**Biodynamics Tasmania Centennial Celebration**

"In the Seed We get an Image of the Universe"  Rudolf Steiner

**Core theme of the centennial events in Tasmania**

*“The celebrations in Tasmania aim to develop authentic dialogue between healing and regeneration across land, people and community, such that new harmonies may emerge and guide further BD developments into the future”.*

It was an honour for Biodynamics Tasmania to host Ueli Hurter (Co-head of Biodynamics International), along with Brain Keats (BD Elder in Australia and creator of the Antipodean Astro-Calenda), Jason Andrew Smith (Palawa man), and across the events, well over 200 biodynamics Tasmania guests, commemorating 100 years since Steiner's Agriculture Lectures.

Magical Farm Tasmania visit

The welcoming day at Magical Farm Tasmania opened with a touching acknowledgement to Country and a smoking ceremony by Jason Andrew Smith from Patrula Nayri (good fire). Jason's down to earth storytelling reminded us of everyone's role in caring for Country. The smoke in the ceremony was very thick and blew North-West, and each person attending chose to walk through the smoke to cleanse themselves.  Next, we had a biodynamic lunch! Marie Zerella (from Mutterliebe Lutruwita) made the most beautiful food for us all to enjoy. The menu included pumpkin soup, Stinging Nettle soup sourced from Graeme's farm, pizzas (that had the most beautiful bases I have ever tasted!), and fresh salads garnished with Magical Farm flowers and herbs. It was a highlight seeing people connect with each other in conversation, around biodynamics and their care of the earth.

Whilst people continued to enjoy their lunch, Tarremah Steiner School Mum Bindi Browning, from "Wild Heart Made" introduced a weaving activity. This gave people an opportunity to take a 'Heart, Head and Hands' approach to reflect on Biodynamics for the future, whilst weaving local grasses with their hands and connecting in convivial conversation with their hearts. As a sign of the 'hands-on' crowd that was attending, most people grabbed some grasses and began weaving in conversation with each other. The result was a beautiful array of grasses which will be woven together in a larger 'collective weaving' to commemorate the centenary.  Our discussions wove the connection between biodynamics wisdom and first nations knowledges - opening a beautiful realm of connections to weave collectively. The importance of everyone caring for country, no matter who you are was emphasised. We also explored how 'festive agriculture and joy' is key to bringing about healing on our planet.

Ueli Hurter’s and Brian Keats’s first public talks at UTas

Following on from a day of 'weaving' together, the lecture on the first evening was full of visionary ways that Biodynamics can come part of our lives. Ueli spoke about the opportunity that farms become the new 'universities' - such an important point. The unique place-based wisdom in each farm and bio-region is the cutting edge research of the future. The farm organism provides us with learnings and insights through its own existence. The biodynamic farm takes in the importance of an anthroposophical way of farming, embracing the 'whole' system health of the farm from the soil, the cosmological influences and the inner world perceptions of the farmer. With this we move gently away from farming that is solely focused on matter and design. Brian Keats also provided an excellent orientation to Steiner's influence on the development of Biodynamic agriculture. He guided the audience through several landscapes including: the effects of the Anthropocene in the Earth; Steiner's more wholistic perception of agriculture; solar research regarding rhythms/pulses that invite harmonies of warmth, light, tone and life; Indigenous creation stories and associated cosmic "gestalts"; and the alchemy of biodynamics.

Bronzewing Botanical Herb Farm and the Raphael Centre visits

The second day began with another vibrant group of 50 people at the Gould’s Farm (Bronzewing Botanical Herb Farm) run by former Tarremah parent and active school community member Greg Whitten. He shared his vast knowledge and beautiful 'living library' of superb medicinal herbs. It is such a blessing to have a wisdom holder like him in our community. We connected to the Biodynamic Herbs visually and viscerally, understanding their importance in improving soil and working 'magic' on the farm. Lunch followed the tour at the Raphael Centre, convened by a group of consciously minded members who would like to live in community on a biodynamic farm.

Tarremah Steiner School visit

The Tarremah celebration entailed hearing about the wonderful world of Biodynamic bee caring from Michael Rowland from Tarremah and Yves Ginat from Miellerie Honey. We were guided by Michael through a range of topics including the implications for bee caring in relation to conventional bee keeping practices, virus, habitat destruction and climate. This was followed by Yves elaborating his BD orientation and practices, providing a window into a deeply relational and rhythmical dynamic between the carer and the insect realm, between the cosmos, the flowers and the bees, all of which involve subtle yet direct communications. Some of the group then moved to the garden to participate in compost making. This activity attracted several younger people, adding to the level of fun and allowing conversations to emerge regarding the essential place of compost generally, and BD compost more specifically, in the practice of BD gardening and farming.

Ueli Hurter’s second public talk at UTas

Later that evening at the UTas Law lecture theatre Ueli presented on “economic models, challenges and opportunities for building regenerative BD food secure communities”. This was another inspiring and thoughtful presentation. Firstly, Ueli, building on some of Brian Keats’s BD orientation and future directions presentation the previous night, outlined some compelling research data that tracked comparisons (particularly in relation to soil health) between conventional, organic, and biodynamic framing practices over 45 years. These data suggested that if practices are maintained over the long-term biodynamics has clear and substantial benefits beyond organic practices (such as carbon content in soil, soil structure and water retention) and reinforced how the damage associated with conventional practices seems indefensible. The focus of the presentation then shifted to a portrayal of some of the consciousness elements of BD at the interface of Earthen and Cosmic forces, with a skilful interweaving of experiences from earlier in the day (herb farming, bee caring, business challenges, communal living, etc) and highlighting BD as deeply interrelation life course.

The second part of Ueli’s talk focussed on a few key consequences of conventional/industrial farming which tend to operate within more linear economic models that tend to separate the farmer, the processer, the wholesaler, the retailer and the consumer. He proposed in the first instance a “round table” model where each of these five roles can better see and understand the efforts and challenges of the others, encouraging more direct engagement, problem solving and discussion regarding necessary compensation for inputs provided. The advantages of regionally focused markets versus global markets were raised, as well as the advantages of having multi-functional activities on land (e.g., accommodation, CSAs, cultural venues) integrated with more diversified farming, drawing on localised practice-based knowledge, and non-profit plant breeding, have been found to have the best evidence to date to support regenerative food systems and communities.

The talk finished with an overview of different economic practices around the globe, with a particular emphasis on community and business development being guided by a three-folding principle of fraternity, equality and liberty. Ueli’s home community model of L’Aubiert in Switzerland was then explored as a long-term venture that might be viewed as a point of reference for future community developments down under.

The wrap-up gathering

The final part of the centennial events in Tasmania involved a wrap-up gathering at the hall at Tarremah.

The centennial recognition events assisted in laying the foundations for the expansion of biodynamics in Tasmania. It is hoped that this expansion will continue to involve the reinvigoration and reconfiguration of relationships with other streams of Rudolf Steiner’s work such as education and Anthroposophy more generally. Working with the Tarremah Steiner School to explore ways to enhance BD practices in the garden, and support BD education possibilities is just one of the ways to build the BD community in Tasmania.

It was fitting that the core theme of the Tassie events became enlivened in the group process of this final gathering. This meeting was tasked with further “weaving together” the main threads of the conversations and presentations over the course of the preceding couple of days, and to start to solidify a plan towards future developments.

Over 20 people joined the circle in the hall to explore the roots of BD in Tassie, where we are now, and where we might be able to go as a community supporting the ongoing development of biodynamics in Tasmania. These core directions include: a focus on BD education in schools, with Tarremah being an initial point of development; increasing our connection with the international BD movement; taking personal responsibility for healing and growing our community; initiatives to increase BD food security and succession options (including knowledge retention - e.g., multiple aspects of Brian Keats’s astro-calendar, land and produce sharing, etc); BD education, training and research; deepening the underpinning of BD in Tassie with Anthroposophy; and centre based and more distributed intentional community building initiatives guided by social three-folding.

There was a wave of emotion which appeared to catalyse motivation within the group to acknowledge the pain of separation that has been experienced within the various Steiner informed streams, the depth of existing connection and potential connection as we strive to create more cohesion moving forward. There was poetry, tears, hugs and laughter as our circle gathered on the same place (literally) where once BD carrots were being grown some time ago.

Many participants committed to form a working group to continue this conversation, with a particular focus on enhancing BD education in schools and better integrating with existing BD training and community initiatives. One step in this direction was suggested that Tarremah could host one of the seasonal weekend workshops of the yearlong BDTas Foundation Education Course.

This was truly an inspiring meeting, showing hope and goodwill to move forward together. The only thing that could top this was Ueli’s expressed discovery that “Tasmania in the centre of BD universe!”, which was met with a jovial and enthusiastic round of applause. Well done to all involved!

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