



THE DRUID NETWORK

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Quarterly News

Editorial

There's a great deal to fit into this newsletter: the energies of the year are rising fast, and big changes are emerging, this growing cycle proving to be both exciting and productive. The land in so many places is desperately crying out for rain; if we don't get enough over the coming months, the drought will be brutal. It will be an interesting year, then, a year worth walking with care, feeling the wild fire and dancing it sensitively, awake to any measure of our complicity in the warming of this world, ensuring that our creativity isn't adding to the problems, but instead nourishing the community of our tribes and our landscape. Blessings of Bel's feast and fire ...

Emma *Bobcat* Restall Orr, TDN Head

Druid Camp 2007 ... is a day longer this year, running from 11 - 15 July. Confirmed workshops include Ronald Hutton, Philip Carr Gomm, Kris Hughes, Robin Herne, Little Raven, Glennie Kindred, Graeme Talboys, James Watson. Performances by **The Dolmen**, Carolyn Hillyer and Nigel Shaw, Paul

Mitchell - and of course your hosts, Bobcat and Mark Graham. Sweatlodge, ritual, learning, community, serenity and Druids Fluid real ale on tap again ... <http://www.druidcamp.org.uk>

Keep up with the TDN Website

With over 1500 pages, the website is growing every day and we are always receiving word from folk amazed at articles they didn't know were there. So we've changed the homepage: it now lists all newly created or updated pages in a **Community and Web News** section with links to more information. As a facility that can be added to by all staff members, we hope this will inspire you to explore areas you haven't done before. On the members homepage, too, there is now a list of the **most recent forum posts**, so instead of trawling in search of new items, you can go straight there.

David, Web Manager

Vixen

In the spring of this year we were sad to have to accept Christine Vixen's resignation from her work as co-ordinator for the Druid Directory and Affiliated Groups and Groves. Following her move from Oxfordshire to the south coast, Vixen has needed some more time to herself, to seek out the songs of a new era and a new landscape.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank her for the enormous amount of work she has given to The Druid Network over the past three or four years. Her original input was the setting up of a Resources section on the website, which included reviews of books and CDs, profiles of writers, priests and publishers, and weblinks, among other things. This area grew so large, so quickly, that she began delegating aspects of it to others, passing on the reviews section recently to Sioned Hawthorn. Running a beautifully strong Grove, feeling the importance of the Grove community, she took over aspects of this part of the crafting of the TDN web of connections. However, moving house and retiring from her stressful day job, she is now seeking some much needed serenity.

Vixen is still co-ordinating the Cor Gawr midsummer rite at Stonehenge.

The Druid Directory

Hi everyone! I have just volunteered to work for TDN and am taking on the Druid Directory. My main aim at the moment is to get all the listings up to date and then to work on broadening what we have. I'm interested in developing communications and mutual understanding between TDN and other Druid groups and welcome comments and insights from anybody who feels inspired to bend my ear on the subject!

If you are part of a Grove that is open not just to members of a particular Order, if you work with or know of an Order, a Gorsedd, Lodge, internet discussion group or other Druid organisation or gathering, let me know! Whether it is not listed in the Directory or if the listing is out of date, I want to hear from you.

In the future, I'm interested in getting the Directory published in its paper form again, but first we need to get it back up to date ...

Bryn Colvin, Druid Directory

Charity Registration Update

Beltane finds us once again awaiting a response from the Charity Commission. In the last update we spoke of the meeting that we attended in Liverpool; subsequent to that meeting we were asked to supply evidence of the 'public benefit' of Druidry. All charities must be able to demonstrate that they are beneficial to the public, or an acceptable proportion of the public - it isn't sufficient that their stated objects are charitable.

At the Spring Equinox we submitted a large document detailing the areas in which Druidry benefits, not only those who are practising Druids, but the community as a whole. We now await a reply from the Commission, which we expect within the next two weeks. If we don't hear from them, we will press them for an explanation of why once again we being subjected to unacceptable delays.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped in supplying the evidence that was submitted.

Phil Ryder, TDN Committee

TDN T-shirts

We are currently looking at getting made some organic, fairly-traded, undyed cotton t-shirts, with a subtle and tastefully designed TDN logo. We hope to be able to sell these for around £15. Let us know if you are interested as upfront orders will all help out!

Beltaine Night

*Languid intensifying majesty,
awakening landscapes of fire.
Curvature of feminine time
snares the masculine,
heavenly shafts traverse the plains of desire.
All that came before is past,
yet in a moment is gathered in,
and thrust spiralling outward
to where a deeper love begins.*

Tryw

TDN Stalls

The Druid Network stall will be at many pagan/green/spiritual events and fairs this year, and we hope to develop what we offer on the stall. **In order to Network effectively, we need your input!**

- 1) Literature: if you have any **flyers, brochures or information on any Druid groups, events or projects**, please send them to us to distribute via the stall. We don't have direct access to a photocopier, so if you can send several copies, we would appreciate it very much.
- 2) **Crafts**: if you make/craft goods, the stall can be an outlet for your work. The Network takes 10% of the total sales of your goods (this helps cover the cost of the stall). If you have goods/crafts get in touch.
- 3) If know of any **event** that you feel the Druid Network should have a presence at, please send me the details.

So far this year we have attended the PF South Central Conference in Reading; it was great to see TDN members who introduced themselves to us, and to get positive feed back about TDN and the Lammas Games. We attended the PF London Conference in April - and have been invited us back to hold their Autumn Equinox Open Ritual in September. We're going to PF Wessex in late April, the Lammas Games (4 August) and DruidCon (8 Sept).

Rob Wilson, Liaison

Review of Groves Grove Day (2007)

Unfortunately last year's Groves Day had to be cancelled because not enough people were able to attend to make it a viable event. The fact that we'd missed a year had me really looking forward to this year's and I wasn't disappointed.

We weren't a large group, as can be seen from the photograph, but that seemed to add to the day, rather than detract, and the atmosphere was one of harmony and friendship. The day was held in a new venue, a lovely little garden centre in Redditch, and from where I was sat I could watch a group of squirrels doing Ratatosk impressions in a nearby oak tree.

Previous to the meeting Morgan had asked that we each bring a symbol of our spiritual journey, our grove or the place where we live. We began the day by sharing the unique stories behind each of these items and attuning to our surroundings. Then followed an update on our individual groves, their histories, their ups and downs and the plans and hopes for their futures. Not only was it a rekindling of old friendships and meeting new friends, it was also a valuable experience sharing thoughts and ideas. I think that at the end of the day we all left feeling inspired and uplifted!

Our closing ritual was held outside in the late afternoon sunshine at the edge of the car park, on a grassy verge dotted with daisies and cowslips, separated from the busy road by a bank of brave trees. Here our druidry acknowledged and embraced the manmade environment around us and we gave thanks for our surroundings and the beautiful day we had just experienced.

I would like to thank Morgan, Bobcat and Bryn for enabling our small group to gather together and feel part of the wider community that is The Druid Network.

Lynda Ryder, Affiliated Groves and Groups Assistant

Photo taken by Lynda Ryder of the folk who attended the Groves Grove Day in Redditch ... (from left to right) : Sue Bouvier, Rob Wilson, Bobcat, Bryn Colvin, Morgan Adams, Keith, Phil Ryder, David, Marianne, Nigel.

Jack of the Green

*Tender leaves soft-frame your face
My lips touch dew we kiss
And all I am breaks open in love
Another leaf bud unfurling*

Charlotte

TDN Flyers

The Network has just completed a new range of flyers, designed by Wayne Avanson. They include an **Introduction to The Druid Network**, one entitled **What is Druidry**, a bi-lingual flyer exploring the connections between **Druidry and Wales**, and one that talks about **The Druid Network and the Environment**, including information about contributing to the Tree Planting and Conservation Fund. We plan to do one on Interfaith and one on Ethics.

None of these are as yet going to be printed, for we are still waiting for a decision from the Charities Commission as to whether TDN can be registered as a charity. If we are, we shall be required to print our charity registration number on all our material. Being both absolutely determined and optimistic that the Commission will concede to our request, we shall hold off printing until our application is accepted.

The flyers are, however, available on the website in the form of *pdf* files. These can be downloaded and printed by folk who would wish to use them: there is a colour option or a greyscale (black and white) option. All are A4 double-sided, to fold into an A5 flyer. If you are not able to access the web or print yourself, and would like a small quantity for a conference or to give to enquirers, please let us know in the office.

We'd like to thank Wayne for his excellent work, donated with generosity and grace.

Bless you, Avey!



News from TDN in North America

In March, Oakwyse stepped down from his role as overall co-ordinator for the Network across the United States and Canada, in order to spend more time upon his own spiritual journey in solitude. We'd like to thank him for some inspired work done.

A large part of his role was envisioning what TDN could be in the American context, but that's not an easy task. We often spoke of the mistaken desire of holding onto an idea of a North American community with more cohesion than is possible across such a vast landmass, with its very different spirits of place, ancestors, gods and weather folk. In the near future TDN NA co-ordinators will meet and talk about the future, perhaps looking at the notion in another way, allowing us to draw the various regions into the community of TDN without needing them to bond as a unit separate from us as well. If you are interested in this discussion, as a member of TDN in the United States and Canada, or from elsewhere, please get in touch.

The other side of Oakwyse's role was the answering of queries that come to the Warwickshire office, ostensibly in English but clearly drenched in that very different culture that is America. Sometimes we confuse ourselves, forgetting that our language is actually different! This task will be taken up by those regional co-ordinators who have offered to help, and to whom I am very grateful.

Bobcat, TDN Committee

Spring saw the convergence of an enthusiastic Montanan, Deborah Milton, and a number of other curious individuals from the northern reaches of the US Rockies and surrounding area (Idaho, Montana, Northern California, and Utah) to explore the path of Druidry. Kevin Emmons (New England and Atlantic Regional Coordinator) led this group through an inspirational weekend workshop titled **Essence of Druidry - Crafting Sacred Relationship**. Thanks and blessings for his inspiration.

As Rockies and Sierra Nevadas Regional Co-ordinator, I myself attended as well and established connections with those who took part in this rich weekend workshop. Participants were excited to learn about The Druid Network's dynamic and interactive webpages, as well as the regional section and activities.

The relationships that were developed during this Earth Day weekend will endure and bring the inspiration of Druid practice further to life in this expansive and diverse NA region. Due to the large geographic size and varied climates of this region, the friendships made will also assist in further developing of the Rockies and Sierra Nevadas Wheel of the Year project.

Kevin, The Rockies

News from the Pacific Northwest includes two festivals co-sponsored by the Druid Network:

The West Coast Gathering of the Reformed Druids and Friends, August 3-5, 2007 in Humboldt Redwoods State Park, California : <http://rdg.mithrilstar.org/2007wcdruiddat.htm>.

Eight Winds Mountain Earth Gathering, on September 29, 2007 at Diamond Lake Resort, with several workshops, bardic circle and a ritual led by ADF's Vice ArchDruid : <http://home.earthlink.net/~triplehorses/id7.html>.

Plus, check out the new pages at: <http://www.druidnetwork.org/namerica/pacnw/index.html>. As always, regional members, and their children, are encouraged to submit their poetry, essays, rituals, etc. Please forward your original work to: aigeann@earthlink.net. Beltane Blessings, Aigeann

ReThinking Affiliated Groves and Groups

After Vixen's resignation, I have now taken on the role of Assistant Groves Co-ordinator and will be working alongside Morgan to update and simplify TDN's Grove Pages. TDN is about connecting people, and with this in mind we are re-thinking the whole area. This means that in the future, information about our groves will be freely accessible to all visitors, rather than being restricted to the Members Only area. During the next few weeks we will be contacting all the listed groves to let them know of the changes. It is our vision to create a thriving community of groves, no matter how big or how small those groves may be!

Lynda Ryder

TDN Committee

The TDN Committee meet online each month to discuss and debate issues that have arisen or developed over the previous weeks. In a spirit of honourable openness a précis is planned to be published in each newsletter to Members. The notes are also available online for Members. Enquiries for further detail may be placed for consideration at the Office.

In the **March** Committee meeting we discussed the recent AGM, the cost of holding it and the plans for next year. We also agreed the new staff expenses policy, which was talked through in depth at the AGM and which Bobcat has now published in the Staff area. We discussed updates to the Civil Liberties section, quite a new area on the site. We received an update on our Charity Commission application from Phil Ryder, and also the statements of support we have received from various parties. The upcoming TDN Marketplace, and merchandise such as t-shirts was discussed, and we finalised our design for a TDN banner for stalls and Eisteddfod use (this is now designed, crafted and available for use). Our new range of leaflets on the Druid Network, an Introduction to Druidry, Druidry and Wales, and aspects of our environmental and ethical stance were agreed. Finally we debated the need to deal with staff who fail to communicate or continue updating their areas, and how we should approach this in a friendly and honourable fashion; it is a subject we continue to consider.

In **April** we met to agree the date for the next AGM (first weekend in March 2008) and how we might include those further afield using internet technology. We discussed sharing the recent AGM minutes to the membership (now available online). We debated the necessity (or lack of it) of advertising TDN in various paper journals and magazines, questioning whether we should be using paperfree media instead, and discussed the merits of a fund to assist local groves with advertising public ritual and events. We anticipated the Groves Grove Day (a report of which is also in this Newsletter), and questioned TDN's future attendance at ASSF (Avebury) and Stonehenge Round Table meetings in the continuing atmosphere of friction. A rewrite of the Sponsored Learning page was outlined (now published), and Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* was considered as a focus for Druid input.

There was an emergency meeting held mid-April, where the Committee received and accepted OakWyse's resignation from Committee, as he seeks solitude for a period. The Committee would like to express its thanks for OakWyse's work on Committee and wishes him well in his retreat. The meeting dealt with the changes caused by OakWyse's leaving, such as Staff Care Teams, and decided that, for now, no new Committee member would be sought. We also discussed Vixen's departure from her role as co-ordinator of Affiliated Groups and the Druid Directory, and set into motion ideas for the future. More on that is discussed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Events

Ogham for the Seasons (Summer)

Saturday 12 May, 10 - 5 pm

Trosley Country Park, Vigo, Kent

The second of a series of four that aims to show a way of working with the spirit essence of trees, plants and herbs. There are no absolutes here, just a deeply held trust between tree and person. Spending the whole day in the woods, we will use ritual, journeying and creativity to build our relationship with the trees of this land. Cost: £15 Booking essential. Contact: Rob Wilson, cerdinen@aol.com or <http://www.woodspirit.org.uk>

The Gorsedd of Bards of Caer Abiri

Saturday 12 May, noon

Avebury, Wiltshire

Muster at Noon beside the Café before making the God and Goddess walks to the Sun Circle. The rite to welcome in summer will commence with offerings to the Guardian/Goddess whose presence we honour. This is an open Gorsedd that welcomes all who come with good intent. Feel free to bring songs and poetry, as well as contributions of bread and mead. Most of all bring your heart. Contact Morgan 01458 835518 if you have queries.

Seer Dream-Weaver – Incubation of Dreams

Thursday 7 to Monday 11 June (Monday optional)

Riverside Camping, Postbridge, Dartmoor, Devon

Four days in the beautiful moorland of Dartmoor to explore the role of Dream-Weaver and Seer. This vision quest is a reaching out and surrender to nature for inspiration, to deepen connection and seek understanding or inspiration. Cost: £95 incl teaching, support, and a pitch for your tent. Contact: Rob Wilson, cerdinen@aol.com or <http://www.woodspirit.org.uk>.

Caer Clud Midsummer Festival

Sunday 17 June 2007, 1 pm

The Burrell, Glasgow, Scotland

We meet in the Burrell car park and walk through the woods to the Ancient Earthworks. After our ceremony, back to the Burrell for a warm drink, maybe something to eat in the café and informal chat. Contact caerclud@googlemail.com for details.

Ynys Môn Alban Hefin Gathering and Ritual

Saturday 23 June, noon

Canolfan yr Orsedd, Ynys Môn, Gogledd Cymru

The Gorsedd Centre, Anglesey, North Wales

Please bring food contribution, musical instruments, etc. FFI contact Kris Hughes on angleseydruids@hotmail.com.

Kent Gorsedd - Summer Solstice Ritual

Saturday 23 June

Kings Wood, Challock, Ashford, Kent

We gather to celebrate in the midday sun the madness of illusion, honouring our creativity, our land and our tribe. All welcome. Feel free to wear robes. Bring biodegradable offerings for the Guardian Spirit. Bring your poems, songs or stories to share in the Eisteddfod. <http://www.woodspirit.org.uk/kentgorsedd.htm>.

The Gorsedd of Bards of Cor Gawr : Midsummer

Sunday 24 June, Dawn

Stonehenge, Wiltshire

This special annual rite in the circle of the ancient temple is open to all; tickets available only in advance, price £2 each. Send cheques payable to The Druid Network to Sue Bouvier, 186 Swievelands Road, Biggin Hill, Kent TN16 3QS.

Anderida Gorsedd - Summer Solstice Ritual

Sunday 24 June, 1.30 pm

The Long Man of Wilmington, Sussex

Anderida is a Druid group, facilitated by Damh the Bard and Cerri Lee, that has been holding regular open rituals at the Long Man of Wilmington since Spring Equinox 2000. Bring flowers of the season, story, song and musical instruments. All the family are welcome. Afterwards, we often retire to the Giants Rest pub for a cozy pint! Average turnout is been about 55-85 people, all from many different traditions and paths. Contact Damh or Cerri : 07747-011515 or anderida_gorsedd@bardicarts.com

Clan of Birds: A Soul Journey

Saturday 7 to Sunday 8 July

North Downs Woodlands, Kent

An exploration in honour and respect for the wisdom and inspiration of each unique spirit flight; carrying us on darkened wings of freedom to the ancestors, to healing, to wisdom and to prophecy. This is an intensive workshop that runs from Midnight to Sunset. You will create 10" deerskin drum, clay bowl, an oracle pouch and incense. Cost: £75 Contact: Rob Wilson cerdinen@aol.com

The Druid Camp (see front page)

Wednesday 11 to Sunday 15 July

The Gorsedd of Rhiannon and the White Horse

Sunday 29 July, noon

The White Horse, Uffington

We meet in the car park and proceed to the area around Dragon Hill. Bardic initiation and handfastings offered if required. Eisteddfod contributions (songs, poems, stories) welcome..

The Lammas Games and Bardic Contest

Saturday 4 August, noon till midnight

Braziers Park, Ipsden, nr. Wallingford, Oxon

Our annual charity fundraising event held at Braziers Park in South Oxfordshire. At the heart of the games is **the Eisteddfod bardic contest for the prized Spear of Lugh**, with MC Bard Paul Newman - why not enter? More than just an enjoyable day for all the family, it raises funds for, and awareness of, a variety of environmental, ethical and spiritual issues, as well as to celebrate the festival of Lammas with ritual. Bands booked are the **superbly wonderful Celtic/Space Rock/World Music Festival Band Kangaroo Moon!** Stalls, Games, demos, archery, football, spear throwing, ferret racing, organic cafe, real ale bar Tickets: Day £5, Evening £5, Full £10 / Under 16s Free. Camping available from Friday Night to Sunday £6 per night per person. Contact: enquiries@lammasgames.org or <http://www.lammasgames.org>

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