

## January 2012

The ancient Greeks called him Zephyrus, the god of the west wind. He was the bringer of light, the messenger of Spring. Zephyrus, the adored son of Astraeus, who helped guide Odysseus back to Ithaca. Have you not heard him these past days? Zephyrus racing across fen and heath and wold, sweeping away dust and thistledown. It was Zephyrus who made the treetops swing and the osiers tilt, who skittered leaves and feathers across the packhouse yard. Quiet places were full of his singing. The human voice was overwhelmed.

Zephyrus moves fast and invisibly. He permeates plough and vegetation and stubble. Soil particles loosen, the heaviness of the land atrophies, bacteria stir in the newly opened pores of the soil. Zephyrus dries, shapes, changes, creates. Every object, every living thing is in some way touched. Consider the leveret charging wildly down the garden path. Back and forth, forth and back, racing the wind as if engulfed in an exercise of self-knowing. Or the piglet chasing its shadow.

Despite all this Epiphany was mild this year. No winter desert to disrupt and freeze. Today Mark harvests cauliflowers and cabbage, the covers of the packing rig giving it the look of a sailboat on a wide green sea. Adrian has seeds to order, machinery maintenance to supervise, crop sales to make; there's the ongoing hedge planting program, school visits. The farm is in good heart, a great place to be. And the evenings are dark.

One time I was driving home from the office. It was late and as I went along the hum of the car startled a heron. Now imagine being disturbed as you plash along the water of a quiet delph. Until then it'd been so quiet. The bird in its alarm darted upwards. I watched its wings silhouetted against the moon as it rose and tried to steady itself, and tried to steady itself again. It was useless. The heron let go. Why resist? As if in thrall to an idea greater than itself it was borne upwards towards the stars.

Back at Lammings the cows are eating sweet-smelling haylage. Above them, perched in the eaves, a flock of collared doves eye the fallen seed. They're quite vocal, cooing away on their high perches. I guess I must alarm them because they scatter immediately, their wings like so much quicksilver and lovely in the limpid light. I'm struck by the juxtaposition of the wild doves and the calm cattle lined up beside the central alleyway eating, their tails flicking. They make interesting bedfellows.

Sheep in the meadow: white-face Longwools, thickly set, burly in their flowing fleeces. Next to them broad headed Lleyns running with Janacek, our pedigree Suffolk ram. (Each flock runs with the ram for thirty four days, the time of two oestrous cycles). Bruce expects lambing to start early March. For now the regime is one of feeding, bedding down, tending. The animals know when you care. They care for you.

Beyond all this a trio of tractors working Tattenham Corner, the rich chocolate soil falling behind them. First the discs cut into the sweep of the clover ley, then the two ploughs follow, turning over the loosened soil in readiness for spring. Wheat will follow. It's twilight when the team finishes. The lights are on.

Solstice: I think there are moments when we carry within us all the recognition of new Beginnings. You find it written on the land. In the way the soil awakens, in the appearance of a new shoot or in the glitter of a stone. Since the Solstice something's changed. The farm is not what it was before and never will be again. Nor will we.

Over all this Zephyrus is felt, moving across the land. Remind us the land is wild and striking and infinite.

## *Market Garden News*

Our broad beans are now six inches tall. They've grown well in this mild weather with a good even germination. Yesterday Simon removed the crop covers and fenced them off against hares. Most things look like being early this year, broad beans among them. The almond blossom's already out.

The garlic's well through and so we've used the brush weeder to literally 'brush away' the weeds between the rows. Otherwise there's work to do in the polytunnels along with the pruning of fruit trees and currant bushes. Today Simon and Sasha finished deadheading the globe artichokes. The strong plants suggest they'll crop heavily this year.

## **Biodynamic update**

Adrian will be making the next batch of preparations for our biodynamic land soon. Quite a number of vegetables grown this year will be biodynamic, among them sweetcorn and rainbow coloured caulis. The turkeys will also be biodynamic (as well as supersonic given how they fly!).

## **BEEF, LAMB, PORK, TURKEY**

**Individual cuts of Woodlands meat are available to order online from the Extras List. We're now offering a selection of turkey items along with various special offers, including our popular sausages!**

## **LINCOLNSHIRE GAME**

**Do check out our selection of game which is available to order online (see Extras page). This is packed specially for us by Crick and Tina Verhey van Wijk, old friends of mine from Gourmet Game, Frampton.**

**With warm wishes for a Happy New Year from us all!**

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