

Winter Solstice 2016

Myddle Earth

The Pagan Federation magazine for the

Mid West and Wales

What is an...

Egregore?

Disability

Liaison

Pagan
Carols

Pagan
Prisoners at
Yule

The Solitary Witch

Contents...

From the Editor	3
District News	4
RC Reports	5
The Winter Solstice	6
Pagan Carols	7
The Solitary Witch	9
Disability in Paganism Column	11
Poetry Corner	14
What is an Egregore?	15
Prison Ministry	16
Book Review	19
Write for Myddle Earth	20
Moot Listings	21

From the editor...

I can't believe it's Yule already! Time seems to be flying past! In my household, we've never really done anything special for Yule, just acknowledged it and celebrated four days later at Christmas. But this year I am planning on lighting candles on a chocolate Yule log and making a wish for the year to come, and giving out a present to each of my family members. I'm sure the children will be delighted to get a present early!

It can be hard to celebrate a Pagan festival when it feels that everyone else around us is celebrating a Christian festival, but there are ways we can crossover. After all, many Christmas symbols, such as the evergreen tree, Yule log and kissing under the mistletoe, have Pagan roots. To help you all get into the Yule spirit, turn to page 7 where you will find Christmas carols rewritten with a Pagan theme!

There is a variety of articles in the magazine for you this issue, from Solitary Witchcraft on page 9 to What is an Eggregore? on page 15. Yule for Pagans in prisons is explored on page 16, and I am pleased to introduce our latest columnist, Carl Johnson, who on page 11 introduces us to himself and his artwork.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Myddle Earth, and as always, I am inviting you all to submit whatever you like to make our magazine more diverse. I would like to start a letters page, so please email in with what you think of the magazine or Paganism in general, to praise or complain, or to just say hi. I love to receive all your feedback and ideas.

Bright Blessings until Ostara,

Laura
JOC

District news...

District Manager's Report Yule 2016

Here we are at the shortest day, and almost the end of the calendar year. And what a year it's been! With a steady stream of famous people meeting their demise, numerous acts of senseless violence and ongoing political upheavals, 2016 is widely acknowledged to be one of the most tumultuous of our times. As we mark the Winter Solstice with friends and family, let's look with hope to the future even though we did the same twelve months ago and might now look back on it with a shudder. Hope is never a bad thing, because without it life is meaningless.

Our PF District continues to be quiet compared to other parts of England and Wales. It isn't a competition, and just by being a PF member you are helping further our cause both by contributing funds and being another person to be counted as proudly Pagan. If you can do more than that, it is very much appreciated. If other commitments take precedence, that is fine too. We are the Pagan Federation: all of us who are members have equal importance, there is no 'hierarchy' based on what a member does. During our collective 38 years as PF volunteers we've seen a lot of how it works as an organisation, and nobody has more value than anyone else.

So, here in PF Mid-west and Wales we are in 'tick-over'. Some Regions have more activities than others because they have more willing helpers. It'd be nice to see every Region with a range of activities, so once again the call is out for volunteers to organise conferences, moots, Earth Day gatherings, and whatever else might be appropriate and desirable. Contact us via email at mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk or phone 07968-599882 for a chat if you are interested.

Thank you for being there, and our good wishes for a Joyful Yule.

Audrey & Richard



RC Reports...

Regional Co-ordinator's Report Yule 2016
– Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Hello, this is your stand-in RC's for H&W reporting. Not much to report, as you may have noticed that there are still no moots or open rituals or other PF-organised Pagan activities happening in these parts. Memberships, both renewals and new, are trickling in but so far nobody is able or willing to take the reins.

These two are connected: lack of volunteers leads to little or no activities, leads to falling away of incentives to join or renew, leads to reduced memberships. And so it goes on. Please don't take this as nagging, it's just here as information and an answer to the oft-posed questions 'Why does nothing happen in this area?' or 'What is the point of joining or renewing PF membership if nothing happens to make it worth the fee?' More volunteers means more activities, means more for your money. It really is that simple.

It is a fact that PF membership fees go towards the production of the high-quality Pagan Dawn magazine, plus a host of other expenses required of an organisation like the PF, even without having to pay staff (nobody is paid). Moots, gatherings, celebrations of any kind are organised for free by people who love getting together with other Pagans to mark special occasions and learn from each other.

So, here it is again: SITUATION VACANT

Regional Co-ordinator (RC) for Herefordshire and Worcestershire
Essential Requirements: Computer at home with Internet connection and a phone number, current PF membership of at least 12 months duration. This demonstrates a commitment to the PF, and helps discourage any infiltrators. When personal details are going to be shared, we want to be certain that they won't be misused: this isn't 'scare-mongering' but simply common sense and a legal requirement under the Data Protection Act.

Please contact us at mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk if you want to volunteer or even just discuss this with no obligation.

All our good wishes for Yule, and we look forward with you to a new year.

Audrey & Richard
(acting) RC's, PF Herefordshire and Worcestershire

The Winter Solstice

By Laura Jones

The winter solstice is traditionally celebrated on the 21st December, and is a time when the day is at its shortest and the night is at its longest. It is the lowest point of the year in terms of light and energy. For Pagans, the solstice represents the rebirth of the sun god born of the goddess, at a time when the sun slowly begins to increase in strength.

The solstice occurs at the same time for everyone, no matter where they are on the Earth, and in 2016, that time is Wednesday 21st December at 10.44 am. This is the time when the north pole is tilted the furthest away from the sun and creates the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere and the summer solstice in the southern hemisphere.

From a Pagan perspective, the winter solstice is a time to focus upon birth rather than death. It provides an opportunity to look back at your achievements throughout the past year and let go of what has served

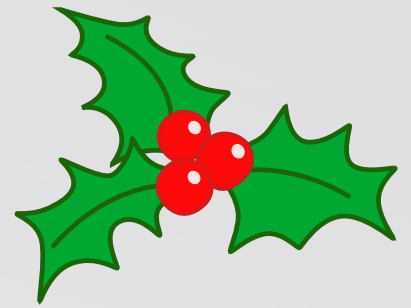
to hold you back, as well as make plans for the new year to come.

A common story during this time is that of the Holly and Oak Kings. They battle each other twice a year, at each solstice, and at the winter solstice the Oak King is victorious and rules over the 'light' part of the year (Yule to Litha).

The kings can be seen to represent the two sides of the Green Man/Horned God, however some people see them as the same king but with a twin soul. They symbolise the waxing and waning of the seasons on Earth and in terms of the yearly cycle, represent the light and dark aspects of the male deity.

So Yule is a special time for Pagans, a time of the birth of the Sun God, the vanquishing of the Holly King and a period of reflection upon the year ahead, as we look forward to the sun returning to our shores and a new year bringing us fresh opportunities.

Pagan carols



Dancing in a Wiccan Wonderland

Pagans sing, are you listenin',
Altar's set, candles glisten,
It's a Magickal night, we're having tonight,
Dancing in a Wiccan Wonderland

In a Circle we can light a Yule Fire,
And await the rising of the Sun,
It's the Great Wheel turning for the new year,
Loaded with abundance and great fun.

Blades held high, censer smoking,
God and Goddess, we're invoking,
Through Elements Five, we celebrate life,
Dancing in a Wiccan Wonderland,

Queen of Heaven, is in Her place,
Triple Goddess, now the Crone Face,
Above and Below, She's the Goddess we know,
Dancing in a Wiccan Wonderland

Now the God, is the Provider,
Supplying game for our Fire,
Above and Below, He's the Horned One we Know,
Dancing in a Wiccan Wonderland

Later on, by the fire,
Cone of Power, gettin' higher
It's a Magickal Night we're having tonight,
Dancing in a Wiccan Wonderland

by Alexander & Archer



Hark the Neo-Pagans Sing

Hark the Neo-Pagans sing,
Glory to the Holly King!
Peace on Earth and mercy mild,
God and Goddess reconciled,
Hear us now as we proclaim,
We have risen from the flames,
Our ancient Craft now we reclaim,
In the God and Goddess' names
Hark the Neo-Pagans sing,
Glory to the Holly King!

Herne by highest love adored,
Herne the ever-reborn Lord,
At all times behold Him come,
Offspring of the Holy One,
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see,
Hail incarnate Deity!
Our ancient Craft we now reclaim,
in the God and Goddess' names
Hark the Neo-Pagans sing,
Glory to the Holly King!

Words by "Sunblade"

Away from the Harvest

Tune: Away In A Manger

Away from the harvest the seasons have turned
The nights have grown colder and fires we've burned
The stars in the heavens look down where we stand
Neighbors and friends with candles in hand.
The warmth is returning, the sun and the light
Will brighten our days and shorten our nights
Come gather around the Solstice is here
The old one is passing, begins the new year.

Words by Blake Taylor-Mixon

Silent Night

Silent night, Solstice Night
All is calm, all is bright
Nature slumbers in forest and glen
Till the Springtime She awakens again
Sleeping spirits grow strong!
Sleeping spirits grow strong!

Silent Night, Solstice Night
Silver moon shine bright
Snowflakes blanket the slumbering
earth
Yule fires welcome the Sun's rebirth
Hark, the Light is reborn!
Hark, the Light is reborn!

Silent Night, Solstice Night
Quiet rest till the Light
Turning every the rolling wheel
Brings the Winter to comfort and heal
Rest your spirit in peace!
Rest your spirit in peace!

by Ellen Reed



THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

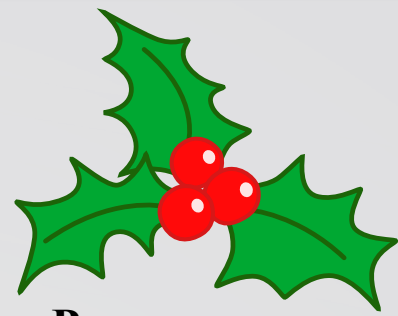
The holly and the ivy, when they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown.

The rising of the sun, and the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a blossom, as white as lily flow'r,
And in our hearts we bear pure hope, and sing every hour.

The holly bears a berry, as red as any rose,
And in our hearts we bear a flame of life, and with hope it grows.

The holly bears a prickle, as sharp as any thorn,
And our skin bears the sun's sharp rays, bringing life this Solstice morn.



Gods Rest Ye Merry Pagan Folk

Gods rest ye merry Pagan folk,
Let nothing you dismay
Remember that the Sun returns
Upon this Solstice Day!
The growing dark is ended now
And Spring is on its way
O, tidings of comfort and joy!
Comfort and joy!
O, tidings of comfort and joy!
The Winter's worst still lies ahead
Fierce tempest, snow and rain!
Beneath the blanket on the ground
The spark of life remains!
The Sun's warm rays caress the seeds
To raise Life's songs again!
O, tidings of comfort and joy!
Comfort and joy!
O, tidings of comfort and joy!
Within the blessed apple lies
The promise of the Queen!
For from this pentacle shall rise
The orchards fresh and green.
The Earth shall blossom once again
The air be sweet and clean!
O, tidings of comfort and joy!
Comfort and joy!
O, tidings of comfort and joy!



The Solitary Witch

By Ian D. Robinson

To be a witch doesn't mean you have to be part of a coven. Sometimes, doing it alone can be just as rewarding, as Ian explains.

There is something special about doing a ritual with a group and I have been fortunate as I have worked as a solitary, with my partner and in groups but there is something equally special and magical working alone as a solitary witch. At present, as I write this, the room is pervaded by the aroma of incense, with gentle music and a cat who is keeping me company. A solitary witch is never truly alone.

As Regional Coordinator I have been asked over the years by a number of people “...*how can I get in contact with a coven?*” and they are always crestfallen by my response. You have to be invited you can't simply knock on someone's door and ask if you can join. That's when moots become useful for meeting new and like-minded people, making friends and working with others.

Be wary of people you encounter on the internet, they might be genuine or might not be. Moots, conferences and events are great places for meeting people, and allow you to get to know them better and to see if you can work with them. That is of course if you wish to work with other people.

For those of you who have a garden create your own sacred space which is something you can also do indoors. If you haven't got a garden there is nothing to stop you bringing the garden inside. I have a friend who has done this and has herbs in

plant pots on his window sill. One of the most important tools for any witch is the imagination, not just for visualisation but for experimentation and creation – that is what started me making my own tools years ago. You don't know what you can do until you try, and whatever you do, or create, doesn't have to be perfect but because you made it you can empower it, staff or wand, with your own energy.

A friend of mine declared that she didn't want a 'knife' on her altar so I said don't put one on it. As a solitary witch you can follow your own instincts and do what feels right for you; you are not being dictated to by anyone except yourself. There is, however, another choice. Instead of having a ceremonial edged blade acquire, or make, a wooden athame.

Being a solitary witch can be rewarding in so many ways; primarily you haven't got anyone telling you that you are doing something wrong. There are plenty of good books to give you guidance and plus the fact you learn from making mistakes. What is important is self discipline and giving time to your chosen path. Finding time can be problem if you have a full time job or a family to consider, but not impossible. The 'muggle' world has a tendency to get in the way at times, but if you can put aside ten

or fifteen minutes day it's better than no time at all. Your deity should be with you twenty four hours a day. A trick I learned is to greet the day each morning; nothing complicated just a simple greeting to the Goddess.

Make your own tools and potions, inks and incenses and write the recipes down in your Book of Shadows or Grimoire. I keep a separate journal of experiences, the places I have been to and talks and moots I have attended. Books are useful but a talk at a moot or conference might inspire you attempt something new. Go out and walk the land, watch the seasons and know what to look for in the hedgerows and woodlands to add to your magical cupboard.

The solitary witch predates Wicca and has been with us in many ways for centuries and as recently as the beginning of the last century (see *The Cornish Witch-finder* by William Henry Paynter, introduced and edited by Jason Semmens). Dependent on what you are doing you don't have to cast a circle, and there are various ways to cast a circle. You have to do what feels right for you. Write your own spells and rituals as you don't have to follow everything that is written in a book. You are constantly learning. Listen and be more aware of the world around you. Earlier this year I asked my wife why she was allowing nettles and thistles flourish in the garden and discovered it was to attract butterflies, which was something that I didn't know.

Whilst I was on holiday in Cornwall this year I wanted to do a simple ritual and hadn't brought any tools with me. I used a sea-shell to represent water, a feather for air, a stone for earth. Let's face it you haven't always got your tools with you so improvise. You don't need a wand or a staff or an athame use a twig or simply use your hands and of course your will.

There are loads of books available to choose from nowadays, possibly too many, but these are some of the books I found useful.

Practical Solitary Magic – Nancy B. Watson

Psychic Self-Defence – Dion Fortune

Practical Techniques of Psychic Self-Defence – Murry Hope

Thorsons Principles of Wicca – Vivianne Crowley

Wicca – A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner – Scott Cunningham

The Western Mystery Tradition – Christine Hartley

Everyday Magic – Marian Green

I would also highly recommend any book by Doreen Valiente.

There are many paths you can choose to follow and by all means look at them to decide which is yours. Follow your intuition and follow the path that calls to you. I strongly advise not to pick and mix; runes would not work well in a ritual which was not purely Northern Tradition. There is no harm in examining other paths or even researching them, but it is wiser to dedicate yourself to one particular path.

One last thing before I finish. Do not be offended by anyone who is part of a coven who declares that you can't be a witch as you have not been properly initiated. This does happen and has happened to people I know. Take no notice of them or just give them a knowing smile. After all who initiated the first witch? Self initiation is now becoming more accepted, but, sadly not by everyone.

Bright Blessings and your Goddess be with you.

Ian Robinson is the Regional Coordinator for Staffordshire and the Mid West. This article is an abridged version of a talk he gave at the October Stafford moot.

Disability in Paganism

Each issue, Carl Johnson, the District Disability Liaison for the Mid West, will be keeping us up to date with his Pagan Federation work and experiences. In his first column, we learn a little about Carl and his work as an artist...



Hello my name is Carl Johnson and I have recently been made the Pagan Federation District Disability Liaison for the Mid West. Thanks to some prompting from Debi Gregory and Ian Robinson!

I live in Stafford although I am originally from East Anglia, on the Border of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk (Iceni Country), where my father had a general store and wholesale warehouse business. We had a flat above the shop so my formative years were spent in the shop and the stock room where I would draw and paint and make things from the old boxes and bags the stock came in. Art, to me, is part compulsion, part need and part experimentation. Any material that is available is a potential creation and anything that stands still long enough gets decorated or transformed into something else.

So when I left college it seemed natural to try and find work in the art field. I painted miniatures for role playing for a while and designed tattoos and then cartoons for Writers International, but those sort of jobs didn't pay very well, so I tried to find work in other areas. But whether I tried retail work, theatre or even factory jobs, I tended to end up making art of some kind within that job. Ultimately, posters, displays and even poetry were what I ended up doing.

Now I live here in Stafford, with a degree in Sculpture and HND in Figurative Sculpture from Wolverhampton University and Stafford College, gained with the help of some wonderful tutors - one was a caster from Madame Tussauds and another was a forensic pathologist reconstructor. It was a wonderful time and this helped me understand where my style fits in with the

artists of history. I love the works of Michelangelo and Rodin and I also have a soft spot for the paintings of Tamara De Lempicka (for their sculptural quality). Other big influences include writers, especially Robert Holdstock's *Mythago Wood* books which had a profound effect on my thinking and subsequent studies, along with the cover art on sci-fi and fantasy books such as those written by Anne McCaffery and Tanith Lee. I do a lot of library art workshops and displays for adults and children as I like to teach and reading is a passion.

Until recently I was a Library Development Officer which means I was tasked with developing events and workshops to encourage closer links with the surrounding community, ensuring everyone has access to library services and events regardless of ability, age, social standing, faith etc. Sadly I was diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnoea a couple of years ago which has affected my memory and I also suffer from depression which has contributed to me developing a slower pace in life. My health issues have meant I have been forced to reduce my workload so I'm doing what I can as a library assistant now. I hope the skill set I have developed will be useful in my role for the PF.

I have been on a Pagan path since I was a teenager (so at least 30 years) and read widely on witchcraft, magic and spirituality, which tends to influence a lot of my artwork. I made a study of historic witchcraft and the discovery of how people had suffered locally at the hands of Mathew Hopkins, including a witch burning in the market place in Kings Lynn.

I recently designed the cover for Witchcraft and Wicca Magazine. You can find examples of my work at carlcom66.deviantart.com



I'm currently studying my Ovate level with the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids which is inspirational and helpful. The teachings contain so many of the things I do naturally but my spiritual path is personal and varied and very individual.

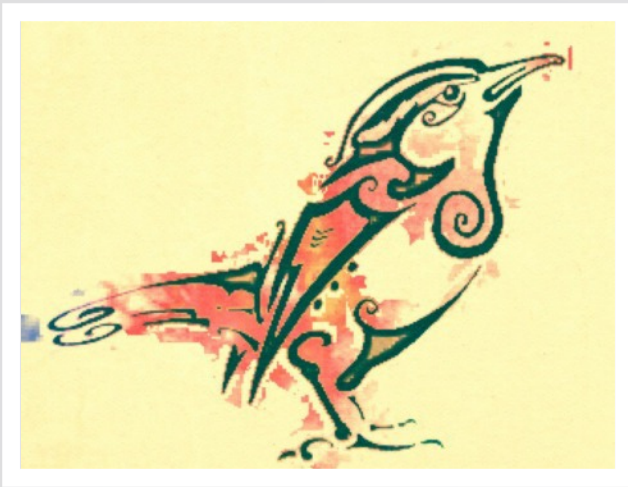


I think for a lot of people, it feels as though we are in a corporate uncaring world at the moment that doesn't really reflect the needs of people or nature either physically, morally or spiritually so I try and do what I can to redress that balance. To me, the Pagan Federation represents a formal, widely recognised, multi path voice for all pagans, so I'm pleased to be able to assist in any way I can.

So please feel free to contact me if you have any local issues, plans or needs, even if its just to have a natter about books or art, I'm here to help if I can.

You can contact Carl at carlcom66@mail.com

Some of Carl's artwork...



A wren from Carl's personal sketchbook



The Hare and the Moon; an Imbolc display made for the local library



A Cernunnos sculpture



Pagan Dance; a drawing all about freedom and being lost in the moment

Poetry Corner...

A place for your pagan-themed poems, songs, chants and spells!

Moon Cage

A shadowed form, reaching into indigo evening
light,
Lineality, the sinuous dance stretching and embrac-
ing the cool night air,
Captured in time and frozen only by the butterfly
shortness of human perception.

A joyous reaching from the earth, to breathe a gasp
of crisp atmosphere,
The living clasp and clamour of nature for the life
giving air.

Denuded by the icy breath of winter, slender fingers
scratch the sky,
They seem to hold the silver Luna orb within a spin-
dle cage, releasing its whispering light yet hiding
within its shadows.

A dance of centuries captured in a moments gaze,
nature and celestial motion,
The delicate web of branches holds the moon, while
slowly writhing roots nestle in inky shades of winter
soil.

By Carl Johnson

What on earth is an...

Eggregore?

By Laura Jones

*Don't be concerned if you have never heard of an egregore!
Read on to find out all you need to know*

Have you ever wondered why the atmosphere of one street is so different when compared to the next street along? Or why you can feel at home in one group of people but feel alienated by another, even though there are no obvious differences between the two? It is possible you are picking up on the egregore of that group, which is created from the amalgamation of the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energies of a group of people working towards the same goal.

Gaetan Delaforce defined an egregore as 'a kind of group mind which is created when people consciously come together for a common purpose'. If it is not upheld, it can dissolve rapidly but an egregore that is sustained will grow stronger and can persist for centuries. Even if all the members of the original group die, the egregore can remain in the inner dimensions until a new group forms that are dedicated to the rules and ideals of the original creators. It could be suggested that the gods and goddesses of Paganism are egregores, sent to the inner realms during the years of Pagan persecution, only to be revived with the advent of neo-Paganism and Goddess-worship. In fact, some non-religious groups put egregores into the same

category as gods and goddesses, whereas spiritual and religious groups believe egregores to be below deity in the spiritual rankings.

In general, an egregore is not evil and can be used to bless and protect a group objective, such as prayers for a loved one. A positive egregore is created by strong feelings of goodwill and will provide protection against negative energies. However, negative egregores do exist and are often created by a group whose primary aim is the attainment of power, often by the subjugation of others. The egregore is fed by addictions and vices, and once a person is caught up within a negative egregore, it is often difficult to escape its destructive influences.

Within Paganism and the occult, egregores are created by the psychic will of the group when we work rituals, cast spells etc. They are the manifestation of focused mental energy, a guide that connects the group to spirit. As more people find Paganism and the Goddess, and the more energy and emotions that people put into deity, the stronger the Pagan egregore will become, after years of being driven underground. This can only work for the benefit of all Pagans.

Are our Gods and Goddesses merely creations of vast numbers of people over the centuries, imbuing their egregores with vast amounts of energy and symbolism? Or are they tangible beings who have always been there, guiding and supporting us in whatever we do?

If you believe that aspects of deity are egregores, it could explain why different people often get similar experiences when working with the same deity. Of course, it could also be because those people are linking with an actual deity!

Prison Ministry...

A Pagan in Prison

By Hazel MacMillan, Pagan Minister

December is a very holy month, that cannot be denied. Not only do we Pagans celebrate Yule and the Winter Solstice, it also encompasses the Christian and Jewish celebrations of Christmas and Hanukkah, and is spiritually significant for Muslims, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians to name but a few.

In fact nearly every day in December is celebrated by one faith or another with one common theme - family.

Sadly for prisoners, being with their families isn't possible. They get to have visitors of course, but they aren't there to watch their kids open up their presents from Santa. They aren't there to give their mums and dads a hug and wish them a Merry Christmas. They aren't at home. They are here in prison.

I have worked in prisons for over fifteen years now and what surprises me still is the atmosphere there is throughout December. People seem to put aside any differences and join together. The wings are decorated in hand made decorations; there are carol services and bands playing, and all the Ministers muck in to make it as spiritual as possible.



For me and my groups, we will be celebrating the Winter Solstice on the 20th December, yes I know it's not the right date but we meet every Tuesday so that's when we will celebrate. We will be having a small feast and welcome the end of the dark days.

A lot of prisoners will be enthused with the celebrations in December but once those doors to their cells are locked they are then isolated from the world and left to their own thoughts, which can be dangerous at this time of year. Staff are on the alert for possible attempted suicides or self-harming, and aware of inmates who are just generally down at

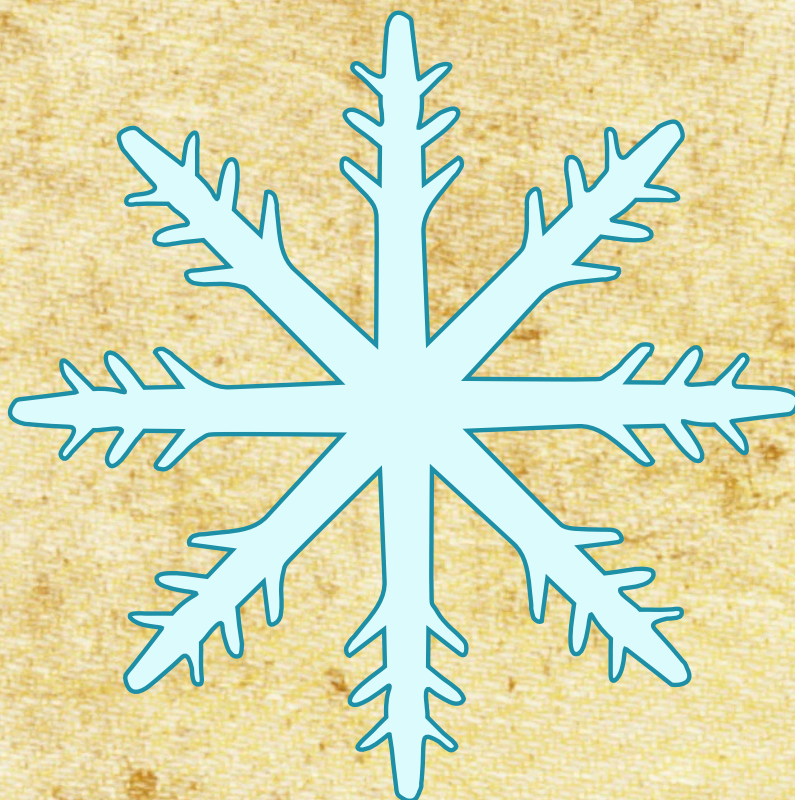
this time of year. It's a hard job being a prison officer and not one that I would be able to do!

We have a duty of care for our prisoners and when you see them more than you see your family you build a friendship of sorts. Keeping prisoners active is important so I also encourage everyone to attend the carol service and to listen out for the Salvation Army band when they visit. To keep an eye out for their neighbour on the wing and be that someone who brings a smile to another human being's face.

For me, I will be home for Christmas and will be attending the Troon Old Parish Carols by Candlelight service with my mum and my teenage son on Christmas Eve. That feeling I get when the lights go out and it's just the candles, it really is a place full of positive and loving energies. I should point out here that my son goes because it means he gets spoiled by the lovely ladies that serve the coffee and mince pies afterwards. Homemade mince pies at that, I can't wait ☺!!!

if you have any questions or feel you would like to help in any way please feel free to get in touch, my email address is ladyacmillan@gmail.com

Over the past 25 years the Pagan Federation through the Prison Ministry has gained recognition with the Home Office and Justice Department in England and Wales as the governing body of the Ministry, within the prison system.



Are you a Welsh speaker?

*Are you interested in joining the Prison
Ministry in Wales?*

If so, read on...

Next year the new Wrexham super prison will be opened to receive people from Wales. I have been tasked with spreading my net to as many PF members as possible to look for a Welsh speaking Pagan Chaplain. Although it is only for a few hours a week, these will be flexible, and may become contractable.

It is a really important role within the PFPM and being an ambassador for us in Wales is quite a weighty responsibility. Apart from Welsh, the applicant will need to be confident to teach eclectically across different traditions, and lead seasonal rituals to many people from different backgrounds. The Managing Chaplain and I will be arranging a tour of the prison in the new year for successful applicants, and prison training will be given.

If you feel that you could fulfil this role, but would like further information, please do not hesitate to send me an email on prisons@paganfederation.co.uk with a land line phone number, and your location.

Helene Mobius
Pagan Federation Prison Ministry
Manager
Faith Advisor to N.O.M.S



Book Review...

Pagan Planet: Being, Believing & Belonging in the 21st Century

Nimue Brown (ed)

Moon Books 2016 192 pp.

★★★★★

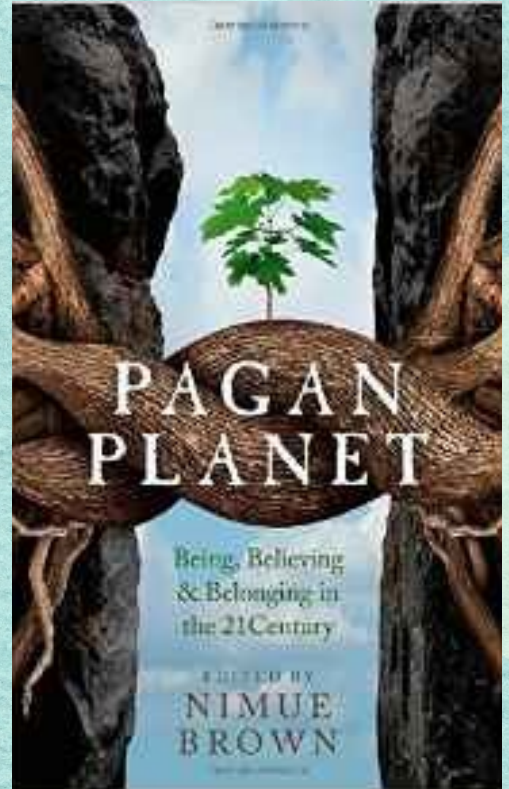
As part of an attempt to integrate more pagan practices into my life, I picked up a copy of '*Pagan Planet*', edited by Nimue Brown. This book promised to give me an insight into pagan attitudes, beliefs and lifestyle in the 21st century, and it seemed to be just the right read for me while I work on becoming a more active pagan.

I was not disappointed. Each chapter provides a glimpse into the varied attitudes, beliefs and lifestyles of our Pagan community, in the UK and beyond. As it is a community project, the book includes both published and unpublished writers, but this does not affect the quality of the work in any way. Subject matter includes Pagan parenting, day-to-day Pagan life and various Pagan paths from Shamanism and Druidry to Eclectic Paganism and Hellenic Witchcraft, as well as Pagan activism and even the mythology of Tolkien. So there is something here for everyone. Each chapter is clear and easy to read, fairly short but packed with inspiring information. It is very easy to dip in, read an article, then put it away and either ruminate on what has been read, or dive onto the Internet to research further! It is a very good introduction to those paths you may not have heard of or experienced, and to the ideas and lifestyles of other pagans.

However, each chapter is only a skim over its topic; the book would be enormous if each subject was done in detail and would have resulted in a loss of variety. If you want an in-depth look at Paganism today, this book may not be for you.

For me, there was only one chapter in the book I found to be unpleasant, and that was from an author calling for a 'Pagan planet' and a 'sterility plague' to control the number of humans on earth. I do not see how this can remotely relate to Paganism, which in my view values all life, even human, but that is my opinion; perhaps others will disagree.

It has been very intriguing reading about different Pagan lives and I would wholeheartedly recommend this book. It is the kind of book you will revisit many times over the years because it is so varied in its subject matter, while staying faithful to the overall theme of paganism today.



By Laura Jones

Write for Myddle Earth!

To make this magazine the best it can be, we need a variety of features from different authors. In addition, there is a need for letters, opinions, personal experiences, artwork and photos.

Let us know what you think of the magazine, what you particularly like, or what you really don't like! Do you agree with what has been written? Do you think you can do better? Write in and tell us!

If you want to be a part of the magazine but don't know in what capacity, email the editor and we can discuss your interests, strengths and weaknesses to find you the perfect position in our magazine. There is space for regular columnists or one-off features.

Broadly, the content of the magazine is split into the following:

- News and events - district and regional news
- Pagan Life - to include the wheel of the year, eco and environment, personal stories, interviews, herbs, trees and animals
- Family and Home - to include pagan parenting, crafts, recipes, activities, shopping, rites of passage
- Spirituality - to include deity, personal stories, meditation, the spiritual side of life
- Back to Basics - revisiting some of the basics of Paganism and its various branches
- Reviews - books mainly, plus oracles, music and anything else you want to send in

The Mid West and Wales is a large district, so get your opinions and experiences out there and share with lots of people! Look on our Facebook page for submission guidelines



Moot Listings...

North Wales

Rhyl

2nd Thursday of the month @ 7.30pm

Caskeys Pub, 19-23 Vale Road LL18 2BT

Facebook 'Rhyl Moot'

Contact Steve: offasring@gmail.com 01691 679066

Wrexham

Last Wednesday of the month @ 7.30pm

Wrexham Lager Sports and Social Club, 1 Union Road LL13 7SR

Facebook 'Wrexham Pagan Federation Moot'

Contact Steve: offasring@gmail.com 01691 679066

Mid Wales

Aberystwyth Pagans

Occasionally have moots in their area. Check out their group for more information

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/aberystwythpagangroup/>

Newtown

3rd Wednesday of the month @ 7.30pm

The Monty Club, Broad Street, Newtown

Facebook 'Simmering Cauldron'

Contact Simmering Cauldron 01686 668404

South Wales

Abergavenny Moot

Second Tuesday of every month, starts 7pm

Hen and Chickens pub, Flannel street, Abergavenny

Contact: ask on the South Wales Pagans group

Cardiff

Second Monday of the month from 7.30pm.

Upstairs at The Rummer Tavern, 14 Duke Street, CF10 1AY.

LC Derek Storey at spirit.brighid@virginmedia.com, or RC

Catherine Abbott at catherine.abbott01@gmail.com

Facebook: 'Cardiff Pagan Moot'

Details: Monthly meet up for Pagans and Heathens of all paths in and around Cardiff. We hold workshops, talks and other stuff in a pagan-friendly environment. We also hold open rituals around most sabbats. Please visit our Facebook page to find a list of events.

Carmarthen

Last Thursday of the month @ 7.30pm.

Get Stuffed Pizza, Cambrian Way, John Street, SA31 1QN (back of Marks & Spencer)

Facebook 'Carmarthen Pagans'

Contact: Susan on 01267 281414 or Paul Roussele on 07872 992162 email

paulkwrousselle@yahoo.co.uk

Cwmbran

3rd Friday of every month @ 7pm

Cwmbran community centre NP44 7JJ

Facebook 'Cwmbran Pagan Moot'

Newport Coffee Morning

Last Saturday of the month from 11am.

Coffee #1, Commercial Street.

Contact: Laura or Craig at the.shadows.light@hotmail.com

Pontardawe

1st Monday of the month @ 7.30pm.

The Pontardawe Inn (known locally as Y Gwachel), SA8 4ED.

Facebook: 'Y Garreg A'r Crochan - Swansea Valley Pagan Moot'

Contact: Jude on ygarregarcrochan@gmail.com

Pontypridd

3rd Saturday of the month (but please check first!) @ 12pm

Pontypridd Museum, Pontypridd

Facebook 'Pontypridd Pagan Moot group'

Contact Karin krainbird@me.com

Port-Talbot Pagan Pathways Gatherings (PPP Gatherings)

Last Friday of the month @ 7pm

Burgess Green pub, Port Talbot

Facebook 'The PPP Gatherings - (Port-Talbot Pagan Pathways)'

Swansea

3rd Tuesday of the month @ 7.30pm.

Mozart's, Walter Road, SA1 4QA.

Facebook: "Swansea Pagan Moot"

Contact: Cyt on 01792 578309.

Valleys

1st Wednesday of the month @ 7.30pm

The Griffin Inn, Gilfach Goch, Porth CF39 8YL

Contact Richard krishak2099@hotmail.com

Mid West

Kidsgrove

Last Tuesday of the month @ 8pm

Blue Bell, 25 Hardingswood, Kidsgrove ST7 1EG

Contact Glenys Walmsley 07973 635318 glenys.walmsley@hotmail.com

Oswestry

1st Wednesday of the month @ 7.30pm

The Golden Lion, Upper Church Street SY11 2AA
Facebook 'Oswestry Pagans'
Contact: Cheryn@nlp-hypno.com

Shrewsbury

Last Wednesday of the month @ 7pm
Bucks Head Inn, Frankwell, Shrewsbury SY3 8JR in the restaurant area.
Parking available at Frankwell car park, with a short walk to the pub.
Facebook 'Shrewsbury & District Pagan Moot'.

Stafford

3rd Monday of the month @ 8pm
Royal British Legion, 6 - 7 Eastgate St., Stafford
Facebook 'Stafford Pagan Moot'
Contact: Maggie Jennings 07825 285688

Stoke on Trent

2nd Tuesday of the month @ 8pm Sept-May
The Red Lion, 18 Stoke Old Road, Hartshill ST4 6ES
Website: mysteriesgroup.atspace.org

Wellington

1st Wednesday of the month @ 8pm
Red Lion Pub, Holyhead Road TF1 2EW
Contact: Pat French 07967 329909 flutes@moonforge.com

It is advised that you contact the relevant person before attending a moot in case details have changed.

If anyone knows of any moots that are not advertised here, please let me



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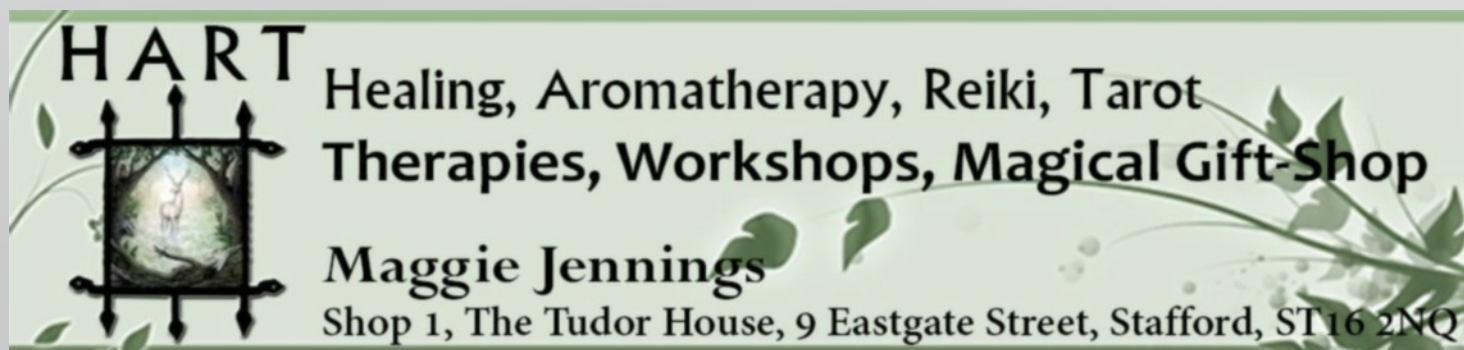
NEW!
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Indian Head Massage,
Hop! Ear Candles
Tuesday Afternoons/Thursday
Evenings
Meditation Classes
Selected Thursday Afternoons
Goddess Oracle Card Readings
Friday Mornings
Indian Head Massage,
Friday Afternoons
Spiritual Healing
Saturday Afternoons
Tarot Card Readings

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