

## Newsletter – Number 7 – November 2014

### Farming

Spring, summer and autumn have gone by already! The weather was really kind, with a lovely summer and rain just coming at the right time to freshen the grass growth, followed by a glorious autumn that helped us enormously getting in the harvest. Our beautiful Hereford Linnet line cow had a heifer calf and our new Highland Bull, Brogach of Gilden Vale, has been up at Rhos Fiddle with his girls. We know he can do his job as his first set of girls are now pregnant with calves due in March and April.

Our big farming event this year was opening the farm for Open Farm Sunday. This is a National event supported by LEAF <http://www.leafuk.org/leaf/home.eb> - Linking Environment and Farming. Farms all over the country open to the public to explain what we do and how we do it. This year Farms opened up from Britain's most southerly mainland farm on The Lizard in Cornwall to the most northerly on the Orkney Islands. Some farmers reported that more visitors were travelling further out of urban areas to visit a farm, and were pleased to see a real willingness to learn about farming and food production. 375 farms held events of all sizes showcasing British farming with 207,000 visitors.

- Nearly one in five farms reported more than 1,000 visitors – Thankfully that wasn't us – I don't know how we would have managed!
- Nearly a quarter of farms held small events of less than 100 visitors. We had 85 visitors and were ever so pleased and thank you for coming.
- One in three farms were opening for the first time, that was us!



We thoroughly enjoyed our day, we had a display of Highland Cattle information along with a cow and calf; Herefords close by, shearing demonstrations along with some native sheep; wool spinning demonstrations and a display of herbs and herb and wool products for sale.

We had a nature trail, farm tours, bug hunting, pond dipping and a scavenger hunt and of course tea and cakes. People could learn about Care Farming and Eco Building. Being organic we have huge biodiversity and different habitats so lots to see and do. Do come next year on June 7<sup>th</sup>, if you couldn't make it this time.



Highland cattle display boards



On the farm tour



Bug hunting fun for all!

You too can learn to spin.

We also have had many farm tours and visits, one of the most poignant was a visit from Fred the Project Manager of the Hands Up For Uganda project started by Bobby Britnell. Here is a picture of Kisaabwa villagers around their new borehole. Before they had to trek for miles to get water. To learn more about this self sustaining project in Uganda see <http://www.handsupforuganda.org/>.



In the UK we have strict regulations both in farming and other industries to protect our water and as water tables drop more and more farmers are finding it difficult to irrigate crops and water abstraction licences are harder to obtain. In the UK

every person uses approximately 150 litres of water a day. If you take into account the water that is needed to produce the food and products you consume in your day-to-day life (known as embedded water) you actually consume 3400 litres per day. You should drink about 3 litres. We should never take our own water for granted, even when we think we have too much of it!!

We have had our WWOOFers (World Wild Opportunities on Organic Farms) again this year helping out on the farm and erecting the new Care Farm Area – more about this later.

Don't forget we have free range eggs and lamb burgers throughout the year and frequently have lamb, hogget and beef for sale. Just email Trevor at: [clunvalleyorganics@googlemail.com](mailto:clunvalleyorganics@googlemail.com) or Jacky at: [jackyharrison51@hotmail.com](mailto:jackyharrison51@hotmail.com).

### Education and Care Farming

We have been busy with extremely different students throughout the year. James and Jack from Brynlllywarch continued to come every Friday until the end of the summer term when they left us, and Brynlllywarch; with some tears and many hugs; to venture into the big wide world.

Billy from Womaston also left us, but not before he and his carers built a box to sell eggs at the front gate and the pig ark for our new Care Farm area. We wish them all well.

This term we have a rotation of different students from Brynlllywarch every Wednesday and Friday, starting with a week at the end of summer term as a taster. Here they are maintaining the hay bob.

One of the students from Harper Adams University, who we mentioned in the last newsletter, won a national prize for the best business suggestion based on Brynmawr. Here is a few words from their press release.



## **Bronze for Beth in farm business awards**

***A final year Harper Adams University student has scooped a Pinnacle Award for Excellence in Business Management, after coming up with a diversification idea tailored not just to the farm in question, but also to the man running it.***

*Beth Duchesne, 21, from Bury St. Edmunds, brought home the bronze award from Pinnacle Awards final at the Farmers Club in London. Students are entered on the recommendation of their college or university, after completing a project deemed good enough to compete against entries from throughout the UK.*

*Lecturer Tony Asson set students on the Rural Business Opportunities module the task of researching, planning and presenting a business idea for Trevor Wheeler's Brynmawr Farm. Beth's project was deemed one of the best and put forward as a Pinnacle Awards contender. "I proposed a small-scale exotic*

*mushroom enterprise. It would be a low-input business, based in a 40ft container," said Beth, who scooped a £600 prize for herself plus £300 for the university. "I have no experience of mushroom farming myself but when I read about it while researching the project, it really struck me as something that would suit the farm and the farmer. Brynmawr is farmed with an environmental ethos. It turned organic in 2001 and there has already been some diversification – it is a care farm and has a straw bale education building and an eco holiday cottage. It's all very environmentally focused. Mr Wheeler is also not someone who would shirk from facing new challenges"*

*Lecturer Tony Asson joined Beth in London and was impressed with her performance on the day: "She did a really good job. Her entry was professional – it was a practical, well-presented piece of work that captured both Trevor's physical resources on the farm and himself as*

*the human resource. In a lot of these projects, students consider the land, the animals, the farm, but fail to consider the human resource.*

*Implementation is key to making a new enterprise work, so you need to be sure the farmer has got what it takes to make it happen."*

We mentioned in the last letter about Stephanie from Shrewsbury College of Art and Technology who wrote to our MP and the Mayor of Shrewsbury; both of whom came to visit and here is Stephanie with the mayor. Stephanie also came to help us with Open Farm Sunday.



We have had a number of school visits with two local schools doing their John Muir award on the farm and on the Shropshire Wildlife sites with Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership. The John Muir Award is an environmental

award scheme focused on wild places. It encourages awareness and responsibility for the natural environment, in the spirit of fun, adventure and exploration. Four challenges are at the heart of the award, discover, explore, conserve share. To find out more go to <http://www.jmt.org/jmaward-home.asp>.



Hannah: ' We worked in a team to make a long den. It stands up against the trees.'

We had visits from a group from Loudwater Studio in Ludlow, which is part of Vision Homes Association, a charity that supports people with visual impairments and other complex disabilities to lead full and active lives. The studio has run for over 10 years and is a safe and



exciting environment where people can express themselves through creativity. The group that came up absorbed the peace, tranquility, scents and tastes and used the surroundings to inspire their artwork. They will be creating an exhibition of it all soon.

## The GRANT from the AONB

As you know we have been awarded £3,000 from the Shropshire Hills AONB's Sustainable Development Fund to create a self-contained Care Farm area and facilities (polytunnels, fruit cage with soft fruit and fruit trees, raised beds, hen house, pig ark and run).



One big thing we need to do is sort out the pathways to enable wheel chair access. We have been given some GRASSPROTECTA which is used for grass car parks, pedestrian paths and disabled access routes. We desperately need more so we can layout the additional beds and the pathways, so if you know of any please let us know.

### Other Stuff

As well as Keeping Chickens we have run some sheep courses – and will be running more next year. We try and give as much hands on practical work as possible. Claire has been running her Herb workshops and will be taking more next year.



Nick and Julie will be doing Ecology and Conservation courses too next year so check out our website.

Talking of sheep, if next spring and summer there are lambs or sheep on the roads just let your local farmer know. It could be unwise to put them in with the nearest sheep. They might not be their Mums! (so no milk), or their own flock. They could be ram lambs, which later in the year could be a problem! They may be carrying something like sheep scab or worse. Sheep have a very good homing instinct and will usually find their way back to where they came from.

With that I will sign off! *Best wishes from all at Brynmawr and have a good Christmas.*

Our facebook pages: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Brynmawr-Farm/163765077148943?sk=insights#!/pages/Brynmawr-Farm/163765077148943> or, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Brynmawr-Farm/163765077148943?sk=insights#!/pages/Clun-Valley-Organics/157157871153113> and of course our website [www.clunvalleyorganics.co.uk](http://www.clunvalleyorganics.co.uk).

