

The Pagan Federation South Midlands District Newsletter



Winter Solstice 2015

Welcome to the latest edition of the PF South Midlands District Newsletter. Any news, events, articles etc for inclusion should be emailed to Jackie at:
southmidlands.webmaster@paganfederation.co.uk

District Managers Report

It's hard to believe that another year is nearly at an end and that the festive season is already upon us. This time is always a great time to reflect on the past year and what's gone well together with those areas that need improvement.

We've thankfully now got two regional co-ordinators again, as well as a local co-ordinator to look after our members on a regional level. So please do take advantage and get in touch with them regarding your ideas, comments and feedback. If you are in Oxfordshire and interested in such a role then please get in touch with us for more information. We have always been greatly saddened that this role has never been filled and are limited by what we can do from afar. We know and are heartened by the fact that there are Moots and events already going on there and we hope that one of you or someone that you know could be encouraged to further support and develop your own community.

In further news we're gladdened to have a local member of the community in Hertfordshire speak to us about setting up a new Moot and possible having lessons/workshops/speakers too. We know from listening to your feedback that this will be very welcome and nicely fit the gap between open events and more closed groups.

On the other hand we are saddened to hear of one or two Moots in our district have had to close down this year but as folks who run one ourselves we appreciate how much work and time can be involved in putting such things on. Therefore we would like to stress as always if you need help or support with your Moot or event please do ask, it's what we are there for. It also shows the need for us as a community to support local events and offer to lend a hand where we can. It really is a case of that old adage, use it or lose it!

So in conclusion, as we wish you and yours all the blessings of Yule and the festive season we look forward to the new adventures and opportunities that 2016 brings.

Geraldine and Darren
District Managers, Pagan Federation
Beds, Bucks, Northants, Oxon, Herts, Milton Keynes

District Updates

Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire area update

The Shamanic Drumming group in Milton Keynes continues to be held on a Tuesday morning from 10am until 1pm so if you are free on a Tuesday morning and are in the area it's a lovely group run by a lovely lady!! If you would like more information please contact me on southmidlands.northants@paganfederation.co.uk.

The Order of The Oath continue their Stone Circle Moon Moots on the evening of the full moon each month. This is held at Willen North Lake, Milton Keynes and is from 9pm although with the next Full Moon being Christmas Day there may not be many attendees!!!

Northampton Pagans host their monthly moot at the Charles Bradlaugh Pub in Northampton. The moot is held on the 1st Tuesday of each month from 8pm and is open to all. Further details can be found on the Northampton Pagans Facebook group.

District IT and Communications Officer

Thank you once again to everyone who contributed articles for inclusion in the newsletter to enable us to keep it going.

As well as editing the newsletter I also maintain our district website: www.pfsouthmidlands.org. If you have a moot, event, group, shop or service which you'd like featured on the website, or if you have an update to an existing entry please get in touch - southmidlands.webmaster@paganfederation.co.uk.

The District also has a Facebook Group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/392184074188925/>

**Jackie Palman - Pagan Federation South Midlands
District IT & Communications Officer**

News

Pagan Pride UK: Anglia

Pagan Pride UK: Anglia is based in Milton Keynes, and is part of Pagan Pride UK. We work in Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas to promote tolerance and accurate representation of modern Paganism, through creating fun community events and an annual FREE festival.

Pagan Pride UK Anglia was formed this summer and is spear headed by Hendrika van-As, It officially Launched on 31st October and has just had a successful first Fundraising event "Deck the Halls" a wreath Making workshop and afternoon tea. this raised £230 towards future events including a large Pagan pride festival and Parade like that seen in Nottingham every year, we are aiming to host the first festival in 2017. Anyone wishing to get involved or to attend future events can find us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/paganprideukanglia/> on Twitter <https://twitter.com/PPUKAnglia> or can email Anglia@paganpride.org.uk



Pagans with Disabilities

Merry Meet South Midlands

The Pagan Federation (England and Wales) is encouraging all members to think about the obstacles Pagans with disabilities face when wanting to attend moots, meetings, event and rituals. It is a difficult subject as disability can have many faces, some visible, some invisible and often a combination of both. Some disability is caused by chronic illness and some may be transitory – maybe an accident. Whatever the cause, I am sure that we have all met it in one of it's forms and we all have a story we can tell whether it is about ourselves, a family member or a friend. This means that we all understand, to a greater or lesser degree, how that can impact on just about everything we try to do in our lives, from washing the dishes to preparing for a ritual – sometimes neither gets done when the intent to 'do' clashes with our physical and/or mental inability to do so on that day, at that time.

There is something in the air at the moment that is insisting that we make changes, that we re-think the ways we have become comfortable with and move towards involving more Pagans with disabilities in our community. We need to identify those members who have maybe felt 'out of the loop', learn what their needs are and find ways of including them. This might not be possible, straight away, because we might use buildings that cannot be adapted or outdoor areas that are hard to reach for people who are not so able bodied. But we are asking everyone to have a think about what we can do, at grass roots level to help bring about changing perceptions and also, where needed changing spaces. You do not have to do this on your own – the PF now have a Disability Working Party who are looking at all aspects of disability and we will be producing a Disability Toolkit that will make

recommendations and give guidance. Of course there will be some areas that are problematic but that doesn't mean to say that generally they can't be overcome. The toolkit will be a while in the making but the sooner we have your input the sooner it will be ready. Are you disabled at the moment? Have you had experience of being disabled? Are you a carer for a person with disabilities? Are you a health professional? Do you already have best practice that you can share with us? Are you interested in disability and what it means?

If so, we have a Facebook group The PF Pagans with Disabilities that you can join – you have no need to explain why. If you do not use Facebook you can email me: disabilities@paganfederation.co.uk

Moots, Meetings and Groups

Bricket Wood Moot

Held quarterly at Moor Mill in Bricket Wood, the dates for the rest of 2015 are: 21st September & 15th December. We have our own room so we can chat and have speakers or do activities depending on what topic is picked.

We aim to provide a casual, safe and friendly environment for pagans to meet and learn from each other. Whether you've just started out on your Pagan path or you're an old hand, you're welcome to come along and have a friendly chat.

You can contact us on: bricketwoodmoot@hotmail.com

Oxford Talking Stick Moot

Every Thursday

The Talking Stick is a discussion group meeting at an Oxford pub each Thursday at about 8.30. We pass the stick around the circle and each person speaks or passes. We decide the week's topic at the end of the previous week's meeting. Prior knowledge of the subject is not necessary: we aim to learn from each other. The Talking Stick is an independent group open to all Pagans, witches, Wiccans, Druids, Thelemites, Shamanics, Magickians and anyone else who comes in good fellowship.

Address: the Angel and Greyhound pub, 30 St Clements Street, Oxford, OX4 1AB
Contact katy@kjennison.com for more information and venue details.

Potters Bar Gathering

3rd Wednesday of each month. A friendly Gathering with CoA and PF members and lots of laughter for all kind of Pagans and beginners welcome too! To learn, exchange and laugh. Held in a friendly local pub in Potters Bar, Haunted House! Attendees will be greeted by Isis. Interesting monthly talks by popular local wise pagans! For more information, please contact pbllaughterclub@yahoo.co.uk

Address: The Old Manor Pub, Wyllyots Place, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 2JD
Time: 8pm

Hertford Pagan Moot

Last Wednesday of the month. We are an informal social moot that meets on the last Wednesday of every month in the upstairs room of the White Horse Pub, Hertford. All paths welcome, as are newcomers and older hands alike.

For more information, find us on Facebook or email Geraldine, Darren and Kate at hertfordmoot@gmail.com

Price: Free

Address: White Horse Pub, 33 Castle Street, Hertford
Time: 8pm

Accessibility: As this is a historic building sadly there is no wheelchair access or disabled toilet.



White Crow Coffee Morning, Aylesbury

Fourth Sunday of each month

This Coffee Morning is run by the people behind the Aylesbury Moot and is designed for those who are not able to come to evening moots. It starts at 10.30 am on the fourth Sunday of each month. Children welcome.

Venue is the White Hart, Exchange Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UR, which is almost opposite the Waterside Theatre. Parking next door and stations nearby.
Accessibility: Wheelchair access and disabled toilet.

Please contact Dianne via kowethasbrangwyn@googlemail.com for further information

Strong Oak Moot – Stevenage

Third Tuesday of the month. The first moot of this social pub moot was held on the 19th February 2013 at 19.30. It is hoped that this seedling acorn will grow into a Strong Oak. All paths and levels of experience are welcome. Meet in the Saloon Bar and look out for the copy of Pagan Dawn on the table. For further information please contact Jacqui and Chris via jackiebabolcsai@hotmail.co.uk.

Address: Royal Oak Pub, 24 Walkern Road, SG1 3RA

Time: 19.30

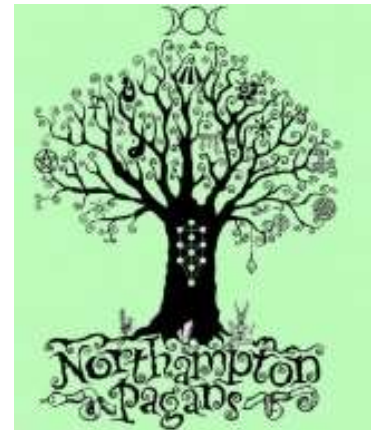
Cernunnos MCC Club

www.cernunnos-mcc.org

A pagan orientated motorbike club that meets on Thursday evenings from 8pm onwards at The Coffee Pot Tavern, High Street, Yardley Gobion NN12 7TN. We hold a number of events during the year, the main one being a three-day biker rally called the Mabon Rally, held on the weekend closest to the Autumn Equinox. The club celebrates at other times of the year to include Samhain with an evening event, Yule with an evening event, Beltane with a bike show and the summer solstice with a camping weekend. The club's website has a comprehensive biker party and rally guide for UK events; there are links to other bike clubs and bike organisations in the UK, Europe and elsewhere in the world.

Northampton Pagans Open Moot

Are you anywhere near Northampton on the first Tuesday of the month? If you are, then we would love to meet you at NP's open pub moot, where we are happy to see any Pagans, or even those who just want to know a bit more about Paganism, for an informal chat (and drink - mustn't forget the drink). Although NP organise this event, it is open to anyone and not just NP members.



For more information please contact openmoot@northamptonpagans.co.uk or see our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Northampton-Pagans/102360617505?fref=ts>

Venue: The Charles Bradlaugh pub, 1 Earl Street, Northampton NN1 3AU (on the corner of Earl Street and Lower Mounts).

Time: 8pm until closing time (or people drift away)

Paranormal Meet up – High Wycombe

Last Wednesday of the month. A Paranormal meet up group in High Wycombe on the last Wednesday of every month. It is a small group at present, but hope numbers will grow and we all have varying interests from Ghosts, Angels, Orbs, UFOS, Crop Circles, Life After Death, Astral travel, etc etc. As the group develops we hope from time to time have speakers talk on specific subjects and a small charge would be made to cover their expenses on those occasions. We have a Facebook group called High Wycombe Paranormal Meet up at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/415462125205125/> .

Contact : neil@geddesward.co.uk or contact Neil via his FB page at Neil Pagan Artist.

Price: free

Address: Bricklayers Arms, High St, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks

Time: 7.30 for 8pm

Abingdon Pub Moot

2nd Friday every other month. We are a friendly group of fun loving and intellectual people from many walks of life. Although generally pagan we are open to all spiritual paths as long as all come with respect and understanding. We are hoping to create a social group to share some of the ancient and mystical knowledge that we all learn through walking this path. So, if you're new to the path of the Wise, or have been treading upon it for some time please feel free to join in and come along to this Social Pub Moot and hear the Pan Pipes Play. We also hope to be able to offer training circles, open celebrations and craft making days as things get more established. Please contact via <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/oxonandthatcham-pub-moot-panspeople/> or join our Facebook group for more info.

Address: The Old Anchor, 1 St. Helens Wharf,
Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 5EN

<http://www.theoldanchor.com/>



Bishops Stortford Moot

Our moot takes place on the third Monday of every month from 8pm at The Castle pub, Castle Street. Just off of new town hill/road. We are a friendly open group who welcomes new comers with open arms. We have a different fascinating subject every month, previous ones including past lives, familiars, crystals, local ghost stories and legends.

For more information contact: willow_dragonkat@hotmail.co.uk

Dunstable Moot

3rd Sunday of the month, 11.00 am at the Old Sugar Loaf, 42-44 High St North, Dunstable, LU6 1LA.

It's a chance to meet with like minded individuals, open to those new to the path & those who have been walking it a while. Grab a coffee & have a chat. Feel free to invite friends!

For more information, please see our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/events/736469886466933/>

Aylesbury Pub Moot

Moot in Aylesbury for those in the Vale and beyond!

The moot is being held at the Hop Pole pub, 83 Bicester Road, Aylesbury. HP19 9AZ at 8pm every second Monday of the month. This is a real ale pub, with beer brewed locally and it does coffee too, and you will be sure of a warm welcome. For further information, please contact Dianne via kowethasbrangwyn@googlemail.com.

Accessibility: Disabled access available to Moot room.

Grove of the White Goddess

Monthly on a Monday (please check for dates), grove ceremony and socialising for druids, witches and seekers of every path. Particularly solitary witches - come and meet others who've changed their minds about practising the craft alone!

Address: Wellingborough Museum, 12 Castle Way, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 1XB

Time: 7.30pm

Cost: £6

PLUS, weekly on a Thursday, informal learning and social events, on everything from reflexology to chaos magic! Plus cake of course. Address: Varies, but normally somewhere around Wellingborough

Time: 7.30pm

Cost: Free

For further information, contact Wayne Freeman on groveofthewhitegoddess@gmail.com or find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/thegroveofthewhitegoddess](https://www.facebook.com/thegroveofthewhitegoddess)

Motley Moot Northants (the pagans wot picnic)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/353108811393187/>

The Motley Moot is a small group of pagans from all paths who are based in and around Corby and Kettering. We meet on the second Monday of every month and at other times and are very much a fun group of spiritual friends.

We hold regular outdoor ritual and often meet adhoc for midnight picnics and spiritual practice.

New members are always welcome and we are open to anyone who seeks to explore their spiritual self. for further information please message Suzanne or Jim on the Facebook page above.

Meeting of Kind Minds

The Shamanic Sharing Circle was birthed in November 2013 by shamanic practitioner, 4th level paqo, and life long earth lover and learner of the Celtic, Druid and Pagan traditions, Elizabeth Calderara. Whether you are already following your own spiritual path, seeking inner peace or wanting to add to your spirituality, we warmly welcome you to our Sharing Circle.



Run by Elizabeth and Karen Puttick, initiated Wiccan High Priestess who works with nature, and faeries. These two women open the circle each month for teachings, sharing experiences, guidance and joyous fun for all who seek to follow a spiritual path. No previous knowledge or practice is needed, all are welcome; to share experiences, meditations and laughter.

Thoughts from some of the circle.

'It's fun and welcoming' - Jess

'Really enjoyed this evening, thank you' Jenny

'Thank you so much for the circle yesterday evening, I felt energised and yet calm when I got home.' Dee

Bring your curiosity & self-knowledge. To join the group and to book your cushion space, call us, Elizabeth Calderara on 0779 1659 554 or Karen on 07886 190 921.

Earthlore Moot, Milton Keynes

Third Sunday of the Month

Run by the Circle of the Silver Star, this moot meets most third Sundays of the month at 8pm. There a mix of events at the Bradwell Common Community Centre, house moots and sabbat based outdoor events. We would appreciate a £3 contribution at every moot to build up the kitty to cover guest speakers and the hire of the hall when we are there. Refreshments will be provided. We have a guest speaker at every moot on a range of interesting topics. We advertise upcoming moots monthly with guest speaker and topic details. We hope you find it informative - Suggestions are always welcome and guest speakers to the moot are appreciated.



For directions and information please contact Cherylee on 07922 015758 or Pam on 07828 024499 or see our Facebook page [Earthlore Moot](#).
Price: £3.00 (includes refreshments, speakers and workshops)

Venue: various

Time: 8pm

Shamanic Drummers MK, Milton Keynes

Tuesday Morning Shamanic Drumming Ladies Group. Rectory Cottage, Bletchley, 10-1 £3 per session. Spare drums available which need to be pre-booked please.

NEW mixed sex evening group and day workshops starting shortly. Please check our page for updates <https://www.facebook.com/peacefulhealingdrumming>

Oxford Pilgrims

We are a group of seekers, all from Oxfordshire, who meet regularly to discuss magic and Occultism in a homely setting. The cycle of the year plays an important role in our group meetings, and we try to keep things as honest and direct as we can. We reject the complicated grades of initiation that are so cherished by other occult organisations. Instead of rushing into performing ritual magic, we start our 'work' closer to home, by honouring that part of nature in our own hearts, and overcoming limiting old beliefs and neuroses.

The ultimate goal is nothing less than becoming full human beings, with all the powers that entails. We strive to become who The Gods (or God) meant us to be. We study the work of a genuine Master; a spiritual teacher with over 40 years of experience guiding students. We're free to think and believe what we like, but we use his teachings as a backbone to our meetings, using them as a starting point for our discussions.

Email pilgrim777@gmail.com for more info

Chiltern Nemeton Druid Grove coffee mornings



First Sunday of the month at Tiki Cafe (Organic and Fair Trade Cafe) in the Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead
Time: 10am-12noon

The Grove almost always has open and informal Coffee mornings as listed above, please contact Reverend Paul Sandford to check on paulsandford28@yahoo.co.uk

The Chiltern Nemeton Grove is a friendly and welcoming druidic inspired community that shares an Animistic and Deeply Ecological vision that draws primarily from our Celtic but also from our Germanic Pagan roots.

Accessibility: Disabled toilet.

Bedford Pagan Moot

Meets on the first Thursday of the Month from 8pm at the Bedford Arms, 2 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2QA.

For further information, find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Bedford-Pagan-Moot-840066526077875>.

Order of the Oath Full Moon Moot

Held on the night of the full moon each month. Circles are held at the stone circle at Willen, Milton Keynes from approximately 9pm each month.

For more information please contact the group via their Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/TheOrderOfTheOathStoneCircleMoonMoot>

Address: Stone Circle, Willen, Milton Keynes, Bucks Time: 9pm

Article

Ghost Stories by Dianne Green

From High Wycombe we have some eerie tales. The Hell Fire Caves, reputed to be a place where gentlemen got merrily drunk, feasted perhaps too well and were entertained by ladies of easy virtue, was the setting for a story that may have been all too common at that time, or even now.



A young maid, working at the Inn, attracted the attention of one of the Hell fire aficionados, and lured by his flattery and tales of exotic places, such as London, and his suggestive advances, began to think that he might have honourable intentions about her. Some of the local lads, jealous of the rich competitor, concocted a story about her gentleman friend wishing to have an assignation, with a view to marriage, with young, pretty, spell-struck Susan/Sukie in, of all places, the caves.

When the appointed evening came, Sukie walked, cautiously, up the hill to the cave, open as it happened. She was carrying a large, outdoor Olympic style torch, stored at the coaching inn, and finding her way through its flickering light as well as that of the rising Full Moon over the hill. But the light of the torchiere seemed less as she entered the tunnel of the caves, the flame flickering, casting moving orange glows and dark flickering shadows on the hard, white, rough walls, floor and ceiling, so it seemed to her like the imaginary descent into the bowels of hellfire. She knew all about hell and the eternal fires that were the fate meted out to those who displeased their betters as said the vicar, thundering on in the pulpit at Sunday service. Down and down she went, the light not illuminating the side rooms, but vanishing behind her; darkness swallowed up the glimmering tunnel. She felt the crush of the heavy chalk, that extended hundreds of feet above her head, become more and more oppressive as she crept on, carefully now, but with an excitement that made her catch her breath constantly.

She would soon meet her proclaimed lover and she kept up her spirits by thinking of a new life, far away from the constant, wearisome drudgery of the bar and kitchen, endless hours of being nice to drunken louts and lascivious gents; of getting up early, going to bed late, to face yet another dull, dragging day. So her step quickened as she approached the central cavern, with its two ways from which to choose. She waited, waited and a few minutes stretched out to an eternity of suspense. Then came the expected sound. Was it her lover, with the teasing smile, smart clothes and his own horse? She turned and saw not one, not two but three strange shadows growing larger on the far wall. Suddenly there was a groan, a moan, followed by a shriek, like a soul crying out with all the torments of hell.

Sukie jumped, her suppressed fear rising in her throat; she screamed and the echo came back, scaring her even more. She jumped, the torch fell to the ground, rolled with the flame guttering and - it went out. The darkness was sudden and intense. No light ever filtered this far down. Terror overcame Sukie, she was paralyzed. Unthinking, and seeing flashes of light against the dark background, she stood stock still as noise arose; hearing, then realizing it was a scrabbling, a groaning behind her in the pitch-black, eye-hurting heaviness of the grave. The spell broke, she screamed and ran.

Across the floor she went, missing the surrounding walls by chance, but fate took a hand. As she ran towards the invisible tunnel she caught herself on the rough chalk side of the archway, staggered sideways, fell and hit her head as she toppled to the ground. Thwack. She lay still.

A spark came from the space parallel to the large cave, then another and a light flared up, flickered and steadied. The light grew and then the whole cave brightened as three young men came into view from their hiding place. They were laughing and

joking at first. “Hey, we give ‘er a good frit then. Learn ‘er to make eyes at fancy gents.” The sound stopped suddenly as they saw the still figure lying crumpled on the floor. They rushed up, immediately picked her up and two carried her out while the other held the light. Now they were trying to think what they could say about their part in her downfall. They had only been trying to scare her, to show her that a barmaid should look at the young men of her own class and not to try to get off with her betters, especially a toff from London.

Still nervous they took her back to the Inn, her home at the time. The landlord sent a maid to fetch the doctor down the road. He came on his horse, looked at the still girl, bled her and advised that she be put on a settle, near a good fire. He would call in the morning. But the large deep blue-black bruise on her temple showed that damage has been done and she died in the early hours, without regaining consciousness. Her fellow maid, who had been watching over her, cried loudly.

The landlord collected a subscription for her burial, which paid for mourning scarves for his household and a plot in the graveyard. No one would say she had killed herself and would lie in unconsecrated ground. So Sukie passed away, but her story remains today.

They say that a lady in grey, the colour often given to vague ghost shapes, is seen where the bar was, going towards the door to search for her lover. In the caves, people have seen strange shapes, felt cold so intense that the hair rose on their arms and chills went down their spines, especially in the central temple area: the scene of her death wound is still a place where fear can arise; and an encounter with her has been known to give rise to depression. Even children have found the caves too scary to re-enter.

The supernatural is not a place to enter lightly.

The Small Print

The opinions expressed by writers are not necessarily those of The Pagan Federation or its Officers. © Copyright remains with individual contributors. No part, written or visual, of this newsletter may be reproduced without written permission from the publishers. Inclusion within this newsletter should not be seen as an endorsement of events, products or services and readers must rely on their own judgement, although complaints will be noted.

Deadlines for Submissions:

Spring Equinox – 1st March
Autumn Equinox – 1st September

Summer Solstice – 1st June
Winter Solstice – 1st December