

Secretary's Letter No 3.

November 1951

Dear Members,

You find with this Letter various papers in preparation of our Annual General Meeting which will be held at Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London N.W.1 at 2.30 p.1. on Saturday, 8th December 1951.

1. Programme of the annual General Meeting.
2. Chairman's Report of the work of the Year,
3. Hon. Treasurer's Report.
4. Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet.
5. Proposed Constitution.
6. Ballot Paper for Election of New Council.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL

As stated previously, the two Councils of the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation and the Bio-Dynamic Association, after having acted jointly during the past year, have resigned to make possible the election of a new Council. 11 Members of these Councils stand for re-election (their names are prefixed with a + in the list below) and five new nominations have been received. According to the proposed Constitution, the Council shall consist of not fewer than 9 and not more than 12 elected members.

- + Mr G. Adams - of the Goethean Science Foundation, with knowledge of both Natural and Spiritual Science.
- + Mrs Brocklebank - Practising gardener. - Hon. Treasurer of B.D.A.A.
- + Lady Chance - Practising gardener with long association with our movement.
- + Mr D. S. Clement - Practising farmer. - Chairman of B.D.A.A.
Mr G. Corrin - Practising farmer. - keen younger Member.
- + Mrs C.B. Davy - Practising gardener. - Editor of 'Notes and Correspondence'
- + Mr H.S. Ellis - In charge of Michael Hall School Gardens
- + Mr J.H. Jeffree - Practising gardener. - With considerable experience of our methods and knowledge of Anthroposophy.
Mr A. V. Kaye - Practising farmer. - Keen younger Member.
Mr B. Mansfield - Practising beekeeper and gardener.
- + Dr C.A Mier - Secretary of B.D.A.A.
Mrs H. Millett - Practising gardener, particularly interested in herbs, In charge of advertising in 'Notes and Correspondence'.
- + Miss K. Thorton - Late Hon. Secretary of Bio-Dynamic Association.
- + Miss O. Whicher - Practising gardener. - Member of Goethean Science Foundation.
- + Mr E. M. Wood - Miller and Farmer. - Founder Member of our movement in this country `

- Miss M. Cross - Practising gardener. - Editor 'B-D News Sheet'. Founder Member of our movement in this country.
-

Secretary's Letter No 4

December 1951

Dear Members,

The main content of this letter is a report of the Annual General Meeting, held at Rudolf Steiner House, London, on Saturday 8th December 1951. - This is followed by some announcements and a preview of the arrangements for 1952.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

When the Chairman, Mr David Clement, opened the 1st Annual General Meeting of the Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association, some 45 Members and a few friends were present. In the course of the afternoon this number rose to between 70 and 80. He drew attention to the fact that with this meeting, the first full year for the new body begins and that this afternoon quite a few loose ends had to be tied up, arising from the amalgamation. The Business part would therefore possibly take longer than usual.

Miss K. Thornton, the Hon. Secretary of the B.D.AA., read the minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting of the B.D.A. held on 13th July 1950. It was at this occasion that Dr Pfeiffer, President of the B.D.A. made the first concrete proposal for the two bodies to unite. The minutes were signed by the Chairman who proposed that a letter should be sent to Dr Pfeiffer from this meeting in recognition of all he had done to bring about the forming of one united body. The meeting agreed unanimously.

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting of the A.A.F., held on 9th December 1950, were then read by the Secretary and signed by the Chairman.

Next, the Chairman introduced the Annual Report (circulated beforehand to all members. He offered his apologies for an omission which had occurred: In the 4th paragraph of the Report new arrangements for the distribution of the Preparations have been described. It should have been made clear that also Miss Thornton and Miss Cross had supplied them in the past and are willing to continue to do so. He was very sorry that the wrong impression had been created as if his was the only distribution centre.

He also regretted that in his reference to his visit to Holland (4th paragraph 2nd page) it was not mentioned that the Loverendale enterprise had been started by Dr Pfeiffer who remains closely connected with the farms to the present day.

Turning to the re-organisation which has taken place in the past year Mr Clement said that what by Dr Pfeiffer himself were described as suggestions only, enlarged upon in a Memorandum submitted by him later on, had been fully discussed by the joint Councils. In their original form these suggestions did not

seem appropriate to our situation, and the outcome of the many and long deliberations are the present arrangements.

Before opening the discussion on his Report, the Chairman asked Mrs Brocklebank to present her Report and the Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet (circulated beforehand). She was glad to report that a new enthusiasm is noticeable. Last year there was a certain hesitation in the payment of subscriptions, but now that the situation is so much clearer, members seem keener to pay, and since the beginning of the financial year (1/10/51) over £50 in subscriptions more had been received than in the corresponding period last year, though this does not mean that we shall have more money, and the difficulties mentioned in the Report remain. There is in particular this very vexed question of finding the funds for keeping contact with Dornach and Germany by enabling the Secretary to attend conferences there. Some Members had written to her about this point, and no doubt it would have to be discussed at the Meeting, but "I am the Treasurer, and I want to finish our financial year without debts".

Mr Wood moved the adoption of the Reports and Balance Sheet with warm words of thanks for the work of Mrs Brocklebank. He said it was a pity we did not have more money, and he did not like the word 'subscription' with that flavour of 'under', but would rather see 'super-subscriptions', and if members were only keen enough, they would find many a way of being able to send to the Hon. Treasurer that 'little bit extra' which would make all the difference. We should think much more in terms of how our income might be increased.

Mrs Davy seconded the adoption of the Balance Sheet. A lively discussion followed, and several Members expressed their concern over a possible curtailment of contacts with the work on the Continent, and offered donations earmarked for this specific purpose. It was also felt that the sum involved (£27) was really a very modest one in view of the importance and value of these journeys.

Many members spoke on the question of the Sale in September which has become so valuable a source of added income, thanks to Mrs Brooklebank being able to enlist the active Co-operation of so many members. In spite of two thirds of the sale price being refunded to members (a measure which enables really every Member to take part because the expenses can be covered) the net-income has increased. It was agreed to retain this principle. It was also suggested to extend the sale at least to Saturday morning, and to make it known more widely, by posters and otherwise. A number of further very constructive suggestions have been noted.

The Reports and the Balance sheet were adopted unanimously.

The Chairman then asked the Secretary to read out the names of the 12 members of the Council elected.

They are (in alphabetical order):

1. Mr G. Adams
2. Mrs Brocklebank
3. Mr D.S. Clement
4. Mrs C.B. Davy

5. Mr H.S, Ellis
6. Mr J.H. Jeffree
7. Mr A.V. Kaye
8. Mr B. Mansfield
9. Dr C.A. Mier
10. Miss K. Thornton
11. Miss O. Whicher
12. Mr E., Wood

Some 120 ballot papers had been received. - (At the Council Meeting next morning Mr Clement and Mrs Brocklebank were re-elected as Chairman and Hon Treasurer respectively)

The Chairman told the meeting that he should have been more careful in making the arrangements for this election which, it must be realised, was unique because a whole new Council had to be elected in one ballot. Some members had expressed their hesitation when having to sign the voting paper, but he felt that the signature was not only customary in other societies, but also essential to make sure that the voter was entitled to vote. In future voting papers should be sent to a neutral address for scrutiny. This time they had been examined and the figures had been checked by a non-member of the Association,

Miss Lakeman proposed that the method of the Single Transferable Vote should be adopted. As far as the voter is concerned this means that preferences are indicated by numbering the order of votes rather than making crosses of equal value. The counting is a little more complicated, but this voting procedure would ensure a much more even representation of groups, should they exist, and in particular would make it easier for fresh members coming on the Council. There was lengthy discussion and in the end a substantial majority agreed with the suggestion that the Council should discuss more fully the proposal when making the arrangements for the next election,

When introducing the new Statutes, the Chairman pointed out that one sentence had been omitted from the draft circulated. In the paragraph 'COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE', after the words 'Anthroposophical Farmers and Gardeners' there should follow "The Council shall appoint its own Executive".

Mrs Elliott had sent the following amendment: "Members of Committee shall retire in rotation after serving three years, and shall be eligible for re-election after standing down a year. All officers are eligible for re-election at the Annual General meeting". Some minor improvements of the wording of the circulated draft had been suggested by other members. There was some discussion of the question of the appointment of the officers. The meeting agreed that Chairman and Hon. Treasurer should, as hitherto, be elected annually by the Council. The Secretary's appointment must be on a more permanent basis, Mr Jeffree proposed and Mr Lambe seconded that the present Statutes (as circulated, but including the omitted sentence referred to) should remain in force for one year, and that amendments should be in the hands of the Secretary by 1st November. The final draft would then be submitted to the next Annual General Meeting for ratification.

The Chairman told the Meeting of the Public Anthroposophical Congress to be held in London from 28th

July to 5th August 1952. The theme will be "The Awakening of the Twentieth Century". It will take place at Rudolf Steiner House and Hall and at the nearby Bedford College, under the joint chairmanship of Mr A.C. Harwood (Chairman of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain) and Dr F.W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven (Chairman of the Anthroposophical Society in Holland,) There will be lectures in the evening on various aspects of Anthroposophy, and during the day meetings and classes devoted to more special subjects. The different branches will have rooms for the representation of their work, Our Association has been asked to be responsible for an agricultural room, also to arrange for classes, discussions etc. Mr. Clement hoped that Members would agree that here a unique opportunity is offered to us to give expression to our aims and objects in their proper setting on the basis of achievements here and abroad. But this will be no mean task which, once undertaken, will largely dominate our work for the coming months. The Members listened with great interest and expressed their agreement. In due course further details will be announced, but meanwhile the Secretary will answer any questions arising.

Mr Mansfield proposed and Mr Jeffree seconded the appointment of Mr W.H. Tindale as Auditor of the accounts of the B.D.A.A. He has acted as auditor of the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation since its beginning,

Mr H.C. Harvey put this resolution before the Meeting: "That a token donation of £1 per year be made to the Natural Science Section at the Goetheanum as an acknowledgement of the work which comes forth from there." Mrs Brocklebank, Mr Jeffree and Dr Mier spoke warmly in support of this proposal which was carried unanimously.

In conclusion of the Business part of the Annual General Meeting, the Secretary read out the names of some 20 Members who had sent special greetings for the meeting, being unable to be present in person.

There was again an interval for tea and refreshments (prepared by Mrs Lytton) and this opportunity for meeting friends was much appreciated, and was very lively indeed, The last few items reported above were dealt with, in fact. after the tea interval.

Mr E.M Wood took the Chair for the remaining hour and a half, and said he felt himself qualified to do so since it was at his Farm in Huby in 1928 that the first Preparations were made in this country.

Mr B. Mansfield spoke first and referred to one of Rudolf Steiner's Lectures to Workmen which are so specially important for farmers and gardeners, (Dornach, 31/10/23), where a most beautiful picture is given of the tree. How the cambium holds the balance between what comes from the Earth and what comes from the air. From below the life of the Earth streams into the plant, from the air new life. In the Agriculture Course Rudolf Steiner draws a parallel between the tree and a hillock of earth, and so this lecture helps us to a better understanding of the compost heap. The preparations 502-507 are needed where the balance between below and above is destroyed.

Mr Clement, after touching briefly upon the development of man's attitude towards the problem of manuring, dealt at some length with the problem of mechanisation, particularly where stirring and spraying of our Preparations are concerned. He described a stirring apparatus he had seen recently at Westhall,

developed by D.J. Duffy. Although an electrical motor is employed, certainly a beautiful vortex is achieved, and also the frequent reversing is possible.

Mr Jeffree took up this there and told of a stirring machine developed in Denmark and described in the American B.D. journal 'Bio-Dynamics' (Spring 1950). This certainly achieves a thorough mixing, but does not produce a vortex. He then sketched on the blackboard an ingenious and simple spraying machine with which he can apply 2 gallons of liquid to 1 acre in 7 minutes.

In conclusion Dr Mier spoke about Preparations 500 and 501. He told of experiments carried out by J. Schultz at the Science laboratories in Dornach and published recently by the Natural Science Section. The experiments deal with the daily rhythm of the Earth. Plants are exposed only at definite periods (morning, midday, evening, midnight) to the free interplay of earthly and cosmic forces, while for the remaining three quarters of the 24 hours they are completely shut off from these influences. He drew special attention to the different materials used for isolation, and it had been found that horn plates were far the most effective material used (compared with horn--meal, peat, sawdust). These experiments have an important bearing on the use of horns for the making of Preparations 500 and 501. While cow manure and silica are buried in horns during winter and summer respectively, those substances are truly isolated from the Earth, and we can now attribute new significance to the stirring. He demonstrated the stirring in large glass vessel (kindly placed at our disposal by Sir Hugh Chance) which enables us to study what happens during this process much more intimately and closely, because we can see what happens not only from the top but also from the side, The spiral movements moving both down- and up-wards (made visible by suspended material) interrupted periodically by the reversal of the direction of stirring, can be understood as placing once again the substance into the cosmic-earthly interplay, interrupted during the time the substance was confined in the horn.

There was some discussion, in which especially Mr Adams and Mr Ballantyne took part.

The subject chosen was, of course, by no means exhausted in so short a time at our disposal. But it was an opening of new vistas for study as well as for practical development of our work.

The Meeting was brought to an end about 7 pm.

Dear Friends,

Looking back over 1951 and trying to find our tasks for 1952, we are perhaps allowed to dwell for a moment of recollection with some degree of grateful satisfaction (though not in any sense of smugness) on the great step forward we were able to take. I want to speak here from my personal point of view, not 'on behalf of the Council' or the like,

The beginning of our anthroposophical agricultural work in this country was closely and intimately connected with the anthroposophical life here, and did not arise primarily out of the sphere of agriculture.

In 1928, a World Conference on Spiritual Science was held under the chairmanship of D.N. Dunlop. Since Count Carl von Keyserlingk was unable to accept the invitation to represent the agricultural aspect of Anthroposophy, I was asked to speak on his behalf. There and then a group was formed, representative in its composition of what has remained the characteristic of our work in this country: Friends practically associated with work on the land as farmers and gardeners joined with individualities who recognised the importance of this work, without 'doing anything practical'. The work developed within the shelter of the Anthroposophical Society.

Under these circumstances it was not avoidable that health and illness of the Anthroposophical Movement should find their reflection in the life of what was then the sole bearer of this impulse, the Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation. When in the Thirties divergencies manifested in Dornach as well as in the Anthroposophical Society in this country, this led to the formation of the BioDynamic Association, with the Foundation continuing its work. For many years, the two groups worked side by side, having very little contact with each other. Every single person involved in these events regretted the separation - but accepted the fact. Rudolf Steiner so often called for a thinking in accordance with realities, the opposite to wishful thinking.

When the war came to an end, steps towards a closer co-operation were taken immediately from both sides. (Here I must mention one personality, although otherwise I have refrained intentionally from mentioning names: It fills me with deep gratitude that my last contacts with Lady Mackinnon took place in the light of this rapprochement which was much welcomed by her.) At times one could not help being a little impatient, but we are now reaping the fruit of proceeding slowly: a true and mutual confidence was the essential but also only reliable basis of what has now been achieved, i.e. the establishment of the Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association.

Our membership is very 'mixed' in the sense that we have some old Members who have been associated with our work since 1928, but also some who found their way to us only quite recently. It is quite fascinating to study the 'life-history' of our membership and I wish I had one day a chance of telling you more about that. But it is not only a difference in length of membership which makes me use the word 'mixed'. We have members who belong to one or other Anthroposophical Society in this country and base their life on the study of Rudolf Steiner's work, but also very active members who are first and foremost interested in the study of this particular fruit of Anthroposophy without feeling the urge to study background and underlying principles of the bio-dynamic methods. And we must not forget either that we have amongst our members those who work in farm or garden, besides those who have no such facilities but lend their support as potential consumers of what has been (or will be) produced by the farmer, or, more altruistically still, consider our cause needful of their help.

All these different categories' of Members exist, and possibly once could find a few more. As Secretary I must bear constantly in mind this diversity of approach, and do my share in harmonising the different (and at times contrasting) demands arising from the various reasons for membership. Some feel we should be 'more practical', and to them I say that no type of correspondence etc is more satisfying than that dealing with practical questions of farming and gardening. Not that I have an answer to every question and

problem, but between us we usually find ways and means of helping.

More and more Members are anxious to study the specific problems they have in the light of Anthroposophy, and want to do so themselves rather than have cut and dried advice. Here our Lending Library comes in useful and we try to issue such literature which is helpful in this respect. It is perhaps here that the noblest task of the B.D.A.A. lies. Work in farm or garden must be done by the individual Member within the setting of economic, climatic, geological, personal and other aspects and limitations. But in study we can unite more easily, can also help and stimulate one another, more easily. It is here too, where untold riches wait for being made available out of the books and lectures of Rudolf Steiner, out of the ever growing anthroposophical literature, out of the accumulated experience of friends at home and abroad.

It seems to me a kind gesture of destiny that at the very beginning of the life of the new Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association there should be the Public Conference in the summer of 1952 "The Awakening of the Twentieth Century". Our participation in this, as Association and as individuals, will largely determine the character of our work throughout this coming year. The title, with its call to action, will give us many opportunities for becoming more aware of where we stand, what we can contribute, and what our tasks are in the years ahead. Anthroposophy, truly understood and practised, has no room for any sectarianism, and so all our Members should find it possible to co-operate in preparation of and attending this Conference.

Anthroposophical agriculture is much more than a manuring technique, it is nothing less than a vital contribution to that fundamental problem of man's relation to Earth and Cosmos, and for its full unfolding it needs the right social setting, helping at the same time to bring this about. From many conversations I have learned with growing clearness how the social aspect of our agricultural work gains in significance and importance, How often are we aware that in the social situation of today (in the widest meaning of the word) obstacles arise to our attempts to realise in practical life such gifts as the Agriculture Course.

The year 1952 offers special opportunities because it was just 33 years ago that Rudolf Steiner began to speak about the Threefold Commonwealth as that expression of social life in which man can unfold his manhood, which also has those healing forces which are needed so desperately today. The English edition of the book "The Threefold Commonwealth" has as a preface that article written by Rudolf Steiner for the Hibbert Journal in July 1921 'Spiritual Life, Civil Rights. Industrial Economy', in which Rudolf Steiner addressed himself directly to the readers of this country (a very rare phenomenon).

The significance of the 33-year cycle in human history was described by Rudolf Steiner in a Christmas lecture given at Basel 23rd December 1917, under the title "Et incarnatus est... The time cycle in historical events". As far as I know it has not been published yet in English, but there is a translation in typescript available from the Library at Rudolf Steiner House (2.129.). Many Members will read this lecture in coming days, and will know that they are not alone in doing so.

And so I close with warmest Christmas Greetings to you all. If we go into the New Year strengthened with all the warmth and light of the Christmas Festival, we shall be able to meet our tasks, heavy and varied as they may be.

Yours sincerely

19/12/51

C. A.Mier.