement with his.

Now there is your suggestion that we should form a sub division of the Soil Association Ltd. in connection with our public Biodynamic representation. I do not at all object to such a blending of the two movements, in fact I believe it will have many advantages, and I am very grateful for your suggestion. I will write to our organization in England and recommend that they seriously consider your suggestion. Some time ago I have also been informed by our English Association as to your proposal but I do not yet know what decision they have made. There were several pros and cons and as far as my knowledge goes nothing has been decided up to the present. I understand and agree entirely that the public representation of the Biodynamic method should go hand in hand with all other organic methods and should provide the outsider, that is every farmer and gardener, with Instructions and advice and whatever is needed in order to enable him to run a successful organic project. The research part and the more internal philosophical work is something entirely different and ought to be kept apart from the public representation. The research part is still very much in its infancy and has to be more sheltered and more protected and kept internally until final and definite results can be published.

The BDA Council [meets in March](#) of 1948 to discuss [Dr Pfeiffer's letter](#) re affiliation of the BDA with the Soil Association. After a full expression of views it was unanimously agreed 'that present organic research knowledge did not justify the BDA affiliating with the Soil Association or similar body at the present time.' However, SA members were welcome to the BDA meetings. A letter from Mr Raab was read – favouring affiliation with the SA. With Lady Balfour's consent there could be a BDA section incorporated at Haughley.

[The May meeting](#) continues:

"Lady Eve would warmly welcome a BD input to Haughley offering an acre of good land gratis including accommodation for the person in charge and some input to the work. Miss Cross pointed out that Dr Pfeiffer opined that the time was premature for affiliation with the SA. She circulated his statement showing how the BD work stands at Rothampstead Research Station. Miss Cross spoke of the necessity for further research in the effects of the BD preparations and the whole question of farming and gardening, thereby being in a position to preserve our own identity in the instance of merger. She thought 1 acre was far too small for a satisfactory experiment. She said, "practical politics kills the suggestion of a plot."

Affiliation is clearly the main and contentious topic of these times since it is continued into [September](#) where Mr Raab is for taking up some connection with the Soil Association:

Despite the rejection of Lady Eve's offer Mr Raab thought the council should accept and undertake some experiments at Haughley. *'It was considered ... that there were insufficient funds and the plot was too small, "Mr Gardiner replied and there followed a frank discussion which revealed very divergent views on the aims of the work of the BDA."* Miss Fisher wanted Lady Eve thanked. *"At this juncture Mr Raab had to leave the meeting to keep another engagement"*

Affiliation with the AAF: Miss Cross had been approached by the Chair of the AAF with a proposition for affiliation of the two associations. She briefly outlined the reason there were two associations 'which were originally one – the Experimental Circle. After discordance due partly to personal jealousy, some members of the Circle seceded and formed the AAF. Dr Pfeiffer who disapproved of this action formed the BDA as a bridge between Dornach and the outer world." It was decided the BDA should remain separate from the AAF, *'keeping its own identity yet maintaining connection with the AAF through the experimental Circle, the united body to bear witness to Rudolf Steiner's agricultural work. Miss Cross would send a letter to this effect to the Chair of the AAF.*

Dr Meir of the AAF wondered if the BDA would consider co-publication of the green leaflet "BD Farming and Gardening" as stocks were running low. Decided 'no'.

A close read of these minutes shows a divergent story from the one told in the present report. I assume that the minutes taker got confused at the point in this dramatic story where the AAF, ExpO and BDA genesis is discussed,

In December Marie Steiner died. Dr Pfeiffer's [eulogy](#) is clearly full of respect for her essential, long and steadfast support of Dr Steiner.

1949 brings [Dr Pfeiffer's request](#) for the BDA to have its own UK president. Then Dr Wachsmuth shows that Dornach too wants things to be reconciled: "... he suggested a merger with the AAF would be of much benefit to the movement. This was discussed and the general opinion expressed was that the time was not ripe for a comfortable merger."

Nevertheless, at the [summer AGM](#) half of those attending were from the AAF.

After many attempts to get [Dr Pfeiffer to come to the UK](#) finally he arrived in July of 1950. He is treated like royalty by Rolf Gardiner who wrote:

Early this year Lord Portsmouth, J. E. Hosking and the present writer determined to pick up the threads of this pattern. We therefore planned what we called a European Husbandry Meeting and invited four Germans, two Swiss and three Frenchmen, all of outstanding merit individually, to join us in a fortnight's fairly leisurely journeying from point to point across southern England. In the end all the Frenchmen failed to appear. But three Germans, and a very redoubtable veteran Swiss, Konrad von Meyenburg, the inventor of rotary tillers, joined us. To this party came also, like Hermes, Dr Ehrenfried Pfeiffer.

In order to welcome Pfeiffer to these islands a tour by charter plane and car was arranged for him (as President of the Bio-Dynamic Association) which bore him from Kent to Aberdeenshire and thence to the West Midlands and back to Wessex, Middlesex, East Anglia and London. Thus this valuable observer of soils and farms could see for himself much of our green and pleasant land, and meet men and women at many centres, farms and estates. His comments were penetrating and wise. Seldom was there a man who knew the peculiarities of the working soils of different European countries and who had then become a practical commercial farmer in the United States who could look at the whole earth with such earned authority.

This grand tour culminates at the 10th AGM of the BDAA "to which Members of the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation had been invited," on July 13th 1950. With pleasing resonance, it is held at Alliance Hall, Alliance Street, SW1, London. In short Dr Pfeiffer says, in a [wide ranging address](#), that the two organisations should amalgamate and sort themselves out – the work should be carried out by British staff.

He goes on to chide the two organisations for always looking at differences and not acknowledging achievement – in a living organism the organs do not criticise, but help one another. He then prescribed how the two organisations might be united.

In the evening there is a public lecture and it is attended by Lady Eve Balfour and Lord Portsmouth

There follows a rally of correspondence between the secretaries of the AAF and the BDA trying to bring things to a conclusion with some rather large gaps. The first five try to get things published at the right time and in the right places so that the laundry isn't hung up in public.

September 14 th 1949	Miss Katherine Thornton writes to Carl Meir
September 18 th 1949	Carl Meir replies to Miss Thornton
September 18 th 1949	Miss Thornton sends a telegram to Carl Meir
August 18 th 1950	Miss Katherine Thornton writes to Carl Meir
September 7 th 1950	Carl Meir replies to Miss Thornton

Agreement has been reached in principle and the next exchange is bringing things to a conclusion.

September 7 th 1950	Miss Katherine Thornton writes to Carl Meir
September 14 th 1950	Pfeiffer writes to Carl Meir
September 14 th 1950	Pfeiffer clarifies his vision for Carl Meir
October 22 nd 1950	Carl Meir writes to the membership of the AAF
October 23 rd 1950	Carl Meir writes to Miss Thornton
November 19 th 1950	Miss Thornton to David Clement

The AAF holds its meeting the next day:

"Most significant result: discussion began between your council and the council of the BDA with the object of uniting. Good will on both sides and optimism. May our common work incarnate with new strength and purpose in our 21st year. 30 letters approving of these steps.

Perhaps all is not thriving in the Experimental Circle." A letter is published in the September 1949 *News Letter* of the Experimental Circle.³⁹

It is just a year since my election to the Experimental Circle. I well remember how I imagined the Circle would be. I thought of a comparatively few Members meeting together for intensive study and discussion of the Course or some other teaching of Dr Steiner's, I imagined them pooling practical experience and wise thought in questions raised by their work and study, and then all going back to their holdings to carry out further study and experiments. I visualised study and experiment as the 'breathing' activity of the individual Members, and their meeting and return home as the equivalent rhythm of the Circle. It did not occur to me that there would be some members who took part in this process rarely or never.

Perhaps I idealised too much: perhaps the picture was one for another generation. Or possibly I was basing my ideas on the scientific method to which I was accustomed. And yet... Is all well with our Circle? Are we forging ahead of current scientific thought, and discovering facts that Science will be glad to acknowledge in years to come? Have we anything to our credit as a Circle in any way comparable to what George Adams and Olive Whicher are accomplishing? Surely, to deserve our existence we should be the spearhead of the Anthroposophical Agricultural Movement and should aim at evolving thoughts as far ahead of our own time as those of Koberwitz were ahead of the thought of 1924.

Dr Steiner was never one to hang on to institutions that had lost their spiritual justification. Have we reached the time when we should say: "The Experimental Circle in this country has lost its original impulse. It would be better to dissolve it, and metamorphose it into something new that has a greater creative urge," ?

In putting forward such a suggestion one cannot but be very conscious of one's own failings as a Member, and of one's own inadequacy to take part in something more vital. But these things in a sense are beside the point. The question is always "What is our responsibility to the Spiritual world, and are we fulfilling it?" Beside this, all personal questions are insignificant, and if I have expressed myself too radically I beg Fellow Members not to take offence. My striving is only towards what we can achieve together in future. Whether we feel that something new can come to birth, or whether we feel that the present form is adequate, let us review our position together in the News Sheet. This vehicle exists for the strengthening of the Circle activity. Let us know, above all, if there are any who disagree with the premise that the Circle exists for intensive work between its members and that, failing in that, it fails as a Circle.

27th September 1949.

Hugh S Ellis

³⁹ [Full letter and responses here.](#)

1940's Precip: The war rages and all other energies are consumed in its madness. BD emerges to seeks to re-establish itself in the new landscape and the two organisations seek rapprochement. Soil Association was considered as umbrella organisation for BD.

Historical context: WW2, The UK begins to shed its colonies. Charlie Chaplin releases 'The Great Dictator', Disney releases Bambi, 1984 printed. 'Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion'. Jimi Hendrix born, Trotsky and Gandhi assassinated. Mount Rushmore complete, Anne Frank, first images of Earth from Space, Partition of India, Manhattan project, apartheid

1950: At last, The BDAA by decade

The 1950s starts with the final moves in the amalgamation of the AAF and the BDA.

[Miss Cross's News Sheet](#) recorded the proceedings of the momentous last BDA AGM held on July 13th 1950 at which Dr Pfeiffer had returned to unite the teams. The newsheet was published late enough to add on a very brief notice showing that Lady MacKinnon did not live to see the new amalgamated body become reality:

In Memoriam : Lady Mackinnon. It is with the greatest regret that we record the death of Lady Mackinnon. After a long illness marked by gradual failure of bodily powers she passed peacefully away on 28th February, 1951. From the earliest days of its introduction into this country her interest and belief in the "New Agriculture" never wavered, and as many of our members will have experienced her ready help and advice were always at hand. All that she undertook was carried out with scrupulous care, sincerity and singleness of purpose. Her presence amongst us is greatly missed.

The AAF held its last recorded meeting on November the 20th of 1950.

On February 7th 1951 the Biodynamic Association for Soil and Crop Improvement records the last entry in [its minutes book](#), and on April 6th 1951 there is a [joint meeting](#) of the BDA and AAF at Hawkwood College on the edge of Stroud, to forge the agreement and agree on the name of the new combined body. The candidates are:

- (1) BIO DYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION based on Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy.
- (2) BIO DYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION to further Rudolf Steiner's agricultural methods.
- (3) BIO DYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION based on the principles given by Rudolf Steiner.
- (4) BIO DYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION based on the teaching of Rudolf Steiner.
- (5) BIO DYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION based on the work of Rudolf Steiner.
- (6) RUDOLF STEINER AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION (Bio-dynamic methods)

None of these options are chosen. The chair of the new body, David Clement, wrote the [first annual report](#) looking back on 1951 for the "*BIO-DYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION Founded on the work of Rudolf Steiner*".

Since this records the birth of the new BDA here is his report in full:

BIO-DYNAMIC AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION Founded on the work of Rudolf Steiner.

Annual Report 1951

Dear Members,

It is with great pleasure that I send you the first Annual Report of our newly constituted association. As you know during this year the Councils of the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation and the Bio-Dynamic

Association have been working together as one and have tried to form our new Association so that there would be no break but a continuity of the work of each. It took some time to find a name to which all Council Members agreed, and some time to draw together the work of the two organisations. But owing to the good will and the Co-operation of everyone and especially the way in which Miss Thornton and Dr Meir (our two Secretaries) have co-operated, I think I can fairly say that we approach the coming Annual General Meeting with a coherent and active body which has the will to carry Rudolf Steiner's agricultural work with all the power at its disposal.

Naturally the combined Councils make far too big a body for efficient work. A number of Council Members have resigned or do not offer themselves for re-election. I think, mainly because they did not feel their services so necessary any more, having at the same time many other responsibilities, but also in order to give other Members the opportunity of joining the Council. These members are: Mr Dew, Miss Edwards, Miss Fisher, Mr Gardiner, Mr Lambe, Mr Maude, Mrs Meir, Mr Nicolls, Mr Raab, Miss Savary, Mr Thomas. The only member, who left the Council because he did not feel in full agreement with our method of working was Mr Gardiner who has nevertheless shown his good will by continuing his membership. I would like to thank all those members who have one and all helped forward the Bio-Dynamic work in this country by giving their time and counsel over a number of years.

In February, our office moved out of the Guest House at Clent Cottage into the lofts of the stables which had been nicely prepared. For some months now Dr Meier has been housed more comfortably and the Guest House has had the use of another room which was badly needed. Many friends and visitors have now visited Dr Meir in his new quarters and I think they all have been pleasantly surprised at what they have found up the stable stairs.

The only other alteration in our organisation this year had been the passing over of the despatch of the preparations from Miss Edwards at Swanage who has so faithfully carried out this task since 1947, to Broome Farm. I have there now a most suitable room for making, storing and despatching them. Although there have been some minor crises in getting of some of the preparations, I hope that in the future there will be no hitches and that all Preparations will be properly and speedily despatched. As in the past, orders should still go through the office at Clent Cottage, and should not be sent to me.

Ten visitors from abroad have visited Dr Meir at Clent Cottage, and two or three times that number from this country.

The Experimental Circle has held two conferences, one at Easter at Hawkwood College, one at Michaelmas at Clent. The first was on the subject of water, at which we had no visiting lecturer. At the second, Dr Lievegoed from Holland spoke on the Preparations in their cosmic and earthly setting.

In January, Dr Mier attended the meetings of Bio-Dynamic farmers and gardeners in Germany, visiting also Hamborn, Darmstadt, Stuttgart and Markdorf, ending up at Dornach at the Conference arranged by the Goetheanum. During this journey he made a number of new contacts, renewed old ones and saw some very interesting work which is in progress. He took the opportunity of telling our continental friends of what we are doing in this country. In August, he accompanied my foreman and myself on a short visit to Holland where we visited the Loverendale farms in Brabant and Walcheren, a most exemplary run concern. Mr Pin Clotscher, the manager, was exceedingly kind to us showing us the farms which besides growing wheat, sugar beet and the other crops usually grown here, also have in their rotation such an interesting crop as caraway. The farms are run entirely biodynamically, intensively sprayed, with all manure and compost treated with the Preparations. To be able to see such crops just before harvest is a tremendous encouragement to any bio-dynamic farmer. They also have there a substantial bakery, selling, to the best of my memory, some two thousand loaves a week in the main cities of Holland.

At our last Annual General Meeting the Countess Keyserlingk (the widow of Count Carl von Keyserlingk at whose invitation Rudolf Steiner gave the Agriculture Course) gave a beautiful description of her experiences with Rudolf Steiner and in particular the days at Koberwitz while the Agriculture Course was in progress. This was followed by a brief but excellent talk by Dr Mier on 'The Farmer as Healer'.

In June we held our usual Summer Meeting at Rudolf Steiner House in London. This time it was devoted to herbs. Short talks were given by Mrs Mann, Mr Kaye, Mrs Millet, Mrs Geuter, Mr Greene, Dr Engel, Dr Hauschka and Dr Mier, followed by a discussion. Herbs of many varieties, fresh and dried, were brought by members which added greatly to the value of the meeting. We have found that this method of having a number of speakers bringing different viewpoints to the same subject, has added life and interest to our discussions and meetings. But we would be glad to hear from members if they do not agree or have other suggestions.

In July, at Forest Row, a number of Members came together with Dr Mier and had an intensive afternoon and evening making compost and discussing ways, means and methods, with a view to improving and bringing up to date our little manual of Instructions.

Once again, owing to the energy of Mrs Brocklebank, we have had a most successful Sale Of Produce this autumn. Members were very generous in their support, and as you will see from the Statement of Accounts, it has been a great financial help. I must mention again, as I did last year, that this sale has also proved to be a most useful meeting at which members are able to meet one another informally and discuss their problems in a way that is not possible at a formal meeting.

Dr Mier has sent out this year 3 Secretary's letters to keep you informed of what is happening in our movement. He has written an article on Branfeld's 'Continuous Creation' for 'Lebendige Erde', the organ of the BioDynamic movement in Germany. He has given two lectures. one at the invitation of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain at Rudolf Steiner House on 'The Beings of the Earth', one at Bristol at the invitation of the Bristol Group of the anthroposophical Society, on 'Observation of the Stars'. He also took the chair for Richard St Barbe Baker at his lecture on Trees at the weekend arranged by the Christian Community at Birmingham. On the same occasion he also translated a lecture by Mr Schauburger jnr. Members will remember Mr St Barbe Baker and Mr Schauburger as very keen advocates of the growing of trees and the study of the movement of water.

The work at the office has been greatly increased this year by the uniting of our two organisations and it has taken many months to find out our present actual membership, and to get all our records in order. An up-to-date List of Members should be ready soon after the annual General meeting.

Dr Mier has this year, at the invitation of the Soil Association, been attending on our behalf a committee which is going into the question of the possibility of registering a Mark for Organic Produce, for the sake of both consumers and producers. It is being considered whether there could be a Mark within the Mark to show the particular organic method used by the grower. There is nothing to be reported as yet but we hope it will not be long before we can send you the findings of the committee.

Mrs Davy, as Editor, has issued two numbers of 'Notes and Correspondence' with which we hope you are pleased. Mrs Davy works very hard at its production, but you will appreciate that such a paper can only be kept alive by the interest and literary contributions of the Members. It would also be help if any of you can find other subscribers.

We have held four Council meetings in the year. Some of these, I am afraid have been a little protracted and must thank all members for giving their support and for the tolerant and helpful way in which they have assisted Dr Meir and myself to deal with the many problems which have necessarily arisen at such a time. Especially I must mention Mrs Brocklebank who carries the onerous duties of Treasurer in the best possible spirit. We owe her all the support we can give her.

I hope very much that you will be able to join us at our meeting on 8th December, but if you cannot come, and have anything you wish to say please, write it as soon as you can.

Yours very sincerely 19th November 1951. David S. Clement Chairman.

Vivian Griffiths has written another appreciation of [this amalgamation](#).

As the organisational changes followed each other in these years the names of the various printed communications changed: The original N&Cs became the *Star and Furrow* in 1953. At the same time, the 'News Sheet' took over the now vacant title of *Notes and Correspondence*. The *Secretary's Letter* of the AAF carried on as the AAF and BDA became the BDAA in 1951 with the junction revealed only by renumbering the *Letters* from 1 from May 1951 and by an introductory page entitled '*What is the Secretary's Letter*' by way of introduction for the new readers. This continued until Carl Meir resigned as secretary in 1953 in order to devote his energies to the creation of the Camphill Village initiative in Botton. Lady Cynthia Chance then took over and renamed the *Secretary's letter* as the *News Letter* – which continues to the present time.

In the first *Star and Furrow* of Autumn 1953 (S+F) Carl Meir offered his perspective.

When in 1928 the first steps were taken to apply Rudolf Steiner's agricultural ideas in this country, the need for a journal was soon felt. For two years a collection of notes, articles and letters was published in duplicated form. When we decided, in March, 1931, to have this printed, various names came under consideration, but *Notes and Correspondence*, the modest description of what it was originally intended to offer, was adhered to for the time being – and was kept for the next fifty issues.

From 1931 to the end of the war the journal was edited by Mama Pease, assisted first by the writer, then by the present editor. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Mrs. Pease for her perseverance and care, and remember her at this moment when her "child" changes its name. The journal's function was in the first place to hold together what was then called the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation, but also to make available to English readers significant original articles, such as the new (and then the only existing) translation of Goethe's '*Metamorphosis of Plant*', and articles by George Adams, Ernst Lehrs and others.

As the organisation grew, and new readers and contributors came on the scene, the journal gradually became less like its title. The new title, *Star and Furrow*, sums up, in a kind of shorthand, what the Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association stands for. The origin of all life is the cosmos, the universe around us of which we and our earth are integral members. Our sphere of action is the earth – our fields and our gardens. Man is the mediator between the forces of heaven and earth, but he can fulfil his tasks only as long as he works with both a true knowledge of the stars in a wider sense than astronomy, and a feeling of responsibility for the earth which sees her as something more than the provider of food. These are the pillars standing at the gateway to the future as we see it.

There cannot be wider limits to human endeavour than heaven and earth. The farmer should never forget this; nor should those who depend on the farmer's work, whether the farmer lives next door, or in New Zealand or Canada. The problems of farming must always be seen as belonging to the sphere of life; they cannot be solved analytically. It has been the curse of agriculture the world over that the specialist, useful as servant, has become the master. Equally dangerous is the essentially urban attitude that food must be cheap. The ultimate value of a farming practice cannot lie expressed exclusively in financial terms any more than the consumer can live from the bulk of his food alone, expressed in terms of calories, weight or the like. To maintain and increase the fertility of the land must be the farmer's aim; to obtain food of truly nutritive quality, fit to nourish the whole man, must be the consumer's endeavour. We must overcome the modern tendency on the part of the producer, as well as the consumer, to express everything in terms of money. It is human labour, guided by insight into the laws of the universe, which provides food; it is a truly human existence, health in body, soul and spirit, that the consumer should aim at.

The interests of producer and consumer are not antagonistic, for the life of man and the life of the earth are interwoven in their origin and in their continuance. Much of the antagonism which exists is due to wrong standards being applied by both, and the disregard of quality as a criterion of sound production and wise consumption.

It is often objected that "quality" is a vague and unscientific term which cannot be measured, and which cannot therefore become a standard. The difference between quantity and quality points to, and is intimately connected with, the difference between dead and living. We must understand that the needs of

				1940
				1941
				1942
				1943
				1944
				1945
				1946
				1947
				1948
				1949
				1950
				1951
				1952
				1953
				1954
				1955
				1956
				1957
				1958
				1959
				1960
				1961
				1962
				1963
				1964
				1965
				1966
				1967
				1968
				1969
				1970
				1971
				1972
				1973
				1974
				1975
				1976
				1977
				1978
				1979
				1980
				1981
				1982
				1983
				1984
				1985
				1986
				1987
				1988
				1989
				1990
				1991
				1992
				1993
				1994
				1995
				1996
				1997
				1998
				1999
				2000
				2001
				2002
				2003
				2004
				2005
				2006
				2007
				2008
				2009
				2010
				2011
				2012
				2013
				2014
				2015
				2016
				2017
				2018
				2019
				2020
				2021
				2022

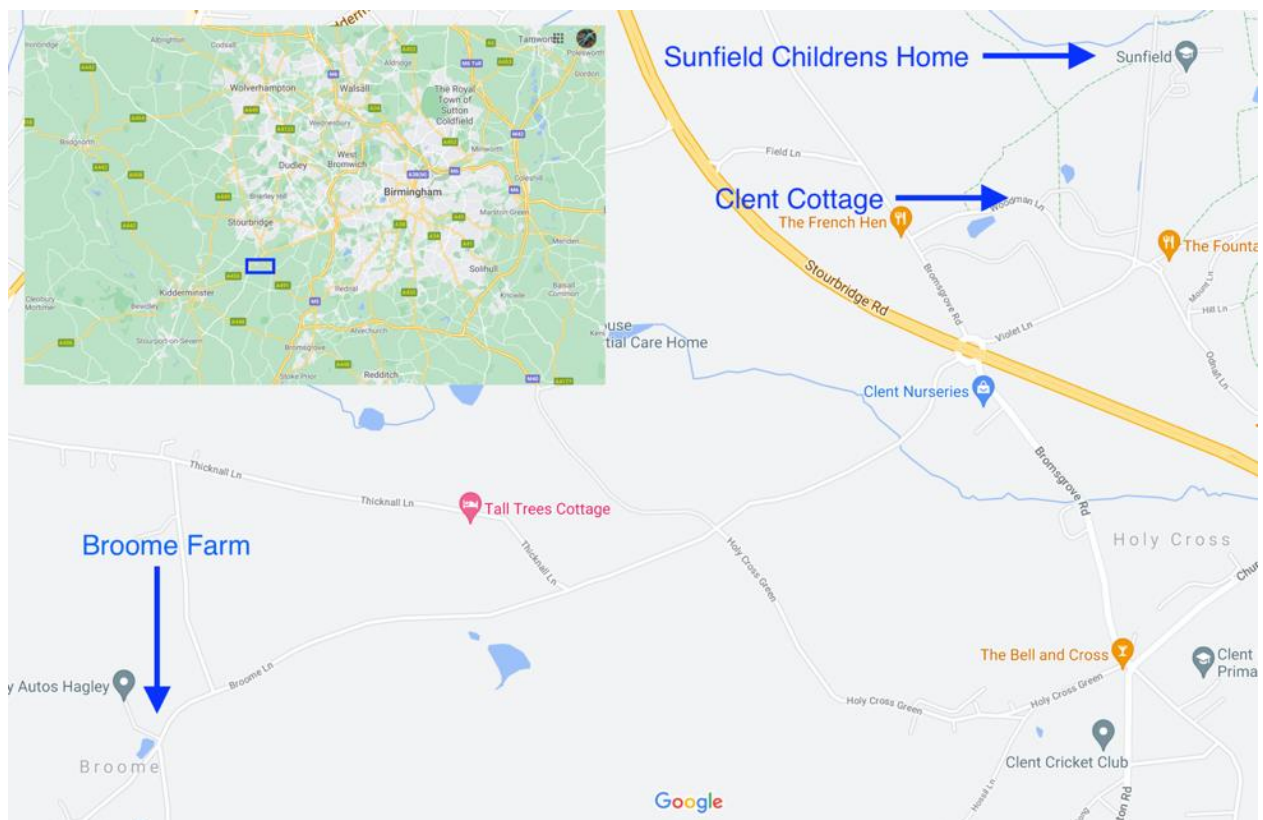
human life can be met only by products from a living soil, part of a living earth and cosmos, and it is up to us to use the concept “quality” in a scientific way. But quite apart from this specific bio-dynamic, or better, anthroposophical approach, a stirring of interest is becoming noticeable, a seeking for a fundamental re-orientation. Responsible farmers, doctors interested more in promoting health than in combating disease, mothers concerned about the health of their children, teachers and sociologists alarmed by the instability of human life, economists worried by the unreality of the very foundation of human existence, all these and many more realise the need for action, and much valuable work is already on foot. But have we gone deep enough in our search and diagnosis? The problem is too great, and societies or institutions can at best tackle only particular tasks. We must see the problem not only in its complexity but also in its wholeness, and must boldly go beyond the expression of it in terms of producer and consumer; we must recognise it as one of life and death for mankind and the earth. A new impulse is needed, strong enough to shake us from our lethargy, from being spellbound by economic caution, or the need for “scientific” proofs in terms of a quantitative science. What better description than to call the impulse a hygienic one; an impulse directed towards the “principle of health.” (OED).

If we take this concept in its full significance, we can bring together everyone, wherever he stands, in garden or field, in laboratory or hospital, in kitchen or school, in trade or parliament. We must become conscious of this hygienic impulse, and must serve it. It is not a question of programmes – political, economic, nutritional or the like. Nor does it mean cutting across the valuable work of existing societies and associations. There must grow a movement which starts from the recognition of man standing alone in the wilderness of nature. Deserted as he is by what guided him in the past, he faces the desert, partly of his own making, in which he may starve. The key to the solution lies in Man; it is man who farms and gardens; it is man who has to be fed. But all will depend on whether we see in man a machine or higher animal, or whether we see in him a being capable of fulfilling his tasks in thinking, feeling and willing, striving for harmony with Creator and Creation.

Just a generation ago Rudolf Steiner gave to mankind many concrete ideas in all fields of human endeavour, and it is these which can show us the way to make this hygienic impulse a real

basis for our work. It is the aim of *Star and Furrow* to help in making known these ideas, to serve the workers in the field, to help the consumer to better insight into his true needs. Small as our numbers may still be, we are not alone, and just recently, in other countries of Europe, endeavours have begun to converge under the name of “Demeter” as an expression of this hygienic impulse. Why this name has been chosen, and what is being done, will be reported in future issues of this journal.

The new chapter opens with David Clement re-elected as the Chair of the BDAA – a role which he is to hold until 1987. He is based at Broome Farm in Clent in the W Midlands. Broome Farm and Clent form the centre of gravity for the BDA all that time.



David Clement was not a farmer by inclination. Interviewed in 2002 he recalls much of the history of the association. Whilst his obituary suggests he bought Broome farm in the war, his own recollection is that he bought it in 1934.

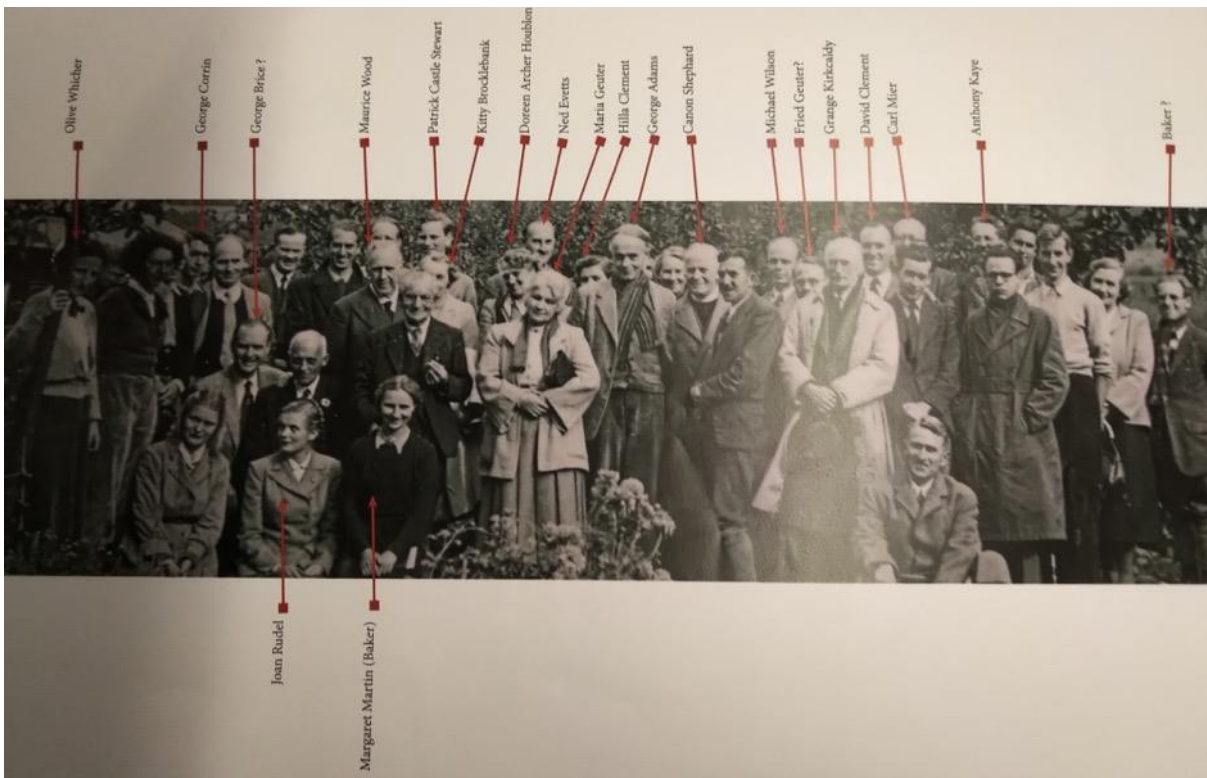
In 1934 I bought Broome Farm. It was not because I wanted to farm - I was a London boy and had no knowledge of farming - it was to grow food for the Sunfield Children's Home. I became interested in anthroposophy just after the World Conference in 1928. Two hundred people visited that conference in the course of the 10 days and I was absolutely smitten. I was still at school then - I was 17 or 18. By the time I was 19 I was a member of the Anthroposophical Society, as was Adam Bittlestone whom I went to school with. We were 'knocked down' by anthroposophy. In the holidays we went to Gloucester Place (which used to be the Anthroposophical headquarters) where we met old ladies who were kind to us and gave us things to read. We were very enthusiastic. We later went to Oxford together.

In 1934 I bought Broome Farm to grow biodynamic food for the children [of Sunfield]. Carl [Mirbt/Meir] was living in the town, so we moved he and his family into the farm and he became the manager. We then

thought that we would start biodynamic farming 'proper'. My mother had died in a motor accident and that was where we got the money to buy the farm. Carl moved in with his family. However, we had some difficulties. The farm men, of whom we had about half a dozen, were typical English farm workers. They had mostly fought in the First War. Carl was anxious that his children could speak German, and so only German was spoken in the farmhouse. This led to a near revolt. So Carl had to move out after 3 years.

The documentation of the BDAA is dominated in the 1950s by a few names - David Clement, Carl Meir, Lady Chance, Maria Geuter, George Corrin, George Adams, Grange Kirkaldy.

Without the struggles of and between different representative bodies, one has the business of supporting the growth of biodynamics to address. There is little money around in post-war Britain and this is certainly the case for biodynamics. Positions are honorary – ie unpaid. David Clement is quick to thank Mrs Brocklebank for her excellent thrift which just keeps the red ink off the page. There is still a £1 (hiked to £1-1-0 in 1957) subscription to be a member of the BDAA but the experimental circle is run without finances from its members. In one newsletter it is admitted that the Notes and Correspondence is essentially financed by the BDA and Maurice Woods.



The momentum from the war years in favour of chemical agriculture is reinforced by agricultural bills from the government, and without a popular ecological movement there appears to be little pushing people to the door of the BDA at Clent. Wartime rationing only ends in July of 1954 and worrying about where the food came from was not the most prominent concern for most people. Despite this, membership of the BDA grows from around 320 in 1950 to 524 in 1959.

The engine behind communication remains the seemingly indefatigable Carl Meir. The circulars and reports he sends out often beg forgiveness for being late due to paper shortages, or trips abroad or more local administrative bottlenecks.

Having noticed that there was a successor to 'the war to end all wars,' thoughtful folk are focussed on the parts of constructive human collaboration that need urgent action. The refugees and ex-pats of Germany answer this 'social question' with their feet, seeking to live three-folding, and the Camphill communities for adults start to draw in much of the biodynamic activity for the next 60 years. Botton Village is founded in 1955 and Carl Meir is drawn there from the roles he has held for the last 27 years, handing over the BDA Secretaryship to Cynthia Chance. Whilst he tries to maintain the energy and focus on the roles of the BDA from Botton, this is not maintained with the massive new initiative now confronting him.

In the mid-fifties, about 1954/55, Bio-dynamic work, hitherto Carl's main concern and work emphasis was giving way to another. The impulse for a threefold social order as a society/ community-building element would now come to the forefront of his work, for the next seven years or so. This would remain one of the important issues of Carl's life to the end even after he added yet another later on. Dr. Karl König had been made aware of Carl Alexander's situation at Clent and called him and his wife, together with the young family of their daughter Kitty, to join a new social experiment. They became co-pioneers of the Camphill Village Movement, which began with the formation of The Camphill Village Trust Ltd. in 1954 and the work which started at Botton Village in 1955. They joined Rev. Peter Roth and his wife Kate, and others who came from Camphill Scotland, as new people not previously connected with the Camphill Community, giving birth to the by now worldwide movement of "Residential and working communities with handicapped adults". Ita Wegman had not only been concerned with the growing curative educational movement and community at Clent, she had also sent Dr. König to Scotland who had founded the Camphill Community there. At Botton Village something of both these social endeavours began to flow together. Peter Roth OBE, its founder brought the religious, sacramental and pastoral element of the Christian Community, Carl and Gertrude the Agricultural, Nutrition and care for the Earth and were united in their determination to form the new village community to be, with the aid of Rudolf Steiner's social ideas.

In the summer of 1951, as the various UK BD organisations came together, Dr Bernard Lievegoed came to the UK to [present a paper](#) that he asked the members of the Experimental Circle to study ahead of time. "The Working of the Planets and Life Processes in Man and Earth" is interesting in this context because it is a cross-fertilisation of the biodynamic work from the Anthroposophical doctors. One outcome of the understanding that a plant has only a physical and etheric body is the assumption by many students that all the phenomena of plant life must be explained by understanding the etheric formative forces⁴⁰. Lievegoed suggests that this is a half-truth and so as much a problem as a more obvious falsehood. The astral and ego *are* active but not incarnated. They are equally important players and need to be taken into consideration. If this is done well then the compost preparations, for instance, really kick in because they give us control of all the interactions between these dynamic or energetic inputs to plant life⁴¹. This publication does require intense

⁴⁰ Günther Wachsmuth's work promotes this simplification and the resulting clash with Ernst Marti as revealed in the latter's "4 Ethers" brings this disagreement into the light.

⁴¹ Dr Steiner set the ball rolling in lecture 5, for example, when describing preparation 505: "it restores order where the etheric body is working too strongly so that the astral element is prevented from reaching the organic substances. Calcium kills (damps down) the forces of the etheric body and so sets free those of the astral body. This is characteristic of all limestone. But if it is necessary for an over-powerful etheric element to be damped down and contracted in a regular way - not suddenly nor jerkily so that shocks are produced - but in a steady and orderly fashion, we should use calcium in the particular form in which it is to be found in the bark of the oak tree."

thinking but it can all be followed with a good will. Then we are really able to address the imbalances that come with every season.

That the main narrative in BD both in the UK and abroad has not adopted Dr Lievegoed's work has perhaps contributed to [the malaise discussed later](#). A form of biodynamics which has integrated this work with significant success can be [accessed here](#).

Precis Two BD associations merge with no formal connection to the Soil Association. David Clement steadies the BD ship. Camphill establishes villages, drawing in Carl Mier, within which BD develops. Star and Furrow established.

Historical context: Jasper Johns' Flag, Green Revolution commences, Cold war settles in, first Carry On movie, Clear Air Act, Albert Schweitzer gets Nobel Peace Prize, Rock Around the Clock, rationing stopped in UK, Queen Elizabeth II, Korean War, Turing test, Polio vaccine, Everest climbed, James Dean dead,

1960s

(Vivian Griffiths)



From left: George Corrin, John Soper, David Clement

Where was the UK Biodynamic Agricultural Association in the 1960s, how much influence did it have and what was happening in the wider organic movement which would affect its progress or hamper this influence?

Important questions as 60 years ago a wider context across the Atlantic was needed to see the influences of Biodynamic Practice. The concern for a different approach to soil and soul care where nutrition would come to the fore was surprisingly been highlighted by the destruction of wildlife by the spraying of DDT. Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring* book used data gathered by Dr Ehrenfried Pfeiffer and Dr Marjorie Spock (sister to the famous child doctor) on a Long Island Biodynamic Garden compulsory sprayed by DDT.

The book changed the perspective of the post war younger generation towards a sustainable land care approach even as industrial agriculture with its chemical army of weed and insect destroying capabilities grew ever stronger, a kind of dichotomy of approach emerged and an alternative agriculture emerged - perhaps the domain of an alliance of young idealists fed up with an 'artificial' society of processed everything and of a much older wise souls generation. These had endured the 'chemical triumphalism' ("..it was nitroglycerin what won the war..") of the post war years and science's march of progress even as the thalidomide scandal questioned that dominance of its meddling influence on many parts of life from agriculture to medicine.

How to relate to science, the great debate..! To illustrate this, is the establishment of Biodynamic practice in the moorland landscape of Botton Village's farms and gardens a good example? Was that a fleeing away from the mainstream, 'The White Heat of Technology ' as Harold Wilson called the

time, or a taking of sacred BD knowledge to the uplands away from the three M's - materialism, mineralization and mortgages!

It is interesting to note that the care of our rivers and the wildlife that depended on them - a theme of Rachel Carson's book - was being echoed by the Duke of Edinburgh no less with the establishment in 1960 of The World Wildlife Fund for Nature whose underlying principle with the threat of animal and bird extinctions was that you shoot them with the lens of a camera, not a gun.

The solutions to challenges come from unexpected quarters and this move to highlight the plight of animals and birds in the wild was supported by a huge cross section of western society.

The death of Dr Pfeiffer in 1962 with obituaries in mainstream press and agricultural publications brought Biodynamic Practice to the fore for a moment and his unceasing efforts to apply the BD Preparations to many growing environments from Florida orange groves to municipal compost heaps with a deep spiritual science knowledge highlighted in these publications made him well known on both sides of the Atlantic.

Two events in 1961 also helped to highlight Biodynamic Practice. The Faithful Thinker - Centenary Essays on the Work and Thought of Rudolf Steiner 1861-1925 - edited by AC Harwood was Hodder and Stoughton's contribution to highlight Steiner in the English Speaking World with a comprehensive chapter on Biodynamics by Carl Mier called 'What is a Farm?' And the establishment of Emerson College at Sunfield, Clent which was to have far reaching effects with the training of young people in Steiner principles. From Sunfield, Emerson College moved to Forest Row in Sussex in 1962 where John Davy, a respected science journalist for The Observer newspaper as principal, took the college forward with Biodynamic Courses with Doris Davy who became Editor of Star and Furrow at that time. It was John Davy who reviewed Silent Spring in The Observer in 1962 drawing much comment and reaction.

In the first years of the 1960s more Biodynamic Pioneers took leave of this world. Dereyk Duffy, (1962) the 1936 Sunfield Agricultural Centre at Clent mastermind, 1944 Westhill Farm School Principal, Aberdeenshire collaborator with Dr Hauschka and builder of Scotland's BD work.

Miss Cross (1962) from the Priory, Kings Langley Headmistress and Secretary who headed up the Biodynamic Agricultural Association from 1936, before the merger in 1950 with The AAF.

Perhaps we shouldn't forget Maye Bruce who died in 1965 and her successful but controversial QR Compost Starter whose inspiration had originally been the BD Compost Preps when she was a member of The Experimental Circle. Her breakaway to develop her own compost aid remains a challenge, even a promise breaker, which to this day has not really been resolved.

Laurence Easterbrook also died in this decade (1965) who did so much to publicise Biodynamic Practice as News Chronicle Agricultural Correspondent in the 1930s when he met Marna Pease at Bray on Thames and Karl Mier at Clent. He also went on to extol Maye Bruce's QR compost starter with which he was very impressed. He did ask the AAF as an officer for The Ministry of Information in war torn 1940 for a statement on Biodynamic Practice to counteract the volley of advice from ICI promoting their Growmore fertilizer!

Maurice Wood was one who cast his influence as a Miller of fine BD Flour even though he died in 1960, his milling stones were widely used as their action was very gentle on the grinding of biodynamic grain. And widely used was Maria Geuter's book 'Herbs in Nutrition' which brought into the modern world a new interest in the value of herbs in food based on her work at Sunfield as gardener and cook.

The address of the BDAA Office began the decade as Broome Farm, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcs (before Stourbridge's postal if not actual boundary change! To Clent!) where the BDAA office had settled from Lady Chance's Secretaryship before John Soper and his wife moved up from Hampshire

after a life of Colonial service in Africa where he became Secretary and she becomes editor of Star and Furrow after Doris Davy.

So by the mid-sixties the so called "Three Broomes" were running the BDAA, David Clement as Chair, John Soper as Secretary and George Corrin as Fieldsman based in Mid Wales - indeed one of the main expenses of the association was running his car for the many visits he made to BD farms and gardens advising and writing his book on The BD Preparations. It was he who said that the difference between a good farmer and a bad farmer was a fortnight! He set the bar high for BD Practice and was much respected in the family farms arena.

Thus Broome Farm became the unofficial centre of the Biodynamic work for the 1960s and beyond for it wasn't until the late 1970s at the invitation of Sunfield and Michael Wilson that The Goethean Science Buildings on Woodman Lane, Clent became the office site and centre of activity occupying a former laboratory and research centre at the children's home. That was in the future but the late sixties brought a new dynamic to the BD world, the first of the post war generation inspired by such books as Silent Spring were beginning to find their ways into Camphill farms and gardens for example and some of those holdings like the horticultural work at The Grange, Glos under Joachim Grundmann and Newton Dee Farm Aberdeen with Virus Wertmann were good examples.

Decades can be very arbitrary and perhaps the 1960s shows that with its different mood at the beginning and end where old and new forms of approaching land work could encourage generation gaps, yet great efforts were also being made to welcome young people into BD farming and gardening worlds especially in communities and this is noted in Prof Dan McKanon's 2018 book called Eco Alchemy where he emphasises the huge contribution the Steiner Movement has made to the environment movement through the community land approach and it all began at this late sixties time.

VG Jan 2021

References. Obituary Notes for:-

Rachel Carson - Mother Earth July 1964

Dr Ehrenfried Pfeiffer - Mother Earth April 1962

". Biodynamics Winter 1962

". Star and Furrow Spring 62

Maurice Wood of Huby Star and Furrow

Autumn 1960

Dereyk Duffy. Star and Furrow Spring 62

Miss Margaret Cross. Star and Furrow Autumn 1962

Maye Bruce Common Sense Compost Making Faber and Faber 1946

Picture of Broome Farm in 1972 S&F Autumn 1973

Picture of Broome Farm in 1962 S&F

Silent Spring Rachel Carson 1962

Herbs in Nutrition Maria Geuter BDAA 1962

Eco Alchemy Prof Dan Mc Kanon University of California Press 2018

The Faithful Thinker Ed by AC Harwood Holder and Straughton 1961

Biodynamic Preparations George Corrin 1970? BDAA

Personal reminiscences!

Precis Miss Cross, Maye Bruce, Maurice Wood & Dr Pfeiffer die. Silent Spring published with BD research. BD still centred around Clent. Emerson College established.

Historical context: England wins world cup. Cuban Missile Crisis, JFK and MLK assassinated, Sound of Music and The Jungle Book released, early internet technologies developing. Male homosexuality decriminalised, The Pill, The Beatles, Aberfan, Prague Spring, Stonewall, Gaddafi, The Troubles.

1970s

(Vivian Griffiths)

When studying the 1970s in relationship to biodynamic work, the conferences The AGMs but also what had been going on in the development of the now recognisable organic movement, one is quite struck by the enormous interest in conservation environment, agro-ecology as the 1970s began. They were heralded with two very remarkable projects, The European Conservation Year was 1970, and with the recent passing of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, his keynote conference called *The Countryside in The 1970s* which was trying to find a balance between sustainable agriculture and you could say, innovation, what the modern farmer should look like, how it should be structured, but also the rise and rise of an interest in conservation sustainability. Papers were prepared from a whole host of rural and environmental organisations and it got a mention in *The Star and Furrow* at the start of the decade.

We are in the wake following Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* in 1962 and to come back to Prince Philip, his establishment of the World Wildlife Fund back in 1960, all which provided in 1970 two streams or challenges, a real concern for environmental support on one hand and a huge and it is huge development of ever larger farms as hedges were ripped out, as new chemicals were developed, as the economics of farming, as we shall see in rather a surprising connexion to the Oxford Farming Conference, took hold during the 1970s with a constant echo from the conservationists, from the environmentalists and from countries which did not develop so strongly, a chemically based agriculture, notably in Scandinavia parts of Germany and also parts of southern Europe, where the small family farms still reigned supreme and was not going to be taken over by a modern farming conglomerate.

So where shall we begin? At the end of the 1960s, I note Rolf Gardener, who suddenly died in 1971, is still in full flow with reviewing two remarkable books at the end of the 1960s, *Our Rural Future* and *Bound to The Soil* by Barbara Kerr. Very different in their approach, but very important in relationship to how a future countryside should look and what is the place of the rural community. I make no apologies to bring the fact that Rolf Gardiner, who had reviewed these books, was deeply connected to the Biodynamic work through his compost making at Spring Head near Shaftesbury in Dorset, also his concern for a vibrant regionalism which would incorporate biodynamic farms, a kind of clarion call that points very directly in the review that Rolf Gardiner writes about the failure of the church which is meant to be sacramental and therefore caring for the earth condoned scientific experiments which kill vast amounts of God's creatures. Can this be right? He's very concerned that the Sacramento element of the land and in *The Host*, you could say that The Communion is being completely ignored by the church is to its detriment and to the failure and to the decline of the rural community.

Rolf Gardener, in his review of this book, *Our Rural Future*, which is a very Christian book, actually is deeply, deeply impressed how this author really shouts from the rooftops that it's not the rural and urban community that should be fighting each other. They, in fact, both have something quite special in their makeup, notably an interest in how the human being lives in harmony with their surroundings. This leads you could say to similarities in the rural community, especially in the outer rural and inner city forms who have much in common with a lack of services and a rural poverty sense which emerges with the huge rise of vast farms in isolation, not proper community.

In *Bound to The Soil* which is another of Rolf Gardner's Reviews he also picks up this idea of the small rural farm actually finding a place in the modern society. The book *Bound to the Soil* is about Dorset in the 19th century, and Rolf Gardiner himself had very strongly protected Dorset from the ravages of suburbanisation and urbanisation after the Second World War. It was his great achievement in a way that he kept Dorset by fierce lobbying and though conservation bodies a rural

community, into the latter half of the 20th century trying to create this self sufficient regionalism that he found in Wessex and important for the survival of family working farms which would naturally be organic or Biodynamic.

He was determined to see that Dorset or Wessex, as he would like to call it, had a regional distinctive character, a regional signature which could then attract and support an urban community coming and going to and from it refreshing themselves from the busy life of London and The Home Counties, which indeed is what happened. In his review, he picks up on this question of a rural civilisation, which the poet A.E is very strongly for. And you can see emerging the organic movement's history where it supports a cultural social and economic activity in a vibrant rural community,

References can be made to T.S. Eliot, the poet who had died by the 1960s, but he left his legacy of *The Little Gidding* poem part of The Four Quartets an evocation of a healthy community based countryside written in The Blitz where "the fire and the rose are one" and in coincidence in the 1970s a new community project around Nicolas Ferrar's 17th century little church and it's extended family community where in 1974 with Tony and Judith Hodgson and my involvement as the gardener there and a kind of clarion call is that a vibrant rural civilisation needs to exist next to and compliment the urban.

I think you might say, well, is this what is this to do with the Biodynamic world? Well, we'll see during the decade just how Biodynamics played a deeply involved part in alternative pictures of how one should live sustainably, how one should farm sustainably, how one should actually follow social justice sustainably. And this was in part due to a group of older, wise souls who had been through much being deeply touched by a group of younger people, some no more than in their early twenties who'd become very interested in land and land issues with community as its conduit. We also see in the 1970s, those who forsook *The White Heat of Technology*, as Harold Wilson the prime minister put it, and took their ideals and their actions to the hills and outer rural communities in places like Camphill at Botton Village on The North York Moors.

Meanwhile in mid Wales and West Wales where interest in the farms which had been run down since the war because nobody wanted to live in them and people had moved to the towns or the cities, a new generation with sustainable ideas like Biodynamics farming where perhaps they were safe from this so called 'white heat of technology' where one could be trapped in a mortgage, two and a half children, a science degree and an executive type of life which was foreign to those who saw the suffering land which needed to be healed. This was after all the decade of John Seymour and Self Sufficiency, the commune, occupying the former mining village to create community, the establishment of Findhorn in Northern Scotland, Bill Mollison's work on Permaculture and interest in religious communities like Taize.

A piece which comes into focus and also reviewed by Gardner's pen in The Soil Association's *Mother Earth* is a book by Dr. Aubrey Westlake, He's a figure in the organic history timeline and a doctor who believes in good nutrition, who works in the east end of London and who has a kind of rural retreat come scouting centre - Sandy Balls - but he wouldn't call it a scouts because this is The Woodcraft Folk stream and an organic and even biodynamic centre on the edge of the New Forest near Fordinbridge.

His farm and a caravan and buildings estate was set up in the 1930s and 1940s. By the beginning of the 1970s, his book comes out. It's a kind of life testament of a person who has been involved in organic farming, pioneering the Peckham Experiment with its family health and nutrition emphasis, the beginnings of The Wholefood movement growing out of the health food movement. He has been involved in quite a wide range of activities and he says Where do we go from there?

He's also mentions the terrible situation described in Rachel Carson *Silent Spring*. The answer appears to him to be towards the teachings of theosophy. He says, we need the vital fluid, the divine

water, animal magnetism that's revealed in The Life Force in Reichenbach and Cosmic Energy and The Ether mentioned Rudolf Steiner. The second answer is to follow Goethe and read The Book of Nature with the immediacy of a new perception to awaken a new organ of cognition, which leads to the development of our senses or super sensory faculties, ultimately the most important, but at present confined to a minority. In most people, these faculties are dormant and there is no awareness of them. They are developed by processes of sustained meditation and a spiritual discipline which requires work, devotion, perseverance and patience, and some withdraw from the world. Thus, Steiner's way is not the only way. And we must beware the occult as it brings with it pitfalls and perils, both physical and psychic.

Dr. Westlake, I think, is making strong a very good idea that Western and Eastern philosophies can help us as we move as we move into the 1970s. And of course, one can remember at this time a huge interest in The East as many people travel across Europe and across Asia to India.

In the Biodynamic Movement the 1970 BD Conference had the subject of Conservation with lectures around mineral, plant, animal and human, and a clarion call in this conference to, see a non-violent approach to the earth in and make that a contribution to the outcomes of the European Conservation Year of 1970 and to Prince Philip's Countryside in the 1970s Conference.

The Book of Revelation is quoted, it's interesting that in those times I know that not very long ago one could read freely quote the Bible in a quite straightforward way and not be seen to be overtly religious, but perhaps a universal Christianity existed and where the Book of Revelations has said not to Hurt not the Earth.

So in 1970, Jemmy Anderson is taking on Busses Farm in Sussex, one hundred and ten acres of silt, loam and clay. Katherine Castelliz is at Tablehurst just down the road and George Kirkcaldy is north of the border. He is very much involved in the Preparation Making. Now a fine old man, of great character, he had seen the beginnings of Biodynamics in Britain, had managed a farm in the 1930s in Aberdeenshire and converted it to Biodynamics, and moved into Aberdeen City, where in his house. The Biodynamic Preparations were made with the huge cooperation of every university student at Aberdeen, helping to pick dandelions at the right time and to make The Preparations. And his long-suffering wife, who's Aga, was always covered with preparation materials, drying!

This with a certain amusement in her life because she herself was an anthroposophist who worked with Canon Shepherd, the author of Science in the Invisible the first Steiner Biography in English and had and created some very important studies in her own right.

In 1969, a quite a special moment, John Davy had been the Science Correspondent of The Observer. His family had been born in London, but because of Michael Hall Steiner School they moved to the Sussex Kent border where he was able to go to I school at Forest Row.

Because of his journalist family connections he worked on The Observer newspaper to become the science correspondent in the 1960s. He was one of the key people to introduce Rachel Carson's Silent Spring book by a very insightful review of her book in The Observer in 1962. And he more and more was concerned about how science and the arts were completely divorcing themselves to the detriment of each other. He was concerned that science had become this monster, that the arts are a kind of restraining influence and science without the art's restraining influence becomes a sort of uncontrollable, unpleasant and unhelpful to the world, unable to help the development of civilisation, because art and science can help civilisation grow properly, sustainably in right truth and in fact, pick up that arts and crafts element of the truth, beauty and goodness, which it tried to do.

John Davey resigns in 1969 as science editor of The Observer and becomes vice principal at Emerson College, which had started some years earlier, at Sunfield, and it moved to Forest Row at Pixton House. He writes a very challenging article in Mother Earth in 1969 on the organic movement, a part of an urgently needed ecological revolution to heal the breach between arts and science. And he is fascinated by the many young people who are starting to come to Emerson College and he

appeals to them to build this arts and science link soon to be developed in Biodynamic courses at The College and he hopes that their courses at Emerson College, which are based on Steiner's teaching, but look at the world in a in the light of anthroposophy and bring people from the world and make them help them go out into the world. We can do just that. It is an environmental testament, no less, and that, in a way, complements the 1970 year. Because it is a you could say, a wonderful beginning to a decade, which brings some of the people who have been born after the war and quite young age into environmental and land awareness.

Some of those people end up on the North Yorkshire Moors in and Botton Village in 1972, including the author of this piece who arrived having left an Ordination course at Durham University to work in the gardens at Botton Village. And I remember and this is a personal moment but it's also an important moment recorded in Star and Furrow in the 1973 editions, Dr. Anthony Deavlin. He came up from Ewell Technical College in the Surrey Hills, which had developed a Biodynamic Course no less, a course for young people to work ecologically,

He would also wish to provide data and materials and tools for providing data for the proof that the Biodynamic Preparations are not only efficacious, but deeply important for the future of the soil. And this Botton Conference, which took place in two sections in 1972 autumn and 1973 spring involved, Dr Anthony Deavlin coming up from Surrey and hosting a remarkable weekend where we freely discussed the future questions of what the earth was doing, but at the same time we were going to make the preparations together as a social deed.

I think there's a lot of significance there, that the community, which included those with special needs, hosted this Preparations Making Conference where all The Preparations were made and buried and then dug up the following spring. And Dr. Anthony Deavlin's course that year, plus his scientific training, wanted to show the efficacy of these Preparations and how they performed. In fact, a BD Regional Group from Edinburgh came down who had been interested in working with The Preparations and were interested in how the Preparations, you could say, worked in marginal climates like Botton, a very windswept and quite cold aspect. And of course, The Preparations earlier were buried in rich middle European winter and summer soils.

At the same time the Anthroposophical Society and Camphill host a stand at the Mind, Body and Spirit Exhibition in London at Olympia in the mid 1970s, which was a feature of that time, a kind of spiritual market place it was said where esoteric secrets were on display like never before!

Meanwhile Richard Swann makes his first appearance as he's visiting Scandinavia and he's looking at the how in Sweden and Norway Biodynamic Produce, as it's still known, Demeter just coming in to be a wider known, is being handled the farms are 25 acres is a good example of a farm, many vegetable growing initiatives. And he's fascinated how he could perhaps translate some of these biodynamic produce initiatives. It seems to be the decade of the produce. Um, how do we get more biodynamic produce onto people's tables! How do we do it through the three-fold process, through the new interest in Whole Foods in London, in big cities like London and Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh, it is helping people understand the true nature of food that we must not move into a mineralised culture, but towards a biological culture, thus avoiding the dangerous pitfalls of the chemical farming regime.

. The whole thread through the 1970s as a younger group of people, many, as I've said in their early 20s, turned producing naturally food in small farms, market gardens and it is such a complete opposite to what is happening in the large industrial farming scene.

In this decade the rattle of the milk churn is being replaced by the tanker to the small farms. The tanker finds that the small farms are uneconomic. So the tanker moves the milk to larger farms and the small farms become beef and sheep, many people go out of dairy. This is the thread of the 1970s where the organic movement is championing the small farm and also an interest in the balance

between man and machine. This always comes up in lots of conversations, as tractor sizes increase and equipment ever larger and more expensive and it has to be said overwhelming.

Organic farms still hold on to their Massey Ferguson 35 or their grey Ferguson as a kind of good example of how to till the soil without too much horsepower all the time talking about how the machine should serve the human being in the cultivation of crops.

In the BDAA

By the 1970s, John Soper has been Treasurer and now his Secretary and George Corrin a long serving Fieldman doing sterling work with the farm advice, his little car being looked after by the Biodynamic Association and even repaired when he has a prang, which he asks for some money!

I don't know how his driving was, but living in the middle of Wales, he probably had lots of small lanes to negotiate and the Biodynamic Association's main cost actually was George Corrin's car at the time that he used as Fieldsman.

There's many biodynamic farms to advise and to also help and support the struggling biodynamic farmer who could be overwhelmed by all the needs to be a farmer, to be to do the work, to learn about Steiner's through agricultural course study.

And that brings us to John Soper's great contribution, because by the 1970s, his Agriculture Course Study Group lecture notes had become quite well known being printed in the Star and Furrow, their very human, you could say, observations of the chapters in the Agriculture Course. So, for example, he's talking about why Rudolf Steiner talking about antlers when he actually is talking about the horns of a cow needed for the preparations to be made for the 500 Horn Manure Preparation.

And from notes in Star and Furrow a little booklet, which comes out in the 1970s and is much appreciated by many as a kind of aid to The Agriculture Course. John Soper, after a colonial career comes back to England, lives in Hampshire and imports Pfeiffer's US based compost starter which is the BD Preparations plus enzymes for breaking down municipal compost. He has moved to Clent Village near Stourbridge, um, in the 1960s to The Laurels and with his wife Marjorie and she becomes editor of The Star 1970 Furrow in the late 60s carrying on the work of Doris Davy. It's interesting to see that in that this couple that their brother, that is John Soper's brother, you would never believe it if you could look is Michael Soper, and he is Secretary of the Oxford Farming Conference no less!

Those who know the Oxford Farming Conference will know that it was a kind of vessel of farming practise, modern industrial agricultural practise, it started in the 30s as a kind of speaking place for farmers, and it developed into a kind of marketplace just as the new year began in January. Huge commercial trade stands were a feature. The fertiliser companies took a keen interest with lavish dinners in the best hotels in Oxford city to show their latest fertiliser, pesticide and herbicide products.

It became a kind of key place for where British farming was developing in the post-war world with this arable/dairy division with a whole number of developments being trialled for modern farming practise. And there's John Soper's brother, and there's David Clement as a guest of John Soper as Chair of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association attending The Oxford Farming Conference as related in a mid 70s Star and Furrow. And I have to say, what an open mind he has to see this conference, the centre of industrial agriculture and to appreciate its workings for it is perhaps slightly unnerving even that even the most modern agricultural land worker with tractor and with every machine Clements notices that this person retains a dignity that the land gives, the dignity to work the land. There's something quite special there.

Even in the biodynamic work, there is interest in machinery. Two Stirring Machines have been ordered to understand the work of the how the biodynamic preparations can be stirred

mechanically and what needs to be done there and experiments to be made and how they should be done.

So that interest in man and machinery or you could say human relationships to machinery is quite strong in the 1970s. As we get to the middle of the 1970s, we have four people who I'd like to bring up who are kind of touchstones of this time, both in their work as living people and in their tributes and obituaries, there is Fritz Schumacher of *Small is Beautiful* fame and his *Guide to the Perplexed* arising from his work for the National Coal Board as an Economist. He is becoming Chair of the Soil Association and his interest in Biodynamics from his Surrey home coming over to the Biodynamic Conferences at Forest Row. In a guest editorial in *Mother Earth* by John Davy, who asks us to be interested in young people, he notes how Schumacher does just that - these young people come to him for advice through The Soil Association through his talks that he gives up and down the country as if economics mattered. He's already turned the fortunes of the Soil Association's finances around to a very grateful audience who has seen the Soil Association almost fall apart because of money worries and he's given a new lease of life to The Soil Association. But he's very interested in how young people are coming to see that land. Is important, and one of the important keys of that is to learn about The Biodynamic Preparations. He's a fierce critic of wrong science and how, like John Davy, there's a kind of stream running through the 1970s that this wrong science is becoming a monster, because art and science is being separated and making our civilisation very, very materialistic and, anti-religious that is is, as I think I've mentioned in ignoring truth, beauty and goodness elements present in both arts and science. And science makes wild, extravagant claims without properly understood working and researching artistically. It's a very interesting picture that emerges in the 70s, almost a kind of fulcrum going on. Which way are we going to go? What's going to happen if science completely takes over society and The Arts are subsumed. So that is Schumacher's great contribution.

There's also the death of Karl Mier in 1975 and that's a moment to reflect on. Mier of course, had started the Anthroposophy Agricultural Association with Daniel Dunlop when he came in the 1920s and his career in BD Secretarial stretched over for nearly 50 years. His work first as agricultural adviser to The Koberwitz Estate leads to in his study of, the working of the stars, but also are very reliable, if sometimes chaotic and sometimes quite controversial figure moving about in all sorts of places!

He's in Yorkshire and then he is at Bray on Thames. In the war he works for the BBC. He really begins the The Sunfield Agricultural Centre in 1936, and is in Wiltshire in 1946 rebuilding the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation with the Brocklebank. Then he's back in Clent again in the early fifties escoused in the stables office of Clent Cottage bringing the 2 Biodynamic Associations together. He is enamoured by the new initiative called Botten Village, where he moves with his daughter Kitty has just married Alan Henderson banker turned farmer, and they all, as it were, moved to Botton Village in the mid 50s. He goes to Newton Dee Village to be secretary there. He's a secretarial sort of person and writes a lot and ends up in 1975 in the CVT Office at Delrow Herbs where he dies, leaving his widow, Gertrude at Delrow, who's also been running a guest house at Clent Grove and in supporting the Sunfield Community and supporting his work, although she must have been worn out by all the moves that the Mier family made. He's excited with new projects and perhaps runs too fast sometimes.

We hear about David Adams. We've heard about him, actually in the 1980s but his life as a biodynamic farmer starts in Botton Farm in the early 1970s, goes on through living and working in Cole Elidyr with partner Rosanne and twins, and then via Forest Row to Stourbridge/ Clent, where he becomes BDAA secretary for a time in the mid 1980s. You can see young people's involvement then. David Adams is a very good example.

Before we leave personalities, George Trevelyan is, you could say, at the peak of his career at this mid 70s time, He's in Attingham Park, warden of an adult education college and biodynamics is

present there at the many Soil f Association Conferences during the decade, which is just outside Shrewsbury.

He carries this ideal that the the country estate in the country has have to rebuild its values away from the hunting and shooting and fishing culture which had become decadent and become and not useful and replace this with discourse and discussion of conservation through the estate and work in forestry, in market gardening and farming. And to take that estate into the future, the country house would have a new community minded role. He used Attingham Park and also established The Wrekin Trust as just such an organisation, which included, as I said, many people from the biodynamic movement, including Dr Thomas Weihs from Camphill who would come and lecture on curative education and biodynamics at some conferences and summer schools, an inspiring time of new ideas around land practice also found in articles in the late seventies in Mother Earth and Star and Furrow.

Also at this time Peter Segger, Craig Sams and Patrick Holden are, you could say, The Three Brooms of The Soil Association! . And in the future nineteen eighties we find them as leading figures in the new Soil Association that Eve Balfour ten years later kind of hands the baton to these young people, almost missing out a generation. In the 1970s, I should say, Patrick Holden has moved with his partner to Wales taking his Emerson College Biodynamic experience with him and they start in West Wales, a small community minded farm, and up the road is Peter Segger who has taken on Plas Camel farm and in doing so has established the West Wales Soil Association region. That farm uses The Preparations and Maxicrop seaweed and Maria Thun's Sowing Calendar and is an example of how this part of West Wales which had seen quite severe decline in the post-war years, which had been rejuvenated by a group of young people coming to work the farms, which were in actually very good heart, in a part of West Wales, which was actually very fertile with a mild climate and featured in a late 70s article in Star and Furrow.

Peter Segger, as it were, links the Soil Association to the Biodynamic Association, this link, which goes overground and underground through the decades, is confirmed in a very beautiful article about this farm and how it's been rejuvenated from its rather neglected post-war past and what they're doing to produce produce because they feel, along with Craig Sams, as you probably know, who starts Whole Foods in this time in the late 70s, there's this kind of rejuvenation at the end of the decade of finding ways to make biodynamic produce available.

As we've heard, finding. Social forms to do it as we can't just any more do it in the old sort of land ownership way, If you're going to produce organic biodynamic produce, it should be done in community supported agriculture settings in communities like Camphill . And it's interesting to see that biodynamic work is beginning to show itself very much in college and school environments so that The Mount and Temple Hill and Pennine are developed at this time. Oakland Cherry Orchards and the late 1970s can have this honour of the beginnings of Oaklands Park, where Cherry Orchards in the in the town working with people with mental health.

Oaklands, a rural based estate in The Forest of Dean as we've discussed before has the possibility to produce a surplus. The farm organism, um, which you can set in a community setting. So The 1970s closes with a thought in the 1977 Star and Furrow AGM Report that a new office is needed! It takes its time. And the address from Clent Stourbridge Worcestershire address, which is now in 1974 through boundary changes, become West Midlands, but actually still resides in Worcestershire and the Bromsgrove District Council.

The idea that to move the office into The Goethean Science Building is mooted in 1977 and of course, precludes the 1980s story of the eventual sale of Broome Farm. The last years of the 1970s, see the retirement of John Soper and his wife, Marjorie from doing the Star and Furrow and John from the BDAA Secretaryship. There's huge tributes to him and her And one of the tributes in the 1978 AGM comes from Doctor Innes Pierce,, she is now an elder statesman of the health and nutrition family health movement that has come from her work with her husband, Dr.Scott

Williamson at The Peckham Experiment, and she appreciates so much, John Soper's. Agriculture Course Study Book.

Also in 1978, an important conference of The Experimental Circle takes place and its minutes published. There's a new, um, you could say, uh, interest in what had been very secret before and now it becomes more widely known the outcomes of experiments which are recorded in The Experimental Circle Minutes.

John Soaper looks at an experiment himself that he's doing in his garden at Clent. He has put chopped knittle around the carrots, he's growing them without the fly and with some success! Grainge Kirkaldy is looking at the experience of the effects of the horn silica on soil, a Preparation is mostly sprayed on plants which are coming to maturity. But what happens when it touches the soil? John Soaper is also looking at coal and oil and the kind of effect on the world.

Of course, what had happened in the 1970s was a changeover from coal fired to oil fired, you could say. And what that meant in such things as the atmosphere, the old smoky coal had been replaced by a perhaps more insidious, not so recognisable oil pollution. And Alan Brockmann is looking at the different relationships that plants have with chalk and limestone.

One should say at the end of the seven 70s that there had been quite an increase in communities which looked after students. So, for example In Ireland, Duff Carrig, which it started earlier in the 70s, had been joined with Ballytobin, which was a school. But meanwhile, these communities like The Mount and The Pennine, which were colleges, had started.

The end of the 70s was marked by the new editor of Star and Furrow. Doris, Davy, The new Secretary Hugh Ffyfes Clinton, who took over, a South African who had come to live in this country and who took the secretaryship for a few years.

Emerson College Land Course with its companion in the 1970s, the Rural Development Programme at Emerson, which was beginning to see that biodynamics, could actually make quite a special addition to Communities in the what was called in the Third World compost making in Kenya was a very good example, which which went on to great success and took students from Emerson abroad to Africa to follow projects which were also enabling women to grow their own vegetables much more effectively for example through proper composting methods.

And Richard Thornton Smith writes about Man and his Environment. He's a geography lecturer at Leeds University who's become very interested in Biodynamics and we shall meet him again!

At the end of the decade Star and Furrow records with some sadness the obituary of Grainge Kirkaldy, who had been such an influence on The Preparations Making in Scotland and had worked tirelessly to make The Preparations as well as he could and to involve young people in it.

So what can we say about the 1970s in one sentence? If you look at it optimistically. You could see there's a new thread of young people's interest in the land which people like Schumacher in his lectures at the Soil Association show.

Conversations with people, with young people at universities and students show that the land has something to give this dignity that was mentioned. George Trevelyan also talking to young people at Attingham Park. And you could say that there is this interest in young people and it is touched in both. Camphil, in Emerson College, The Soil Association Regional Groups and wider and what are they going to do with their lives as land workers, as people interested in sustainability, in ecological agriculture, in new forms of land management, and how are they going to manage this work

And that, I think comes brings us to the end of the 1970s, because, of course, by the middle 1980s, those young people were beginning to take responsibilities. I think David Adams is a very good example. and the Biodynamic Association moves to some quite fundamental changes in its structure, and it's where it's going to be. But during the 1970s, Broome Farm is a biodynamic farm,

albeit with quite a succession challenge of the Clement family, and the office still continues to be on the farm.

I should just say that Richard Thornton Smith starts his BD writing at the end of the 1970s and he then goes on into the end of the century by being a key member of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association and also a. A figure who becomes an inspector for Demeter and is very helpful in its future.

Precis: The 'Three Broomes' form the BDA backbone with George Corrin as field officer spreading the word and assistance. Oaklands Park established. Lilly Kolisko dies.

Historical context: Picasso dies. Punk Rock. Waterloo, Blue, Bohemian Rhapsody and Dark Side of the Moon released. First gene transfers. Richard Nixon impeached. Fall of Saigon, decimalisation and common market, Bloody Sunday, World Population 4 Billion, Killing fields, Elvis dies (allegedly), John Paul I and II, 3 Mile Island, Thatcher, Roe vs Wade.

1980s

(Vivian Griffiths)

The Biodynamic Agricultural Association in the 1980s, Part one

The more you look at this time, it is Forty years ago now, when biodynamics had a new generation arising as practitioners, but it was still very much in the hands of an 'old guard', if that is the right word!

I was struck by the, you could say, creative tension at best and slight generation misunderstanding at worst causing missed opportunities at this late 1970s, early 1980s time.

A bit of historical context, David Clement is still in the Chair of the BDA, he is still on the family farm at Broome. Perhaps the day to day running is with his family but he is manning the BDAA Office's chair, John Soper, is Secretary and George Corrin, Fieldsman who we'll hear about in a moment, The Three Broome's who have been a strong triumvirate has just changed with the retirement of John and along with Marjorie Soper, who was Editor of Star and Furrow for a while!

So a new chapter is emerging, John, as we will discover when we talk about the 1970s, has been deeply involved in this Agriculture Course Study Group and publishing a little booklet about it, which is received with great appreciation by many and some concern by others who think people will read the booklet and not The Agriculture Course itself!

At the turn of the decade it is Hugh Fyffes Clinton, a South African who had come to Britain, is Secretary with David Clement and George Corrin is still there very much The Fieldman looking guardedly at all the new initiatives that are developing around such places as Camphill.

It is interesting to look at Star Furrow and see that some of these new initiatives are not really represented in the articles. You have to be careful, I think when one looks at the journals, because they can miss out quite a lot. And I have a feeling, for example, from my own history perspective, that Camphill is woefully under-represented in the Star and Furrow.. I'm sure people were far too busy looking after the building of their communities than to write articles, but one can see that there can be a bit of a one-sidedness in the articles and that could be a cause of concern if it wasn't for the fact that suddenly, just as you think, oh dear, we're not mentioned, we are!

There is a very informative article about Digging up The Preparations in Botton Village by Bill Thomas from the Edinburgh BD Regional Group, Hurrah!

Looking at the issues around the turn of the decade 1980 is a difficult year to start the decade because actually in 1979, there's been a very special conference.

'What is life?' is the title. It looks to the future as we shall see but it's important to look at that just to see that in 1980, people are still looking back with a certain amount of nostalgia, but also with a certain reflective nature to the past in BD literature and for example asking what was the influence in America of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer's with Biodynamics? Maybe just because he could be called a rebel in BD practice, working with municipal compost and making sure that everybody in society is aware that biodynamics has a special place in the expansion really of post war America, Pfeiffer in the 1950s is not going to stand aside and watch the enormous rise and rise of conventional growing chemical dominated practices of industrial growing in America.

He's going to be part of that. His Compost Starter stands proud. It's a very scientific worked out project of The Compost Preparations and some mycorrhiza which break down the municipal composting.

This compost starter, which is very well known in America and imported into Britain for a time by John Soper before he and his wife Marjorie come to live in the Midlands and become The BDAA Secretary in the 1970s.

Perhaps a new generation is going to look at biodynamics differently, is going to cover how for example indigenous peoples, the first nation peoples, in Africa and America and in Australia and New Zealand are actually very, very connected to biodynamic practice and need, perhaps knowledge and understanding of its practice related by Matthias Guepin as he writes about The Rural Development Programme at Emerson and at Emerson College of course, by the late 70s, early 80s which has this remarkable culture and history behind it, where young people have come to take on Anthroposophy to learn through The Foundation Year, through the education courses, and through the beginnings of a Biodynamic Training with Manfred Klett. In fact, Emerson is really consolidating itself as a college for Anthroposophy. But you can also see that Biodynamics is still Anthroposophy, that it still is a kind of a place where Anthroposophy is expressed in cultivating the land and that out of that you have very strong pictures of the revitalisation of the land is also to do with the revitalisation of the will - that actually we in the world kind duped by media, by all kinds of forces which want to reduce the element of will. Something to be then considered 40 years later..

We were very much gripped in that question. Then it was the question that Anthroposophy spractised Where properly practised Will is revitalised by the biodynamic work. And in that is a very important picture that you could say that biodynamics is anthroposophy, that you study the Agricultural Course and then the rest falls into place. But I have to say something which I think is interesting there, that for the first time there is a question of what's called context as you learnt Anthroposophy and Biodynamics. At one level it was the what, why, wherefore and place of The Agriculture Course given in beautiful sunshine as a Whitsun Celebration in 1924. On another level at the end of the 1970s into the 1980s, the Biodynamic Association is looking I to find its place, it's context as the first humus farming organisation to be established. Where does it fit in, say, for example, the organic movement? In one way The BDAA had taken the second place in the rise and rise of the organic interest in Britain after the war for example, with the Soil Association leading the way with its attendances at Agricultural Shows and Lady Eve's worldwide travels and there has been some Soul-Searching here why this was so?

We in the Biodynamic Association, noticed also how The Soil Association, faltered badly at the end of the 1970s, it was out of touch with the new generation. It was a sort of gentleman farmers club who ran organic farms.

It didn't quite touch actually the soul of the mood of the time. And it took Lady Eve to do some quite radical things towards the end of the decade, the famous AGM in York, where she skipped a generation and put Patrick Holden, Peter Segger and Craig Sams in charge of the Soil Association and you could say a total rejuvenation of the Soil Association with Patrick there, a student at Emerson College, as we know, heading up an organisation which really, we shall see, moved the organic movement from marginal to mainstream, as expressed in Philip conference history of the organic movement that we covered in later decades.

I would suggest, and quite strongly so, that organics was at a very pivotal time and it's at the beginning of the 1980s.

And people like Lawrence Woodward, which we will find in this AGM Talk that he gave in 1982, expresses it very well.

But first, let's look at what is going on!. Here in 1979 the What is Life conference at Hawkwood near Stroud is taking place.

David Clement introduced it, and its opening statement is important..

If a human being fails to discover meaning he goes on strike, he will seek annihilation. I think that's a little bit of a reflection of the struggle of the times. Remember rioting in Brixton? Remember a deep sort of dissatisfaction by young people, many, of course, who had turned their back on modern society, headed for the hills in the late nineteen seventies.

Professor Harry Ree, who was a Professor of Education at York University whose son Brian had gone to live in Botton Village and worked in the forestry before he started a bookshop. Professor Ree said, "Where are the young people who could be creating imaginative teaching places in the primary schools of inner city Britain, which are so neglected? . Where are the the people who have who look at education in a different way? They seem to have disappeared off into communes and communities and turned their back on the white heat of technology and left us without imagination in a society with a mortgage and two and a half children! This is not the way forward for a creative, imaginative society that these young people who are then labelled hippies and all sorts of negative comments applied.

In a sense, the young people could turn around and say that we've taken the model of an alternative society away from the the dustbowl industrial farming wheat lands of the southeast of England from universities which want who think that organics is weird and who think that chemical triumphalism is the only way forward, even though various kinds crisis had been occurring of shocking situations like the thalidomide scandal and Rachel Carson's Silent Spring book both of which had been very well documented by the end of the 1970's.

You could even say, because these young people weren't going to just stand accused in the hills by Harry Ree

They were going to say, we take some of the precious ideals of organics and biodynamics in particular and take them and make them into something for the future. And we can't do it in this white heat of technology. We need the space and the time to develop it away from such overheated environments. So this What is Life Conference is very, very topical and is divided into sections of expertise. John Davay, as the scientist looks at the DNA code, the DNA genetic code is just being developed and he worries about it as an anthropological scientist, it's binary, rather soulless nature. Dr. Twentyman, as the doctor,, is looking at a new consciousness in the materialism of our time and the search for that new consciousness. And George Corrin as the farmer, the practical down to earth farmer, The Fieldsman of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association, bringing the practical farmer's point of view. Interestingly enough, George has introduced Dr. Heintz and his wife, who are holidaying in England because in 1939 he had come from the Holland Pfeiffer managed Loverndale Farms to the Kent Betteshanger Summer School, a keynote conference for biodynamics at the end of the 1930s where the term organic farming can be said to have originated and he then attended the conference to a great appreciation of, the attendance.

The decade had begun!

1980

If you look at the Star and Furrow at that time, George Corrin is talking about rotation's and all the year round salad growing is being discussed as well as John Davey is reflecting on the life and the importance of Dr. Schumacher, whose Small is Beautiful book with A Guide to the Perplexed had come out and with great attention to a new form of economics, which is not based on vast corporations and huge systems, but actually carries a local responsibility to everything we do. Forty years later, it's concerns are now paramount.

We have some familiar names, too, Richard Swann is in Sweden talking about the Scandinavian Research Circle. And it's underpinned by Peter Roth who is at Botton Village and a priest of the Christian Community and who asks "Why no meditations in The Agriculture Course and goes on to express his interest in the farm individuality, connecting the Earth with the Heavens, with The Preparations and the farm individuality has been the great gift of Biodynamics and to the future, in a

sense reflecting. Shumacher and Small is Beautiful, a farm which is part of a Community Supported Agriculture project, which is providing vegetables and produce for the locality and the locality is returned in financial support and interest in that farm and its activities. There is a kind of new social, cultural and economic possibility emerging out of Biodynamics.

You could say a thread running through the Star and Furrow at the time is a new interest in how this should happen.

BD Produce and Where to Buy it?, There you have a very interesting picture of the places where biodynamic produce is available, and one should say if one draws a broad brush stroke, that Oaklands Park, which was the initiative of Joachim and Ingeborg Grundmann and people at Grainge Community in the Forest of Dean Newnham to set up a self-sufficient Camphill community which would rely totally on the produce sold and not on government subsidies and grants for the people with special needs who were part of the community. This project based on a rather large and cumbersome mansion, but with some lovely farms and garden environments but with a self-sufficient template.

Remember in the nineteen seventies, John Seymour and self-sufficiency as an ideal? Well, it took on quite a life of its own, you could say it expressed itself in a community which would look after itself, but also in doing so would produce a healthy surplus for sale. So biodynamic vegetables and produce would be available through Box schemes, through the possibilities of sharing and volunteering. And this was coming into its own, you could say, in the 1980s under Coach's care and imagination. But let us also say that it was suffering from quite some challenges because people were worried that if it was completely self-sufficient, it wouldn't be able to survive.

1982

There was a very strong BD regional group in Edinburgh and Bill Thomas likes to report on proceedings and the coming to dig up the preparations in 1982 in Botton and to look at The Preparations and their qualities. He can see there is a real social, cultural and a work culture in Botton, which he has plenty of time to for to under to to try to understand. And he's writing also in the next issue of Star and Furrow about the challenges of those Preparations, because, of course, Botton with its marginal land and cold and wet does have a certain effect on The Preparations. And so he takes some of them back to Edinburgh and they're analysed. It shows that if they'd been dug up perhaps a month later, they would have been much better..!

Well, at the same time, you see at work in Botton with the preparations Perry Court Farm is described by Alan Brockman who has now really taken on the whole farm as a biodynamic farm. And its story is quite remarkable and special. How he near Canterbury is developing very mixed farm in an area of outstanding natural beauty, challenged on all levels to develop the farm, but also with the fruit that he grew, but also as a soon to become a school on the farm.

There is Grange Kirkaldy's work, he hasn't long to live on this earth, but what he has set up in the beginning of the 1980s is a very active Preparations making group in Aberdeen, which connects to both the farms that are Biodynamic and the Williamson estate near Inch and the Camphill Schools and Newton Dee on Royal Deeside. So there's a kind of coming together of the Anthroposophical endeavour there.

I would say on Seeds is beginning to come a subject again after the seed work of Maria Geuter, which had taken had come from Broome Farm, where she set up her seed nursery in the 1960s and of which Herbs and Nutrition was the result of her work. A new addition of Herbs and Nutrition that come out in the 70s reflecting the seed work. That seed work had been taken by the Evetts family to a place called Hinstock Shrewsbury, and they continued the work. and by the 1980s, it's going to make a new jump from Shropshire up to the Black Isle. And behind that is the whole question of seeds and the importance of Biodynamic Seeds, especially after Maria Thun of Sowing Calendar

fame has indicated that if you buy in seeds conventionally, the efficacy of those seeds is not particularly strong and will not particularly respond to the sowing calendar indications.

It is lovely to see the Reverend Donald Perkins, for example, a priest in the Christian Community who is in Boston with Peter Roth speak about Graces. There are some wonderful graces in the article like

"The light has formed the Food for Earth, for example, and are printed in this very beautiful article about Gracies and connecting, of course, to the Celtic Christian stream.

1983

So continuing The Rhythms of Nature in the conference theme for 1983 at Hawkwood. These three conferences in the 1980s seemed to be very touchstones of of that time.

Before we move on, there is the obituary in that time of Doris Davy, who carried the Star and Furrow in its infancy. In fact, she was involved in the naming of the journal The Star and the Furrow - the Earth and the Cosmos from 1953 when it had first come out. And she, as a partner of John Davy, who is principal of Emerson College, had taken this journal to become the respected journal it was amongst BDAA membership so her obituary was an enormous appreciation for her work. So I think it's fair to say that by the time we reach nineteen eighty four and a new secretary. And then a new chapter for Biodynamics from the office at Clent with the whole question around the sale of Broome Farm and how much it influenced it or not, the Biodynamic Association, and we'll come to that.

In the second part, it's worth reflecting this question that biodynamics was beginning to find its context.

It starts with the Agriculture Course itself.

Why was it given, where was it given, who was there? What was the influence of the biodynamic agriculture course lectures on the people who were there? What was the weather like? Was the food any good? You know, you suddenly a kind of a pent up need to find the context almost burst over the literature of the time like a tsunami. And this is the time, I think, when that is beginning to show itself that in no way in opposition to the study of the words, the deep and important and rigorous study of The Agriculture Course.

And it shows that there were up and down the country Agriculture Corps Study Groups going on as a continuum through this time. I think I know that some people who studied the agricultural course did deeply go through one by one, they the sentences which Rudolf Steiner gave on this Whitsun time of 1924 at Kobervitz and each of them carries, of course, deep significance.

I think it's fair to say that a new generation wanted a little bit more of the context. I mean, after all, this is the first humous farming. Conference, you could say, and it carries with it enormous significance and enormous weight in the fact that it is stands at the birth of what we now know is the organic movement and how that biodynamic conference needs to be brought to the wider community and how, to a certain extent it hadn't been. The reasons why were in a way reflected on we've moved a little bit out of our I would be not fair to say a comfort zone, but into the world where biodynamics was hardly known. Regarded as weird and wonderful and and magic and was in danger of being lost and the middle of the 1980s there is this context rebirth, you could say, of the organic movement of a new wish to put biodynamics at the fore of this organic movement symbolised in Patrick Holden, who becomes very involved in the Soil Association, who has been at Emerson College.

So we're going to go into two parts in this and this 1980s, just because in a way, they do have different emphases. And we'll start part two in a moment. Before I finish the first part of the 1980s decade, I'd like to cover in detail, really a keynote speech by Lawrence Woodward of the Elm Farm

Research Centre, given that the Biodynamic Agricultural Association AGM in 1982. Lawrence Woodward is a remarkable figure. He is an impatient young man, a miners son from Yorkshire who married the daughter of the Lord Astor family, who were very encouraging that the Haughley Experiment should continue.

In fact, much of the material, the material used at Haughley, the laboratory material went to Elm Farm Research Station, which was situated on the south side of Newbury on a 200 acre farm not far from the Greenham Common Women's Camp which was happening at the same time. And the Research Centre really had the kind of task to make by ORGANIC'S and with it biodynamics, a respectable and viable alternative for agricultural practise.

It did not like the kind of hippy alternative tag that organics were given. And Lawrence Woodward, and this is, to his great credit, reached out over the organic movement to the biodynamic movement, saying that you are very much part of this renewal of agriculture, which was beginning to really, I think, find traction in the early 1980s on a number of levels which we've been discussing, that biodynamics suddenly found itself out in the world and being examined and commented upon even criticised, but at the same time deeply admired.

And so Lawrence Woodward's talk at the AGM was actually deeply appreciated. He spoke about the research needs of biological agriculture in Great Britain, which was the report that he had produced at Elm Farm. You see, he was interesting, he wasn't really wanting to call it organic, he wanted to call it biological, and he wanted to support the organic farmer. And he was looking around the world to see what was going on. And he saw in United States a huge amount of interest in organics as also in West Germany, of course, where Steiner's work is known and the continuing development of organics in in the Newcastle University Agricultural Department for example, whereas a chair had been established for organic agriculture.

He points out that produce using organic methods in the rest of Europe, seem to be and undoubtedly were much more successful than we in Britain. In fact, that is, I'm sure, appreciated by biodynamic farmers as they figure prominently amongst the ranks of the most successful. Yet small beginnings were being made in Britain around 1980, some of which are now developing, and one or two may well produce a happy ending. Looking at the situation two years on from that 1980 first report, I can present a different summary to the one of disillusionment, demoralisation and decline that would in truth have had to be presented two years earlier.

So you can see there's a huge interest. He's very interested, for example, in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, which is published a report on organic farming at the beginning of the 1980s. He is aware also of the new Organic Farmers and Growers Project, which has come, let's face it, out of a certain frustration with the Soil Association symbol use. And of course, and he then follows with a quite a detailed description of the new Organic Farmers and Growers Group whose founding group included David Clements..An important picture is emerging there. Effectively, he said that Organic Farmers and Growers is essentially a marketing group buying and selling organic produce. Although its mainstay is cereals, it handles approximately 85 percent of all cereals that are sold as organic in Britain. Essentially, this is the operation of organic production standards. The first grade is organic and the second is a kind of conventional but with relatively harmless agrichemicals of use. But he's really quite impatient about this. The Organic Farmers and Growers is the first group from the organic movement in Britain to make any significant impression on the conventional agricultural community. he goes on to say that a number of hitherto conventional farmers coming from a traditional farming background who could not by any stretch of the imagination, be labelled mystical or hippie became interested in the possibility of growing crops organically. Most of these turned to Organic Farmers and Growers for help.

It's a very detailed report. He looks at questions about nitrogen and the problem of Chilean nitrate, you know, guano, which is produced and can be put on the whole question of organic

fertilisers. And he says, for me, the vital problem of the organic movement in Britain is to change this new conventional approach of its farmers to a truly biological one.

Here is a very, very important picture here, away from the mineralisation and into the biological the mineralisation, which, you know, is the chemical farming approach with its philosophical root. The approach to agriculture that seeks to work harmoniously with natural cycles is a prerequisite for the natural approach farmer. This is why I'm extremely encouraged that the biodynamic movement in Britain is now beginning to make a more active part in the wider organic movement by playing a full role in Organic Farmers and Growers self-help group composed of farmers of all types.

A true cross-section of the biodynamic movement can help educate the British organic farmer and bring about a widespread change to truly a biological approach to agriculture in this country. It's interesting, he looks at British consumers at the early 80s and he sees that Britain is a bit behind and actually quite a lot behind the rest of Europe. Holland has a strong market and very high premiums are paid for organic produce. However, there's an undoubtedly increasing awareness of the potential hazards of conventional produce in Britain highlighted in recent reports in the media about nitrates in food are just one example of this growing concern. The organic movement will benefit from this concern if we first draw the public's attention to the value of organic produce. . He wonders if we remembered The Farm and Food Society, a small, extremely active group of people. It's not a charity because its members are politically active. It represents. Its main concern has been the opposition to factory farming methods, particularly battery, egg production and generally very concerned for animal welfare. It is by far the most politically effective group associated with the organic movement. Its members closely monitor the press, publish an excellent newsletter and make excellent representations to the various parliamentary committees.

Here then goes Lawrence Woodward with rather a downbeat assessment of the Soil Association!

But. He also shows that there's much more organic produce exported to Britain than grown here.

I'm supporting this in a new attempt to recognise organic farming. He reflects on research for the experiment he says, originally set up by Lady Eve Balfour and finally by the JPye Research Centre, terminated in 1981.

Dr. Victor Stuart of the Soil Science Unit at the University of College, Aberystwyth and Gareth Rolands, a Welsh organic dairy farmer, have been working with the National Coal Board on behalf of the Soil Association on the reclamation by organic methods of an Open Cast Mine site. The team of monitoring the development of soil structure and earthworm populations on the farm. He outlines what they're doing, the the conversion of our two hundred and thirty two acre farm from intensive chemicals, the manure management, green manures and weed control.

We are at Elm Farm adapting British conditions, to a soil analysis service specifically developed in West Germany for organic farmers, 12 farmers, including one biodynamic farm, are involved with this in this work and advisory services to developed along this side and we hope to have a fully operational analysis and advisory service within a year, which did actually happen and was a major influence on bringing organic farms to proper organic activity away from conventional neo conventional approaches, like you mentioned.

In fact, this report at this AGM is a kind of tour de force, really, of how biodynamic farming could help the organic world. And in a sense, of course, has this interesting challenge that it drags the biodynamic world kicking and screaming, you could say into the more wider organic movement.. We have seen in the decades how it managed that. He also goes on to show that the Elm Farm Research Station research used homeopathic veterinary methods and have virtually stopped the use of standard antibiotics in our dairy herd, effectively investigating the possibility of controlling a controlled trial in cooperation with Kessel University's.

So what excitement, I think it was quite special, this AGM talk by Lawrence Woodward, he was a kind of marking point of biodynamics and organic's in the 1980s. And he says that in this text, which is taken from his talk, I'm extremely happy about the increasing involvement of biodynamic practitioners in the wider organic movement. Earlier, I indicated that one of the major problems of organic agriculture in Britain is the new conventional dominance approach rather than a truly harmonious, holistic one.

Then that approach is essential to biodynamic agriculture, of course, and for me explains much of the success of biological agriculture has had in Europe, where the underlying philosophies of Steiner are more widely known and understood. In conclusion, there are clear signs that the organic movement in Britain is pulling itself together. There is still major problems on the farm, still a crippling need for research and development, still a lack of knowledge and confidence. But things are looking up.

We are at the beginning to take ourselves seriously and forcing others to be serious about us. We no longer easy targets for anybody, and he mentions how the press have reduced the muck and magic hippie sort of conversations about organics. And I'm fully confident that at last we are united enough to move forward and present our case to the world with some expectation of success.

1985

Barbara Saunders Davis attends attends Goetheanum Ccnference, you realise that there is an important moment maybe it's also frustrated because is. She does know German. So she's all right. But the biodynamic conferences in February of each year are in the German language at that time, are by invitation only. They do bring a huge number of people from all parts of the world to Dornach but can be frustrating for English speaking especially if they don't know German, even though the topics are remarkable and wonderful - a tour de force. For example, you can hear talking about how New Zealand is finding biodynamics important, very important. Is, is and and there are various contributions in the in the conference from Holland, from Germany and from Maria Thun herself looking at the effects of The Preparation's on plants so it and that that every plant has its own planetary constellation.

End of Part One!

The 1980s. Part 2

Three major events dominated the end of the 1980s. Farm Sales, New Council Appointments and The Development Groups. And it could be said that it has flavoured the whole Biodynamic Association since.

The first was the fact that a new generation of staff came about when David Adams was appointed Secretary of The BDAA in nineteen eighty four. The job came with the little cottage that was built for Maria, Geuter when she did her work with herbs and seeds from Broome Farm and David's work was to help on the farm, but also be The Secretary of the Biodynamic Association.

It was a brave move and brought the new generation of BD practioners into the staff of the Biodynamic Agriculture Association, David and his then wife Rosanne lived on the farm, having come from Camphill in Wales, Botton Village and from Tablehurst Farm Sussex. He had to work with Fieldsman George Corrin and to take up the reins from Hugh Ffyfes Clinton who had retired.

Still a very important part of the Biodynamic Association was David Clement who as Chair worked at the Broome Office and needed help in the large amount of correspondence that was building up with the Biodynamic Agricultural Association .

Now, how does one be a secretary and how does one respond to an enquiry? And how does one join the wider picture of the Biodynamic Association's work at Clent and Broome? I think it's fair to say that in the mid 1980s, the work at Sunfield continued although now 'in retirement' as an anthroposophical community - maybe with a glorious chapter of activity to its name. Yet the support of the work of The Biodynamic Association with an Agricultural Course Study Group and the life of Elmfield School over two or three miles away in Stourbridge with the Christian Community and Anthroposophical Society was a feature.

The Broome Farm owned by the Clement family - we shall come to that situation in a moment - but first to say that David Adams had to navigate quite a lot of new and old situations, I guess, which is which is the best way to put it.

So if, for example, many heard about Biodynamics on a radio or in a journal, a natural reaction would be to write a letter and ask for more details about Biodynamics. David responded. Sometimes if you judge this enquiry to be someone who really would benefit, he would enclose past copies of Star and Furrow and an explanation and try as best he could to support this membership enquiry because it could be very quickly become a membership subscription for The BDAA!

George Corrin found this a very challenging way of doing things, and I think you have to reflect on the fact that the Biodynamic Association was just coming out of a confidentiality clause for all Biodynamic material. You had to write to the Biodynamic Association, but you also had to show much more than just a passing enquiry or connexion, maybe to your own specific Anthroposophical Society membership or some kind of farming experience.

Into this scenario came Michael Wilson at Sunfield who was also there with a real passion to bring in young people interested in Steiner's work...

It is certainly a tall order to be Secretary as David remembers from his home now in Vancouver Island in Canada.. Membership, Conference organising, Enquiries. Much work and high expectations!

Into this challenge is the family farm scenario where offspring individuals not taking on BD farms in some cases from their parents. However young people were also wanting to take on land for Biodynamic production - there was a whole new generation taking on farms and gardens in communities like Camphill.

Well, to help, that's a job for The Fieldsman and when the father and son or daughter of a family if they existed wanted to inherit he tried to give a lot of support.

It is extremely challenging however and more openness and more willingness to hear a new generation was needed as well as an interest in the young people in Camphill situations as well. Anyway, George Corrin it has to be said was not well prepared for this connect between family farm BD inheritance and community farm take. The old bonds had begun to break and he resigned from the BDAA very unhappy with the way things were going. Moreover Corrin refuses to allow any of the enormous tributes which were paid in written form and sent to the Star and Furrow Editor to be printed. It was a distressing moment something is not quite right if the generations couldn't quite find contact. It is also a fact that the Biodynamic Association was going to have to change its approaches to a new interest in organic practice but first of all we have to deal with the future of Broome Farm

An understanding of where this farm has a special history over the decades - The Sunfield Agriculture Centre working with Carl Mier, Dr. Hauschka, and Dereyk Duffy in the 1930s, Maria Geuter's Herbs in Nutrition book and the Seeds in the 1950s ! David Clement's Chair in the 1960s

and the familiar address of the BDAA - Broome Farm, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcestershire - before postal address changes! It is a cultural centre for Biodynamics!

And David Clement, as we have recorded, took on the farm with his family and promised the Worcester War AG Committee that he would carry the farm forward through in the war years and make it productive naturally because the committee had looked at Broome Farm with grave concern, thinking that they should take the farm away from its owner. Fast Forward to nineteen eighty seven, and the Clement family not so much David wanted to sell the farm.

The Broome Farm Sale 1987

What a dream to come true, a BD Demonstration Farm! The office of the Agricultural Association could be situated on the farm and would be run as a demonstration farm with research on the BD Preparations applications And a kind of Biodynamic cultural centre could be developed maybe with accommodation and a cafe. Stourbridge nearby always had this, you could say a kind of affinity to the land, especially those who had Biodynamic interests and could go out to the countryside from the town.

They made quite a special connexion to this place. Well there was some fascinating work done in a few short months in 1987y. A group of people who would raise money for the sale from private individuals, Camphill and more.

But it was also noted that the farm provided a wonderful setting for and maybe in future things could be developed, maybe some kind of social community. There was an interest from the Camphill Houses Community in Stourbridge who could establish the household at the farmhouse and promises of financial support came thick and fast.

A certain picture emerged when David Adams offered to take on the farm if it was bought by a conglomeration of the Biodynamic Association private individuals and the Camphill. Village Trust. Hopes were high and a businessman parent from Elmfield School took charge of the bidding at a Kidderminster Auction House.

It would be very high price for this farm because of the interest from the wealthy Birmingham business community. In the end it was a close call to the near £540000. And so to the controversy, because it is not it was noted by one or two people that a close agreement with some strong family views on value who needed the maximum value and maybe not a full agreement on demonstration farms and Bd cultural centres which would have to be maintained to a very high level and just maybe one or two who felt this farm would not br up to the task with its light soils and a BDAA not able to field the task.

It was als too expensive. Did the charity idea push the value too high so the eventual vendor and his family were presented with a home over valued strongly so a certain resentment set in.

It was a defining moment when eventually this family business man has been successful in purchasing Broome Farm. A remembrance of the supper in the evening of the auction at Broome Farm saw despondency, but also the question of why did the BD Association not want to go the extra mile in the bidding? Why was this BD Farm given away? Lots of questions and perhaps some behind the scenes deals to save the BDAA from having to run this farm.

Yet there is a huge amount of disappointment. I remember people 10 years or more afterwards still mourning the fact that they couldn't meditate on biodynamic land next to Stourbridge. Broome Farm had gone.

I think the sadness that the farm had gone the way it had was offset to a certain extent by the many good things that came from the failed sale not the least that unused monies should go to to

the Biodynamic Association - in many cases they should keep the money because it needs to develop perhaps some kind of centre in the future.

Now, this presented a very important opportunity and, soon after the sale under Pat McManamon's guidance staff were assigned to create, a group of people to take on what was called. The Biodynamic Development Fund. And in this fund, there was the representative for The Regional Development Fund, the idea that there should be regional centres of that, not one in the middle of the country.

This is headed up by Richard Thornton Smith and,, get back to the to work, because while all this was going on resignations and quite some distress amongst the membership over The Fieldsman and related issues leading to a letter from John Soper in Star and Furrow asking for a thoughtful pause no haste in resignation and a welcome to a new chapter. George Corrin had retired was replaced by Jimmy Anderson which would lead to The Demeter Standards Office in Edinburgh.

This prompted a wonderful description of Demeter activity from Jimmy called, From The Dart to The Dee! Some people are aware that this is an extended Tees Exe Line, which divides western and eastern Britain with a line that divides Roman and Celtic Britain but. Jimmy Anderson took it to new lengths when he touring the country in the 1980s and demonstrating Preparation Stirring complete with electric powered Stirring Machine towed on the back of his car. The new Fieldsman as he had become had found his role.

This was the way forward

Competing the picture of BD regional development and Demeter was Research. Heading up this project around Emerson College was Manfred Klett and which led to a group of English speaking Biodynamic Conferences we shall cover towards the end of this narrative..

At Emerson College, there was research being carried out and and with the connexion to the Experimental Circle with Alan Brockman .. And just down the road at Tablehurst Farm is our involvement in the last heading for The Development Group which is Training.. Pat McManamon is explaining the importance of training, Biodynamic Training on farm, on market garden, but also as a way we can to build the beginnings of what was to become The Severn Valley BD Training, but also on farms where people can have a proper training environment, where work and understand a bit of the practise and knowledge behind Biodynamic Practice. The Emerson College BD training Course begins at this time.

This brings us to the end of the nineteen eighties, but not before, it's interesting to note, the Star and Furrow issue of Winter, 1988 where you see The new Council Members listed.. A new Chair and Secretary and out of the sale of Broome Farm, a new address..!

The office is moved from the farm down the road to the small Goethean Science building which was at the Home Farm in the Sunfield Children's Home. And that's the address from the late 1980s with a new secretary Ann Parsons (daughter of David Clements) and a new Chair Joachim Grundmann from Camphill at Oaklands Park. David Clements had been Chair for nearly 40 years .it was and is quite an achievement.

These English-Speaking Conferences for those concerned with Biodynamic Agriculture continue to took place in January despite all the changes at the BDAA. The theme in Nineteen eighty nine is Growing Together. Why should we bother? What motivates the BD farmer? Why buy biodynamic food when it's so expensive? What is the relationship between the farm and its surrounding community? How is it possible for farmers and growers to come together to become responsible for the land? These questions arise from an increasing awareness of the alienation of many of us from the land and from those who grow our food. And we should address these issues at our New Year's

meeting. These conferences had been since 1987 and were a reflection very much on college of the of the work on research, education and , training, that was, around Emerson College work.

And the conference will include talks given by Professor Koepf co-founder of the School of Biodynamic Agriculture and Emerson College, and Dr. Manfred Klett There were discussions and biography, sharing workshops and social artistic activities such as singing and folk dancing. And one of three books for which you should read in preparation was Anthroposophy and The Social Question, three essays by Rudolf Steiner.

At the end of the 1980s Decade

John Soper writes in Star and Furrow about the so called 'Three Broomes' (Clement Soper and Corrin) and their great influence on Biodynamics steering its work over several decades as a kind of reflective tribute after all the upheavals.

Pat McManamon now Thompson is moving from Emerson to Oaklands Park, she has done huge amounts of work organising the Emison Conferences and working with the Training projects which we will see expand into the severn Valley Training.

A new secretary was joining, Mary Anne Parsons. Now we know as one of the daughters of David Klement and her wish to be involved in biodynamics is a kind of wish fulfilment at this time.

BDAA Council Members in 1989

It's interesting to look at the council members. There's Jemmy Anderson, the Fieldsperson living in Edinburgh with Pauline, both of them heading up the work at the new Demeter Office with Fiona there as the new Secretary.. Catherine Kastelitz has gone to live in West Wales around the Plans Dwbyl Farm . And Richard Evans, is a Council Member from Forest Row. Olga Holbeck is Editor of Star, and Furrow is on the Council from her home in Cambridge and Bernard Jarman, who is living near Stroud and who is developing the work with The Preparations and who is to become Chair of Council and Director in the next 10 to 15 years, is also on the council.

And Nic is from County Wexford, heading up the representative in Ireland, and is also an ex officio as principal Department of Agriculture, Emerson College. Anthony Matthews at Terethyn - he and his partner has worked in Cole Elidyr and has taken on a farm on the south west Wales coast, not far from Swansea. . And another Welsh setting. Barbara Saunders Davis found. Michael Schmundt has also farmed in Botton and then comes down to Ringwood and develops the Sturts Farm Camphill near Wimborne.

Richard Smith from Devon and Julian Paiser from West Sussex, Graham Sheppard from Taunton, Michael Newton up in West Lothian Tyl Van der Voort at Oaklands Park, make up the council of The Biodynamic Agricultural Association at the end of the 1980s and into the last decade of the 20th century.

I think it's been a testing and struggling time as a new generation takes on responsibility and a new chapter in Biodynamics has begun. The Regional Groups, The Trainings, the Demeter Standards, they all show a bright future if managed well..

And that brings us really to a thoughtful, cautious conclusion to a decade, which has seen a lot of changes and a handing of the baton from an older generation to a younger one.

Precis: Broome Farm is sold. IBIG conferences established. Coleg Elydir and Ruskin Mill begin. George Corrin leaves abruptly. Jimmy and Pauline Anderson become fieldsmen.

Historical context: Chernobyl melts, Challenger explodes, and Berlin Wall falls, Lennon and Marvin Gaye killed. Thriller and Midnight's Children. Falklands War, AIDS, Star Wars and Pac Man, Live Aid, Windows 1.0, Glasnost and Perestroika, Channel Tunnel, Exxon Valdez, Rubik's cube, Tiananmen Square.

1990's

(Vivian Griffiths)

The Biodynamic Agricultural Association activities in the 1990s is a decade we are still influenced.

It started its administration in the office in Clent with Anne Parsons as secretary and ended up with a new office in Stroud with Bernard Jamon as chair and becoming director of The BD Council and in between some very radical and also quite interesting and important developments took place.

There was the wilderness years when there wasn't an office. And I would say there was a strange moment of 'what if' when promising young people and I shall name names Hamish Macay and Charlie Wallop who were commanding quite influential positions in The Association in the middle of the decade, said their farewells and left the Biodynamic Association to face the new century with a new group of people and a new emphasis of activity.

After a decade, the 1980s where the BDAA had tried to find a way to have a BD showcase farm, demonstration area, office, cafe, all sorts of things that you could bring together at Broome which didn't come about there was a kind of consolidation but not without other sites to debate the wisdom of this idea notably Kolisko Farm between Stroud and Gloucester.

So welcome to the 1990s and to a new decade, in a way still reflecting on the whole question of why Broome Farm was sold to someone else three years before at an auction room in Kidderminster. Broome Farm, Clent Starbridge had been sold to a Birmingham businessman and the repercussions were still reverberating. The Herculean effort to buy Broome Farm to be the demonstration farm where the office would be had just fallen short. And there were strange noises off about that situation which we will discuss in when we cover the 1980s.

On the 1st of January 1990, the Biodynamics Association didn't have, a demonstration farm, and it was still trying to understand why, because one of the results of that was a huge amount of promised monies which would have been used to for the purchase of the farm, but were never needed, but left as promises and were to be very helpful for The Association.

The IBIG Conferences.

This set of conferences which looked at silica, calcium and clay underpinned the biodynamic work in this decade and these conferences which took place in both Sussex and Gloucestershire at Hawkwood and Emerson, certainly provided spiritual and practical nourishment for the work.

It was also golden decade in many ways for some of the Camphills - Oaklands Park being one where Tyll had taken over from Joachim Grundman (now at Larchfield Community by invitation of Middlesbrough Council) Tyll was developing the BD farm and garden training with colleagues and a new horticultural building was opened by Aonghus Gordon, a fine design reflecting the community supported agriculture element of the work with box schemes.

Because this was the year, the decade when the Severn Valley Training started to come into its own biodynamic training both for apprentices in Camphill Communities and related organisations..

This was the decade when Ruskin Mill, with its work in Naillsworth, took shape with the restoration of the mill in The Horsely Valley.

This is also the decade of some new personalities who are still present in the Biodynamic Association of Today, notably Ian Bailey, who was Treasurer by the end of the 90s, and Richard

Swan, who took over the editorship of Star and Furrow at the end of the decade, from Pat Thomson, Pat McManaman, who had carried it through the decade before.

So what can one say about the 1990s as a decade of, of change and of development?

I would be also fair to say that the famous - or should that be infamous - baby boomers had come of age by the 1990s and were taking responsibilities, whereas before their contribution had been tentative, as we shall discover when we look at the 1980s and the Biodynamic Association.

1991

If we look at a Star and Furrow journal at the beginning of the decade, we find Anthony Kaye representing BD in Ireland, the Iona Steiner School in Nottingham, with a land school initiative. There is The Life Science Seminar; Richard Smith on developing community farming. And John Twine in an article about how BD food can take up food nourishment in the right way, a challenge and question how human beings absorb nourishment of biodynamic grown vegetable, fruit or dairy product. This important element of nutrition that is underlies so much of biodynamic practise.

If we look at a Star and Furrow the following year in 1992, you can see some also threads developing out of good nutrition. Wendy Cook, she is, of course, if you know, the widow of Peter Cook, of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore fame and she is in her own right, a very competent and knowledgeable cook in this whole question of nutrition.

Also look at titles in The Star and Furrow, The Social Sheaths of Agriculture by you are Joachim Grundmann the Chair of Council at the time and living in Larchfield Community, Middlesborough, an industrial town, had very little in the way of organic agriculture around it. So Larchfeld, which was an initiative of the Campill Village Trust in Middlesborough Council, was very welcome.

An Organic garden in Devon is featured and a moment to pause for the Obituary of Michael Newton, who had done so much in Scotland, the supply of BD food from a market garden in the middle of a very new town area on the rather windswept outskirts of of Edinburgh, and his enormous dedication to the farm, to his family, to the local Edinburgh, growing initiatives where he would supply vegetable boxes and vegetables to the retail outlets was an enormous and I would say huge contribution to the Scottish biodynamic story, of which we're going to meet a little bit more as well in this time.

Barbara Saunders, Davis, a wise and respected lady who had moved to a farm in Wales near her ancestral home has an article about silica strongly present in West Wales.

A person we're going to meet more in the future is Chris Stockdale and his farm at Cherrywood Farm in Herefordshire is described in a very special Farm Profile. These farm profiles are a feature of Star and Furrow at the time. And Chris Stockdale's work as a farmer and also a social worker is very well portrayed in the in the magazine. I see a mention of community supported agriculture, this had come into focus in the 1990s, Targa Grauhh in America wanted to see community supported agriculture established in the English speaking world because there were some very successful Community Supported Agriculture farms in north Germany to the north of Hamburg.

So. When we move towards the middle of the decade, we do find a moment to pause with an appreciation of George Corrin., David Clement, who had retired from Broome Farm when it was sold and it lived in the Laburnum Cottage there wrote about George Corrin and his enormous contribution as the first Fieldman. Meanwhile his influence is put in an article called An Appreciation of Truth in Agriculture.

Alan Brockman, we should also very much look to at this time, he is to become soon Chair of the Biodynamic Association and his work at Perry Court Farm, Canterbury, which by then had this school, The Rudolf Steiner School, on its premises in a remarkable and very generous move, but also to show how a school and a farm can work together.

Alan Brockman is talking about the different methods of stirring, and I know at that time the whole question of how to stir mechanically was exercising a number of biodynamic minds, how it should do it properly, how one should keep electric motor and the stirred substance apart. After some very interesting experiments with the electric motors, the reversible electric motors, which could stir the things, should not be anywhere near the steering action because of the negative forces the electric motor had on the liquid substance, on the water and the Preparations. And at that time, there were quite a few people who had tried to find mechanical stirring ways for all sorts of reasons, many very large areas to cover. Of course, in Australia it was known that Podolinski is work with spraying with helicopters or with light aircraft. Some of the biodynamic fields was, in a sense reflected in Europe in looking at mechanical stirrings and how they could be done. But behind it, of course, was the question of real stirring, as it were. Consciousness perhaps only be done in enhanced sharing with one's own arm!

1995

In 1995, we found a new chair, Bernard Jarmon, Bernard and Karen Jarmon had been in Boston Village in the 1980s and came to work in Gloucestershire in the mid 1980s, for instance, for Kolisko Farm and for Ruskin Mill, and developed his very fine work with the Preparations almost a kind of special quality which showed the preparations in the light the practical mystic, the the way the preparations could be done in the sphere of a guild craft and part of a whole range of crafts that humans train in for to make a better world in the beauty of the product and their own development.

Why is it that some people didn't come into long-term serving of the BD? Off to Australia was Charlie Wallop, who was Chair for a moment, and Hamish Mackay , who was treasurer for a short while. The 'What if' scenario becomes very strong mostly because they showed such promise as both good administrators and carrying the substance of BD Practice, something which can be in one and not the other.

One should also not forget that Tyll himself had been Chair for a short while as well, preferring to develop the work at Oaklands Park which he was carrying huge responsibility with the Severn Valley Training and the life of a rural based land-based Camphill Adult Village community at Oaklands Park.

Into the Star and Furrow in 1995, the Farm Profile looks at Tablehurst Farm and Manfred Klett, who is heading up the natural science section work at Emerson College. We should not forget the importance of the Emerson College land training, which comes into focus at the beginning of the decade, is is mentioned with great interest because. Manfred Klett, as we are going to find out in the IBIG Conference takes a leading role in a remarkable group of people who carry biodynamics in the last decade of the 20th century.

So how do we look at a letter that is written by Katherine Castelliz, she is worried about the translation in the new American edition of The Agriculture Course. The Preparations could be interpreted in a rather materialistic way she finds in this new translation.

The English edition, which had come out in 1958 to general public use (before you had to get a signed copy and there was a certain confidentiality and guarding its truths in that English edition) which could be traced back to the 1930 Agricultural Course translation. This is the translation where George Adams had been working on the text at Huby at Sleights Farm in Yorkshire, where Maurice Wood would look at his efforts that he did in the morning after coming in from the farm work and having a very pleasant lunch together with Mrs Wood!

He would then you could say change the wording to suit a practical but spiritually minded farmer. And many people found a special relationship to that, even if you could say that the language sometimes veered away from the original German translation. Catherine Kasterlitz - she found this American tradition a bit too materialistic in its interpretation of how the Preparations were not quite understanding the elemental forces at work.

In Germany at this time, the Biodynamic Seed Work had been centred around the little town of Bingenheim where a community with people with special needs who did the sorting of the seeds so well and so conscientiously that actually some of these ideas were coming to fruition at Botton Village in windswept North Yorkshire where Stormy Hall Seed's was establishing itself. This is the work of Hans Steenbergen, who had taken on Stormy Hall at the end of the 1980s when it had been purchased from a local farmer who retired to complete the Botton Hall Estate.

Stormy Hall Seeds grew out of this initiative. And again, the people with special needs were brilliant, along with the young co-workers who came to join the seed sorting, seed cleaning, making sure that all the seeds were rightly packaged and sent off by the post at the time.

1997

The age-old question about human waste on the land was a Conference subject at this time and how that was and how difficult that was for some to accept and how, of course, the whole question of human manure when Rudolf Steiner said that human manure is best put in woodland environment. So the trees take up the substance and not the and not the edible plants, which interferes with the ego of those who actually eat those plants.

Into that and a related subject, but actually a very important subject was community composting, which was nothing really to do with human manure, of course, but composting as such, the very important aspect of taking vegetable waste from a group of households to make compost and either make it available to them or be part of a community supported agriculture. In particular was the very special article by Rebekah Hoyland on the Dean Community Compost Project, and it showed how connected to Oaklands, but also its own initiative involving a whole group of local community supporters.

Composting of course could be a very strong community initiative with a number of people putting out every Tuesday their vegetable peelings and that sort of thing. And what an enormously effective compost making project that was developed from there. Biodynamics can look over the wall to what's going on in the wider world and do it in a remarkable way. It is, of course, in deeply involved in the history of the organic movement as we saw.

1998

It is actually at this time that Philip Conford is writing his first book on the subject, The History of the Organic Movement, which comes out in 2000 and published by Floris Books with a rather special book launch at Rudolf Steiner House with some people who had very strong connexions to the organic movement and Philip Conford's research visits to various parts of the country, including the Clent office, which had actually been closed at the time!

It was a significant moment because he began to really say to biodynamic colleagues who he met that the history of the Biodynamic Movement within the organic movement is the kind of elephant in the room and a comprehensive history was badly needed to get the context of BD in the organic story. And up to then there wasn't enough material for the academic world to do to work on. He would have liked to have looked much closer at the biodynamic archives!

He acknowledged, with great respect, Ehrenfried Pfeiffer's work and noted, of course, that he was very interested in Karl Mier's work in Clent and later on at Botton Village when he became secretary. He tried in the text to follow the various developments around the context of the rise and rise of the Soil Association after the war, and puzzled why the Biodynamic Association did not have closer contacts. We shall reflect on this a bit because the biodynamic researchers have found that there's more connexions than perhaps realised by the kind of standard history of the Organic Movement.

Because Philip Conford is looking forward to some important contributions on biodynamic history, partly so that the academic world can judge what went on before we leave the middle of the decade, might be interesting to note that sometimes quite strange letters are included!

I see that I have reviewed Patrick Wright's book, *The Village That Died for England*, partly because I felt at the time in 1995 that Patrick Wright's book reflected on the whole thought that how land, if it was not chemically treated would react and this land on the Dorset coast near Simmering and Lulworth Cove was taken by the Ministry for Tank Training in the war and never returned to its inhabitants the Bond family estate a manor house and farms and cottages and how this land has fared, as it were, as completely natural no chemicals applied - reflecting also on the fact that if a tank shell hits the the ground at a ferocious rate and extreme heat, it germinates very, very rare iris plants!

If you turned on the radio in the 1990s to *The Today Programme* would most likely have an impassioned plea from Patrick Holden, he from the young group of people who kind of jumped to generation with Lady Eve Balfour's blessing at the end of the 1980s Soil Association AGM in York which had this effect of really removing organics from the margin into the mainstream consciousness - a new awareness that was beginning to affect Biodynamic Practice as well.

We should look a bit further than being so English centric and realise the two initiatives were going on in Scotland and one in Ireland, which deserved not just a mention, but actually quite a central plank. Paul Van Middens work at Biodynamics Supplies on the outskirts of Aberdeen, towards the coast south of the city was a centre of BD Preparations supplies and Demeter Certified product in the 1990s, giving him a livelihood, giving the Biodynamic Association a source for the preparations, where he also was able to import the mesentery for example from Germany and, elements which were needed for making The Preparations either yourself or for purchase complete.

Biodynamic Supplies was a place to go and to have an AGM, and that happened when we travelled north to Aberdeenshire in the late 1990's!

Addendum – Nov 2021

If you looked at *Star and Furrow* issues of the mid 1990s the address for correspondence was c/o Rudolf Steiner House, London. No longer the Clent Office at Woodman Lane on the site of the Sunfield Children's Home in the rural hinterland near Stourbridge where the BDAA had operated as a national natural farming and gardening organisation for many decades.

This change of address belied many changes at The BDAA after the sale of Broome Farm in 1987 and included a retirement of Secretary Ann Parsons in 1993 - part of the Clement Family, two Chairs Joachim and Tyll, the drawing to an end of Pat Thompson's (then MacManamon) long running tenure as Editor of *Star and Furrow* and the closure of not only the office but also the retail sales section of the organisation. It coincided with the ceasing of trading of The Caradoc BD supplies business. Memories of rooms at the old Natural Science Section building at Clent stacked with leaflets, books, exhibition materials waiting to go into storage and rooms where desks and tables and chairs strewn with papers abide, no longer the site for meetings and AGM gatherings in Middle England. It was actually quite a sad sight. A national organisation, the first humus farming charity to be formed way back at the start of the 1930s now looking for a new home.

It is a small but significant chapter of BD History that describes a moment at this time when a group of Gloucestershire Biodynamic Practitioners wondered if actually a national home and office for The BDAA was even necessary: why do we wear out secretaries and staff, travel huge distances and encourage motorway building across our green and pleasant land (remember Swampy and The Newbury Bypass) when we have perfectly good BD Farms and Gardens to visit in most if not nearly

all regions of The UK. Why not a regional approach to Biodynamic Practice, do away with a national office altogether!

This Gloucestershire Biodynamic Group which included Bernard Jarman and Oakland's farmer Tim Harmsworth wrote to Council on this matter and could certainly show how a region could be demonstrated. Oaklands Park on the edge of The Forest of Dean was a Camphill Community, a pioneer Agroecology centre boasting a Biodynamic Farm and Garden run as a Community Supported Agriculture project in the economic and social spheres with a huge fruit and vegetable growing distribution business. There was also Camphill Water a remarkable project using the flowforms created by John Wilkes at Emerson College to clean sewage water with the help of reed beds.

In the cultural sphere an active Christian Community Congregation. All in all a demonstration farm, garden and food producing project. And across the Severn Ruskin Mill was developing land based college activity with a fishery and market garden with the students at Nailsworth as well as William Morris House not far away at Eastington with its student gardens, the rise and rise of Stroud as a centre of community land projects and the established centres of Wynstones Rudolf Steiner School with its Kolisko Farm named after Eugene and Lilly Kolisko who had come to England in the 1930s with remarkable scientific knowledge on the efficacy of the BD Preparations. The region presented itself especially when you added a farm apprentice training scheme for BD, Hawkwood College and it's adult education Programmes and gardens and a regular celebration of the seasonal festivals on the land with the making of The Preparations in the autumn and their digging up in the spring.

A brief look at other regions showed that the south east of England had the farms like Tablehurst at Forest Row in Sussex, The Sheiling School Ringwood, the Bradleys at Hungary Lane, and Trinity IFarm in the East Midlands, Botton Village on the North York Moors with Larchfield Community developing on the edge of Middlesbrough. In Scotland BD centres near Aberdeen and Edinburgh not to mention a herb nursery on The Black Isle near Inverness. And in Ireland a separate BD Association was establishing itself in Co Kilkenny. You could say that you were never too far from a Biodynamic land project to visit and get involved so why all the necessary fuss of a national office?!

To add to the situation, there is so much "what if" going on around this mid 1990s point - a couple of figures Hamish McKay (Treasurer) and Charlie Wannop (Secretary) who showed so much promise in the BDAA Council melted away to other lands as quickly as they had come but they left an "if only.." flavour on The Council because of their natural land charisma and the subsequent team had to work very hard to gain credence in the aftermath I would suggest - I think that is a fair statement to make - but also to add to the mix the rise and rise of a competent Demeter Standards Office in Edinburgh started by Jimmy and Pauline Anderson and continued by Timothy Brink with Fiona Mackie as Secretary. So a national office had a question over its head!

Towards the end of the 1990s the question of a demonstration Biodynamic farm and garden in a community setting had begun to come to the fore again with memories of the Broome Farm sale only ten years distant. This came about because of the possibility of purchasing Kolisko Farm which was owned by Wynstones School and presented itself in 1996 as a community land project with productive walled gardens with a box scheme and a small farm with buildings for offices beside teachers houses for the School. A utopian dream you might say and certainly this home of BD in the UK would have been a vibrant little land community between Gloucester and Stroud nestling below The Cotswold scarp in a truly beautiful setting.

After quite some negotiation and meetings with the School Trustees at Wynstones the idea was not accepted and this caused some frustration. As a result the thought that maybe just concentrate on a Stroud town based office for The BDAA where people could come and visit and no more highly ambitious farm-based schemes. After all within a stone's throw of the office BD farms and gardens could be visited.

So it was in readiness for the new century The Biodynamic Agricultural Association opened a national based office in The Painswick Inn Project on Gloucester Road very near the BD Garden to be developed at Upper Grange and just across from Hawkwood College.

Perhaps it became a reluctant national office by necessity, The Soil Association was having a moment of glory as the world took notice of organic farming - from margin to mainstream it was called - and in all this the question around the BSE crisis which asked about what you fed animals and reflected on Rudolf Steiner's comment that if you fed a cow with meat then it would go mad.

If organics was going mainstream with organic produce finding a home on supermarket shelves and Patrick Holden - soon to become Patron of the Biodynamic work appearing regularly on TV and in the Press - then maybe a national office was needed again with regular hours, secretarial support and response to the media and to an increasing membership.

Yet perhaps this office begun in a strange environment of many retirements and stepping away of key personnel and had its challenges mapped out to rebuild a BD national awareness. A new A4 sized Star and Furrow with a new editor Richard Swann was an early result as well as a comprehensive leaflet outlining the Biodynamic approach and featuring a range of books and contacts available to all enquirers and well designed!

If there was to be a national office then there were to be healthy regional centres as well emphasised by the start of travelling AGMs going all round the country and taking place on a Biodynamic centre of activity.

The office, well set out with new furniture had certainly its work cut out with an early challenge with The Foot and Mouth pandemic of 2001 especially when for perfectly sound reasons Oakland's Park refused to allow the government vets to slaughter the herds of the farm and making national headlines as a result. The interest in the case had the office flooded with enquiries and much information was shared. Other incidents like film star Elizabeth Hurley's like of Biodynamic Sausages from Tablehurst also caught the imagination and enquiries rolled in once more as well from features on Radio 4's The Food Programme.

So the office provided a touchstone but it's Secretary Jessica Standing who was appointed in 1999 just after it began always emphasizes that the office itself can't exist without regional support and activity and that philosophy continues to this day!

Vivian Griffiths

Nov 21

Sources include personal interviews, Star and Furrow Council Members Lists and the author being on The BDAA Council from 1997 into the new century.

Precis BDA is homeless until end of the decade, Caradoc closes. Severn Valley training begins, Biodynamic Seminar established. CSAs and box-schemes become familiar terms.

Historical context: Nelson Mandela and Windows 95 released. Amazon established. BSE, Dolly the sheep, Hubble telescope, German reunification, Gulf War, first web site, Freddie Mercury, Lady Di and Tupac die, PlayStation released, Harry Potter, Clinton impeached, World Population 6 billion, Putin.

2000 – 2010

(Vivian Griffiths)

The Biodynamic Association from the year 2000 to 2010, the first decade of the 21st century. Decades are very finite, so it is with interest when we look at the Biodynamic Association that in the year 2000 it has finally found a home again after several years. You could say in the wilderness, but nevertheless, some very important work has been done. We shall leave the last decade of the 20th century to the next chapter. But what we will see in the year 2000 in the town of Stroud, in a social project with a restaurant and offices in an old Stroud school building in Cotswold stone. This is the new Biodynamic Office with a new secretary for a new century.

The office looked very purposeful in its new home, we didn't, I remember, go and find second hand chipped office desks but bought new from IKEA and I think it is fair to say started the new century with a purpose. Organic Farming and Gardening by then had spent 15 years being moved from the margins to mainstream attention in people's consciousness answering many important questions on soil quality and disease control. Moreover, you could say the Biodynamic Office in Stroud, in a town known for its interest in natural agriculture, in and in proper health, and with a long-established Steiner community, was in the right place at the right time.

It had a very short honeymoon in that the Biodynamic Association had to confront some very challenging moments just as the twenty first century started. The Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak was a major challenge, how to respond to this mass culling of animals on farms, the life's work of many families who lived in trauma and distress as a result. It would be fair to say the Biodynamic Association, whether directly or indirectly through vaccination questions and lock outs became quite involved in an opposition to all this mass slaughter as the disease took hold throughout Britain and caused the year 2000 to be a very much stay at home, do not go out, do not go to the countryside, do not spread the disease. A reminder of 20 years later. An event that caught national attention was when the Camphill Community at Oaklands Park in Gloucestershire decided, against all the odds to resist the culling of their animals because it was rumoured, although not proven, that actually there might be, although it was not established, within reasonable but not near to distance, a herd which might have got the illness of the foot and mouth. Therefore, there had to be a slaughter order served even though disease had not been confirmed.

A certain madness was taking place where huge amounts of animals were being slaughtered almost unnecessarily, and this caused quite some pain and suffering so that when it was thought that the Ministry of Agriculture now become DEFRA was on their way to Oaklands Park in The Forest of Dean in West Gloucestershire, the whole community were put on alert to stop them coming. And interestingly, with the nation's press and certainly the local press and a number of interested parties waiting at the gate of Oatlands to see if the DEFRA vets would arrive to do the slaughtering, would they back of or involve the police to gain entry.

Was this a mistake that they made about the proximity of the other hurt, did they feel that they were pushing it too far because this was a community of people with special needs and the animals were much loved by them. But it was certainly a critical moment for biodynamic agriculture, partly because whenever something is mentioned about illness and disease, Rudolf Steiner's indications actually take quite some precedence, for example, with the BSE, people found that Rudolf Steiner had said back in the 1920s that, of course, animals will go mad if they eat their own meat. It is cannibalism in one sense, but also it brings debilitating illness.

The new Star and Furrow in colour and lots of photos and good design featured articles on the foot and mouth crisis as it did with the perennial challenge of a new biodynamics centre! This of course had been thought of up a few years before the beginning of the twenty first century. The Broome Farm saga in the 1980s and Kolisko Farm in the 1990s which had belonged to Wynstones School. Those ideas had had to melt away because of changed ideas to do with land sale.

The idea of a Biodynamics Centre would need to find land and would need to find a quite a strong group of people willing to take on the fact that they would have to develop and maintain it to a very high standard to satisfy sky high expectations +f visitors. It was a tall order.

That the Organic and Biodynamic Movement was certainly on trial at this time was an understatement! Of course, up to then, and it is fair to say up to the end of the 20th century, chemical farming was king, so the Biodynamic Association had to contend with a picture of enormous opposition. Partly because of the rural community was very wedded to a chemical based agriculture, which, if it was to be understood, had dominated and it has to be said 'simplified' industrial agriculture and horticulture into so called efficient units of arable in the east of Britain or dairy in the west.

The farming community either concentrated on one or the other or it took on huge areas of vegetable growing in areas like Lincolnshire or Norfolk. The ICI fertiliser salesman built a very respectable culture in this setting. Tweed suited, he would arrive with an air of confidence in his country estate car and compliment on how nice the farm looked and inviting the farmer and his wife to a very, very lavish dinner at the local hotel once a year. And by a certain amount of reassurance that all the chemicals were being tested in laboratories and that everything was fine and a soil sample would highlight what the crop would need and sign here for the fertilizer order. It ran so smoothly and it had sort of invaded, you could say the folks soul of the countryside, a result of the post war chemical triumphalism that had seen victory against tyranny if one can put it that way. I know this could be seen as a big distraction to BD History but to bring a farmer out of his chemical regime into an organic regime, let alone biodynamic, was an enormous challenge, both in facing away from a rural community which had become used to the chemicals. Of course, the culture deemed they had to be locked up. Of course, you have to put on a suit to use the pesticides, that was what you did in laboratories and wasn't the farm one big laboratory where you have to keep the pests at bay. And we're not going to grow any wheat for anybody if they're all going to be eaten by weevils...

Perhaps you had to, as it were, build a biodynamic community instead which to a certain extent challenged those old norms, which by the end of the 20th century were beginning to come to crumble a bit, but not enough to illustrate when a Suffolk farmer turned organic in the late 1990s how he had to face criticism, prejudice, was ignored, and certainly very, very lonely when he became an organic farmer, let alone biodynamics with all its amazing preparations and sprays and ways of doing things.

To come back to the core of biodynamics, one of the best approaches is to look over the new layout Star and Furrow at the beginning of the decade and see what is featured. And one of the early ones, the two thousand and one summer issue of Star and Furrow featured an article entitled The Processes of Silica, Calcium in Clay, Their Role in the Redemption of Matter, a special article, which really goes deeper into the spiritual understanding of biodynamics. Richard Swann is the new editor, also featured an article by Peter Procter and Biodynamics in India. Kolisko Farm near Gloucester is needing a new farm manager as is Garvald Home Farm, near Edinburgh. This is a project which has house and workshop facilities for people with special needs in the city, but also out in the countryside nearby.

Vivian Griffiths is reviewing a very important book in the canon, and that's Philip Conford's History of the Organic Movement. I don't think we would have focussed or would have understood the organic movement completely without Philip Conford. He would want to bring the Biodynamic

Agricultural Association in context as the first humous farming organisation. And he has also said to many Biodynamic colleagues that we are the elephant in the room in the humus farming story. He was writing this book at the end of the 20th century and it came out on in the year 2000 with an invitation to Rudolf Steiner House to where the book launch took place.

It was interesting to see who was at that book launch because Biodynamics and organics have deep connections. Mary Heron who had helped Lady Eve Balfour with The Haughley Experiment came to the book launch from The Liberal Democrat Party Conference where she was attending. Richard De La Mare's grandson was also present. These threads of the organic movement from Richard who was the agricultural editor for Faber in Faber and he did encourage books about natural agriculture, publishes Pfeiffer's works and books on natural gardening, alternative ways from growing plants with chemicals. But he also brought social issues in as well. And he published books that would enliven the debate that actually organics was part of a social renewal, part of a natural craft, sacramental even farming inheritance, which was anyway a part of life until one hundred and fifty years ago when Liebig invented chemical agriculture. All covered in the nature and agriculture writings of a book publishing company.

The first Star and Furrow issue which featured the review of Philip Cornford's The History of the Organic Movement, which features quite some figures who were involved in the Organic Movement, Pfeiffer is of course a main influence Then there is Rolf Gardiner and people who have had an appreciation of Biodynamics like Laurence Easterbrook, as well as Lawrence Hills the person who started the Henry Doubleday Association is one another person who is deeply connected and appreciates and even May Bruce, who goes off for their own with The QR - Quick Return Compost Starter that has an origin in Biodynamics..

So no wonder Philip Cornford says it is the elephant in the room in the natural farming organisations, and it beats the Soil Association by 16 years, of course, which is interesting in itself.

Also featuring in Star and Farrow's at the beginning of the 21st century are articles about the significance of animals on the Earth by Nikolai Fuks at the Agricultural Section of The Goetheanum and

featured in the upcoming Biodynamic Association AGM is a major conference for Ueli Konig to speak about the enormous importance for the regular application of The Biodynamic Preparations. He worries that in post radioactive Europe since the radioactive Chernobyl, Hiroshima, the Biodynamic Preparations Act as kind of healing. Healing places for which have had such an effect, the radioactivity on the earth, and he's very, very challenging, we must use the preparations more!

One of the new ideas of the new century from Biodynamics is a seed representative, a person who can carry the seed initiative, biodynamic seeds and how they're grown.

At the turn of the new century, seed production was in all sorts of different places, done by all sorts of different people and done in different ways. And it was felt by the Biodynamic Council of the time that somebody would go around the different seed growing places and help with the harvest, look at the quality of seed growing, see what was being done and give advice where necessary. And there were even grand ideas of a lottery grant to support this initiative!

I remember in the council at the time, reviewing the job description - a new kind agricultural rep/ DefRa farm advisor maybe, that he would become a new incarnation of the tweed jacketed ICI salesman, for the right way to grow plants but perhaps without the tweed suit, posh car and hotel dinner invitation! A Skoda was mentioned!

What I'm trying to get at is that we were looking at a new fieldsperson for the 21st century who would carry particular responsibility for seeds growing because the importance of seed growing and especially as an open pollinated seed was it was not to be underemphasised because the seeds needed to reflect the vitality and the efficacy of The Preparations that they were sprayed on them as

they went on into their seed forming state. This job went to Peter Brinch, who had been working at Emerson on a number of projects, and he became attached to Stormy Hall Seeds at Botton Village.

You could say a most unlikely place to have a seed workshop and certainly growing seeds in the misty, rainy and quite severe climate where sun ripening was not a feature of the of the seasons, but actually it was a very special place for it needed plenty of people to help it for sorting seeds, operating the cleaning machines, making sure all the invoices were correct and the money coming in. And a huge tribute really is offered to Hans and to Peter Branch, who masterminded the Demeter Seeds in the first years of the new century.

The Star and Furrow featured another book which was reviewed very positively actually was Organic Farm Management Handbook, Nick Lambkin and Mark Measures who have been at the forefront of Organic Research at The Elm Farm Research Station with Lawrence Woodward near Newbury, actually just down the road from the Greenham Common women's camp. It gave organics a good name and respectability, but it is certainly so that the organic movement at this time was making sure that its mainstream interests that people could buy organic products with confidence. It could also be supported by proper scientific proof of soil samples, of how to arrange an organic farm and how to manage an organic farm. And it was much, much appreciated!

Also interesting to see that Resurgence was advertised and the first of the websites which looked at GM crops,

Moving along from the foot and mouth crisis, which has certainly dominated in the first two years of the 21st century, gave way to another the Question of how one looked after one's food properly, in other words, given that organic product was available, then how does one cook it? How does one care for it? How does one in what settings does one have it in?

What in what does one how does one appreciate food, which on one level was becoming less and less as people as the lunch hour disappeared in offices, as the people raced about and travelled a lot and didn't really have time for proper meals. In another way, this was shown by a remarkable book which came out at this early 20th century time called Food Wise by Wendy Cook.

She's, of course, the widow of Peter Cook, the comedian and she had a lifelong interest in how to cook properly, but also a concern that the ingredients to cook were grown properly, how does one cook properly with them? I think it was interesting to reflect on that, that her book, Food Wise, which was reviewed and the story of the book in the In the Star and Farrow was an important moment because it kind of introduced a finer way of preparing food with the right Ingredients.

The 80th Year Conference for Biodynamics was organised to be in Boston village in the summer of 2004. In fact, at the Whitsun weekend that had been to celebrate the week that it actually took place in Kobervitz, Silesia in June 1924, when we just gave the eight lectures and the structure of that 80th birthday conference took the form of eight lectures and each lecture reflected the lecture, Rudolf Steiner had given 80 years before.

It was a fascinating week in Botton Village! The North York Moors Community was looking well, new facilities for land work and new buildings had been erected in the last 10, 15 years of Botton's life.

A new environmental awareness had come, which also asked a few questions about why was it using so much grid electricity when the wind could just provide so much of the power at being a windy place? Also, where were the solar panels?

Was the community a little bit behind in environmental awareness and I think the conference really put Botton on the map environmentally and sustainably but also asked of it questions.as if to say Biodynamics has to go hand in hand with environmental sustainability.

It's interesting to note, actually, that because of that conference in Botton, as part of the accountability it received before all the management changes several years later that took place the

community took a stand and a lecture at the office of the Deputy Prime Minister Sustainable Communities Conference, which happened a year later. And it did so along with a number of other initiatives which were looking at how to build community and also sustain it with properly grown food, with community gardens, and also to sustain the landscape with new forms of energy and new ways of sharing, transport and such.

So Botton talked quite a lot of boxes, which led it to also enter the Sustainable Communities Conference Awards and be shortlisted in the year 2007.

I wrote a very important article to celebrate the fact that this was the 100th issue of Star and Furrow and the timetable in the Botton Conference was published and it was and Patrick Howland's article also on the history of the organic movement, emphasising what had also been demonstrated in the conference book, but taken from a certain angle of his own biography.

Um, both. Um. At the conference and in the star of Furrow, and as we will find out in a very keynote lecture he gave a couple of years later in the Christian Community Church in Stourbridge, the guest of the Reverend Tom Ravitz when he spoke about his personal history as well. So and his relationship to biodynamics.

Patrick was a student at Emerson College after being the classic hippie and visiting various parts of the world, travelling about but also wanting some purpose in his life. He arrives at Emerson College in 1972. And by the turn of the century, he is, as we know, has been indicated, heading up the science association in all its important work to show to the world the importance of an organic approach to life on land and sea and soil.

Is it where you could say that? So it is interesting to see him speak as a person or how he met at Emerson a very creative young woman and how they together through her inheritance, could buy a farm in West Wales, and how the organic movement could more and more, you could say, build a community of organics in that part of the world and try and find ways to supply organic product. And how biodynamics is kind of Patrick's inspiration.

We move on, Anna Urwin retires, she's been a wonderful Chair and it has been a very special journey for the council, building itself up again, finding its home, looking at the various branches of aspects of organic and biodynamic agriculture and horticulture and its related social questions.

Community Supported Agriculture is mentioned at the time, and that's quite important I because there is where you support the people, you support the farm and in supporting the farm are able to access a naturally grown product from the farm, but it's not given a price. You're not buying individual vegetables. You are supporting the farmer and grower.

That has a special connexion to the Biodynamic Movement as it was first suggested by Targa Grough in America, but also at the same time, strangely, at a conference of farmers and gardeners at Newton Dee Village in the early 1960s, where Dr Thomas Weihs and Dr. Koenig both said that we should not be buying vegetables from the farm in the community, but making sure that the farmers are supported in such a way that they would be able to grow all the vegetables, the milk, the dairy products for the following year, a deed of trust by the community and the community would support them. And of course, if disaster struck, then the community would all more support them.

So let's move on into the midpoint of the decade.

One can't help noticing in one of the advertisements at the time in Star and Furrow - this rather strange heading 'Steiner Graffiti', but it's interesting that the son of a long-term Steiner teacher Joan Marcus - Christopher Marcus, did a mime of Rudolf Steiner's life and all the elements around it in a remarkable kind of presentation trying to get to the nub of who Rudolf Steiner was and how he was received in the world. So not only was Rudolf Steiner shown visiting the Mercedes factory in 1916 and getting booted out because he told the workers on the assembly line to think for themselves, but also being attacked by the Catholic vigilantes when he gives lectures. And here's a picture of his

life that Christopher built up including a. Devon, Biodynamic Farmer trying to explain the Preparations to a farm walk and a retired Steiner teacher trying to explain to her family what why she was a Steiner teacher.

It was actually hilarious at many points, but also very thoughtful.

It of course asks the perennial question, where does the Steiner Movement fit into the society? How do people doubt it? Why do people think it is weird? Is biodynamic farming something completely un-understandable? He touched on some very important aspects of this when he gave these presentations in both Stourbridge and Stroud at the beginning of the 21st century.

Meanwhile, new initiatives, Laverstoke Park, Jodie Schechter, you wouldn't think, as a retired South African motor racing driver, would be interested in biodynamics! Yet his marriage to a person deeply concerned with food quality and his interest to build a farm community based on food quality and that being the central tenet so that everything on the farm would actually reflect food quality, a soil analysis, buffalo and the products of buffalo milk, cheese, the way the farm was run and to build up a biodynamic farm where food quality came first. After all, that is in a sense, if you think about it is a very important aspect of biodynamics, how to build food quality so that the human being who eats biodynamic food benefits from it, from an ability to meditate better because one isn't distracted and it helps an inner life develop because the skittishness of that modern human beings suffer from can be directly attributed to the stimulation that one can get from foods which are grown artificially.

At this 2004 point Nick Raeside becomes the Chair of the Council and Bernard Jarman becomes its Director and he that's a new post and that carries with it some responsibility to develop biodynamics, to get a thousand members, to make sure that biodynamics is at the forefront of debate in the organic and natural farming movement, but also to make sure that the Biodynamic Association, its members are looked after and supported.

It was decided that The AGMs should travel, it should not stay in Rudolph Steiner House or Clent, but should travel around the country where there was a BD presence so for example in 2004 it went to Otley Agricultural College in Suffolk where a BD Course was held.

The new Chair, Nick Raeside had a lifetime interest in Biodynamic Forestry, to work to make them fertile, that forests have a particular importance to play on the farm with the way that they absorb carbon, the way that they breathe for the land. Nick has a vice chair, and that's Lawrence Dungworth, and he writes a very special article about the Environment. The Star and Furrow also features the Ecovillage movement, which Jan Martin Bang from Norway is talking about how an eco-village can be developed and that in a way it's the first time in the new decade where the Eco Village Movement is described. You could say it is arising out of the hippie movement, that an alternative lifestyle which was off the grid, which was organic, biodynamic, which was self-sufficient, but at the same time part of the community, which developed ways of growing vegetables sustainably and also lived sustainably as a community of mutual help.

A very special article showing also the interest at the time in soils and their characteristics was from retired University of Leeds Geography Lecturer Richard Thornton Smith, soon to become BD Council Member another very important key to biodynamic practise.

Demeter Standards had been in the very capable hands of the Andersons and they had retired now that Timothy Brink at the helm with Fiona at the Edinburgh office. In this decade, Jemmy and Pauline were guests of a very special Lifetime Achievement Award Ceremony, which gave enormous thanks to them for basically developing the Demeter Standards Office with secretary, Fiona, with the work being done from that office and with Jemmy travelling around the country.

The Andersons had retired and gone to live on a lovely smallholding on the edge of Loch Arthur community in Dumfries,

A way of inspection that was right for the developing biodynamic farmer and gardener, this is not a kind of tick box affair where you just come and tick a few boxes and leave, it is a conversation. Jimmy Andersons, I think contribution to that was to introduce that idea. And Timothy continued it and he continued it in the face of more and more technical sort of regulations around organics, which would encourage such things as an inspection by box ticking. This was a partnership where the farmer and the inspector shook hands and respected each other. And also that the inspector can say, well, do you think you could do it this way or do you have this possibility or could you help that person, a true inspection partnership.

So we move on and we come across something quite interesting in this, because in it is Sikkem - How does Anthroposophy, how does Biodynamic Practice translate to the countryside not far from Cairo?

What sort of community could be built there in the Muslim tradition rather than the Christian tradition in Europe? All these questions feature in a very illuminating article.

We spoke about. Patrick Holden's presence at the 80th Birthday Conference and now come to his visit to the Christian Community Church in Stourbridge two years later and speaking about his personal biography. With Biodynamics at Emerson college and The Soil Association. Something which would lead to be quite a moment for the Soil Association, and how it reacted to such was the story of getting to know somebody called Rob Hopkins.

Rob Hopkins was worried the Soil Association could easily get into real doom-laden realms. The world is about to implode, as it were a foretaste of climate change. Well, climate change hadn't quite been sort of focussed on as it is today, but the situation was dire.

And a young person learning about the state of the world and how it was could easily become very, very depressed Rob Hopkins initiated something that deeply impressed Patrick Holden as our patron of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association, this influenced us greatly.

The Transition Town Movement suddenly reversed, you could say the doom, it gave people back responsibility to look after the place where they lived, most notably a town in which they could voice, you could say responsibility for that town environmentally.

That could include, of course, recycling. That could include community allotments, that could include transport systems that didn't completely dominate with the car, but bus services and taxi services and car sharing that could include a whole green agenda for the town, which would turn, you could say, away from it over dominance on fossil fuels and an over dominance of expensive technology.

All kinds of energy inefficient ways of transport, heating, all sorts, and it led to Patrick Holden finally actually saying goodbye to the Soil Association and setting up the Sustainable Food Trust as a kind of response to the Transition Town Movement. It started in Totnes, in Devon, a very good place to start, actually, with a very strong green agenda, but it moved to all kinds of towns and cities throughout Britain. Rob Hopkins himself was asked more and more to come and try and explain to a town how it could be, how it could go green, both economically, socially and culturally, which was an interesting reflection, really, of our own threefold ideals.

As we move towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, a first decade, we note that we have a new chair, Nick Raeside gives over to Sebastian Parsons, but not before, I think an interesting moment in the story of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association.

This question of how it could show is it where the spirit in agriculture, the land I could say the spiritual, of course, and attempts were put together, not always with fruition, to actually have a land spirit conference in the Eden Project, which had been going on since the new century and enjoying with enormous success and how one could grow produce in the biomes in the southwest of England,

but also that introducing festivals throughout the year, a kind of environmental festival a little bit akin to transition towns, you could say an important moment.

Well, in the end, something couldn't sort of gel there at Eden. But that wasn't in any way a reflection on both the organisations for actually, the Biodynamic Association ended up jointly hosting a Land Spirit) Conference on the Scilly Isles in September 2007.

This had been because the Ruskin Mill Trust which were very happy sponsors, wanted to underpin this conference, come retreat for its trustees and executive members so that an appreciation really of a landscape quite different to one used to in mainland Britain and how people and the land got on in a particular way. The Scilly Isles presents, all kinds of very immediate challenges, the island community has to make a livelihood. How should it economically survive? There are 2000 people actually on the islands mostly in St x1Mary's. But there are islands besides St Mary's and fishing, tourism and agriculture in the form of flower growing the early flowers, the mild Atlantic waves means that the city as hardly gets a frost. And how important it is to value, as it were, these spiritual inheritances in a modern community. These inheritances, of course, have given a whole generation of people the chance to grow flowers for early harvesting for the London markets or how to build sustainable tourism. Does one need an abattoir on the island? Does how does one manage, as it were, to farm on the island and in relation to all the visitors? And how should one do it? And this conference was a joint initiative with Jonathan Smith, who had an organic market garden growing salad crops and veg for the hotels and features because we arranged this event jointly with the Biodynamic Association.

Pt2

In concluding the dynamic. First decade description, I'd like to comment on two aspects of life in the first decade.. So let's begin an initiative that started at Brantwood in the middle of the decade in 2005 where Sally Beamish, who had been the remarkable estate manager of John Ruskin's Lake District home. "Listening to the landscape" was important because what's happened was that John Ruskin, when he lived at Brantwood, puzzled a lot and how he should develop the estate, the gardens around the house, the the place which was becoming even by the end of the 19th century, a place of pilgrimage of many people coming to listen to his radical thoughts on climate change and his interest in a different more nature sympathetic way of life, which looked to a more balanced view of land, of landscape, of nature, of how we we looked after the planet.

Now, you might also say, why is this got to do with biodynamics? Well, Sally Beamish herself had been to a forestry conference in Ruskin Mill and she'd come across the preparations and was very intrigued.

She was a scientist and done all the sorts of horticultural trainings, and arrived via West Cumbria Job Creation Schemes where she was planting trees.

Sally said once in a kind of cosmic disclosure way that. Ruskin whispered in her ear not to use chemicals to do this as a well trained horticulturist of the end of the 20th century. But Ruskin's approach was different. And it was interesting that when she came across the BD Preparations, this kind of answered something very basic to her thoughts, that the preparations would provide the efficacy to continue the fertility of these gardens on this very wet and sheltered slope in the Lake District hills.

She worried that if you could recreate the garden, how you would maintain it because of the enormous rainfall that it receives and also wind and cold can affect the gardens adversely. So she wanted to set up an experiment, being a good scientist. And one of the ideas was to build

interestingly, a place where she could experiment with the biodynamic, the organic and the conventional on the meadow just below.

This became the subject of a Northern Spring Biodynamic conference which took place in Sheffield in 2007 and Brantwood Cumbria in 2008.

These Northern Spring biodynamic conferences were taking place and they had the effect of building. So these two spring by Islamic conferences, one it clever and the other at Sheffield, the crisis of the moment of gathering in the north of England, which reflected also the beginnings of the Ruskin Mill projects in both Clairvaux in Darlington and Sheffield, where the work of Arnold Freeman Freeman College, the Tintagel Centre, which was set up in the Sheffield suburbs where a school would be established and a college, down in the city where the cutlery tradition would be regenerated. There's also in this city an interest in craftwork, which has gone back through before industry where cutlery was made. In Clairvaux, Darlington part of a local landowners initiative to produce have places for children to come to visit, and an interest to develop a biodynamic garden which had taken Tyll Van Der Voort from Oaklands to work there to develop the gardens.

So quite a strong initiative was going on in the North of England where Botton Village had been established with its Biodynamic farms in 1955.

Over the Irish Sea, in the little town of Kilkenny, in Kilkenny, in Thomastown, the Biodynamic Association of Ireland had established itself. The office was at The Watergarden in a beautiful setting . This garden was quite a special place where a Camphill Community had developed a cafe and the maintenance of a very beautiful garden by the streams with water features. And there was also a cluster of Camphill Communities.

Now, the AGMs of the first decade of the 21st century, if we look at the venues. It wanted to not also follow regional Biodynamic initiatives that actually share their experiences and show a little bit the origins, but also the association wanted to come and in a sense congratulate and enhance the activities. And you could see for example in 2001 at Otley College in Suffolk.. The AGM was at the college, which had taken alternative agricultural courses and had an interest in biodynamics and in an area which wasn't known for biodynamic activity in the large arable area of the East Anglia.

In 2002, the AGM was at Emerson, confirming and strengthening the enormously valuable work that was going on at Table Hurst Farm at the edge of Forest Row and at Emerson College itself were interesting to note the beginnings of a biodynamic college was in the first stages of its life. Emerson College, of course, going back to 1961 as an offshoot of Sunfield and establishing itself in the Sussex village of Forest Row had been an enormous influence on biodynamic training, education courses. They could at one sense be a feature in a large garden, and they could also be taken to use with wastewater systems, the flowforms which were proven especially with reed beds to clean water in the most remarkable way by the use of the platforms themselves, which which purged the water of impurities.

In 2003, the AGM went down to South Devon to the Steiner School at Totnes which established itself some years earlier and had become a school which had a very strong relationship to its garden. And some staff there who really did show the importance of learning with the land, your curriculum, that everything in the curriculum could have a land-based connexion from measuring vegetable beds to collecting eggs from the chickens. And how many, many, many initiatives could grow out of an active garden which surrounded this Steiner School, and, of course, reflected on a very active biodynamic community there where BD gardeners grew food for juice and jams and also down the road to Dartington and to Shumacher College and up the road to Resurgence Magazine and it's influence over 40 years of alternative approaches to land and living.

As we've mentioned before in 2004, the Botton 80th Birthday Conference reflected, very much the activity of the Biodynamic Association at the time from Patrick Holden's talk as Patron to The Agriculture Course Lectures but it's interesting to note that later on in the year, the Biodynamics

Association went to what's called the Green House in the City of Norwich, which was specially converted to be well insulated, to use all the alternative methods of wind and solar, and to be a kind of touchstone of how we could build and possibly live sustainably in the future.

I remember a happy occasion you could say where from the city you could like visit a local organic farmer who was also interested in biodynamics and who was on the Soil Association. Mr. Cherry was our host and we were shown around some beautiful countryside where he practised Biodynamics as well as a visit to Thornage Hall Camphill near Holt another BD Holding. It was a special event in many ways because it also was an area where Biodynamics was not so well known, but was given a new lease of life by having this AGM there.

Biodynamics in Scotland was very strongly represented by the Camphill Communities in and around Aberdeen in the north, by active producer consumer projects around Edinburgh and bd herb growing on the Black Isle.. But in the southwest of Scotland, in Dumfries with the Loch Arthur Community building a strong connexion to the wider community, with the cheese to and winning awards throughout the land and with national press The BDAA AGM came in 2005.

It signalled a new connexion and one also shouldn't forget. Just down the road, Pauline and Jemmy Anderson were enjoying their retirement with a smallholding which also took guests, many of them who came to the AGM.

The Seven Valley BD Land Training was at the time very important part of Association activity. a journey for some young people to go and work in Camphill Communities on farms and gardens. And the setting for the 2006 AGM was Sturts Farm with its farm and garden adult community on the Ringwood side of East Dorset, not too far to connect to local Biodynamic initiatives in that area, including Foxfield Farm near Dorchester the home of The Bells, who had, in a sense, the first wildling farm producing this wonderful meat for the London market but a sharing like Isabelle Tree and their estate 15 years later, just how it could be done.

From rural and Dorset to the centre of London, to Borough Market with the 2007 AGM . visiting this famous food place and celebrating Biodynamic Food Fortnight in the autumn of 2007. This was important moment because the biodynamic world was always trying to find ways to put produce on the market stall in the health food shop and outlets, providing them with produce, which would highlight the need for this produce to be readily available. The Borough Market was going through a renaissance of natural food at the time, so The Association's AGM. with Wendy Cook's demonstrating biodynamic food cooking and how to bring out its vitality was a star moment.

In Northern Ireland, another Camp Hill community in , in the west of the Province over in County Tyrone, is of

Clanabogon Camphill Community, quietly growing its biodynamic credentials as a kind of ecological community project where walk's could be created, where young trees could grow, where water could be properly managed. In this mild and it has to be said, damp corner of west Northern Ireland, it had made a name for itself for its alternative biomass heating system and looking at how a future ecological environment could be created at the AGM in 2008 was very appropriate. So UK, Biodynamics was active in Northern Ireland, at GlenCraig and Mourne Grange Camphill as well and with the Hollywood Bakery adding to the mx...!

Our last AGM for the decade 2009 is the AGM at Laverstoke Park near Basingstoke. We've talked about Jenny Schecter and his rise and rise in the Biodynamic Food spectrum to see how a food based paramount importance estate which concentrated on biodynamic production could show itself as a quality product. It would be interesting to look at the elements that the AGM found. Obviously, the buffalo, but also the soil analysis work but also developing ways to provide that good food is also and I think it is reflected the first decade of the 20th century had this very strong relationship to good food and how to grow it and how to produce it and so that the human being could become a better fed, better nourished. Perhaps was the rise and rise of good food awareness is a hallmark of

this decade, you could say if you were being critical - the rise and rise of the foodie human being, trying to always to eat the right food and hopefully if the intention was right to build a better food and nourishment environment And it is interesting to note that it has come from many people who have made quite some substantial fortunes and then investing them in farms and gardens and trying to build up through their own resources, ways to which we could make the world a better place.

The danger is that as the decade closed with the financial crisis and the vanishing investment in good food has begun to sort of ripple through this, that it was it was a niche market. A flash in the pan literally! But of course, that's the question that, does a trail in a niche market of the organics or is it something totally, radically different? Is it trying to find a way to produce healthy and nourishing food for everybody or will it only favour wealthy consumers? As organic produce Faltered in sales at the end of the decade and was debated at AGMs of the time, the question of Biodynamic produce at point of sale grew more challenging. VG 5/21

Precis: BDA establishes itself in Stroud. Membership tops 1000. Stormy Hall seeds established. Ruskin Mill begins to spread. Lynette West, Glen Atkinson, Hugh Lovel, Denis Klocek, and Enzo Nastati teach in the UK. Foot and mouth cull resisted at Oaklands Park.

Historical context: 9-11. Foot and Mouth disease, The Millennium bug, Mac OS X, Facebook, civil partnerships, iPhones.

2010 – 2020

(Vivian Griffiths)

What to make of the decade that just ended, which started in 2010 and finished last year 2020.

It's a decade which has seen a very, very wide picture of the world before, you could say and we'll cover that in the next chapter. The problems and challenges were very specific. GM foods the beans in the last decade. It might be. Thoughtful to say that the problems have suddenly become wider, much, much wider, that affects biodynamics, climate change, world weather conditions, fires in California and South Africa. The world of biodynamics here in the U.K. and its challenges.

It started in 2010 with Sebastian Parsons speaking about Biodynamic agricultural challenges and huge hopes for the decade to come in his Director role. He was talking about the BD College, which was going well down at Emerson College in Sussex and would actually merge with the Biodynamic Association not many years later. He is very excited about a Natural Product Show demonstration invitation of Biodynamics at Olympia in London, and there are visits to farms such as Watch Out in Thornbury, a working biodynamic farm with people with special needs.

Biodynamic Food for Fortnight is becoming a stronger feature, it takes place in October, soon after the Organic Fortnight of The Soil Association.

There is a Trees and Forest Gardening Course at Brantwood and there is an update on the questions of GM crops and how they are affecting this country and Europe and what legislation is about to stop prevent them being planted wider.

The beginning of the decade also saw a wish to rationalise all the different training courses to recognise qualifications. Training could no longer be just informal gatherings of life stories and demonstrations. They had to be much more rigorous in their approach and also monitored with tutors. There would also be more questionnaires about how the courses were conducted and whether the tutors themselves were up to the mark. And behind all this reorganization was an organisation called the Crossfields Institute with Charlotte von Bulow, a very remarkable young Danish person who saw the future for all kinds of spiritual and alternative so-called movements being validated properly in a mainstream qualification structure.

She saw an important path that actually had to be recognised. You had to join, as it were, the world's qualification. You could stay separate. And she did that with quite strong vision from her own story growing up in Denmark on a biodynamic farm. And what a wonderful place that was and how much she wished to protect that place.

Meanwhile, up the road from Stroud, where the Crossfield Institute was situated, a remarkable building was taking place, The Field Centre. Ruskin Mill College had begun to expand in the new century. We are really covering in the next chapter and there are colleges now in Stoubridge (Glasshouse) and Sheffield (Freeman) and in Darlington (Clervaux).

Their work was expanding fast to meet a vital need to train young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and needed, a research and development centre so that the concepts of The Ruskin Mill Training - The Practical Skills Therapeutic Education Programme - the training given by making a chair or making a pot or forging a spoon could be properly ratified and verified. And so it came to pass that The Field Centre a remarkable design by Aonghus Gordon and colleagues came to be built and opened in 2013.

Another element which was touching the Biodynamic Association was the bee question. The bees, their treatment in apiaries, the importance of pollination, bee diseases, the varroa mite, the question of sudden death syndrome, of whole hives dying and the whole approach around how one looks after the bees came sharply into focus with the widespread use of certain pesticides and their detrimental effects now begun to be scientifically proven. It made the Biodynamic Association wake up to the very important responsibilities of the biodynamic approach to bees based on Rudolf Steiner's lectures on the subject how to keep bees in such a way that they would be allowed to grow and develop in their own community way and not be continually meddled with and forced to produce honey in such a way that they could not sustain themselves.

Commercial Apiaries had a very, I would say, dubious reputation after a report done by The Ethical Consumer Magazine and the Biodynamic Association, in a particular affiliation to the Natural Beekeepers Association, took on the whole question of bees.

There were a number of articles in in Star and Farrow and a number of contributions, especially by Heidi Hermann who became very involved both as Biodynamic Trustee and Natural Beekeepers Association Chair. The Sun Hive project took a strong part of biodynamic activity where the Sun Hive is a natural sort of skep shape, where the bees could build their own nests undisturbed and produce their own honey and not be forced into producing honey artificially,

Sebastian's tenure gave way to Peter Brown and thoughtful, energetic farmer at Tablehurst, with its many social, economic and cultural activities on this community farm on the outskirts of Forest Row in Sussex, took the reins and also had to take on responsibilities that a chair of a small natural farming and gardening organisation punching totally above its weight, with huge responsibilities of representation to official bodies. Thus Peter was attending meetings organised by Defra in London on the future of organic farming. He was consulted by a number of government sponsored bodies who wanted to recognise the alternative agriculture organic sector, but needed advice to do that. His role was an enormously responsible one, and he took it very, very seriously and worked very hard indeed at that job.

As the decade progressed, one could see the rise and rise of the gardening section of biodynamic work and practise. It could be said, and it is a debateable point, that for many years the Biodynamic Association looked after the farming community and the horticultural holdings and market gardeners attached themselves to the farm communities as best they may.

Farmers are busy, people very busy, and they can have little time with a burgeoning workload either out on the land because there isn't enough money to go around to employ or in the office where a huge amount of paperwork is needed to fill in the forms to get the grants to sort out the cattle and to make sure that disease and health are in order. It is a huge challenge and this put a lot of pressure on farmers and it perhaps was noticed more than once in the biodynamic work that gardeners could share the load, writing the articles, serving on the BD Council and to support the work of the Star and Furrow. And it was noticed, most especially by Linda Abraham who'd come marching out of the Soil Association into the Biodynamic Association, that the back yard gardener and allotment holder was one of the most important assets of the Biodynamic Movement, many of them retired, maybe, or just setting out on biodynamics full of enthusiasm, many with a bit of time on their hands and a wish to publicise gardening, especially as growing your own food was suddenly coming into focus again.

Ever since the mid 1980s, working outdoors, being outdoors in nature had come back into focus again, into fashion, if you want to use that rather strange word. And people were developing ways in which to do it, from forest gardening to outdoor classroom pursuits to craftwork and biodynamics should Lynda reasoned take a very active role in this. And the idea that The Biodynamic Garden was a central plank in the biodynamic work was brought forward with great enthusiasm and there's one big moment when this really happened, and that was in October 2016 at the Garden Organic Centre. That is the centre that was set up by the Henry Doubleday Research Association with Jackie and Alan

Gear, who masterminded this organic gardening centre in the middle of England, very accessible to visit with some very important days as in potato seed, potato buying days, harvesting days, and an increasing relationship with university departments, overseas aid carrying, you could say, the focus of organic gardening in Britain.

To have the conference at The Garden Organic centre near Coventry was a quite a celebration, a milestone, a marking point. And that day included a large amount of gardening lectures, looking also at the little show garden that had been financed by Stockwood Community Farm.

We shouldn't forget, and this is an important moment that Biodynamics marked its 90th birthday in a special Conference which was held at The Glasshouse College and celebrated in October 2014. It is true to say that by the in the first 10 to 15 years of the 21st century, organic agriculture had to look to the biodynamic movement for its training and these weekend events over two years with dissertations and on hands, on experience in various centres, with people from Camphill, from Ruskin Mill and people from the Biodynamic College sharing as tutor and student the lectures which provided a bedrock, you could say, in humus farming training projects. A Lifetime Achievement Award was given at the Conference to Tyll Van Der Voort who had headed up training and BD Horticulture at both Camphill's Oaklands Park in Gloucestershire and at Ruskin Mill's Clervaux near Darlington.

I would suggest that that training has produced a remarkable group of very, very committed land workers. They don't always end up in the expected places. They have life changing situations themselves. But mostly these people have formed a kind of cultural land influence, what word would be the best? A cultural thread with new nature centred agricultural forms. So such ideas as Community Supported Agriculture, connexions to the Land Workers Alliance, taking on herds of dairy herds, working with mainstream farming, but at the same time asking many questions about its practises.

These young people who come through these trainings change the nature, as it were, of how one approaches land, work and sustainable land work, which I think is a cornerstone of biodynamic practise, was born in these trainings and I personally think began to show fruit in such things as their work in organisations, asking questions, making the land practise sustainable and in some fortunate situations, building on the biodynamic practise they already achieved. So by the middle of this last decade, you had a very, very active wine producing culture in biodynamics.

Not so much in Britain who had to look over the Channel to see the transformation of some of the most well-known vineyards in France to biodynamic viticulture. Monty Walden is talking about that in his book.

And a milestone also in this decade which confirmed the gardening emphasis is the Dorian Kindersley Book of Biodynamic Gardening compiled by Monty Walden which came out in 2015. It is a remarkable book, there's no doubt about that. It is the most explicit biodynamic book that's ever been published. It goes deeply into all The Preparations and their effectiveness and their role in the whole of the compost heap and the sprays on the land. It shows the cow horns being prepared and buried. It shows the different animal sheaths in absolute clear detail. It does not beat around the bush and try and pretend that one should just use The Preparations without knowing what is involved.

This is biodynamics writ large for a new generation of people who want a complete transparency and understanding. It is the decade really that has also as a result put biodynamic practice under the spotlight. Certainly the vegans find that biodynamic practise enormously challenging and there have been biodynamic courses where the vegan community has found it very difficult to continue to attend.

But it is also a fact that many people wish to give biodynamics a fair chance to understand where it's coming from and what it does to improve the sustainability and the land's efficacy and vitality.

And to that extent, I think it's been very important to see biodynamic farms showing their skills at farm open days as at Spencer's farm in Essex, for example. Then there's been the farming work that's been done on the established Farms like Hungry Lane Farm, now 30 years of biodynamic farm in on the Leicestershire Nottingham border with an active farming year up to Pandemic times which involves also invitations to volunteers to come and help with Preparation Making. As a result you should see the beauty of the hedgerows!

Joe Bradley's life with all its Biodynamic practise and the local East Midlands anthroposophical community with Weleda at Ilkeston and The Michael House Steiner School up till recently, with those who know the rigorous standards that The Preparation Making days require and the harvesting days a refreshing and wonderful thing to do around an active BD farm which has a training contribution to make with The severn Valley Group.

In a sense the strange kind of moment when all these activities had to stop with the pandemic's starting in March 2020. That Gardening Conference in 2016 set off a very important, you could say, a string of events and The Biodynamic Step by Step Gardening Courses, at the last weekend of each month from February to July, and held mostly in Ruskin Mill College settings with the exception of Cumbria, where it was held at Brantwood, all had to be cancelled for the duration. That meant The BD Gardening Club which had begun and mostly online coming into its own with many new subscribers gardening virtually!

The different approach that gardening biodynamic involves how a garden has a kind of mineral, plant, animal and human being character and how it is an expression of your work on it, but also of the surroundings. All the people with the animals, the wildlife, the plant world and the rock and geology that the garden is situated is becomes an expression so that you serve this being, this garden being. And to support these days, the biodynamic gardening club was set up online, in fact, online courses where the you could say with a great burgeoning project of a Biodynamic Association developing with the use of social media and technology for online courses, new ways to disseminate biodynamic practise.

It has been a remarkable story. And biodynamic expansion, you could say, using the new forms of technology for example in online ordering it has been reflected in the setting up of The Seed Co-op in Lincolnshire - right in the middle if you like of industrial horticulture's homeland and providing a new home and a new chapter for the various Biodynamic Seed initiatives like Stormy Hall Seeds at Botton Village which did so much to future the use of open pollinated seeds as a natural and right alternative to hybrids. Will there be a seed catalogue in the future?!

Peter Brown gave way to Chris Stockdale and Chris, who'd been on the Biodynamic Council for many years and now became Chair of the Trustees and Director, carrying the Biodynamic Association, a Herefordshire farmer whose job in social services brought him in touch with people with special needs, but also a great interest in, for example, Polly Higgins, her work with Ecocide, which was also centred in Gloucestershire. The Stroud BD Office continued and expanded when the Demeter Standards Office which had been in Edinburgh before and now was well established in Stroud with new staff to carry the inspection work in farms, gardens and food processing, and to do that work in the way that was demanded by the new regulations that were increasingly coming in on the inspection process, which also included a huge amount of online questioning especially when the pandemic hit.

In a sense, the pandemic with everybody at home on Zoom meetings and online working, extended the work that the office was doing. Yet of course, people do miss each other and they will look forward, hopefully to meeting again, to turning a compost heap, to making The Preparations together and burying them to learning on on a farm or a market garden or at a college. Ruskin Mill is continuing to be a very generous benefactor in all the providing of trainings using their facilities as they have been open and outside for courses which has been allowed during The Pandemic which

has been enormously beneficial for both Biodynamics and hopefully for the Ruskin Mill College, the staff all having to get a thorough training in biodynamics as part of their work.

How can you develop selling in retail markets BD produce selling in Britain, who is now so dominated by the supermarket culture and that it's not easy to penetrate the big distribution kind of patterns if you are a biodynamic farm? In fact, it was noted by a director of the agriculture section at Goetheanum that whereas in Germany when he travels, every supermarket is groaning with Demeter BD Product, the absence of this BD product in Britain is a noticeable admission to him coming from abroad.

We in Britain, of course, can reflect on this observation by saying, well, that the most Biodynamic Produce is on some kind of 'personal relationship'. It is grown for a college or a school or a village community or becomes the subject of a vegetable box. It does not enter the conventional food chain so easily. And that is a question which in a sense either can be answered by saying where do we concentrate the need to produce more biodynamic product, as it were, for the market.

And what sort of products should that be? I know that many people will say, well, yes, Demeter BD product is usually in a tin, a bottle or a carton and that maybe can allow it into mainstream retail as long as it can find a competitive price. And there are one or two very good distributors of biodynamic product in the country, notably Essential Trading in Bristol. It is a perennial question how we go forward with providing biodynamic food into markets which need it. Markets, for example, in in urban or in housing areas where green vegetables are still hugely needed and not provided or that that biodynamic or organic produce that can overcome this rather unpleasant class divisive label that it is for people who can shop in Waitrose or and it is actually not fair on Waitrose itself with its unique employee owned set up and also distracts on the whole question of good food availability. That is important because at the end of the decade, Philip Conford's epic book on the Peckham Experiment published in 2020 looking at the 70 years that have elapsed since Peckham closed and the whole question of food and health and with the two doctors Williamson and Pearce who were doing this survey on self-determining family health the question of how to make healthy, happy people who are in control of their lives has not gone away.

And in the book, there was this rather special mention of the Steiner inspired Blackthorn Medical Centre in Maidstone, where it was famously said, you got three hours gardening instead of some pills as your prescription or the Healthy Villages Initiative or an art centre in the West Midlands becoming out of a surgery where the medical is, in a sense, partnered with painting and sculpture work and clay modelling where the arts community and the medical community joined together, especially to help people who might have mental health issues and bring a new purpose in life and through belonging to some of these quite creative organisations, can find a new chapter in their in their biographies

We need positives but I think one has to finish off this this dialogue by remarking that we are losing Biodynamic land in quite large acreages. One, the tragedies of the end of the decade was that Botton Village, the famous Camphill village community, no longer could be called biodynamic. It was closing its farms and farm related workshops down. Partly it was the pandemic. Partly it was a group of the residents not who are supposedly not wanting to work on the land anymore and partly staffing and technical problems.

But one could also detect the lack of will to continue community farming by the social care dominated and managed top down CVT which used to be Communities and aren't any more. A tragic situation and there are some beautiful and remarkable places in in areas of outstanding natural beauty or national parks which now lie fallow waiting for a new chapter in their lives. What we will do with them, nobody quite knows what will happen. Nobody also knows because the social services and the provision, the care provision doesn't quite connect into the care for the land model or and

the other side of that is the care farming movement, which could have really made some very important connexions, what used to be called Horticultural Therapy and was aligned to some of the organic movement, especially the Henry Doubleday Association, have failed really to connect up to the, the alternative farming, biodynamic, organic movement in any appreciable way.

We're still. Waiting for the outcome when the Green Care Alliance which grew out of the care farming movement, maybe will return some biodynamic land in the care sector because of this.

So there we have it, 10 years in which the Biodynamic Association moved slightly away from its roots of just being agricultural, lost its agricultural name in 2013 when it became the Biodynamic Association and took on with an enormous celebration you could say the gardeners, the back street gardeners, the Allotment Holders, the pots in the yard and on the terrace! The gardeners who perhaps have more time to engage with D in The Biodynamic Gardening Club who are newcomers to biodynamics and give the Biodynamic Association a new lease of life by their enthusiasm and interest.

And meanwhile The Biodynamic Association has been building enough strength to provide that inspiration and interest and knowledge for this new group of people who who've discovered biodynamics in this climate change world, which has so many people concerned about the future of how we look after our planet. And of course, the pandemic has only served to underline the enormity of the task to deindustrialise farming and agriculture and all the poisoned land and make growing more local, more sustainable. And biodynamics is poised in the next decade to help just that come about.

Thank you.

Precis Camphills implode. Land Trust & Gardening Club established. Seed Co-op moves to Lincolnshire. BDAA loses an A. BDAC takes on the training.

Historical context: WhatsApp released, Arab Spring – Gaddafi killed, Occupy, Pope Francis, Mandela dies, Indyrefs in Scotland / Catalunya, Brexit, Trump & Boris Johnson, ISIS, George Floyd.

Analysis (Applying the GL template to the history)



• lectures, conferences,
 training, education,
 conferences, summer schools.
 • AGM Adrian
Anderson
 • farms/hallings
 social care / cumphol
 • research / experimental
 WHITE
 • PINK / BLACK = STEINER
 • Post 2000 commercial
 farm green in off

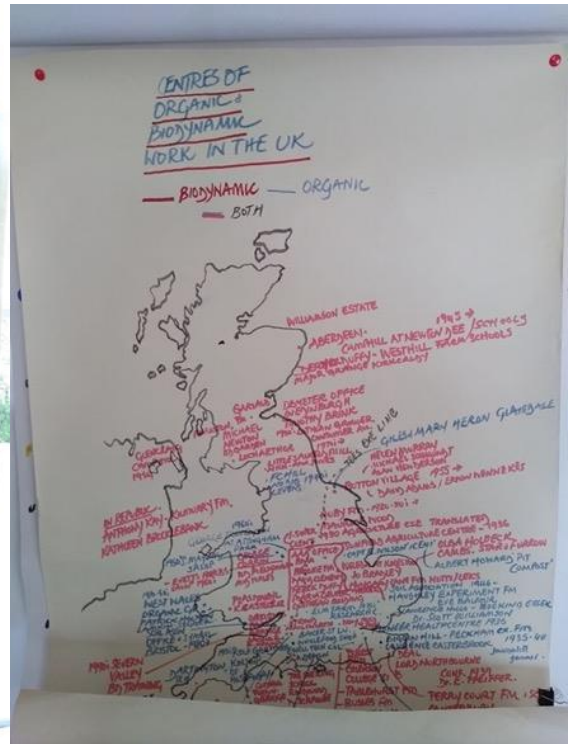
ASTRAL ✦ EGO ✦✦
 ANTI SYMPATHY _{CLOSED} PERSON
 SYMPATHY _{OPEN} ORGANISATION
 ✦ IN / EX ✦ + VE
 ✦ SHADOW
 WOUND
 OBSTRUCTION
 (circle) not chaotic
 within - block periods

T

STREAMS IN BD

- Social therapeutic
- Educational therapeutic
- Alchemical (preps)
- Food production
- Medicinal
- Recreational
- Training (prod)
- Research

S
E
A
F
M
R
T



NICK HART - EDITOR
JONES TALK TO
PAT McMANUS
IT LITTLE SALKELA
UMBRIA FOR STAR
RRON ARTICLE

ANN PARSONS
SR. AT GOERMAN
SCIENCE BUILDINGS
AT CLINT.

JIMMY ANDERSON
FIELDSMAN
EDINBURGH OFFICE
FOR DEMETER CERTIFICATION
TIMOTHY BRINK

AT SUPPLIES
AT CLINT

MICHAEL NEWTON
NES
SCOTLAND

KOLSKO FARM
BY PROJECT
WYNSTONES HOSTEL
GLOS.

ALAN BROCKMAN
CHAIR OF BDA

Cecil Reilly
TREASURER

ANTHONY KAYE
B.I. IRELAND REP
CEANS DAVIS (CARDS
GREEN'S BUSINESS
CHOCOLATE (TECHNOLOGICAL S.A)

SEEN GROUP
MEETS AT
BOTTON VILLAGE
(STORMY HALL
SEEMS TO BECOME)

RICHARD THORNTON
SMITH, LEEDS UNIV
BECOMES COUNCIL MEM

PATRICIA THOMPSON
EDITOR STAR + FURROW

EXHIBITS OF
FLORA FIELDS AT
BISHOPSCOTE EXHIBITION.

MICHAEL NEWTON
NES
MENT
CENTRE
STEWART
LIBRERIES

BYRON POLICE
BIODYNAMIC
PRACTICE, SUFFOLK
WISTON

COMING TO THE
AGRICULTURE
EXPERIMENT OF THE

THE B.I. JOURNAL
REPRINTING
BY JAMES
BY JAMES

THE B.I. JOURNAL
REPRINTING
BY JAMES
BY JAMES

THE B.I. JOURNAL
REPRINTING
BY JAMES
BY JAMES

Handwritten notes and lists of names and activities, including mentions of 'The B.I. Journal' and 'Reprinting'.

Handwritten notes and lists of names and activities, including mentions of 'The B.I. Journal' and 'Reprinting'.



The images above emerged over the first days of the Genius Loci process.

As mentioned in the guidance to the process, the initial appreciation of Biodynamics in the UK takes place in four preparatory stages, each of which was nominally allocated a day in the spring of 2021.

Day 1 – establishing the non-moving as accurately as possible, ie the biodynamically treated land (spatially non-moving) and the clearly established dates (temporally fixed). This gave us a geographical map and a time-line as shown in the images above and [online](#).

Day 2 – looking for patterns, particularly through time, most simply for regular events (AGMs, publications) but also in relation to astronomical markers and other pivotal events. The yearly rhythm was also drawn out with preparation events and festivals along with yearly fixtures such as solstices and so forth.

Day 3 - looking for the atmosphere at various phases of the 'biography' of the BD association, when it was content and when it was struggling, what drew it and what pushed it away.

Day 4 - looking at the times the 'self' has been put on the line, via the individuals concerned and other free interventions and sacrifices.

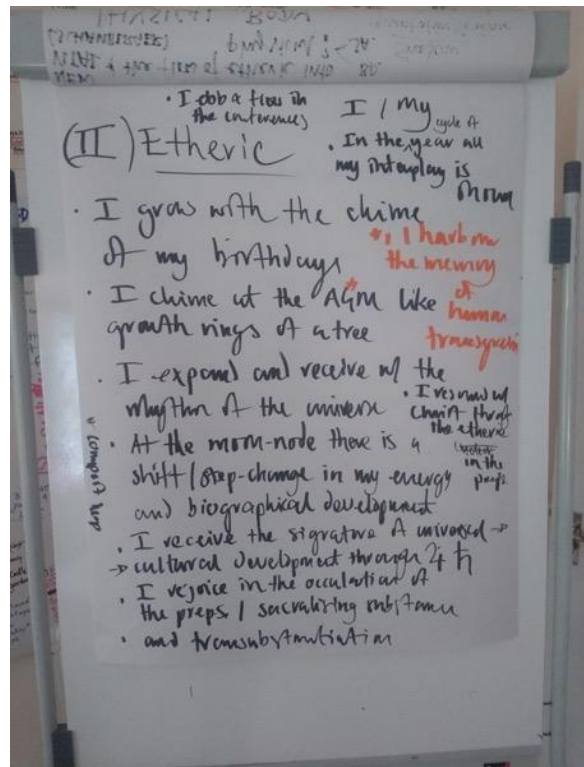
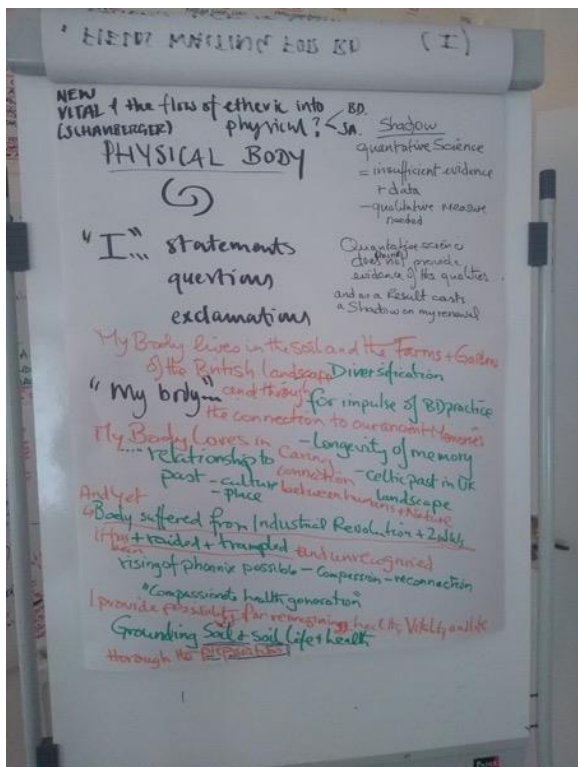
That these days didn't stick to their guidelines was inevitable because these are intermingled threads which combine in all sorts of ways to weave the full story.

The low fruit of all of this is clarity on how we got here – at least in some factual sense. The more meaningful conclusions from this process will take time to come into focus and it is hoped to be ones which evolve with the BDA over time and with some active correspondence with the Being of the BDA.

Just as the days have gone over the lines so it has been impossible to hold back ideas about what's going on. Nucleating narratives around which the story might make sense have been 'in the air' and some are listed here for consideration and for the record:

- Biodynamics – sacred and profane
- Public consumption and internal rumination
- The Tees-Exe line
- Women and men
- Celtic and Roman approaches – circles and triangles

- Protected settings and the market
- UK and Germanic BD
- The research case
- How does one do BD research?
- Should the BDA lead the charge?
- What would a thriving Experimental Circle look like?
- Does biodynamics work?
- Dogma and innovation
- Science and biodynamics
- Broad church



(III) Astral

- I can't describe to avoid ^{not naming} being a revolving door
- I carry hope-enthusiasm
- I have a tendency to invite mistrust and a splitting tendency. I wish to be transparent + pure
- I invite co-operative (co-working) but ^{egoistic} ^{confront}
- I sometimes hold my light in for fear of scorn
- * I covert and obvious, and don't share if you are not ready
- * Fear of mockery is in my astral body
- * I wish to share but on my own terms
- * I bear arrogance and carry the shadow of the 'Chosen One' - you do not have the truth
- In my body is betrayed, holding on, and yet a deep desire to shine

(III) Astral

- I have failed to be shaped: ^{suffering from concepts and poor process}
- and yet volunteer support, selfless initiative and humbleness within my physical manifestation.
- I regularly called to read it to collaborate and as required to find new language.
- I yearn for rescue.
- I yearn to be broken and understood.
- I wish to shine -

IV EQD TASK & PURPOSE

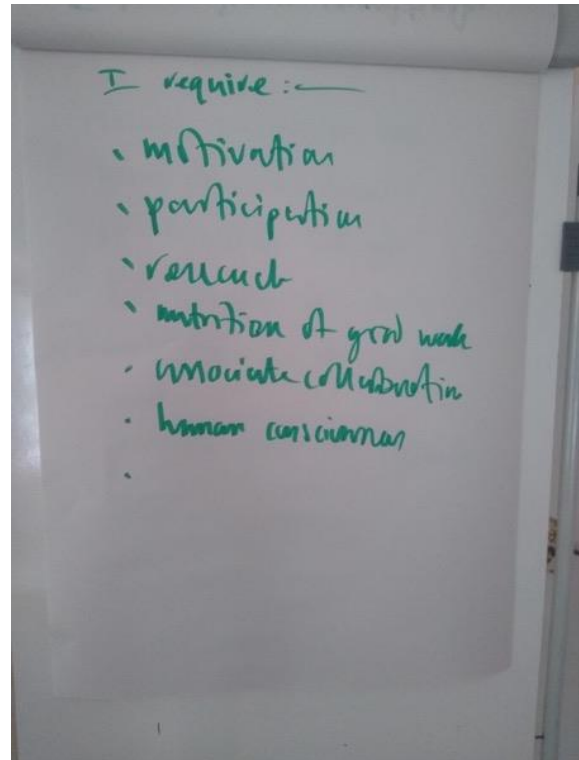
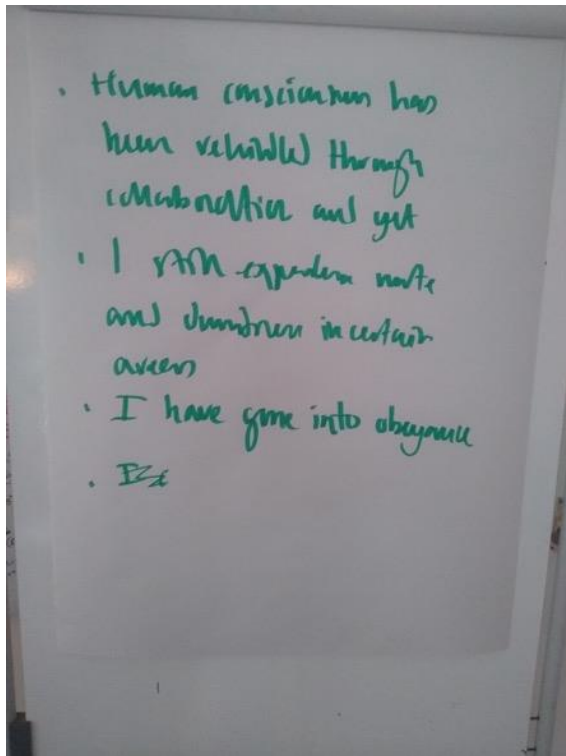
nk ↓

I minister Christ in the Etheric in the physical through the prisms as a counterweight for the dying earth ^{enabling the earth} connecting the robes to the human ^{enabling the earth} ^{and the development of the} ^{evolution} ^{and} ^{perhaps the} ^{conscience} ^{through this participation}

I invite you to inquire/participate into this.

IV EQD

- I have been unwittingly of capture and restricted through impulses and devices, at times I have been shut down.
- ~~To be understood and~~ I have re-awakened, recognized have been followed and abandoned.



Physical –

- My body lives in the soil and the farms and gardens of the British Landscape and through the connection to our ancient memories.
- My Body loves in caring connection between humans and nature ... and yet my body has suffered from the Industrial Revolution and 2 world wars. It has been raided and trampled and left unrecognised.
- I provide possibility for reimagining health and vitality and life through the preparations.

Etheric

- I grow with the chime of my birthdays.
- I ebb and flow in the conferences
- In the cycle of the year all my interplay is shown
- I chime at the AGMs like the growth rings of a tree
- I expand and recede with the rhythm of the universe
- At the moon-node there is a shift / step-change in my energy and biographical development
- I receive the signature of universal and cultural development through Saturn and Jupiter
- I rejoice in the inoculation of the preparations sacralising substance and transubstantiation

- I harbour the memory of human transgression
- I resound with Christ through the etheric with the preparations

Astral

- I carry hope / enthusiasm
- I have a tendency to invite mistrust and a splitting tendency.
- I wish to be transparent and open
- I invite cooperative co-working but egotism can ruin it
- I sometimes hold my light in for fear of scorn
- I covert and pre-ordain and don't share if you are not signed-up
- Fear of mockery is in my astral body
- I wish to share but on my own terms
- I bear arrogance and carry the shadow of the 'chosen one' - 'you do not have the truth'
- In my body is betrayal, holding on, and yet a deep desire to shine
- I have failed to be shaped, suffering from concepts and peer process and yet volunteer support
- Selfless initiatives are hallmarks within my physical menterution (?)
- I regularly attempt to reach out to collaborate and am required to find new language
- I yearn for research
- I yearn to be known and understood
- I wish to shine

Ego

- I manifest Christ in the Etheric in the physical through the preparations as a countervailing for the dying earth connecting the cosmos to the human being and enabling the development of human consciousness through this participation
- I invite you to inquire into / participate in this
- I have been unwittingly captured and requisitioned (?) through impulses and devices at times I have even shut down
- I have reawakened, recognising having been tortured and abandoned.
- I require motivation, participation, research, nutrition of good work, associative collaboration, human consciousness
- Human consciousness has been rekindled through collaboration and yet
- I still expect norte and dumbness in certain areas
- I have gone into abeyance

Discussion and Conclusion

i - Mark Moodie

Personal conflicts

Biodynamic agriculture is carried by individuals and if any of these people are perfect they have managed to keep this to themselves. This report has gone into some detail of the impact of this state of affairs in the fighting that dominated anthroposophical collegial activity from 1925 to 1935, and the turbulence that it left for many decades. It is easier to reveal such early struggles than those nearer in time. Some of the latter are touched upon in the transcripts of interviews in the appendix to the full report but what would be gained by further probing and revelation? There is not the necessary distance to come to even provisional judgement and most of the participants are still alive. It is out of their own efforts that any healing impulse must come.

What one might legitimately deduce, however, is that there will always be 'people stuff' in an organisation and that such stuff cannot be legislated away. Perhaps this is even more the case in an organisation that brings people together from such diverse approaches as was indicated in the section on the [School of Michael](#), who are working together against the cultural tides.

What can be profitable is to clarify the form and the purpose and aims of the BDA. It is hoped that this *Genius Personae* project can contribute towards such a goal. With such clarity, and with an agreed and appropriate form of governance, the conflicts which will inevitably arise might have a reduced impact on the common project.

Given that 'people stuff' will not be tidied away one can recognise the need for forgiving trespasses as a fundamental and ongoing foundation for any such communal striving.

The basics

A discipline which wishes to establish itself in modern times would ideally have two things in place: a clear explanation of how it works, and varied demonstrations of its success. Almost any other discipline has been built upon basic original hypotheses and shown a slow build-up of experience- and experiment-led exploration as time elapsed. Maturation reveals, although perhaps not in a constant trajectory, an ever-greater perfection of that discipline's scope and accuracy, and thus of its efficacy.

BD, by stark contrast, started from a non-farmer giving some opaque lectures in a far-away manor house to those who are often labelled 'believers' or occasionally 'students'. These students and their successors have failed to reach consensus about what was presented almost 100 years ago and to develop the discipline for modern agricultural challenges. Perhaps the Agriculture course is a simple document which some have overcomplicated unnecessarily. On the other hand, perhaps it is a glimpse into an intensely complex endeavour and we lack the necessarily energetic collective research to reveal its full import.

Focussing on the practical side, does the implementation of biodynamics give encouragement that excellent agriculture would arise from this source? Whilst a sympathetic person could say yes to this question, such an opinion is no 'slam dunk' in the face of scepticism. Those proposing the motion might point to some transformed soils in Australia, or to an oenophile's blog, and even a rare trial with controls and good evaluation protocols such as the DOK trials.

Whilst the social and environmental benefits that attend the movement are impressive and stand up to comparison with agribusiness' full-cost-accounting bottom line, is this any more the case than the practice of a thoughtful organic grower? Have the defining biodynamic practices demonstrated that they are necessary and sufficient for moving us out of the current crisis?

Given that 'no' is the answer of the majority, the landscape is set for all the dramas and challenges facing the BDA today. It holds the UK guardianship of a discipline which has attracted people of various inclinations (head-bound scientists, vibe-oriented intuitive types, practical workers) for a huge range of reasons (intuition, environmental despair, curiosity, some isolated experience) and these folk want to work together to further their hope that BD in the UK will show its full potential. And then it has a role to protect BD from the sceptic⁴² or those with active ill-will and does not have sufficient material in its past to repel all boarders. Between the wish to support the various approaches of sympathetic folk, and to resist the attacks of those with antipathy, or simply to encourage the potential of BD to emerge with a difficult founding document and insufficient 'proof' - the task is not going to be easy.

Yet there is support for BD and there is a hunger that BD could satisfy despite the challenges outlined above. How might the BDA in the UK best fulfil its guardianship role?

Throughout the *genius personae* process, persistent themes and issues have arisen. In the hope of clarifying the discussion of these issues a suitable pictorial form has been selected to consider them in context. The same image can be used for many of these themes.

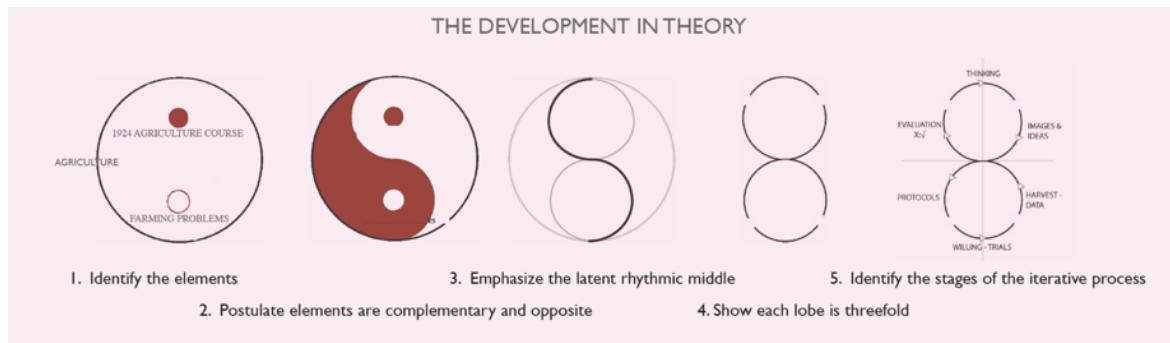
UK BD R&D

The basic diagram/image is familiar to students of Dr Steiner. The 'lemniscate' indicates a variety of ways that complementary and opposite phenomena interact. It is culturally represented as the moebius strip, the sign for infinity, as Virgin Media's logo and now also of Meta and the 2022 Qatar world cup! - and is one of a host of symbols which portray the same dynamic: the Star of David, the Masons' compass and square, or the Taijitu⁴³ of oriental philosophy.

It is good to bear in mind that the lemniscate is an archetype that can be applied to any situation which relates complementary opposites to each other. Here we are using it specifically to track an ideal developmental process of how biodynamics might grow strong in the UK. From left to right in the progression below one can track the theoretical route from Koberwitz 1924 to a healthy biodynamic presence and future.

⁴² [Nobel-winner Parisi blasts anti-science drift](#). Physicist cites biodynamic agriculture, opposition to vaccines. ROME, NOV 22, 2021 - Nobel Prize-winning Italian physicist on Monday blasted a rise in unscientific beliefs such as opposition to vaccines. "There are strong anti-scientific tendencies in today's society," Parisi said during a lecture for the opening of the academic year at Rome's La Sapienza University. "The prestige of science and trust in it are diminishing fast. Together with voracious technological consumerism, astrological, homeopathic and anti-science practices are spreading widely, see the anti-vax movement, for example, and a frankly witchcraft-like practice like biodynamic agriculture is set to be recognized by a law of the Italian State".

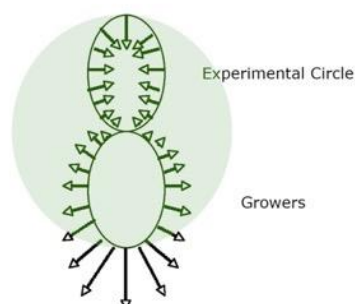
⁴³ The ying yang sign. Whilst [Wikipedia](#) says "A taijitu is a symbol or diagram in Chinese philosophy representing Taiji in both its monist and its dualist aspects," the anthroposophical lemniscate is more explicit in showing a third mediating aspect between the complementary opposite poles.



The outer circle – the circle is the monist icon *par excellence* - represents the whole arena of biodynamic agriculture in the UK. The dualistic poles of the lemniscate are, first, the inner developmental research activity drenched in anthroposophical understandings and labels, and then the outer manifestation of biodynamic agriculture in the UK. If we designate the worldly manifestation as an expansive sulphuric⁴⁴ pole we would identify it with the biodynamic farms and gardens that anyone can visit, together with the physical preparations and instructions for their application. The contractive ‘salt’ pole is formed from the deliberations of those who strive to work towards and out of an understanding of biodynamics from its anthroposophically charted foundations up – primarily manifest, in theory at least, as the Experimental Circle.

When the poles become polarised and do not communicate with or flow into each other, any lemniscate will be static and lifeless, stagnating in purely self-referential processes, dogmatism and ungrounded chat. It would manifest as researchers caught up in their theories and unable to survive peer review, isolated from the farmers who just ‘get on with it’. This is unable to address the issues of the day. Such a lemniscate withers away.

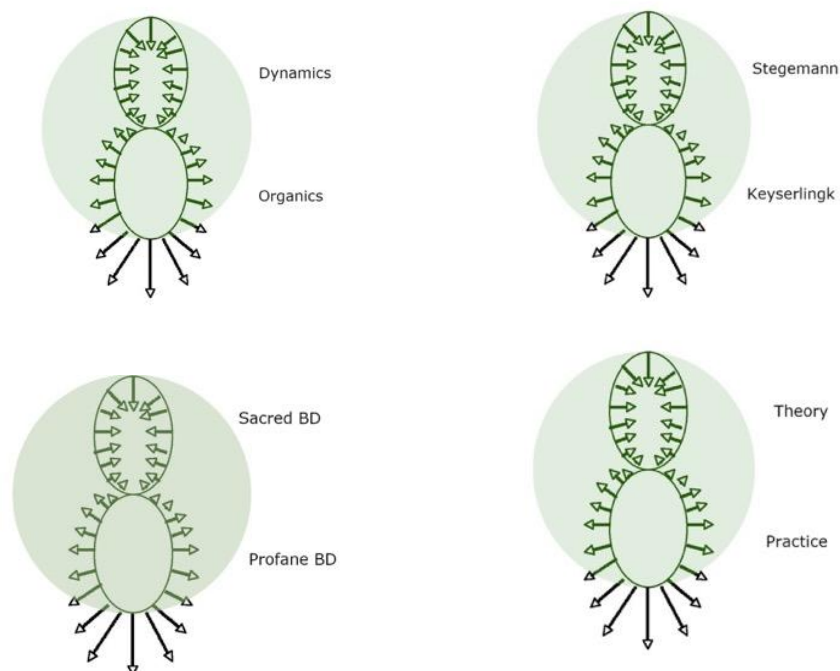
Alternatively, it could be a creative tension, pumping and vibrant so that the initiatives of the upper pole - innovations based on the fullness of anthroposophy - do in fact ‘seek the truly practical life⁴⁵’ within the present realities of farming and gardening. Here the R&D iteratively seeks out and addresses the problems which called forth the innovations in the first place. That energy would flow back from the growers to researchers in the form of reality-checking feedback and data, requests and suggestions for increased efficacy, and in the form of enquiries concerning ever new practical concerns.



⁴⁴ This language is that of alchemy with the complementary opposite poles being that of *sulphur* (orientated outwards) and *salt* (inwardly oriented) mediated by the rhythmical *mercurial* interaction.

⁴⁵ “Seek the truly practical life, but seek it in such a way that it does not blind you to the spirit working in it. Seek the spirit, but seek it not out of spiritual greed, but so that you may apply it in the genuinely practical life.” Dr Steiner

The same image that encompasses this dynamic can be re-labelled, and perhaps this will help illuminate several of the issues covered below.



Are all aspects thriving in BD in the UK? It would appear that, in the UK at least, neither of the lobes is particularly robust and don't interact much, and if that is the case how could the whole be in good shape? Compared with the situation on the continent, as pointed out by [Ueli Heuter](#), there is very little biodynamic food available in the shops here – a symptom that the outer face of UK biodynamics is absent or pale. And looking at the other pole, if we scan the paperwork generated over the years it would seem that there has been a lot of activity in the experimental circle but to what effect?

At Koberwitz Dr Steiner suggested that the Experimental Circle would try things out and report back to the Goetheanum who would comment and suggest what might improve their situation. Clearly '*the Goetheanum*'⁴⁶ in this context would originally have meant Dr Steiner who would continue guiding others (Pfeiffer, Wachsmuth, Kolisko, Wegman, Schmidt ...) to become familiar enough with his approach and insights so that he would no longer be an indispensable part of this process. But he died sooner than would have been ideal and one can at least ask whether the team left behind were able to carry the responsibilities of nurturing this fledgling discipline. If the originator of that discipline was not available to train and develop his successors then is biodynamics always to be hampered?

In theory, theory and practice are the same thing. In practice they're not.

Ideally there would be a clearly structured reservoir of research after almost 100 years since Dr Steiner's course. There would be those who have found their way far enough into the esoteric foundations of the course (and anthroposophy in general) to be able to draw from that source ever anew in the light of the new challenges facing agriculture and the changes in the etheric

⁴⁶ "The Goetheanum is present where ever one works out of its spirit" – quoted by Manfred Klett. See below.

configuration of the Earth. It is fair to say that this is not the Experimental Circle of UK's strongest suit.

Hugh Ellis, calling the ideal circulation *breathing*, asked in the [News Sheet No 14](#) of 1949, "is all well with our Circle?"

It is just a year since my election to the Experimental Circle. I well remember how I imagined the Circle would be. I thought of a comparatively few members meeting together for intensive study and discussion of the Course or some other teaching of Dr Steiner's, I imagined them pooling practical experience and wise thought in questions raised by their work and study, and then all going back to their holdings to carry out further study and experiments. I visualised study and experiment as the 'breathing' activity of the individual Members, and their meeting and return home as the equivalent rhythm of the Circle. It did not occur to me that there would be some members who took part in this process rarely or never.

Perhaps I idealised too much: perhaps the picture was one for another generation. Or possibly I was basing my ideas on the scientific method to which I was accustomed. And yet... Is all well with our Circle? Are we forging ahead of current scientific thought, and discovering facts that Science will be glad to acknowledge in years to come? Have we anything to our credit as a Circle in any way comparable to what George Adams and Olive Whicher are accomplishing? Surely, to deserve our existence we should be the spearhead of the Anthroposophical Agricultural Movement and should aim at evolving thoughts as far ahead of our own time as those of Koberwitz were ahead of the thought of 1924.

Dr Steiner was never one to hang on to institutions that had lost their spiritual justification. Have we reached the time when we should say: "The Experimental Circle in this country has lost its original impulse. It would be better to dissolve it, and metamorphose it into something new that has a greater creative urge"?

In putting forward such a suggestion one cannot but be very conscious of one's own failings as a Member, and of one's own inadequacy to take part in something more vital. But these things in a sense are beside the point. The question is always "What is our responsibility to the Spiritual world, and are we fulfilling it?" Beside this, all personal questions are insignificant, and if I have expressed myself too radically I beg Fellow Members not to take offence. My striving is only towards what we can achieve together in future. Whether we feel that something new can come to birth, or whether we feel that the present form is adequate, let us review our position together in the News Sheet. This vehicle exists for the strengthening of the Circle activity. Let us know, above all, if there are any who disagree with the premise that the Circle exists for intensive work between its members and that, failing in that, it fails as a Circle.

One can read his peers' responses to this letter on the [same link](#). However, I cannot see that the issue was put to bed by them. For instance, the present writer echoed the same in 2011⁴⁷ before leaving the Circle to seek a more vibrant research community.

When I first found biodynamics I assumed that there would be many more examples ... in which anthroposophical reasoning and experimental development would be mutually reinforcing to ground more of the huge potential of the agriculture course in relation to farming issues. However, despite the fact that this research process is well described by anthroposophical cartography, this process does not seem to be entrenched in biodynamics.

In the 1980s [John Soper stated](#) that little had been achieved by the Circle.

... Apart from the effects of the moon on plant growth, very little has since been done here except perhaps by [L. Edwards](#). Much development still awaits tomorrow⁴⁸! Possibly in response to Rudolf Steiner's address to the Koberwitz gathering, the Experimental Circle was formed and monthly meetings were held to study selected lectures; but as in its German counterpart, **little if any actual experimental work has been instigated.**

⁴⁷ <https://www.considera.org/downloads/BDRResearch.pdf>

⁴⁸ An allusion to the Kolisko's 'Agriculture of Tomorrow'

In the 1990s a splinter group spun off from the main experimental circle calling itself the 'research group'. Though these were essentially the same people as in the main experimental circle, they clearly felt an unsatisfied need to 'do something' practical. Their nucleating issue was the appearance of the NZ flatworm but they too failed to achieve their goal.

Katherine Castelliz and Alan Brockman both had thoughts and expressed opinions about what their hopes were for the Circle. Bernard Jarman hoped and then implemented some changes so that the esoteric side of the Circle might be strengthened by connecting the UK Circle to the Goetheanum.

When Mike Atherton tried to reanimate the circle at the turn of the millennium he wrote to Manfred Klett, who replied:

I very much appreciate your engagement to reveal the history of the Experimental Circle and thus to find out what it's present task could be ... The predominating intention of the farmers attending the Agricultural Course was to found such a circle and ... to introduce spiritual research by experiment into practical work. The foundation finally took place after the third lecture, 11th June 1924, with an address by Rudolf Steiner.

In this address he outlines simply in two sentences what the task should be: literally translated "... what we need in Dornach, is a representation of each, who is willing to cooperate in the circle, what he has under the earth and what he has above the earth and how these two things work together. And what Dornach provides as science must be such, that it is well understood by even the most conservative peasant head"⁴⁹.. ...

No doubt the Experimental Circle has been the original vessel, provided exoterically by the historical process, to receive, carry and foster the esoteric content of Agriculture Course. ... Rudolf Steiner was very practical minded. On the one hand he promoted on-farm research in order to improve farming and to deliver spiritual insights into this field of life, on the other hand his intention was to form a body linked to the Anthroposophical Society and, by some of its leading members, to the High School of Spiritual Science. ... **This unique disposition of an active interrelationship between periphery and centre, that is the High School of Spiritual Science, never really came into being.** The early death of Rudolf Steiner left as a legacy to us, the generations to come. The tragedy of the following decades was a threefold one. First! the historical events of the 20th century, especially the evil impact of the Nazi-regime in Middle Europe and World War II smashed this tender germ. Second the unity of the Anthroposophical Society broke and parts and pieces disconnected from one another and from the Goetheanum. I assume the historical becoming of the Experimental Circle in Great Britain, and somewhat its isolation and uncertainty about its tasks must be seen and can be understood on this background. Third and in my opinion the most essential reason for **the general inability to fulfil the intentions of Rudolf Steiner was and to a certain extent still is the fact that they are not fully understood in their practical and spiritual dimensions.** They were and still are too modern, too much related to an advanced stage of the consciousness soul. ... I would like to add a few remarks: Rudolf Steiner states: The task of the High School is to advance by spiritual research ever deeper into the esoteric as well as to work in the highest possible intensity into the public. "The knowledge of initiation must become the knowledge of civilisation". ...

⁴⁹ This was translated in the Agriculture Course appendix as ... "...from each one of you who wants to work in this Circle, we in Dornach will need a description of your farm in terms of what is above ground and what is below ground, and how these two things are working together. After all, if our advice is to be of any use, we need to know your circumstances quite exactly. What is meant here is what you know from your daily practice much better than we can know in Dornach: the soil structure of your individual farm, the amount and type of woodland, the crops that have been grown on the farm in the last few years, how the yields were, and so on. In short, everything that farmers themselves need to know in order to run their farms with intelligence – with peasant wisdom. What is on the farm, and what your individual experience with it has been – that is the kind of information we will need initially. This does not take long to describe."

Klett clearly identified the same issue in 2002 as today, and whilst credit must go to Bernard Jarman for taking up part of the challenge by reconnecting The Goetheanum and the UK circle⁵⁰, Klett also notes that “*The Goetheanum is present where ever one works out of its spirit*”. One can ask if Dornach is really the right or only complement to the UK Experimental Circle. Whilst one would like to avoid false binaries and mistaking an either/or debate for a both/and debate⁵¹, one can ask if all the graduates of Michael’s academy are based in Switzerland. The whole issue of the connection between the folk spirits of the continent and the UK has arisen time and again in the *Genius Personae* process.

The UK has produced some remarkable insights into biodynamics and related subjects. Adams, Whicher, Edwards, Calderwood and Thomas have established a thorough framework and matching empirical findings for the forces recognised in biodynamics. If we can grant Lilly Kolisko a posthumous *Lola Budd* pass into team-UK, then the extraordinary work presented in *Agriculture of Tomorrow* could be added in. And the UK-BD scene can be justifiably proud of the activities in the social arena – Camphill, Sunfield, RMT, BDLT - which have established protective social microclimates in which BD could be practiced in the face of the prevailing currents. But these bright lights have failed to come together sufficiently to sustain a thriving BD scene which might attract all farmers by the gravitational pull of its excellence.

What happened to Lilly Kolisko’s work?

An enigma in all of this is the work of Lilly Kolisko. In the *Agriculture of Tomorrow* one feels that the kind of work that a thriving experimental circle should be producing is presented in all its ground-breaking genius. Not only does this work **not** galvanise the circle into building further and wider, Lilly is notable by her very absence from the circle. Only [in the one letter](#) do we hear Pfeiffer mention her work and then this is to call it a ‘grave problem’ – presumably because something from the ‘secret’ lobe of the ideal lemniscate peeks its head above the ramparts, endangering all in the BD bunker.

That some of Lilly Kolisko’s original work may now be rotting in a barn in Wales has become known in the course of the *Genius Personae* process. That the human relationships surrounding this still appear to be fraught and fragile suggests that there is much energy to be liberated here. The timing also raises the possibility of associating this *coincidence*⁵² with the being of Biodynamics in the UK.

⁵⁰ A parallel and more grass-roots attempt to bring the Germanic and English-speaking BD worlds together was made by [Pat Thompson](#) (then MacManaman) which became manifest in the IBIG conferences. These efforts stirred to life in 1984, and the first conference was in 1986.

⁵¹ A truly insightful and gorgeously presented exploration of this is [available here](#).

⁵² How would the sought-for Being of UK BD communicate with the non-clairvoyant? Jung flagged up *enantiodromia* – the relevant aspect of which for our present circumstances is to be particularly attentive to what comes towards participants during the ‘courtship’. Such ‘coincidences’ are ignored at cost during this period: Lilly’s research, the [Circular Letter 119](#) from Dornach, Glen Atkinson’s presentations on [agriculture and medicine](#), new interpretations and [extension of the Koberwitz course](#)... ..

How should biodynamic agriculture best present itself in the UK?

A very clear thread runs throughout biodynamic history from its inception to right now. This issue is even coded into its name⁵³. It is inherent in the nature of the situation: biodynamics is a form of agriculture whose core is alien to the culture in which it is embedded^{54, 55}. Everyone familiar with biodynamics can look back on when they first encountered filling cow horns with cow poo, or removing a farm animal's brain and filling the cavity with oak bark before putting it in stinky mud. We may have forgotten the shock but an echo can be noticed each time we introduce a newbie. Even without the shock and assuming good will, there is a fundamental reorientation, at least for an educated westerner, to grapple with etheric forces and astrality and their relation to the stars and planets.

Ernst Stegemann and Count Keyserlingk had, [according to Manfred Klett](#), already had a heated debate about such things at the first (unrecorded)⁵⁶ experimental circle meeting at Breslau.

The foundation was agreed after a very sharp discussion between Count Keyserlingk and Ernst Stegemann. The latter put the main emphasis on the esoteric side, while count Keyserlingk preferred a practical exoteric orientation.

Steiner himself referred to this at length when [he spoke to the experimental circle](#) at Koberwitz. Dr Steiner delineated two ways that the promotion of practical outcomes of anthroposophy can miss the mark. There are those who think that professionals (including farmers) can be made into anthroposophists at the drop of a *bonne mot* or two. Neither have such a sharp turning circle. Then he warned against "a sloppy patchwork of anthroposophy and [material] science. That will not bring us forward at all."

Pfeiffer was very cautious about sharing too much of the background to biodynamics⁵⁷. This was clear in [his characterisation](#) of Lilly Kolisko's Agriculture of Tomorrow as a '*grave problem*', and in [his condemnation of the AAF](#) in his letter to Lady Mackinnon.

⁵³ Nicolai Fuchs: "In 1929 a conversation with Erhard Bartsch gave rise to the name "biodynamic", which does not go back to Steiner: Erhard Bartsch had voted for the anthroposophical method Agriculture to be called "organic farming". Ernst Stegemann, however, advocated the term "dynamic farming", which is probably related to his deep connection to astronomy and weather events. The term "biodynamic farming" is attributable to the combination of these two approaches."

⁵⁴ "... these thoughts do represent something quite foreign in the context of present day views." [Letter to Ita Wegman](#) from Dr Steiner whilst at Koberwitz.

⁵⁵ One reaction, fortunately said with a twinkle in the eye, was that, "Biodynamics really is very efficient: with each bullet I can save the world from a homeopath, an astrologer, a Christian and a hippy who believes in fairies!"

⁵⁶ - Some notes have emerged in 2021 and are intended to be part of the 9th edition of the Agriculture Course

⁵⁷ "In the Agricultural Course at Koberwitz, at which one or two of those here were also present, I indicated guiding lines for agriculture. An elderly farmer attended the course, who is also an old member of the Society. Throughout the whole of the course he could not rid himself of a feeling of misgiving; it kept coming out in the discussions. Again and again he would say: 'But if we do that, we shall be using occult means for practical ends; won't that be steering too close to the sphere of ethics? Could not these truths be applied also in a wrong way?' He was never able to get rid of this scruple; he was always suspicious of black magic in the application. Needless to say, these things do become black magic when they are not handled as they ought to be handled. And it was for this reason that I said once on that occasion quite explicitly: 'A high standard of morality is absolutely essential in dealing with these matters; therefore, I assume at the outset that those who attend this course attend it on purely ethical grounds, desirous only to serve humanity and help agriculture. The Agricultural Experimental Circle has accordingly to be regarded also as an ethical circle, which definitely sets

Dr Meirs makes no clear line between the purely Anthroposophical endeavour and what is needed for the outside. He always asks through his way of publishing things that the outside has to take part immediately in Anthroposophical matters. This, I think, is not possible and also it is not right to ask the average farmer or gardener to show Anthroposophical interest at once. However, it should be our endeavour through the way in which we represent our practice and background in a business-like manner that people gradually become interested.

To Miss Nancy Fisher this opinion was spelled out further:

... there should by all means be maintained an internal circle of Anthroposophical Farmers and Gardeners who do research work, investigation, and work out such schemes that the Anthroposophical agricultural ideas of Dr Steiner can be made understandable to the general public. In fact this internal group is the research group proper who bring down the message of the spiritual worlds into practical forms. .. Second, the Biodynamic Association is to represent the experience based on the application of the Biodynamic Method to the outer public, that is, to those farmers and gardeners who are not able or willing to deal with the Anthroposophical ideas... Since we are not able to convince every farmer and gardener of our Anthroposophical back-ground, it is, therefore necessary, of course, to have such an association as the Biodynamic Association, to help the farmer who does not want to deal with Anthroposophy. This is therefore the external work, the public representation towards the practical part as well as the scientific part. This is really our front line of attack and defence. If we keep these two things separate there will be no trouble ...

Perhaps the times have changed sufficiently to travel further down the path that Pfeiffer eschewed?

The role of the BDA

The lemniscate has clear vertical and horizontal axes. Both pass through and cross at the central point at the intersection of the two lobes of the lemniscate. One could label the area above the horizon as the area for internal work and that below as belonging to a worldly manifestation. If we were to borrow from Dr Steiner's epistemological works we might keep the labels pithy as the hemispheres of *concepts* and *percepts*.

Again, simplifying slightly, we can put labels to the vertical axis and note that the upper inner-orientated lobe is dominated by inner efforts, the lower by doing. If we place an archetypal human being on this axis we can ask, 'what is this central point which mediates between thinking and willing?'

I would like to suggest that in a healthy version of the modern era, one which is striving to achieve freedom and love, this vertical axis needs active efforts to be upright, to keep the thinking and willing in an active and mutual circulation and to be the pump which becomes capable of invigorating the research and the manifestation of biodynamics.

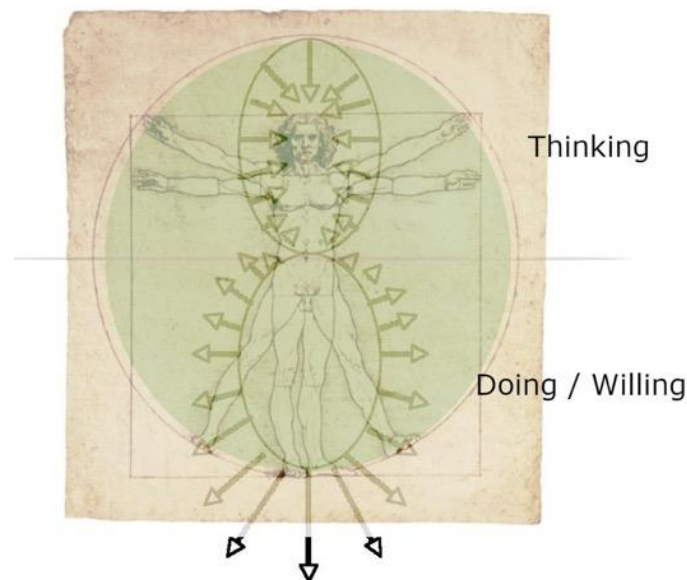
This suggests a blueprint for husbanding biodynamics in the UK in the 21st century – the seed question behind this report. The Association would be clear in its several responsibilities: for first enquirers and practical mainstream types it can make the preparations available with clear instructions for how they can be used. Results from other growers would be made readily available so that such folk can know what to expect and/or under what circumstances to apply the preparations. At the same time the BDA would nurture the anthroposophical foundations of the

itself the task of seeing that the truths are applied in the right and proper way.' The Gods use magic, and the difference between white and black magic consists only in this: in white magic one intervenes in a moral, selfless way, and in black magic in an immoral, selfish way. There is no other difference." - R. Steiner [Curative Education Course](#)

preparations to the extent that the curiosity and experimentation of its in-house or partnered researchers would bring theory and practice into a mutually reinforcing creativity, ready to deal with new eventualities such as CCD, BSE, GM, DDT, 5G, radioactivity and other post-1924 challenges. It would be clear when to give “just do this” instructions, and when to invite people in to the esoteric background to which their curiosity will draw them. It will recognise the *show me* types from the *explain to me* types from the *intuitive* types and be equipped to offer a range of approaches as much as is feasible. It will be confident in the relations between the farm organism, the calendar work and the preparation work, so that these elements work together towards the same goal. It will not lose sight of the goal - the healing of the earth - and if the promotion of biodynamics serves that goal then great, but the Association would be aware that self-promotion is not the goal itself.

The association would be the Ego ensuring that the inner- and outer-orientated are seamlessly conjoined, and take responsibility for the whole picture, being active when one or other aspect is out of balance, out of touch, or either are lacking in oomph.

It will recognise that all this is a truly demanding task, especially given the prevailing momentum and the convictions of those running the mainstream show, so it will remember to make time for forgiveness as it resolves to keep up the work in the face of all these challenges.



What is ‘organic agriculture’?

John Paull has found the first written use of the phrase *organic farming*, and Lord Northbourne⁵⁸ has been credited with this coinage as a result. If John Paull has faithfully traced the trail back to Northbourne’s phrase, then credit lies with biodynamics as presented by Pfeiffer in so far as the concept of the Farm Organism informed Northbourne’s language. Whether it is meaningful to [ascribe this neologism to one person](#) amongst a cohort of fellow-travellers⁵⁹ is, perhaps, a secondary question to: ‘What is presently understood by ‘organic’?’

⁵⁸ Philip Conford reckons that Lord Northbourne denied that this was his neologism.

⁵⁹ See Dan McKinan p 39 at seq headed “The other Sources of Organic Agriculture”.

To a chemist, *'organic'* specifies the field of carbon chemistry and so *organic farming* is a limited chemical-material concern manifesting as a farming which will address problems through material or chemical remedies because all issues are viewed, in the final analysis, as chemical problems.

One kind of organic farmer obeys the certification criteria which requires these physical-chemical inputs to the farm to be from something that was identifiably alive in the recent past – manure, compost and so forth. To this farmer the only realignment from the chemical farmer is the recent life-history of the source of the necessary nutrients.

Another organic farmer would attempt to find these recently-alive nutrients from within a cycle under their control. This organic farmer would realise that any undesigned output from a farm is pollution and all undesigned input to a farm is expense and that these two loose ends could be connected to form a virtuous loop. On such a farm, manure and other *'waste materials'* don't leach away to stream and water-table but are husbanded to be the core of the fertility of the land, reducing bought-in materials towards zero.

Whilst willingly incorporating the undoubted achievements of this third farmer, a fundamental paradigm shift is required to weave together the thoughts in a fully aware biodynamic practice. One steps away from the certainties of mainstream culture⁶⁰ to entertain the possibility that life is not something emerging from the physical body of a creature, but is something that trumps the sovereignty of the rules proper to the matter of the mineral world.⁶¹ Steiner attempted to show how a person can appreciate the overlooked invisible realities without logical contradiction. This involved recognising the assumptions of Kant, Bacon and Descartes inherent in our education and reassessing the situation. Done successfully, so Steiner asserts, one can develop *'a science that understands itself.'* If Dr Steiner made a good job of this recasting of knowledge, this meant putting life back into the living, the psyche back into psychology, and a free being back into the moral order of the world. This makes demands on people to employ increasing precision and clarity both in external investigation and self-reflection, and then to weave together these two experiences back into the full and - now - consciously apprehended reality, to know it for the first time⁶².

Since our modern science has tied its ship to the (oxymoronic) ideal of objectivity, it is wary of allowing any (other) subjective experiences back into the fold. Although rarely stated, its manifest assumption is that it must press on with its own project rather than allow contamination from other approaches. This boils down to confidence that *physics* has the ultimate answer to all life's enigmas. Dr Steiner challenged that this is ever going to reveal the mysteries of what is alive. He wrote about what an *organics* might be like in 1886 and he framed it in direct comparison to *physics*.

At the end of the eighteenth century the universally prevailing view was that there was no science to explain living phenomena in the sense in which physics, for example, is a science that explains things. Kant, in fact, tried to establish a philosophical basis for this view.

Above all, one has committed a serious error in this. One believed that the method of inorganic science should simply be taken over into the realm of organisms. One considered the method employed here to be altogether the only scientific one, and thought that for "organics" to be scientifically possible, it would have to be so in exactly the same sense in which physics is, for example.

'A Theory of Knowledge Inherent in Goethe's World View' Chapter: *Organic Nature*

⁶⁰ "...under the influence of our modern philosophy of materialism, it is agriculture - believe it or not - that has deviated furthest from any truly rational principles..." [Dr Steiner to the members](#)

⁶¹ The laws of Newton's thermodynamics are superb for mechanisms, but are insufficient to explain a thistle or a chicken. A thorough familiarity with acetylcholine and DNA cannot encompass a farmer.

⁶² "We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." TS Elliot – Little Gidding

A biodynamic farmer *could* just apply the preparations and husband a farm so it is reasonably self-contained, and we can be grateful that so many have shouldered these already heavy demands. But this could also be the start of a path down which the farmer strives to be fully conscious of what and why such practices are employed. This too would be *organic farming* but how different from our chemist!

This biodynamic farmer would be aware of the inner life of the animals. The form of the plants and animals would be as revelatory as their yield. The work of George Adams, Andreas Suchantke and Jos Verhulst are seminal in this Goethean approach to life and thus to farming. It is one in which the analytical approach (intellect) is healed by the synthetic (reason), and the farm organism can reveal itself.

Could it be that Pfeiffer's inclination to bring the *organische* aspect of BD to the attention of the public has contributed to the atrophy of the energetic or *dynamische* aspect, even in anthroposophical circles?

Whoever actually first coined the phrase 'organic farming' can be pleased with a widely adopted term that is very useful in soft focus. Perhaps it is sufficiently broad to encompass a common approach in the various strands within it and even to represent the outward facing aspects of biodynamic agriculture. Definitive differences are only revealed by the next level of enquiry.

It may not be necessary to understand the full parameters of anthroposophical agriculture to be an excellent farmer. Indeed, history suggests that many have struggled to find intellectual purchase on biodynamics' unique procedures. For that reason, Paull's insightful phrase (that Northbourne's seminal *Life to the Land* was "a secularized British manifesto") points out that organic farming can be an incomplete appreciation of biodynamic agriculture.

If the outwardly-orientated lobe of the BD lemniscate becomes detached from its reticent twin it will lose its distinctive and important character and become *biologische* – simply organic. It will have lost its deeper insights, its heritage, its potential – its *dynamische* aspect.

One way for *biologische-dynamische* agriculture to lead the way is to show that it can do positive things other agricultural disciplines cannot. It has some things to show after 100 years but it would make a much more persuasive case if there were more.

BD in the UK

In the *Genius Personae* group discussions the subject of the particular nature of the British Isles has arisen at every stage. We have noted that Pfeiffer seems to have made a good connection to Barbara Saunders Davies and visited her in SW Wales every time he came here. He was fascinated by the stone circles to be found in that part of the world and suggested that BD would not find a home here unless it made some connection to the culture responsible for the stones.

The group also noted a line that is marked both geologically and by the first centres of the Ruskin Mill Trust, and we postulated a difference in emphasis in the culture to the North and West compared to that to the East and South of this 'Tees-Exe line'. We spoke of the remnants of the Druidic Celtic culture to the West, and to the East a more roman-influenced flavour. According to Dr Steiner, the Druids of the Hibernian mysteries of the West knew of the Christ before word could have come from the Middle East because their mystery centres avoided decadence into the early Christian era. This original clairvoyance leaves its legacy alongside the attitudes which surround that culture. The East was seen as a home to the triumphs and pitfalls of a more reductionist and intellectual culture, more hierarchical and at ease with structured society. The more anarchic flat-hierarchical culture predominates in the West. The stones of the Preselli's came across that line to Stonehenge – an eye of yin in the heart of yang perhaps? What are we to make of all these intuitions?

First, I am taking it as read that these are generalisations of the sort that have given Anthroposophy a deal of trouble in recent years. Whether they are actually insightful and helpful is a secret of the future.

Perhaps we don't have to test the thickness of the ice here, but from these intuitions we can take something which is not located in places or categories of person. We can, for instance, reckon with a spectrum of approaches to BD ranging from the feeling-based intuitions to the more logical and materialistic, and from all / any stations in between. The BDA will have to engage with all these approaches whilst still being true to itself. Everyone who has been around BD knows that there are those who relate to the world via the beings of Nature, others whose primary interface is practical, and others who need to have some grasp of the theory in order to be comfortable. In all of these categories there will be some who are happy to accept the authority of a trusted teacher (most commonly Dr Steiner) whilst others will accept nothing unless and until their scepticism is uprooted through their own direct engagement with nature.

Tying this together

... Pfeiffer, being the first generation, was really attempting to get BD on to the Earth, and so he tended to up-play the biological reality, and down-play the energetic reality of all these things - from my impression. And the next generation tended to do the same. People like Keopf in his book, he was really focussing on the [material] scientific realities of Biodynamics and I got to say I feel it's now my generation's task to bring back the knowledge of the energetic realities ... that it's biological forces we're playing with.

[Glen Atkinson](#)

A 26 year-old Ehrenfried Pfeiffer was left holding a precious baby in 1925 conceived in his absence. He raised this child and assimilated it into with the world to be self-reliant. He protected its uniqueness from a world that would not understand. Others, sensing the phenomenal potential, felt the need to protect the child further, and in the UK this was achieved by Lord Northbourne's secularized British disguise which smuggled it through the war. In 1951 Bernard Lievegoed encouraged BD-UK to be itself and reminded the youth of its full esoteric essence. (¿"You're a wizard BD!"?) Ever since, the hunger for genuine connection to the spirit has grown in the UK. The need for a true harmony with the real foundations of the world have never been more acute. Dornach cannot resolve its internal contradictions and once again has asked for BD-UK-R&D to assist - and we do have some of the keys.

The BDA has recently added 'research' to its remit but must reinvigorate its research organ and empower it to own its esoteric inheritance if it is to fulfil its brief. This might fulfil the potential of biodynamics from 1924, and perhaps that will bring enough momentum to carry it into the present and, possibly, into the future.

Discussion and Conclusion

ii - Vivian Griffiths

I have been thinking on this question of what strikes you as the most important aspect of our BD History Studies in the light of the Genius Loci/ Personae approach. For it is the Personae that most resonates for me through the mineral, plant animal and human journey. The people who made the history however difficult or crowned with glory. So it is a procession of remarkable or constant characters which begins for UK Biodynamics in London in 1928 at the International Anthroposophical Conference being held at the Quaker Headquarters in Euston Road. Here Daniel Dunlop from the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain is hosting a number of speakers from all branches of anthroposophical activity and he is particularly taken by Kobervitz estate manager Karl Mirbt's contribution on Biodynamic Practice with a lecture actually on Agricultural Depression! It is spoken in German and translated by George Adams /Kaufmann. Kobervitz is where The Agriculture Course was given 4 years earlier before Rudolf Steiner's untimely death and the human link particularly important for the establishment of BD practice in the UK.

Daniel Dunlop invites Carl Mirbt to come to England and help with this establishment and with his wife Gertrude and young son they settle at The Old Mill, Bray on Thames near Maidenhead in 1929 with Marna Pease - sister of Eleanor Merry who is a working colleague of Dunlop. She has come south selling the family seat in Northumberland and here on the Thames riverside a Biodynamic garden is established, the office set up of The Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation and registered as a charity, The Preparations are made, the Bee Lectures by Rudolf Steiner are translated and a UK BD Experimental Circle is established.

Meanwhile Carl's London translator George Adams is translating The Agriculture Course in 1929 up at Huby near Leeds where Maurice Wood who had attended Karl's lecture in London and as a Quaker had been a stretcher bearer in WW1 had bought a farm and wanted his farm to be Biodynamic. Like many who suffered the trenches he found Anthroposophy to be a revelation. He also wanted the spiritual language translation to remain practical for the many farmers who might be interested.

The Bray on Thames connection continues with Marna Pease inviting and offering a home and laboratory to Eugene and Lilly Kolisko in 1936 coming from Germany as a consequence of Anthroposophical Splits with a wealth of scientific experiments to verify the efficacy of the BD Preparations through chromatography as well as a key testament to Biodynamics - 'Agriculture For Tomorrow' published only after the war.

The setup at Bray has attracted the attention of Laurence Easterbrook - Sussex farmer and Agricultural Correspondent of The News Chronicle who meets Mirbt - now Mier - and Marna Pease and writes enthusiastic articles about Biodynamics underlining the idea that Biodynamics under the newly established Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation was a major influence in the newly emerging humus farming and gardening movement.

One of the members of The Experimental Circle is Cotswold farmer Maye Bruce fascinated by The Preparations and developing her plant-based variation, The QR Compost Starter. She always maintains that Rudolf Steiner encouraged experimentation and although The Experimental Circle regretted her departure and making public something that was still in the realms of confidentiality, she nevertheless went on to have great success with QR especially with gardeners unable to get the animal parts of The Preparations.

All is not well in The Anthroposophical Movement-based in Switzerland and the AAF based at Bray because of splits is to be 'replaced' by the Biodynamic Association under the care of Miss Cross at The Priory Kings Langley where she runs a becoming Waldorf School. We need to look at this

phenomenon further for just how 'disapproved of' members still met with Anthroposophical colleagues in The Experimental Circle! Is a challenging question.

The late 1930s sees a number of Biodynamic endeavours. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer from Switzerland and Holland where he is working with Biodynamics comes to UK in 1936 and meets Albert Howard and Lord Portsmouth whose book 'Famine in England' has caused a stir. He would like to set up a Biodynamic Experiment on his Hampshire estate and make The Preparations. Pfeiffer stays with Barbara Saunders Davies a young land aware person at her country home in South West Wales and is mightily taken by the Celtic influences there on the Pembrokeshire coast which he feels is the foundation and cradle of British BD.

Meanwhile Fried Geuter and David Clement set up The Sunfield Agricultural Centre at the Sunfield Children's Home and Broome Farm in North Worcestershire where the Mier family settle also in 1936 as helpers and organisers ignoring splits and disapproval. This centre at Clent is a hub of BD land activity which not only includes compost making and farming with the students with Deryck Duffy, (one of many inspired by Rom Landau's book God is my Adventure where a Steiner lecture is profoundly described) but also Sunfield is a kind of experimental hub of laboratories and spiritual science study alongside the children and a unique home for British Anthroposophical endeavour however expelled.

This brings me to an interesting point which we came across again and again that early BD practitioners were anthroposophists through and through and their Biodynamic Practice was an extension of this. Whatever side of the splits the practice of Biodynamics was, it was completely bound up with being an Anthroposophist. We shall see that this was about to be challenged.

The 'just try it' school of Biodynamics was about to cast its influence. Was it Pfeiffer or Lord Northbourne who invented the term Organic Farming or Maye Bruce trying out the plants from The Preparations or Eve Balfour experimenting on her Suffolk farm at Haughley or Dr Scott Williamson at the Peckham Experiment which had an organic farm for good family nutrition both as physical work and good food? The point is that we come across a group of practitioners who look outside the box to speak to a wider audience of farmers, gardeners and medics and underpin the notion that the Agriculture Course was given to all.

Did the war scupper the influential and leading place that Biodynamics held at the end of the 1930s? It could be said so if you look at the great compost debate going on, in pits with Albert Howard, standing proud like altars with Rudolf Steiner and much appreciated by The Springhead Ring rural revival leader Rolf Gardiner in Dorset who had become an ambassador for English self-sufficient regionalism. Into his mix was a hand of friendship which reached out to the German people which was constantly misunderstood as a Nazi sympathizer. In Germany the Steiner Movement was having quite a complex journey with National Socialism - encouraged and banned at the same time as Waldorf Schools closed and Christian Community congregations tolerated. Nourishing Aryans was a priority so BD Farms continued often becoming sanctuaries for Waldorf teachers who conducted home schools.

Perhaps this indivisible from Third Reich association mess reflected badly on British Biodynamics, perhaps the 'chemical triumphalism' of the post war world where a grateful population released from tyranny and holocaust horror as well it has to be said as lobbies by the chemical industry had over the war years 'welcomed' huge amounts of nitro-glycerin which was now being transferred from bomb making to fertilizer production. We are all scientists now!

In continuing the human personality thread, those who were elected to run the newly formed Biodynamic Agricultural Association which was created mid-century were a steady bunch who in 1951 were holding the two BD groups together whose different approaches to BD practice took a long time to reconcile. All came together to make a challenging task for the BD work to be recognised and understood. Certainly the Soil Association founded only in 1946 seemed to be in the

ascendant and the interest in the soil brought many to its doors helped by an extensive presence at county agricultural shows. Eve Balfour and Louise Howard (widow of Albert) presenting a convincing argument against chemicals in their not so little display tent which was a feature of rural life in the 1950s.

As the 1950s moved into the 1960s the biodynamic human thread is a more complex one. Carl Mier has gone off to Botton Village in 1955 with hardly a moment's notice from Clent with his family to be part of a threefold social order project on The North York Moors, the first Camphill Adult Community at Botton with people with special needs.

This time is also peppered with the loss of the pioneers so the worldwide personnel of organic farming paused for a reflection with the huge amount of work done to further the cause of a soil spiritual approach at the death of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer in 1961 as it did globally for the death of Rachel Carson in 1963. Her influential book *Silent Spring* included convincing data collected by Pfeiffer on a Long Island BD Garden to show the damage done by the compulsory spraying of DDT.

Lawrence Easterbrook's Obituary in the mid-sixties is a tribute to the instinctive spiritual ways a farmer needs to have to work the soil. Maye Bruce's legacy also shows other ways than sprinkling on ICI's Growmore sold in vast quantities in every ironmonger and agricultural merchant. If Lord Northbourne who also departs this world soon afterwards had had his way The BD Preparations would have been just as present on the shelves of these establishments...

If the first environmental revolution was in the 1930s with so many publications and organisations countering the widespread use of chemicals on the land, the second environmental revolution took place at the start of the 1970s. It does not feature learned books on good land use so much but rather young people taking a different course than following 'The White Heat of Technology' as British Prime Minister Harold Wilson would have it by young people heading for the hills and the rural hinterland by joining intentional communities, a back to the land movement that saw the rise of communes, intentional communities and even local social justice groups turn their backs on a mortgage and two and a half children! Some point to a counter culture movement, I have heard it said it was either The Baader Meinhof Movement or Camphill...

Academic research on this phenomenon has come from a Harvard Divinity Professor Dan McKanan whose 2018 book *Eco Alchemy* (University of California Press) pointed to Camphill Communities as an example of a sustainable alternative to urban employment but also adds that outer rural and inner-city environments were subjects of alternative forms of social and even political practice from city farms to wholefood cooperatives.

The Duke of Edinburgh also makes a cameo appearance strange to say by setting up the World Wildlife Fund for Nature in 1960 making many aware of environments for wildlife ("shoot with a camera and not a gun") and a 1970 Conference on the British Countryside highlighting the many threats to its environment, surely an aid to changing attitudes to soil and soul ... as it was also in 1970 European Conservation Year!

The 1970s saw the departure of Rolf Gardiner leading campaigner for regional, local and international awareness, a controversial figure who felt Germany should be our friends when actually we were at war yet he was deeply influential in the early organic movement praising Steiner's compost heaps which were created on his Dorset forest farm by large workcamp groups.

Figures in the 1970s who matter include Dr Anthony Deavlin from Ewell Technical College in Surrey a great supporter of BD from a scientific approach with a laboratory to support his work.

It is the decade of a young Patrick Holden going to Emerson College in Sussex and deeply affected by Biodynamics, of George Trevelyan at Attingham Park in Shropshire holding adult education courses on BD, of The Three Broomes - John Soper the Secretary, George Corrin the Fieldsman and David

Clements The Chair carrying The BD Office work at Broome Farm with great rigour and respect. John Soper's Guide to The Study of The Agriculture Course comes out at this time.

This first sign of a younger generation show themselves in for example David Adams who would go on to be Secretary of The BDAA in the mid 1980s is a farmer at Botton Village in 1972 and Coleg Elidyr in West Wales where a number of BD farming initiatives are started like Plas Dwbyl with Katherine Castellitz and also by the end of the decade Oakland's Park has been established as a land based Camphill Community in Gloucestershire by Joachim Grundmann and colleagues. The Rural Development Programme in Emerson with Mattias Guepin looking to work with BD in developing countries begins and also a Conference at Emerson concludes the decade with the title 'What is Life' introducing Pat McManamon and Dr Koepf to the British BD work.

The 1980s introduces Lawrence Woodward of the Elm Farm Research Station to a Biodynamic audience at a 1982 BDAA AGM where he is helping with colleague Mark Measures to convert conventional farms to organic and biodynamic with a comprehensive soil sampling service with good advice to boot giving organics much respect.

This is the decade of The Emerson College Conferences with Dr Koepf, The rise of The BD Regional Groups like the one in Edinburgh with Bill Thomas; the beginning of The Waldorf School on Perry Court Farm in Kent on the invitation of the Brockman's and this is the decade of course of The Sale of Broome Farm which reintroduced a host of personalities from the Clement family who wanted the sale to the highest bidder to a group of personalities like John Twine who worked tirelessly to raise the required funds. It was not to be and the 1990s saw the repercussions of this moment. We should mention Ann Parsons who takes up the Secretary post at the Clent Office in 1988, Bernard Jarman who writes from the Gloucestershire Regional BD Group 1991 wondering whether there is any need for a national office at all with strong regional BD Groups now operating from Gloucester to Aberdeen. We should mention Charlie Wallop and Hamish McKay before they disappear to the southern hemisphere and their brief strong and optimistic presence on The BD Council.

In the mid 1990s through various re-examining of priorities the BD Farm Demonstration idea on a site at Kolisko Farm near Gloucester is eventually refused so the Stroud Office is established to usher in the new century with Bernard and then Anna Irwin from South Africa in the Chair and with Richard Swann as new Star and Furrow Editor, Ian Bailey as Treasurer and Severn Valley BD Land Training Coordinator and soon after its establishment Jessica Standing as Office Administration. She inherits an expanding Biodynamic presence, strong regional groups from farms and gardens in Aberdeen which has a 5-decade history, BD in Ireland with a newly established Association at The Water Garden at Kilkenny and the seeds of a Biodynamic Land Trust which would buy or inherit land for perpetually. With a new enthusiasm for Seeds the scene is set for the 21st Century.

Just before the new century begins Aonghus Gordon from Ruskin Mill opens the new horticultural building hub at Oakland's Park. Here produce is distributed, land training is carried out and tools and equipment are stored and serviced. It is a seminal moment bringing many guests from Biodynamic Practice from all over the country plus the initiatives that have grown up around this land community including Flowforms and water treatment from Camphill Water, Beci Hoyland's compost initiatives, an active Christian Community Church and a young Camphill Community working in the farms and gardens. Aonghus speaks of the dignity of land work where to bow as with working with fork and spade and weeding the crops human beings are at their most noble.

It is perhaps a concluding moment of a third environmental push in the 1990s which brought organics and biodynamic practice from margin to mainstream partly it has to be said the shock of the BSE crisis which Biodynamics had an answer that as Rudolf Steiner said if a cow eats its own meat it will go mad.

To conclude this contribution as the figures of the last twenty years are still making contributions and historians are wary to make too many statements! Yet it is worth saying that the first 21 years of

the 21st Century has seen a strengthening of the BD Movement and the Gardening sector in particular through for example Jess at The Office and Lynda Brown fresh from The Soil Association a notable feature the cooperation with Garden Organic at Coventry with a 2016 BD Gardening Conference there with Sebastian Parsons. Also a recognition of the BD Forestry Movement through Nick Raeside and figures like the late Lynette West from Australia giving many courses on BD Practice.

We are now beginning to looking to the 100th Birthday of The BDA in 2024 which could be a remarkable moment - a celebration of a unique event in 1924 which ushered in a humus farming revolution. With the promise of three new books on British Biodynamics and a new translation of The Agriculture Course with vital new information from Lilly Kolisko found down the back of an archive chest we have much to look forward!

Vivian Griffiths Nov 21

[^ Table of Contents](#)

