

Newsletter December 2016



Panorama December 2016

Seasonal greetings

It has been an exciting and packed year for The Field Centre. Internally, in association with Ruskin Mill Trust, we have been working to develop and launch a portfolio of programmes and seminars. Mini reports are given below as well as a glimpse of the ECO-motive project.

Throughout 2016 The Field Centre has also been delighted to welcome and host a series of inspiring events that have included both national and international contributors: Johannes Köhl, David Tresemer, Peter Grunewald, Tonalis, Frank Burdich, Glen Atkinson, Simon Charter, Bruno Follador, Susan Raven, and the Nailsworth Festival.

We hope that you have enjoyed and been inspired by the programme this year and will continue to be so in 2017.

Biodynamic Training programme

Launched in September, the Ruskin Mill Biodynamic Training programme has been designed by experienced farmers, gardeners, teachers and senior practitioners within the Trust. Biodynamic Agriculture lives at the heart of the Trust's method of Practical Skills Therapeutic Education (PSTE) and as such, its educational provisions use the land as context and means of engagement in bringing about person-centred learning and development. Arising from this, and what makes the programme unique, is its two primary focus areas: firstly, Biodynamic training – 'Growing the land' and secondly Social therapeutic education – 'Growing people.'

On the first weekend of the programme learners were invited into an experience of what it means to work out of a 'spirit of place.' Having become familiar with Gables Farm, the participants then worked with clay from the Horsley valley. Once the clay was dug out, a 'community pot' was fashioned.



Inaugural Biodynamic Training weekend, Community Pot, Horsley Valley, September 2016

The following weekend in October saw learners getting to grips with the basics of soil science and plant studies in Biodynamic practice, before going deeper into the practices of soil fertility building and the fundamental morphology and physiology of plants.

“The soil study was fantastic. I got a lot out of seeing the brought in soil samples from different places and hearing people speaking about them. The germination sequences were fantastic to draw and I felt my observation skills were awakened by doing this.” - Annette Parker

“Drawing the development of seeds at different stages of the germination process was a fascinating study.” - Jim Hildyard

The Biodynamic Training programme has two intakes per year and trainee and direct applications for January 2017 are now being invited. For more information, contact Simon Reakes or visit the website:

E: simon.reakes@thefieldcentre.org.uk

T: +44 (0) 1453 367 369

W: www.biodynamictraining.org/

Teacher Development programme

The Ruskin Mill Teacher Development Programme was launched at The Field Centre in October.

The Programme is a two-year part-time course aimed at teachers or professionals working in education who wish to develop, deepen and enliven their skills, knowledge and practice. The programme explores how a practical craft and therapeutic curriculum can be integrated with the National Curriculum to deliver highly effective teaching and learning, particularly for young people with complex learning needs.

Throughout the programme, emphasis will be placed on experiential learning – learning through doing. Participants will be invited to explore existing pedagogic and human development frameworks through research, experiential learning and reflection. There will also be the opportunity for participants to develop and deepen their artistic practice.

With an intake of both internal and external staff, the programme provides a great opportunity to explore alternative approaches to special education. Key to this is experiential learning, research and reflective and reflexive practice.



Learner artwork from the Teacher Development Programme,
November 2016

The first taught module focused on the four-fold approach to both the human being and the natural world brought by Rudolf Steiner. This was enhanced by working with Goethean observation techniques. Learners also looked at how to develop a curriculum out of the genius loci of a place, teaching through nature, and nature deficit disorder.

“This course has allowed me to understand the students from a different perspective, helping to deepen my knowledge of how to work with them in an educational and therapeutic context. The variety of lecturers who present on the course, from both inside and outside Ruskin Mill, are really inspiring.” – Sophie Creed

In its pilot year the programme will have two intakes and applications are now being invited for January 2017. For more information, contact Simon Reakes or visit the website:

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T: +44 (0) 1453 367 369

W: www.thefieldcentre.org.uk/teacher-development-programme/

ECO-Motive

The benefits of Practical Skills Therapeutic Education may soon be made available to marginalised and disadvantaged young people across Europe, thanks to a pioneering initiative known as ECO-Motive. Funded under the European Union’s Erasmus+ programme, ECO-Motive will train European farmers and agricultural workers in the theory and techniques of PSTE. Once trained in the UK, graduates can, in turn, pass on their skills to young people back home.

By facilitating small-scale organic agriculture, the project aims to re-vitalise land, communities and economies. Whilst the initial pilot focuses on Roma communities in Hungary, the programme is designed to adapt to any ecological and cultural context, and could ultimately be rolled-out in any of the E.U.’s 28 member-states if results are encouraging.

Representatives of ECO-Motive are:

Szent Istvan University, Hungary

GAK Nonprofit Kozhasznu, Hungary

Tizsasas Municipality, Hungary

Ruskin Mill Trust, UK.

Ormansag Foundation, Hungary

Civitas Foundation, Romania

Manresa Vocational School, Catalonia.

For further information, please contact Ricardo Pereira

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SAVE THE DATE IN 2017

The Philosophy of Freedom as a Foundation for Scientific Research

Dr Judyth Sassoon

January 27-28, 2017

The Field Centre, Nailsworth, Stroud

This seminar will be an exploration of how Rudolf Steiner's "Philosophy of Freedom", in conjunction with Goetheanism, can provide new paradigms for work on biological evolution.

Friday 27th January: 7.30pm – 9.00pm – £5

An open evening lecture/discussion: this will be an introduction, summarising the essential ideas in "Philosophy of Freedom" and modes of human thinking, distinguishing everyday thinking from "living thinking". It will lead to the idea of thinking as a continuous, creative process uniting mobile concepts to percepts and thus playing a role in creation itself.

Saturday 28th January: 9.30am – 5.00pm – £45

The continuing theme will introduce the idea of thinking as a supra-personal experience and a creative universal activity. If thinking can be experienced as a continuous process of becoming it follows that thinking itself mirrors the processes of evolving life. Judyth Sassoon will develop this theme further with respect to her work on biological evolution and demonstrate how, through "living thinking" (as described by Steiner), human beings might participate in completing natural evolution. The seminar will emerge from the response of participants to the presentations. It is hoped that through collaborative discussion and the thoughtful "peer review" of participants, new insights may be gained into the processes of biological evolution.

To register contact Simon Reakes:

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Anthroposophy and Meditation

Dr Terje Sparby

June 16-18, 2017

The Field Centre, Nailsworth, Stroud

The Field Centre is delighted welcome Dr Terje Sparby who will be offering a seminar on Anthroposophic Meditation.

To date Terje has published papers in English on:

- *A Proposal for a System of Classification for Anthroposophical Meditation*
- *Investigating the Depths of Consciousness Through Meditation*
- *Hegel and Steiner; Rudolf Steiner's Idea of Freedom as seen in the Panorama of Hegel's Dialectic*

These and other papers can be viewed and downloaded here:

www.uni-giessen.academia.edu/TerjeSparby

To register your interest contact Simon Reakes

E: simon.reakes@thefieldcentre.org.uk

And finally...

A quote from Rudolf Steiner on his Philosophy of Freedom:

"In The Philosophy of Freedom I wanted to say - look into the depths of your soul. There you will find the remnant of a genuine and energetic thinking arising out of the inner self; a pure thinking that is more than ordinary thinking, a thinking that can generate a feeling-imbued knowledge, a thinking that lives in the human will. And this enlivened, pure thinking, working together with the will, can become the impulse for moral actions."

Rudolf Steiner on His Book the "Philosophy of Freedom":
Selections Arranged and Annotated Paperback – 2007