

Myddle Earth

The quarterly Magazine of the Pagan Federation Midwest and Wales District

Lughnasagh 2018

Issue 142



Welcome to Myddle Earth

Your **Pagan Federation District Manager** is Audrey and Richard
Contact details are: <mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk> **or** write to
Pagan Federation, BM Box 7097, London WC1N 3XX

Myddle Earth Editor is Ailim Email: myddleearth@yahoo.co.uk

Myddle Earth is distributed four times a year to local PF members (and a few others). Your contributions are welcome, whether they are letters, stories, poems, suggestions and/or black-and-white drawings. Don't be shy—share them with us: this is **your** magazine.

These are the copy deadlines:

- 31 December for Imbolc issue
- 31 March for Beltane issue
- 30 June for Lughnasadh issue
- 31 September for Samhain issue

You may advertise in *Myddle Earth* - this is free for non-profit-making ventures.

How to advertise? Post it as a hard copy to:
Pagan Federation, BM Box 7097, London WC1N 3XX or e-mail to: myddleearth@yahoo.co.uk

Editor's Blurb

In this issue we have two very interesting articles for you, thanks to Amanita and Crowhorse. There is also a little fun Quiz for you to try, and there is a new section for your comments and letters—so please drop me a line even if it's only a few words. Let's share our knowledge and help 'Myddle Earth' grow strong again.

Lughnasadh is known as "Lugh's Feast" in memory of his foster-mother, Teltiu, who is said to have died as a result of clearing the land of Eire so that seeds could be sown. Lugh was honouring his foster-mother's life with this feast, not her death, and thus it is a timely reminder to us that the life cycle of birth and death is continuous. As the Corn God gives up his life with the harvest so we honour his gift with feasting and joy, knowing that his seed will grow again next year.

The moorland fires in Saddleworth Moore and Winter Hill in North-West England this summer has destroyed the habitat of many species, yet nature is resilient and will hopefully regenerate itself. I wonder if the human species will be so fortunate. We seem to be on a speeding train, heading always to the next shiny object without thought as to what we've left behind or the damage we're causing. It might seem a hopeless case, yet I believe if each person does whatever they can to minimise their own footprint on this beautiful planet, then in time someone may put the brakes on the train.

Bright blessings to you all,

Ailim

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SITUATIONS VACANT -- SITUATIONS VACANT -- SITUATIONS VACANT

We urgently require Regional Co-ordinators (RC) to do PF admin and organising work in the following Regions:

Herefordshire/Worcestershire –postcodes HR and WR

Bristol – postcode BS

Staffordshire/Shropshire --numerous postcodes.

In the meantime the RC work for these Regions will be done by us, but really it needs people living in those areas to take on the jobs. Please contact us at the addresses below if you want to help.

With good wishes,

Audrey & Richard

mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk

Pagan Federation, BM Box 7097, London WC1N 3XX

DISTRICT NEWS

District Managers Report – Lammas 2018

Hello,

It gives us great pride to say that our biggest and best news this issue is the re-launch of the District website. **YIPPEE!** It took a while, there was a lot of electronic juggling and chopping, messages back and forth, setbacks and forward leaps, but finally it is in place and ready for visitors.

Everyone with email has been sent a link and perhaps you are one of the folks who've looked at it already, but just to repeat the message, here it is: <https://pfdistricts.info/midwestandwales/>

Now, the usual appeal for Volunteers:

SITUATIONS VACANT +++ SITUATIONS VACANT +++ SITUATIONS VACANT

INTERFAITH OFFICER – We need someone to co-ordinate Interfaith activities and be our District PF representative for this important aspect of PF work. As a member of Interfaith UK, the Pagan Federation acts to foster good relations with other faiths and thereby cutting through misunderstandings and prejudice.

CONTACT: vicepresident@paganfederation.co.uk

DISABILITIES LIAISON – We are having to re-advertise this post as the previous person has been obliged to quit due to illness.

CONTACT: disabilities.secretary@paganfederation.co.uk

LGBTQIA+ OFFICER – Someone to represent the Pagans of alternative sexualities.

LGBTQIA Pagans encounter a wide range of emotional and mental obstacles, which can prevent them from practicing their beliefs, attending meetings, moots and events or engaging fully with Pagan communities. This district role exists to support the National LGBTQIA Managers to increase awareness and work towards overcoming barriers and challenges encountered by LGBTQIA pagans and their families.

CONTACT: Alex bear LGBTQIA Manager <lgbt@paganfederation.co.uk>

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATORS: Three of our Regions still need people to do the admin work (processing memberships, being a local contact, etc). These are:

Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Bristol

Staffordshire

CONTACT: mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk. That's us, your District Managers

PRISON MINISTRY – We need more Pagan Chaplains in the District. This is co-ordinated nationally by the PF Prison Ministry (PFPM) Manager

CONTACT: prisons@paganfederation.co.uk

Happy Summer, everybody!

Audrey & Richard (District Managers)



REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORTS

Regional Co-ordinator's Report – Bristol

Greetings Bristol Pagans!

If you think you've got what it takes to be the Regional Co-ordinator for Bristol, then let us know. Come on—don't be shy. The role requires a bit of admin work, organising Pagan activities and being the PF rep for your area. You should be reasonably IT-literate and be online.

We'd also love to hear about events etc. happening in the Bristol area. Just drop a line to the Editor for inclusion in the next edition of Myddle Earth.

Please contact us if you want to help:

Audrey & Richard (District Managers and acting RC's for Bristol)

mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk



Regional Co-ordinators' Report:

VACANCIES: Regional Co-ordinator for Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Regional Co-ordinator for Mid-West Staffordshire/Shropshire

Hi,

The role of Regional Co-ordinator involves some admin work, organising events, moots, or other things Pagan-related. It is essential that the RC is IT-literate and has internet access. If you think you can help or would like to discuss the role please contact us, your District Managers, at mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk or Pagan Federation, BM Box 7097, London WC1N 3XX

Thanks,

Audrey (acting RC)



North Wales RC Report

Rhyl Moot

It has not met recently but did get involved with a 3 day Mayday Event at Gwryth Castle in Abergele 5-7th May.

Wrexham Moot

We are currently organising filming of the Tale/Legend of Ceridwen and Taliesen. We have done a site visit which went very well, when we arrived it was dull and overcast but the sun came out and we had a pleasant day.



Some people even ventured into the lake.

Niina has been working on the art work we will need for the transformations made during the chase.

We will be discussing costumes at the next moot on 31st May. A date has been set for filming June 16th then we will have to produce the film by editing the footage. It will be shown at the fringe event in Llangollen.

This is one of seven tales/legends Gillian from Llangollen Museum has gained funding to do from the Heritage Lottery.

Mold Moot

Had a family day in April which was well attended. It was originally going to be a BBQ but the weather decided otherwise. Despite the weather everyone had a great day and the children enjoyed playing while the adults caught up with each other's news.

Oswestry Moot

The moot is meeting regularly, attendance varies but the regulars attend for a chat and catch up. New members are always welcome.



Eight words: but what do they mean?

In Paganism we hear much about the Wiccan Rede, those eight words expressed in modern language as '*If it harms none, do what you will*'. For many years these formed one of the Pagan Federation's Three Principles which were a condition of membership. But what does it really mean to 'harm none?'. Over many years and countless debates on these words, I haven't yet heard a definition that is acceptable to everyone.

The arguments rage on endlessly amongst Pagans of all types, not just Wiccans. PF meetings and informal gatherings alike have been taken up with passionately expressed views but no lasting agreement or consensus. Omnivores against vegetarians against vegans, cyclists against car owners, computer geeks against technophobes, townies against rural dwellers: everyone seems to have their own idea as to what is 'harm' and at what level it is acceptable to them as Pagans.

Veganism has taken over vegetarianism as the fastest growing social trend of our time, embraced by A-list celebrities and promoted as the only viable form of sustainable living. It's argued that merely giving up meat products (vegetarianism) is not sufficient to end animal suffering but only by adopting veganism, where all animal products are eliminated from both diet and lifestyle can a person truly be said to 'harm none'. This doesn't address how we avoid harming other species competing with us for vegetation. However, there is so much about our lives that can be called harmful and many of these cannot easily be reconciled but must be reassessed.

Taking this issue to its limit, a person would need to examine every aspect of their life and what impact they have on the world. For example, many would agree that the private motor vehicle is a wasteful indulgence and should be the first thing to go, but a person

with mobility problems could need their own transport to manage day-to-day life. Should that person give up car ownership and use trains, buses and taxis only? As a non-driver, I am acutely aware of how unreliable public transport can be. Motor vehicles of any kind are manufactured and maintained by heavy industries causing pollution, quite apart from the environmental costs of the fuel they use. Houses can be very wasteful of resources with the space they take up, then heating and upkeep. Clothing, even pre-owned, often involves many harmful substances and processes. Let's not even get started on the technology bringing you this essay!

So perhaps the only truly 'harm none' lifestyle is that of the troglodyte. This is one urban Pagan, non-survivalist's idea of how it might be done.

Start on a warm day in summer to maximise time and opportunity. Strip yourself naked, including footwear and any artificial aids such as eyeglasses. Walk barefoot to a cave for shelter. On your way, look for a dead (harm none!) fur-bearing animal and remove its skin using a found sharp stone. If fortunate, you may find a deer or horse which will provide enough covering for warmth. Alternatively, look for smaller animals. A few sheep, goat or badger skins sewn together with sinew, and a needle made from wood, might provide enough to keep the average adult warm during the summer months in Britain.

Find a spring for safe drinking water, but ideally avoid streams and any standing water as these will contain bacteria that cause stomach upsets causing dehydration, so you'll be looking for more water anyway. Pick fruits and green plants, fungi, nuts, seeds, and roots. If your knowledge of wild edibles is good, you should be okay for a while. Any animals consumed should be already dead when found.

On finding a cave, look for some fallen dry wood to burn. But how do you start a fire without matches or a magnifying glass or

discarded bottle, all of which have been made using harmful processes? Wait for a thunderstorm and hope lightning strikes a tree near you, then grab a burning branch for your cave fire. Try rubbing sticks together, or a stick rubbed against a stone.

To put it bluntly, your life will be brief. Perhaps it'll last a summer, or less than a day in winter when hypothermia will kill you, but it will be a righteous life. Harming none.

If that doesn't appeal, how about accepting that human life does involve some unavoidable harm and so the concept of 'harm none' is relative. We can each define it for ourselves. I've heard people accused of not being 'a real Pagan' for all sorts of reasons: going out to work for a living, being a meat-eater, using plastic or mass-produced anything, travelling by private car (even as a passenger), living in a bricks-and-mortar structure, listening to classical music (?!), you name it.

Can we at the very least agree that Paganism is Earth-centred and not nag each other or claim any moral superiority about what is 'harm'?

Amanita



The Little QUIZ



1. *Whose name means Hound Lord?*
2. *What is the name of the goddess associated with the River Severn?*
3. *Which Celtic tribe used the motif of the 3-tailed horse on its coinage?*
4. *What is a book of rituals and spells called?*
5. *What creature is a symbol of both death and wisdom?*

Answers on page 15

Have Your Say!

We'd love to hear from you, perhaps a comment about an article you've read, or tips on saving money or even a gentle moan :)

If you have something to say, why not drop me a line.

Ailin

Email: myddleearth@yahoo.co.uk

LUGHNASADH (“nasadh” is Irish for assembly or feast): This festival takes its name from the Irish god, Lugh and celebrates the first harvest of the year. Although Lughnasadh is named after Lugh it is actually a funeral feast for his foster mother Tailtiu. The *Leabar Babala* (Book of Invasions) explains that Tailtiu was the wife of Eochaidh mac Er, the last king of the Fir Bolg. After his defeat in battle, she married Eochaidh Garby of the Tuatha de Danaan. At her command, the plains were cleared of trees to allow access to the rich soil for agriculture. The *Annals of the Four Masters* said she cleared the plain herself and died of her toil. Her foster-son, Lugh mac Cian, told the men of Ireland that on the anniversary of her death, they must hold an annual feast in her honour in the form of sacred funeral games.



Funeral games in honour of the dead can also be found in Greek tradition, where the *Iliad* shows the death of warriors being attended by such rites. Although Lughnasadh is sometimes said to mean “the funeral games held by Lugh” it had an older name, “*Brón Trogam*” – fertile earth.

In traditional times, the feast lasted for approximately one month (2 weeks before and 2 weeks after the actual festival day). It was a time for the gathering of tribe and family where the hay harvest was past and the wheat and barley still to come. A time for competitions of skill and strength, for showing off the speed of one’s horses, arranging marriages, hiring of farmhands and selling animals. The last official contests were held in August 1169 with Ruraidh O’Conchobhar, the last High King of Ireland.

In Britain, it is the Corn King/John Barleycorn who gives his life so we won’t starve during the dark months ahead. This ancient festival can still be seen in the customs of the Lammas Horse-Fairs in Northern England and Lowland Scotland. The Anglo-Saxon form of Lughnasadh was called “hlaf-mass” and the church

not only took over this custom of offering bread from the newly cut and milled grain as “Lammas” (“hlafmasse” as ‘loaf-mass’), it also reduced the festival period into just a weekend centered on a Sunday.

In Wales, the festival is called *Gwyl Awst*, and it is still a day for fairs.

Today, the celebration of Lughnasadh retains its harvest character, often incorporating the ritualistic death of the harvest god: John Barleycorn, the King of the Wood, or the Green Man.

As we look back over our lives, it can also be a time to reflect on what we have sown and to recognise what we may reap.

Ailim

The Guild of Straw Craftsmen: What exactly is a Corn Dolly?

<http://www.strawcraftsmen.co.uk/cdolly.php>

When early man ceased his nomadic existence as a hunter-gatherer and settled down to cultivate the earth and produce food, he believed that the success of his labours was highly dependent on various deities who would oversee the cycles and fruitfulness of his crops. To this end, various sacrifices and ceremonies would be held to propitiate his gods. These early beliefs are to be found in civilisations all over the world, particularly where cereal crops are concerned.

Wheat is one of the first cereals known to have been domesticated, and archaeological records suggest that this first occurred in the regions known as the Fertile Crescent in the Near East, and the Nile Delta.

Some of the more well known deities were Ceres, the Roman goddess of *the harvest* (from which we get our word “cereal”); *Demeter* (*Earth Mother*) the Greek goddess of the harvest, and Isis, the Egyptian Goddess of Fertility. So wherever cereal crops were

grown, the underlying legend still remained: it was thought that the Corn Spirit retreated before the oncoming reapers at harvest time, taking refuge in the last of the standing corn. These last few stalks would be fashioned into a Corn Dolly, a receptacle in which the Spirit could rest during the winter. In the spring, the Corn Dolly, together with its incumbent Corn Spirit, would be returned to the fields with the new planting. By giving the Corn Spirit a home during the dark and cold winter months, it was hoped to ensure that the forthcoming crop would be a bounteous one.

The term "Corn Dolly" is a relatively modern generic one, coined in the early part of the 20th Century, together with names such as Cambridge Umbrella, Stafford Knot, Suffolk Horseshoe, etc. which described the style of a Corn Dolly from a particular region. Prior to this they were known as 'Harvest Trophies'. The centuries old local names for the figure created from the last precious stalks of wheat were (and still are) used, names such as Cailleach, Churn, Clyack, Corn Maiden, Hag, Harvest Maid, Ivy Girl, Kern Baby (Kirk baba), Kern Maiden, Maiden, Mell, Mare and Neck, and in other countries, Arûseh (Corn Bride) and Corazón (Heart).



Pagan Aid is a charity that raises money for projects that protect the Earth, support sustainability or help relieve poverty. Projects that involve education around sustainability or Earth protection are of particular interest. Grants are given to causes that are in line with Pagan values rather than being Pagan based themselves.

In the past couple of years we have supported tree planting in Africa, a relief effort in Puerto Rico and a permaculture project in the Himalayas.

If you would like to know more or get involved then please visit our website at:
www.paganaid.org

PaganAid is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as a charity by the Charity Commission of England & Wales, registered charity number 1158075. PaganAid is run and funded by Pagans who want to support efforts to protect the environment and lift people out of extreme poverty.

Paganism – a way of life?

~*~

It seems that Myddle Earth needs people to contribute. Now I've always been more than happy to read, but actually put fingers to keyboard and write?

Not for me, I used to think. Then lately it occurred to me that writing is sort of a hobby of mine and I've always been fond of the mag, be it paper or e-mag, so perhaps it might be a good idea if I actually made an effort?

I fully intended to write a pretty little piece about summer and the solstice, but it didn't turn out that way. Instead I find myself writing about the survival of paganism in today's world. Heavy topic, I know.

In the last few years, after a lifetime of dreaming about going places and actually going pretty much nowhere, I've been lucky enough to visit two of the Earth's more northerly lands, namely Iceland and Norway. Suddenly being a Pagan makes sense in a whole new way.

History tells us that Christianity flirted with the Norwegians for a few hundred years, but conversion finally arrived big time at sword point, courtesy of Olaf Tryggvason (King Olaf the first) in 995. Convert or die. What a motto, and one he took abroad to Iceland and the Western Isles.

Now you might be wondering why the conversion of whole countries away from Paganism is relevant to the survival of Paganism, but here's the thing...conversion is not necessarily belief.

The Sami peoples of northern Scandinavia and native peoples of North America blend Paganism and Christianity in a mix of their own liking. This, it seems, is the product of missionary conversion.

In Norway, confirmation into the Christian religion at maturity has a high take-up, but they do get a rather splendid gift. As our tour guide (student, Norwegian) pointed out, "It's enough to buy a traditional dress for the girls, or to pay for learning to drive."

Talking to him, it was clear that Paganism is alive and well in Norway, sometimes openly, sometimes a little disguised. He took great efforts and pleasure in pointing out to tourists that the Christian religion had 'stolen' popular Pagan festivals and replaced them with Christian events that just happened to occur on the same days. I can't tell you how refreshing that was! The Midsummer bonfires were already stacked high, some weeks before Midsummer, the wood carvings on the old stave churches are unmistakably Pagan, and it's generally clear that most people, whatever they call themselves, are proud of their Pagan heritage and customs.

Likewise many Icelandic people speak of the conversion at sword point of the islanders. Theirs is an interesting story. In the year 1000 two separate Icelandic states were forming, one based on Christian laws and the other on traditional Pagan laws. To maintain peace, it was decreed that all Icelanders should be baptized and be Christian, however Pagan worship could continue secretly. Outdoors, everyone had to practice the Christian faith, but indoors, where there were no witnesses, people could practice whatever faith they preferred. Today's inhabitants proudly point this out to tourists.

Freedom of religion was finally granted in 1874, and the construction of a new Asatru temple in Reykjavik is due for completion in 2018. Very noticeable and particularly endearing during our visit was the custom of keeping Christmas lights lit until the Spring Festival. Now there's a contradiction if ever there was one.

So the point of this rambling...feeling forced away from your true belief, be it at sword point or by

the constant drip, drip of public opinion, does not mean you have ceased to be a Pagan.

Being Pagan is part of your soul. It is part of everything you do and everything you think. You may even try to run away from it when things get tough, when there doesn't seem to be anyone else out there, when you're feeling lonely and lost. Then you open the door and feel the wind in your hair and the sun and rain on your skin. You can smell it in the salt tang of the sea, see it in the movement of the leaves and the clouds across the sky, and feel it under your fingers in the cold rocks and warm bark. It's vibrant and alive and all around you. It's why I dip my fingers into the running stream and mark my forehead, why I bow my head to the moon, why I rescue the small creatures the Gods put in my path.

When we doubt, we should remember the lessons of the northern peoples. Paganism isn't just a religion. It's a way of life.

Crowhorse - 14 June 2018

~*~

Network of Leyhunters

The Network of Ley Hunters is an informal movement for all who are interested in leys and patterns within the landscape. Leys are alignments of sacred sites, often converging on a holy hill and linked to the sun or moon, e.g. aligned with sunrise at the summer solstice.

Laurence Main is available to give talks (for train fare only) to groups on walking the Leys and King Arthur's Camlan. Address and phone details are on the Network of Ley Hunters website.

For more information and to get a free sample copy of the Newsletter of the Network of Ley Hunters, please go to:

www.networkofleyhunters.com

MOOT LISTINGS

North Wales

Wrexham Pagan Moot

Held on the last Thursday in the month

Wrexham Lager Club

7.30 p.m. doors open at 7 p.m.

At present we are working with Gillian from Llangollen Museum to produce a short 3min film on the tale of Taliesin.

Oswestry Moot

1st Wednesday in the month

Golden Lion, Upper Church Street, Oswestry. SY11 2AA

7.30 p.m.

Facebook page:- Oswestry Pagan Moot

Mold Moot

Dates varies

Liz Rose house

7.30 p.m.

Pagan Moot in Mold

The date of meetings varies due to Liz husband's work schedule. Please contact Liz for date and instructions on how to find her home.

Rhyl Moot

Dates vary due to members work commitments

Caskeys Pub. Vale Road, Rhyl

7.30 p.m.

Mid-West Staffordshire/Shropshire

New Stafford Moot

3rd Tuesday of each month

The Shrewsbury Arms, Eastgate Street.

Occasional speakers.

This is a closed group but if anyone local to Stafford wishes to join please send a request to join via Facebook.

Kidsgrove Moot

Last Tuesday of each month, except in December.

The Bluebell

This is a closed group. Please send a request to join via Facebook.

Stafford Pagan Moot

The Lamb & Flag at Little Haywood

(Continued on page 14)

Stoke-on-Trent Moot

2nd Wednesday of the month.

The White Star in Stoke on Trent

Run by Elric Sullivan with regular well known speakers. Elric is also the organiser of the successful Mid-land COA events.

**If you would like your Moot listed, please email details to:
The Editor, myddleearth@yahoo.co.uk**



Fill your Moot by advertising your events here!

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Myddle Earth is the newsletter of the Pagan Federation, Mid-West & Wales District and is published four times a year at Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasadh/Lammas and Samhain.

We would like to encourage our readers to submit articles, artwork, poetry and other creative works for inclusion in future newsletters. Please see the guidelines below when preparing your material. If you have any queries, please email myddleearth@yahoo.co.uk.

- ◇ Your submission must have a Pagan theme or be of interest to the Mid-West & Wales Pagan community.
- ◇ Articles need to be submitted as a Microsoft Word or OpenOffice document. Please use Arial or another standard font; 12pt; single-spacing; left justified; without indentation.
- ◇ Please ensure that articles are between 800 and 1200 words in length, unless agreed otherwise.
- ◇ Use a friendly, casual tone. We want to make the information as accessible as possible.
- ◇ We reserve the right to abridge articles and to edit them for clarity, style, grammar and accuracy.
- ◇ Authors are responsible for the accuracy of references and reference citations.
- ◇ Images should be sent as separate files, not embedded into the document. Please indicate recommended insertion points of the images within the body of the text, and ensure that the file names enable them to be easily identified.
- ◇ Images need to be of a high quality (minimum resolution 300dpi), preferably in JPEG format. Also, please ensure that you have copyright permission for their further publication.
- ◇ All articles/artwork remain the copyright of the author/artist.
- ◇ Please send your contributions via email to myddleearth@yahoo.co.uk. Please include the type of submission and the suggested issue for publication in the 'Subject' line. For example: 'Poem for Imbolc'.
- ◇ Although every effort will be made to accept your contributions for publication, we reserve the right to refuse submissions.
- ◇ We're sorry but we are unable to pay for submissions.

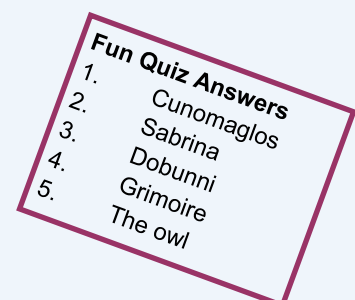
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STOP PRESS!!—STOP PRESS!!

Three Counties merge GL, HR and WR postcodes

Attention PF Members in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire: these three have now been combined into one PF Region as the '**Three Counties**'.

This has been done to streamline admin work for the District following some recent changes in how the PF membership is managed. It won't affect your membership status, grant you any special privileges, or create any wild and wonderful magic. You don't need to do anything at all, this is simply keeping you informed of developments.

VACANCY! VACANCY! VACANCY! VACANCY! VACANCY! VACANCY!

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR. We require someone to take on the (unpaid) job of Regional Co-ordinator (RC) to do the necessary clerical work such as processing memberships and keeping records. Organising pub moots and other get-togethers for Pagans in the Three Counties can also be part of the work, or appoint a volunteer Local Organisers to do it. It isn't difficult, complicated or time-consuming, we can show you what to do. So why not get in touch with us and give it a try?

Contact: District Managers (Richard and Audrey) mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.