Myddle Earth

The quarterly Magazine of the Pagan Federation Midwest and Wales District

Samhain 2018 Issue 143



Myddle Earth: Samhain 2018

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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: Ailim Email: mwaw.editor@paganfederation.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

30 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: mwaw.editor@paganfederation.co.uk

Editor's Blurb

In this issue we have a beautiful meditation for Samhain created by Morwenna Greenslade. As always please be mindful when doing meditation—if you feel it's not right for you for whatever reason, then don't do it . :)

As well as our "Little Quiz", I've added a "Pet's Corner" where you can share tips for pet owners or quirky sayings you've heard. I would love to get your feedback on what you would like to see included in our next issue.

Our thoughts at Samhain tend to turn towards our down to a date in a calendar. Remembering memory alive not only for us but also for our some seeing it as an extension of life itself. Yet For as long as we remember those who have dig out those old photo albums (or digital photo family.

Ancestors, but I don't think we should tie ourselves someone, even a beloved pet, keeps their descendants. People talk about immortality with I believe immortality comes from our memory. gone before us, they will live with us forever. So folders) and share your memories with your

Bright blessings to you all,

Ailim

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SITUATIONS VACANT -- SITUATIONS VACANT -- SITUATIONS VACANT

- ◆ Three Counties (Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire) looking to appoint a Regional Co-ordinator (RC) to do the admin work with memberships.
- ♦ Mid-west Region (Staffordshire, Shropshire) requires Regional Co-ordinator (RC)
- Interfaith volunteer required to liaise with Interfaith UK to represent Paganism and the PF.

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

Myddle Earth: Samhain 2018

DISTRICTNEWS

District Managers Report - Samhain 2018

Hello.

Here we are at that time of year when Winter approaches and we remember our deceased ancestors and friends. Samhain (or Halloween) is seen by mainstream society as the time most associated with Paganism and Witchcraft. In fact, looking at the popular media, one could be forgiven for thinking that this is the only time we're active! Many years ago, at this time of year the Pagan Federation would launch a campaign, sending information leaflets to the press and schools to educate them about the real reason for this festival. This was in reaction to lurid headlines and scare stories from some branches of the Church warning of the 'dangers' of celebrating 'evil' Halloween. Thanks to the hard work of many Pagans, this time is much better understood now in wider society. Times change, and let's be glad they have for the better, but also guard against complacency that can let those troubled days return.

New People

We'd like to welcome Alison, who has volunteered to be Local Co-ordinator. Alison is the PF person keeping us informed about moots and other activities in Bristol and surrounding area. There is plenty going on, so what are the rest of you doing? It's still very quiet in some places!

Also new on the District volunteers list is Catherine W who is our rep for LGBT+ (Pagans of alternative sexualities) who can be contacted at mwaw.lgbt@paganfederation.co.uk

In between editions of Myddle Earth, find us online at:

District website https://pfdistricts.info/midwestandwales/

Facebook 'Pagan Federation Mid-west and Wales' so do look in there for news, photos and some of the history of the District. While you are there, give us a wave!

SITUATIONS VACANT

Please contact us on mwaw.dm@paganfederation.co.uk to help.

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- Mid-west Region (Staffordshire, Shropshire) requires Regional Co-ordinator (RC)
- Interfaith volunteer required to liaise with Interfaith UK to represent Paganism and the PF.

Best wishes for a Happy Samhain and don't mind the ghosties, they're nice really!

Audrey & Richard













PRISON MINISTRY – We need more Pagan Chaplains in the District.

This is co-ordinated nationally by the PF Prison Ministry (PFPM).

CONTACT: prisons@paganfederation.co.uk

Myddle Earth : Samhain 2018

North Wales RC Report

Rhyl Moot

Rhyl are trying to organise a meeting in the woods I believenot got a date for that yet.

Wrexham Moot

Wrexham moot are putting the final touches to the 3 min film on Ceridwen and Taliesin hopefully by the next *Myddle Earth* edition. We will be able to tell you how you can view it.

Gillian is planning a get together for the people who took part in the projects when everything is finished.

Sadly we did not have a meeting in Aug due to the project but hopefully normal service will be resumed on the last Thurs in Sept 7.30 at Wrexham Lager Club.

Might have to bring a cake for that one as I had a big birthday at the beginning of the month and planned to take one for Aug (early start) to put me in the party spirit. <LOL>

Mold Moot

Mold moot are having a picnic at Alyn Bank Riding stables at the end of the month.

Oswestry Moot

Oswestry moot had a great talk and pathworking. The Speaker was Val Hughes.

Please note they've moved from the pub where they used to hold their meetings, so if anyone wants to attend the first Wednesday of each month they need to contact Merion for directions (still at the same time 7.30pm)

Jackie













PAGAN TRANSITIONS was created to provide Pagans with the resources to create meaningful and beautiful funeral rites to reflect the spirituality of the person who has passed through the Gateway.

If you are a Funeral Celebrant and would like to have a free listing at Pagan Transitions, please complete the application form available from the website:

www.pagan-transitions.org.uk



Statue of Saint Martin cutting his cloak in two above the Höchst Castle's gate

Aren't Chaplains always Christians?

Not any more. Nowadays, the term "chaplain" has become a multi-faith title.

You will find Chaplains of most religions serving in places such as prisons, fire service, police, hospitals, universities, in the military and even on cruise ships. There are also Veterinary Chaplains.

Where does the word 'chaplain' come from?

There is a story of a 4th century soldier who was approaching the gates of the city of Amiens (Gaul) when he saw a beggar. It was a bitterly cold winter night. Having no money to offer, the soldier took off his cloak and split it in two with his sword giv-

ing half to the beggar. He later had a vision of Jesus Christ wearing the cloak.

When he left the army he devoted his life to the church and eventually became the third bishop of Tours. His name was Martin of Tours. In the Middle Ages he became the patron saint of the French kings. The St. Martin's cloak (*cappella*) was carried into battle by the kings as a banner signifying "the presence of God." The cloak was kept in the chapel, or place of worship, and a priest became the keeper of the cloak (*cappellanus*), as well as attending to the king's spiritual needs.

From this role the word 'chaplain' is believed to have developed.













The Little QUIZ

- 1. What famous hill figure is found in Dorset?
- 2. Who was the queen of the Iceni Tribe?
- 3. Which month is named after the god, Mars?
- 4. What creature do the Chinese see on the face of the Moon?
- 5. What is the smallest of all British mammals?
- 6. What is the name of the Rolls-Royce car bonnet figurine?

Answers on page 16



PET CORNER

Share your anecdotes about favourite pets, or classic sayings perhaps.

"Cats have specialised hearing: What you say goes in one ear and out the other!"

"Dogs come when you call them. Cats take the message and will get back to you!"

"Dog owners know they're in control." Cat owners think they're in control."













YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED: articles, stories, poems etc.

If you would like to submit a Cover Page design for our Imbolc edition, please email The Editor at mwaw.editor@paganfederation.co.uk

Mae croeso i gyfraniadau yn Gymraeg. Contributions in Welsh are welcome!

(Please send an English translation with your submissions).

This is Your magazine, please help us make it special for everyone!

Submission Deadline for Imbolc issue: 31st December 2018

Submissions may be edited due to available space and content.



Have Your Say!

We'd love to hear from you! Don't be shy. Share tips; suggestions; or even a gentle moan about Pagan issues :)

If you have something to say, drop me a line at mwaw.editor@paganfederation.co.uk



SAMHAIN THOUGHTS

Just because it's Samhain why do our thoughts drift toward death? In the olden days they would also be celebrating the last harvest of the year with family and community.

Remembering our Ancestors shouldn't be dark and sad, instead we should celebrate their lives because they've made us who we are today. Having said that, I'm going to talk about that inevitable moment in our future. There's no getting away from it — unless they find that elixir of immortality!

How many people think about an event that may lie in the distant future? Dying is so far away – or is it? Death comes in many guises and chooses its own appointment. We can either ignore it until it happens, or we can make simple preparations to help make it easier for family and friends.

As a Prison Pagan Chaplain, I've dealt with a lot of things. But there is one experience I will never forget.

I had known a particular Buddhist prisoner for over 5 years. He always greeted me with the Buddhist custom of the *Anjali Mudra* (palms pressed together in front of the chest) and bowing. It was natural for me to respond in the same way as there was respect and understanding in that simple greeting. Then he became ill and was taken into the palliative care unit with terminal lung cancer – he only had a week or two to live. He asked for me and so I visited him regularly, chatting about his faith and general things. I recall him saying he had no regrets, that he had sorted out his affairs and accepted responsibility for what he had done in the past.

I have a lot of admiration and respect for the palliative care nurses, as I watched them tend him with care and patience as he struggled to breathe. He told me of his funeral wishes, his burial robes and how he wanted his body laid in the coffin.

The last time I saw him he was unable to move. He asked me to perform the Buddhist

act of 9 bows on his behalf. His window faced the roadway leading out of the prison. Later that day, as I walked towards the gatehouse, I felt a strange urge to stop and give a farewell wave towards that dark window. He died the following day.

I attended the funeral, conducted by the Prison Buddhist Chaplain, and met his family. The way he prepared for his last days, with dignity and at peace with himself, through his faith, left its mark on me.

The Buddha said,
Life is a journey.

Death is a return to earth.
The universe is like an inn.
The passing years are like dust.
Regard this phantom world
As a star at dawn, a bubble in a stream,
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,
A flickering lamp – a phantom – and a dream.
(Vairacchedika 32.)

I decided to do something about preparing for my own eventual passing. Morbid eh? Well, in the army we had a saying called the "7 P's" — Proper Planning and Preparation Prevents Piss Poor Performance. Putting something in writing now will help my family when that inevitable drum beat calls me westwards.

I found a document on the web called an Advanced Funeral Directive. This helps you plan your own funeral and provides a questionnaire, so you decide what you want e.g. burial or cremation; burial clothing; embalming; organ donation; favourite music; type of service and so on.

The Advanced Funeral Directive is something you can add to or change whenever

(Continued on page 9)

necessary. It should be kept in a safe place, preferably with your Will (if you have one) **but not sealed with it!** This is important because funeral arrangements need to be started as soon as possible so if its locked in with your Will, it's likely all going to be over before anyone sees it!

Some of the questions in the original document assumed a Christian service, so I've taken the liberty of re-writing it to reflect our Pagan beliefs. A pdf version is available for download at www.pagan-transitions.org.uk.

When my husband died suddenly we didn't know what he would have liked, apart from being cremated. On the day of the funeral we belatedly remembered something he had said many years before about hearing "Danny Boy" being sung at his father's funeral – but it was too late and even now, many years later, I still feel I let him down by not including it in the service.

I started writing my Advanced Funeral Directive last year, and it's still not finished. It's not something you can do in five minutes! However, you can revise it as and when you like e.g. you've thought of a better song or, perhaps over the years you've changed your mind about being cremated or buried. Even if you never finish it, what you have done will give your family and friends an idea of your wishes.

And so, Samhain is not only about the last harvest or the honouring of our Ancestors, it is also about the future, preparing the ground for those who come after us.

Samhain Blessings to You and your Ancestors



For more information about the Advanced Funeral Directive for Pagans, please send an email to: admin@pagan-transitions.org.uk



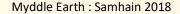
Network of Leyhunters

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



BE AT ONE WITH THE LIVING LAND

by Laurence Main

Volunteers are welcome to come on Vision Quests and Pilgrimages at remote sacred sites, often up Welsh mountains.

You need to be fit. We camp at special spots (in a tent usually but under the stars if dry). You'll need at least a sleeping bag and a rucksack.

Come on a training trip! Pilgrimages could mean backpacking and dowsing a ley for hundreds of miles, wild camping to dream at sacred places, or (easier for oldies) 'highlights' walks (no backpacking) with a base camp using public transport. Again, training trips would be useful.

Please contact:

Laurence Main, Network of Ley Hunters, 9 Mawddy Cottages, Minllyn, Dinas Mawddy, Machynlleth SY20 9LW, Wales. Tel 01650-531354

You will be asked to subscribe to the Network of Ley Hunters. £15 per annum per household (sharing a magazine) brings four quarterly newsletters plus access to Moots and other activities.



The Welsh say anyone who sleeps on top of the mountain comes down a poet or a madman.

Cader Idris











SKY AT NIGHT

OCTOBER 31st: Will be the largest last quarter Moon of the year.

Monday 5 November: Taurid meteor shower peak.

Wednesday 7 November: New Moon 16:01

Sunday 18 November: Leonid meteor shower peak.

Friday 23 November: Full Moon 05:39

Samhain Guided Meditation

by Morwenna Greenslade

Make yourself comfortable and close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths and be aware of the ground beneath you, of your general surroundings, and of any everyday noises in the background. As you relax you see a white mist forming in the corners of your vision, a white mist that gradually thickens and swirls around you; blocking out the space you are in, blocking out any other people. A thick white mist that envelops you, surrounds you, and hides everything around you. You are alone and safe in this thick white mist.

The mist fades away and you find yourself standing in a dark place. It is night time and you are outdoors, you are wrapped in a large thick hooded cloak to keep you warm. Take a few moments to get your bearings. As your eyes become accustomed to the dark you notice that there are stars in the sky above you; looking up you try to spot a few constellations that you recognise, perhaps you see Pegasus, the flying horse, or maybe Aquarius, the water bearer.

You are stood on a hillside, and in the valley below you, you can see distant fires. Noises drift up from the valley, the sound of people, shouting, laughing, and the sound of animals, cattle lowing, sheep bleating. Penned into small enclosures their voices travel far across the crisp night. But you stand above these signs of life, you stand alone on a cold windy hillside. In your hands is a wicker basket, full of fruitful offerings for you intend to meet the Crone. Ahead of you, looming up out of the dark, is a chambered burial tomb. A sacred place, where the bones of the dead are laid to rest, and where at this time of year when the veil is thin you hope to meet with the Crone.

You climb the last few steps up the hillside, the basket heavy in your arms. The stones of the chamber entrance stand tall, the rest of the tomb is covered in earth and grass. The largest stone stands in front of the entrance, it is twice as big as you are. You touch it and feel how cold the stone is beneath your hands. Then you slip round the side of it and crouch down to crawl into the entrance itself. It is blacker than night inside the tomb but you have remembered to bring a lantern with you which you now light so that you can see your way. After the first few feet of the tomb which you have to crawl through, you emerge in a larger chamber in which you can stand upright. To the sides of this central chamber lie shadowy doorways, these lead to other smaller chambers within which you know lie the bones of the dead, laid out in their sacred resting place, but you are not afraid.

Your path lies ahead to the smaller chamber at the back. You walk through, lighting your way with your lantern. In this back chamber sits a large black cauldron. Placing your basket on the ground you unpack its contents. It is filled with fruits and flowers, apples, pomegranates, hazelnuts, blackberries, and a small knife... Most of the fruit you place on a ledge at the back of the chamber, along with the flowers, but you take an apple, a pomegranate, and a handful of hazelnuts to the cauldron, place them on the ground and sit facing it.

Taking the apple you cut it in half sideways revealing the pattern of the five pointed star inside. You place one half at the side of the cauldron and eat the other. As you bite into the crisp juicy fruit the scent of apples fills the chamber and before your eyes a shadowy figure begins to appear. The figure is cloaked, much as you are, and they sit across from you, the other side of the cauldron... Their figure becomes more solid until they are as real as you are. As you finish eating your half of the apple the figure throws back its hood to reveal a deeply lined face, full of wisdom and knowledge, and two piercing eyes regard you questioningly. This is the face of the Crone, and now is your chance to talk to her...

(Continued on page 12)



After you have spoken for a while the Crone indicates the cauldron and invites you to scry in the liquid contained therein. Before you do so you eat a few hazelnuts, then you peer into the dark waters and look deeply....what visions do you see...?



After a while the waters cloud over and you can see no more. You raise your head to look at the Crone again, nodding your thanks for the insight she has given. And now, perhaps, you wish to see those who have passed over, loved ones, a relative, a friend... The Crone senses your need and holding out her hand indicates a gauzy, grey, cobwebby, veil that hangs at the side of the chamber. You walk over to it and part the veil with your hand and walk through. Behind the veil you find yourself emerging from a cave onto a beach, it is twilight and walking towards you is someone you would like to talk to....



It is time to say goodbye to those who now live beyond the veil. As they walk away you step back into the cave and through the gauzy curtain and find yourself back in the chamber. The Crone is still sitting behind the cauldron, but she is growing more and more shadowy. It is time to say your goodbyes and thanks to her...



As she fades away you pick up the pomegranate by the side of the cauldron, cutting it in half you lay one piece down by the cauldron and bite into the other. Feel the sweet red juice in your mouth and dripping down your chin. Know that by eating these seeds you have promised to return again. You wipe your face and pick up your empty basket, into which you place your knife. The candle in your lantern is burning low as you turn and walk out of the chamber leaving the fruit and the cauldron behind you. You enter the main chamber and stoop to pass through the entrance. You emerge and slide past the large entrance stone. Your lantern candle flickers in the breeze and goes out, but you no longer need it for dawn is breaking as you walk down the hillside and into the rising mist. The mist begins to thicken around you, becoming a thick white mist.....

A white mist that thickens to block out all your surroundings, until it is just you, alone and safe in this thick white mist.

When the mist begins to clear once more you find yourself back in the place you started, be aware of the ground beneath you, of everyday sounds, and feel yourself truly back in your body.

Take a few deep breaths, and when you are ready you may open your eyes.





Protesters next to trees felled in the Hambach forest before a demonstration calling for the forest to be saved and the government to outlaw lignite as an energy source. Photograph: Michael Gottschalk/Getty Images

SAVING AN ANCIENT FOREST AND PLANTING TREES

Ecosia, a non-profit Berlin tech company has offered to buy the remaining 200 hectares of an ancient German forest to save it from being destroyed for lignite/brown coal surface mining in Hambach forest in the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Ecosia is a search engine which donates the majority of its advertising revenue to conservation initiatives, funding the planting of almost 40 million trees across the world.

Would you like a tree planted just for using a search engine?

Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?

Well, check out this site and decide for yourself.

https://www.ecosia.org



North Wales

Wrexham Pagan Moot

Change of venue being sought.

In the meantime please contact Jackie TJ on 07934-345217

Oswestry Moot

1st Wednesday in the month

Moved from the pub where we used to hold our meetings. Therefore, please contact Merion for directions to the new meeting place.

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.

(Continued on page 15)

Stafford Pagan Moot

The Lamb & Flag at Little Haywood

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 Midland COA events.

If you would like your Moot listed, please email details to: The Editor, mwaw.editor@paganfederation.co.uk



Don't let the grass grow under your feet! Fill your Moot by advertising your events here!





BECOME A MEMBER OF PAGAN AID

Our members have a say in which projects we raise money for. It costs just £1 per month or £10 per year to become a member of Pagan Aid so please join and help support us. Projects have to fit within our aims which are:

- the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources or
- the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities or
- the promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration.

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











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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: **mwaw.editor@paganfederation.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 mwaw.editor@paganfederation.co.uk. Please include the type of submission and the suggested issue for publication in the 'Subject' line. For example: 'Poem for Imbolc'.
- Welsh language submissions: please accompany with the English translation.
- 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.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by writers are not necessarily those of the Pagan Federation or its Officers.

Images used in this edition:

Cover image: With grateful thanks to Audrey.

Page 2 http://orig13.deviantart.net

Page 7 Martin of Tours Image—Eva Kröcher (Wikipedia)

Page 11 https://oddstuffmagazine.com

Page 13 https://madebymothereagle.files.wordpress.com



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