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# *Dark Mirror*



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*Ostara (Spring Equinox) 2017*

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## Behind the Mirror

**Welcome to the Dark Mirror Autumn Equinox Issue** - this edition celebrates the period between Ostara and Beltaine. The cover shows our dark mirror reflecting the morning sunshine amongst the first flowers of spring.

The editor welcomes news from local moots about their events and activities, directly or via their RC. News from our local moots encourages others to join and demonstrates just how active the pagan community is in this region, so please share your news. Thanks to all contributors to this issue.

Blessed Be  
Harvey – DM Editor

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### Dark Mirror submissions

Dark Mirror (DM) is read by Pagan Federation District Members and most likely many other Pagans. The aim of the Dark Mirror continues to be to reflect the work of the local PF (PFDCI) and its members, illuminate news and events in our area, and to provide a platform for local pagans to share their thoughts, poems, prose, stories, recipes, craft items, views, and articles of general pagan interest. Articles can be ca 3-4 pages of A4 (inc. images). The editors' decision is final.

Send your submissions in any digital format to the DM editor via email  
DarkMirrorMagazine@gmail.com or by mail to:  
Dark Mirror c/o PF DCI, Torcroft, Commons Lane, Shaldon, TQ14 OHN.

### Copy deadlines

Please get your articles in by the deadline and the editor will do his best to get them into the newsletter that aims to be with members by the relevant festival.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
Spring Equinox (Ostara)	21st February
Summer Solstice (Litha)	21st May
Autumn Equinox (Mabon)	21st August
Winter Solstice (Yule)	21st November

### PF Members only advertising

Please note that we now offer FREE THREE LINE advertising entries to members

### Disclaimer

Dark Mirror is the District Newsletter of the Pagan Federation - Devon, Cornwall and the Isles (PFDCJ) and is only available to members of the Pagan Federation. **The views and/or opinions expressed within this publication are not necessarily those of the editor, printers, PFDCI or the Pagan Federation.** Mention within this publication should not be seen as an endorsement of any events, meetings, moots or products, and no responsibility can be accepted by us for such items.

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## District Managers report

### A Few Words from Your District Manager – Maia

Spring is such a cheerful season. The promise of summer comes as the warming sun and life returns to the land with early white blossom of the thorns before we see any leaves. The galloping 'equation of time' plays with our senses as the days lengthen with enthusiasm.

Our District welcomes Spring with our fabulous day conference at Penstowe Manor, Bude, which was again a most popular event. We hold it on the second weekend in March. An excellent report follows in this issue with some photos. More excellent photos will be available on our website and Face book page in due course. It was a truly great weekend, from the quiz on Friday through the wonderful standard and well-chosen speakers to the lovely music all weekend from Arthur Billington, Kate and Corwen (who kindly joined us from the Orkney Isles!) and your favourite Bard – Damh.

After the quiz, the organiser became ill, so on the crucial day of the conference we had to manage without her leadership and guidance. The volunteer team stepped in to cover all the gaps she covers, and we need to thank every single person who played their parts so well in making sure the day ran without a hitch. Well done everyone.

I know it went well as I had so many positive comments about everything and especially the speakers – the quality and the balance of subjects pleased everyone so great thanks are due to Graham King, Prudence Jones, Kate & Corwen (and their enthusiastic volunteer 'osses) and Professor Rotherham. An unexpected pleasure was the presence of the Poet Laureate of Plymouth. Thom offered us his poems inspired by the day and these are printed later in this newsletter. He also read them to us at the end of the day. Fabulous poems; and in their way this shows you that these speakers all offered up inspiring words and actions. We are so lucky to have such talent in our District. I am delighted to tell you that the raffle proceeds plus generous donations means we can give £400 to Wembury Marine Centre (part of Devon Wildlife Trust) to help them protect our local sea life. Next year is our 20<sup>th</sup> District Conference, so watch out – we are planning a big one.

After that perfect weekend away in Cornwall, we are all back at home with the inner knowing that the growing times are now ahead, and those of us with gardens or allotments had best service the old mower now, and start thinking about the veg plot. After 2 weeks of planting many trees and hedgerow whips, and sadly my dog, we have 'planted' something else very important this week (pictured here). I hope she will become a strong presence and a source of comfort, love and inspiration. It seems the land is becoming a place of final rest for animals and cremated humans. I realised we needed to manifest a marker according to our faith, belief – and tradition. The right thing arrives as it always does, thanks to the natural balancing of things by the powers we have grown to know and respect..

There are several new moots in the District so check out the list and see if there is something new for you. Exciting moot news is a new one is beginning soon in the Channel Isles run by a PF Member so you will hear more about that one soon. Old and new they are all well run; most are learning moots and have speakers of great interest, and/or hold festival celebrations so do not miss out – get out and about!

### Maia

District Manager Devon, Cornwall & Isles [dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk)



## News and events

### Cornwall

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#### RC report Cornwall – Eve

The hedgerows are greening and Spring has very truly sprung. This strengthening of the Green is often the focus of our Spring Equinox celebrations. But at Equinox, Day and Night are of equal length, in balance, and this balance can also be a focus for our spiritual reflections at this time of the year. Equinox celebrations are often more low key, and I often use these as an opportunity to reflect on the balance in my own life: work/life balance, (the biggie for me); the balance between spiritual and secular; the balance between serving and being served. I take the opportunity to sit and quietly reflect on the balance in my own life, and to look at my plans for the coming months, what needs to be put away in the “winter under bed box” and what needs to be taken out, cleaned and readied for the coming season.

Often it is all too easy to get caught up in being busy; in full calendars, in lists of things to do, places to go, people to see, especially now as the Sun warms the Earth and the days are lengthening and we feel energised. But as we stand on the threshold of Spring, the time of Promise and Renewal, let us take time to reflect on how the balance in our own lives reflects that Balance which is in all things.

And on a more practical note. As the days lengthen, I hope to be able to visit more Cornish Moots.

Welcome to the new Falmouth Penryn Moot! And hopefully seeds of renewal in Bodmin too. Please do let us know about what you are doing, this can be such a source of inspiration and good idea for other Moots.

Equinox blessings to you all

Eve

#### Bude Moot

The moot continues to have a strong core attendance and has attracted some more regular members. We have had some really interesting speakers and demos.

Heimke Moll led us in a beautiful in depth Winter and Imbolc Meditation in January. Karen led a Sound Gong bath last month. Looking forward we have Jill Lamede soothing our souls with her unique Story Telling in April, Peter Knight giving a talk on Sacred Dartmoor in June, and a local coven demonstration in July.

Lisa

### Devon

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#### RC Report Devon - Michele

The majority of Devon moots have lively Face book groups with many links to interesting events or topics for Pagans as well as information on their own activities. These are well worth looking through. Here are some of the things moots have been getting up to in the last few months.

**Teignbridge Pagans** January, astrological trends for the coming year; February, Steve Wills 'Pagan Strategies - Reclaiming your Power'; March; carving egg candles and honouring Ostara. Bank holiday means no moot in April.

**Torbay/South Devon Pagan Moot** Feb; Deity. Perceptions, definitions and the significance of the nature of Deity in your personal practice. March; the role of Pagan woman in our community inspired by International Women's Day.

**Devon Pagan Communities**, hold weekly gathering, around half are for socialising, recent moot subjects

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were reincarnation, Japanese monsters, making magical music, and a talk from Peter Knight. This moot hosts regular seasonal open rituals.

Locally there have been several changes to the moot listings so please check these out.

Once we have gathered, shared stories, been entertained by inspiring members of the Pagan community, and celebrated together at our Spring Conference, the real growing phase of the year has begun. For me this is the signal to knock out the dust, and get my teeth into what I wish to achieve in the coming season and beyond. In an attempt to get my artistic inspiration flowing I wrote a poem about a morning walk on the moor where the rising sun lit up the dewy grass like a sparking rainbow.

### **Great Dragon-Fly**

White ferns of cloud slowly scatter over the rich azure sky.  
Time to taste the air fresh in your lungs, Great Dragon-Fly.

Mists arising from the valley, let the bright sun warm your wings.  
Bird song resounding off granite tor, awaken Great Dragon-Fly of Spring.

Glistening iridescent rebirth reflects from every emerald blade dew wet.  
Shining red, blue, amber and purple, a living golden-silvered carpet.

A walk in beauty upon rainbow wings, a glimpse of eternity to gladden the eye.  
Heal our hearts and make our spirits soar; unfurl your nurturing wings, Great Dragon-Fly.

Bright Blessings of the Spring Equinox

### **Michele**

#### **Taw and Torridge Moot.**

The moot is going from strength to strength, we usually have about 12 people attending now. Last month Mark Norman came to speak about folklore and magical practices in Devon & Cornwall. Nick Thompson of Wizewoods is guesting in May -tree lore and energies/magic of trees. A walk is planned if weather is good! Alas, no April meeting because it is a bank holiday.

### **Minerva**

#### **Plymouth and South West Devon PF Moot.**

Just when the weather is at its dreariest, our celebration of Imbolc lifted the spirits of all (a magical 13) who attended that Wednesday night ! A big thank you to Kirsty and Joanna, who led a memorable, varied and distinctive ritual. After the circle was vigorously cast and purified, we were grounded, then led in guided meditation, followed by the gift of wildflower seeds. Contributions included a short reading and a Maggie poem, then drumming and chanting led by John and Sarah. All followed by a fine feast with good company thanks to all for your support.

We all had a great evening at the 8 March moot, which was the best attended (24) for a long time! Peter Knight's talk was a 'tour de force' around Dartmoor and its fascinating variety of ancient features. The tors with their "simulacra" of brooding figures and totem animals so powerfully magical to our ancestors; the stone circles and processional stone rows so carefully sited and aligned; and the enigmatic 'slipped' stones; the timeless energies of place, and our awakening to them if and when we walk and lie upon this land seeking attunement. I think we all felt inspired, and fortunate to live so close to this wonderful place. We've gotta get up there!

Merry meet, merry part and merry meet again!

### **Patrick**

## Spring conference 2017

### Devon, Cornwall & Isles Spring Pagan Federation Conference 2017

A report by Alan Jones

It seems like only a short time ago that we were enjoying the 2016 offering of PF organized goodies, so to be reporting now on the 2017 Conference merely goes to remind me of how quickly time passes and, if we let it, The Wheel spins by without due recognition and regard.

So standing in the morning North Cornwall air on the Saturday morning with a full day ahead it was nice to stop and become aware of the Spring and the coming season echoed as it was in the flowers, hedgerows and on the smiling faces of the convention-goers.

We are extremely fortunate in this area to have such a hard-working and committed team of organisers who spend so many hours bringing the whole thing together as well as running the seventh Elephant stall, Raffle, Front of House – a big thank you to you all.

So, to the convention treats this year.

### British Spells and Charms - Graham King

After a calming opening visualization, we welcomed Graham King, surely someone who needed little introduction to this conference. As custodian of the Boscastle Museum of Witchcraft from 1996 until 2013, Graham managed this particular jewel in the crown of Paganism with passion and energy. He received praise for his, and the other trustees, decision to formally lay to rest Joan Wytte, the Fighting Fairy Woman of Bodmin Town on account of her size and vicious assaults, whose skeleton had been displayed rather unceremoniously as an artefact in the museum for forty years or so.

Some may know something of Grahams other exploits, including his John O'Groates to Lands End walk in 2016. But did you know he has been a volunteer with the Boscastle Coastguard rescue team, and that, in 2005, had received the Chief Coastguard's Commendation for his actions during the Boscastle Flood of 2004?

Of course, we will all be aware of his scholarship and interest in things Witchcraft and Magical, and it was this knowledge he brought to a lecture entitled British Spells and Charms.

Graham started out by asking us to consider what we mean by the words 'spell' and 'charm' offering a definition such that they could be considered as *'a set of actions and words intended to bring about a magical change or revelation'*.

Such a definition differentiates spells and charms from the idea of a 'prayer', which, Graham noted, generally called upon a deity. He noted that the 'River Jordan' chant to stop bleeding exists in numerous forms, but generally calls upon Christian deity or saint. One version of this chant is:



"Christ was born in Bethlehem  
Baptized in the river Jordan;  
There he digg'd a well  
And turn'd the water against the hill  
So shall thy blood stand still. In the name...."

Graham suggested that charms, and spells, are actually part and parcel of our everyday experience. "Good Morning", a derivation of "Have a Good Morning" being a salutation, blessing and spell perhaps.

Some nursery rhymes could be seen as what remains of a spell or chant when the magical context is removed. For example,

"Rain, Rain Go Away – Come Again Another Day".

And some traditional sayings carry within them elements of spell-work – a desire to bring luck, good fortune and personal transition. For example:

- A Bride is invited to seek out something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue...:
- A new moon may bring a new love...;
- A horseshoe hung over the threshold;
- A *Witch Mark* on a ceiling timber ... and so on.

The point was made that the Cunning Tradition and the Charmers of old plied their trade with success for many years, and through several generations. The reason, the acceptance that magic works. Note here that the word is not 'belief' that magic works, but the no-nonsense acceptance of its affect and effectiveness.

## Healing Spells

Graham gave the example of the 'Bone-to-Bone' chant, which was used to heal broken bones.

"Phol and Wodan were riding to the woods,  
and the foot of Balder's foal was sprained  
So Sinthgunt, Sunna's sister, conjured it.  
and Frija, Volla's sister, conjured it.  
and Wodan conjured it, as well he could:  
Like bone-sprain, so blood-sprain, so joint-sprain:  
Bone to bone, blood to blood,  
joints to joints, so may they be mended."

This incantation, or spell, is known as the "Second of The Merseburg Incantations" and are the only surviving instance of ostensibly pre-Christian, pagan, Old High German literature. Wikipedia notes that this incantation was recorded in the 10th century by a literate cleric, possibly in the abbey of Fulda, on a blank page of a liturgical book, which later passed to the library at Merseburg.

Graham credited Rory Te'Tigo (an artist, pagan living in St Just) with pointing this Germanic spell out to him after he had written on a Christianized version of the spell recorded in 1845 from Scotland.

Actually, we do find both Thomas Westen (1714) Jacob Grimm (1787) transcribes a Christianized version from the 1700s.

"Jesus himself rode to the heath,  
And as he rode, his horse's bone was broken.  
Jesus dismounted and healed that:  
Jesus laid marrow to marrow,  
Bone to bone, flesh to flesh.  
Jesus thereafter laid a leaf  
So that these should stay in their place."

Grahams point was that here we have a spell, or a charm, that had been in constant use for best part of

1000 years. This alone speaks volumes about the power and extent of spell-craft. Indeed, Graham postulated, that perhaps we are witnessing a cycle of spell-casting as Pagan usage passed to Christian usage and Christian usage passes again into Pagan usage as language and spiritual reference points change but not the intention.

This is syncretism in action and, from a personal point of view, it is refreshing and essential to view spiritual belief systems as evolving, syncretic and contextually relevant practices rather than arcane, sterile and dogmatic. (Not wishing to put my words into Graham's mouth here).

Graham's knowledge of, and research into, the artefacts and writings gathered at the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic allowed him to demonstrate our continued cultural use of spells, charms and talismans. Referring specifically to the "Hitler Dolls" produced during the Second World War and the instructions written for seamstresses to enable them to make them.

Graham ended his talk with a song. As someone with a love of Old English folk songs, Graham admitted, that finding spells in song form was not as common as we might expect. He sang an English translation of a Gaelic song which contained the words 'deosil turn once, deosil turn twice, deosil turn thrice' and 'honey kisses of fair ones'

The song was apparently sung by seamstresses who were sewing blessings into robes and clothes.

If the subject of Spells and Charms interests you, then you might like to consider Graham's book, published in 2016, "The British Book of Spells and Charms" lovingly bound and produced by Troy Books ([www.troybooks.co.uk](http://www.troybooks.co.uk))

## **Pagan astrology - Prudence Jones**

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Next on was Prudence Jones whose talk was entitled simply as Pagan Astrology in the program, but given the subtitle "Astrology - The Enchanted Cosmos, and Cycles of Transformation"

On her website, we read that she is "a writer and commentator on the Pagan (polytheistic, nature-venerating) traditions of Europe and associated spiritual systems. [www.prudencejones.co.uk](http://www.prudencejones.co.uk)

Prudence's opening statement was interesting "*most pagans know little about astrology and most astrologers know little of paganism*". It was from this starting point that she began to explore the notion that divisions of cosmic wheel, the circles created by the horizon, the rising and setting of the sun and the landscape provided a framework for ritual and oracular work.

Astrology as a system dates from 2000 BCE and appears to have origins on Mesopotamia. By the 1st century BCE, there were two varieties of astrology, one using horoscopes to describe the past, present and future; the other, ritualistic, emphasising the soul's ascent to the stars.

Prudence noted that the 'Sky Gods' could be seen (and possibly invoked) as they moved through the 'Sky Circle' - hence ritual.

Romulus and Remus the twin brothers raised by wolves, who according to myth were the founders of Rome, featured in the next part of Prudence's talk.

According to myth, the brothers argued over where their city should be situated. Romulus favoured the Palatine Hill; Remus wanted the Aventine Hill.

They agreed to select the site by divine augury, took up position on their respective hills and prepared a sacred space; signs were sent to each in the form of vultures, or eagles. Remus saw six; Romulus saw twelve, and claimed superior augury (foresight) as the basis of his right to decide. Romulus completes his city and names it Roma after himself.

Prudence noted that the City itself was designed with the Cosmos in mind. She spoke of the *Mundus Pit*, the word Mundus equates with the word Cosmos.

Roman mythology states that the *mundus was dug and sealed by Romulus as part of Rome's foundation*. A circular pit placed specifically to reflect the 'wheel of the sky', and if I understood

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Prudence correctly, using the horizon as marker points as representations of the places of the Gods.

The Roman writer Plutarch compared this pit to one dug by Etruscan colonists, containing soil brought from their parent city, used to dedicate the first fruits of the harvest. In this sense, *The Mundus Cerialis* (literally "the world" of Ceres or Caereris mundus) was a hemispherical pit or underground vault in Rome. Whilst its location is uncertain legend suggests that it was sealed by a stone lid known as the *lapis manalis*.

On August 24, October 5 and November 8, according to lists of Roman Festivals, the pit was opened with the official announcement "*mundus patet*" ("the mundus is open"), and offerings were made there to agricultural or underworld deities, including Ceres as goddess of the earth and guardian of its underworld portals.

It was around this pit that the Roma was constructed in accordance with patterns of what we these days would call sacred geometries. The ritual by which Roman cities were built has been described in numerous writings. One which I was inspired to seek out after Prudence's lecture comes from *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* (Vol. 14, No 3, pp. 107-119 2014 (ref: <http://maajournal.com/Issues/2014/Vol14-3/Full11.pdf>))

The ritual described by Solinus, from a lost account by Varro, was based on the Etruscan tradition and was supposedly the ceremonial followed by Romulus in the foundation of Rome. According to this ritual, the first steps had to be done by the augur, who would inspect the skies for auspicious signs in order to set up the *templum*, a symbolic image of the heavens where all the ceremony should be performed.

Next, a cow and an ox would be yoked to a plough in order to define with a furrow the *pomerium*, the sacred precinct of the new town, and where the city walls would be built. Next, a pit, the *mundus*, was dug, into which the first fruits were offered. Presumably, near this place the surveyors laid the *groma*, the instrument they used to set the orientation of the city grid after taking again the appropriate auspices. In this sense, it is clear that the foundation of a city was a sacred act.

The *groma* consisted of a rod with a metal arm at the top perpendicular to it. Four straight metal pieces extended at right angles from the tip of this arm. In this way, if the surveyor finds a direction with one of the straight sections, the other immediately gives the perpendicular direction, facilitating the laying out of a grid. The Roman grid had an urban layout normally defined by a series of streets running largely north-south, called *cardines*, and their perpendiculars running broadly east-west, called *decumani*.

The main streets would be those often called *Cardus Maximus* and *Decumanus Maximus*. These names (*cardines* and *decumani*) are not attested in proper relation to towns, but in relation to the division or *centuratio* of the fields. The two main streets cross near the town centre, where usually the forum is located.



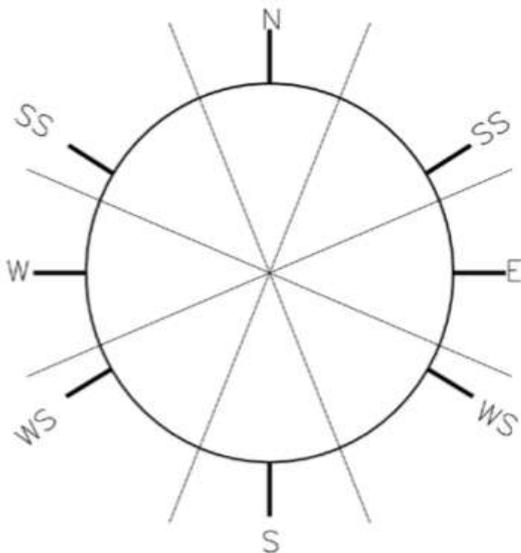


Diagram showing the eight divisions of the horizon used to obtain the main wind directions according to Vitruvius. The orientation of the city grid should avoid the central areas and thus follow the solid lines. Short heavy lines indicate the cardinal directions and the sunrise and sunset at the solstices (WS and SS).

The forum was the main square of Roman towns, where most of the administrative, judicial and representation buildings were congregated, such as the basilica or the curia, together with buildings for commerce and temples.

This diagram, taken from MAAJ 2014 (see ref. above) emphasizes some of the points Prudence was making in this part of her talk. It clearly implies a clear necessity to orient Roman towns according to the path of the sun.

Whilst the conclusions of the 2014 paper urge caution on over generalizing ideas, they note there is still space for much deeper research into this topic.

This section of Prudence's talk did offer much food for thought, and as is clear, inspired some deeper digging on my part. Her emphasis on the creation of an oracular space; cautionary comments about "*cod Freudianism in the Roman World*" and the development of astrology from a tool for divination into the better known use in terms of Natal Astrology (Birth Charts) made for a fascinating talk.

The second section of Prudence's presentation featured a look at specific 'astrological charts' namely that of York Minster at the time of the fire in the 1980's; the chart for this talk at Penstowe and some revelations about Donald Trump.

She concluded with some astrology that everyone can do with their birthdates without the need to generate natal charts.

## "Obby Oss rituals" - Kate and Corwen

After lunch, and perfectly placed, was the session led by Kate and Corwen on "Obby Oss Rituals and other adult dressing-up games" Kate and Corwen are musicians, instrument makers and accomplished workshop leaders who perform folk music and drama. They also recreate ancient music, run sessions within schools and demonstrations in museums. ([www.ancientmusic.co.uk](http://www.ancientmusic.co.uk))

Now if this write-up is a little brief it is not because there is little to say. It is because I, as writer of this report, became totally engaged and entertained by this presentation. Starting with a 'horse play' featuring Nobbin the 'Oss, which featured the key elements of misrule, death and resurrection, Kate and Corwen led us rapidly through a brief 40,000 year history of therianthropy.

It was noted that whereas some Pagan traditions appeal to ancient tradition, humans dressing up as animals is genuinely ancient. In a very clear and carefully structured presentation Kate and Corwen suggested that such dressing-up was a tool for spiritual change; a ritual of both mirth and reverence.

With a range of super photographs and strong images we were delighted by some of the examples of 'adults dressing-up' in the most Pagan and 'Folky' of ways.

We were introduced to the Lion Man statue...In 1939 in Germany, in a cave inside a mountain, the oldest sculpture in the world was found. It represents a lion head human and it is carved out of mammoth ivory and is about 30cm in height.

Originally, the statue was carbon dated to be more than 32,000 years old. Recent studies and dating has shown that it is probably more than 40,000 years old. It has been estimated that the sculpture would have taken about two months' to carve using flint tools, which would mean that the carver was only working and must have been supported by others in the village who went out hunting and gathering. This means that village-life involved some kind of social system in which different roles were allocated.

What makes this statue unique is that it is the only item from that era involving an actual carved figurine rather than just lines or patterns.

From cave paintings it is clear that humans dressing as animals is exceptionally old and perhaps is the truest form of shape-shifting – **guising is shamanic!** From the Lion Man we were led into photographs of the Abbots Bromley Horn-Dance, Krampus, The Bear Dancers, The Bury Man and various UK 'Oss's. Kate and Corwen outlined three types of 'guising beast'.

The **MAST** beast where the mask, the head of the beast, is supported by a single pole held by the operator, who is covered by a cloth costume. This is perhaps the most readily recognizable of the Oss's.

The **BASKET** beast wherein the operator wears a 'basket mask' on their shoulders. Hence, it is their body which forms the body of the beast and they wear an exaggerated head.

The **TOURNEY** head wherein the 'rider' is encircled by a decorated hoop, and their upper body extends from the encased hoop. Rod Hull and Emu would be an example of such a beast.

### **Audience participation was the key.**

Some audience members were given the opportunity to explore shape-shifting with a mast beast. Temporary chaos ensued and the point was well made that by simply wearing the costume there is a transformation. Personal identity and hence personal reservations (limitations) disappear.

Other audience members were invited to take part in a piece of horse-play with four 'teasers' and a tourney beast. The point was made that whilst the themes of death and re-birth are there it is not always the 'oss' that goes through this transition.



Kate and Corwen closed by challenging those present to create a beast; attend processions; revive traditions and encourage self-learning through transformation.

### **The Ladies of the Lake - Professor Roland Rotherham**

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From an organisers point of view I would have thought it would have been very tough to follow the energetic presentation of Kate and Corwen – I mean where do you go when you've explored in a very visceral way shape-shifting and ritual death and rebirth. The perfect choice of course was Roland Rotherham who presented a talk entitled Ladies of the Lake.

How to begin here?

Roland Rotherham (AKA Roly or The Doctor) is a British writer, who specializes in medieval legends and lore, especially those related to King Arthur, Merlin and Glastonbury. On the conference's program we are told that he has been described as "the quintessential Englishman".

Roland took the stage, then calmly, eruditely and with a hint of ribaldry gave a superb talk on the relationships between 'lakes' and 'ladies' – the Priestesses of the sacred waters.

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Here we witnessed an expert raconteur at home on the stage and with his audience. No notes to distract him from his personal connection to the audience and with more than a hint of the academic eccentric, we were enthralled by what he calls 'his pretty pictures and jelly babies' (you had to be there).

Again, I find reporting on this quite difficult as I was totally engaged in the journey we were all escorted on. From the assertion that Merlin was a title not a name (The Merlin) a proposition I have long held personally; through to the exploration of romantic images of Ladies of the Lake who lacked, in Roland's eyes, that sense of darkness required of these wonderful women of magic and priestesshood.

In a whirlwind tour of lakes and holy wells, we were asked to consider the myths and legends of places such as St Joseph's Well, Chalice Well and Pomparles Bridge in Glastonbury; Dozmary Pool, St Nectans Glen, Holiwell, Sancreed Well and other wells within Cornwall.



The key message being that whereas Groves were the domain of the pagan priests, the Lakes, Wells, Streams and Water Falls were the provenance of priestesses. [Editors note - In addition, Roland suggested that the (sacred) weapon of the fallen hero (chieftain, or leader) was given into the custody of the 'lake' and its priestesses until the next worthy hero (leader or chieftain) arose, a concept that echoes the myth of 'Excalibur'.]

His closing comment being that *despite the romantic image of these Ladies, their diaphanous garb, we must not forget the Darkness of The Lady of the Lake – there are after all some pretty amazing 'kick ass' fairies.*

This report can merely hope to capture the enchantment of this presentation and the speakers performance.

**Alan Jones**



## Poetry of the moment

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This year's conference had a guest bard. We were joined by Thom Boulton (A.K.A Blaidh Nemorlith) the Poet Laureate for the City of Plymouth. He used this year's talks to inspire a set of poems, which we have been fortunate to reproduce below.

### Let's Go A Charmin'

Inspired by Graham King's *British Spells and Charms* talk.

When Debbie Reynolds sang,  
to Gene and O'Connor on the bed,  
after long night's work,  
the rain refrained from singing  
and a simple good morning  
changed their luck.

Gotta get me some of that magick.

When the Lusitania sank,  
no one had wished her a  
bon voyage,  
simply waved her off,  
full of chocolate bars  
for northern girls and  
plenty of chocolate soldiers  
ready to melt on  
the beaches of  
Northern France.

She loves me, blown out.  
She loves me not, inhaled.

Choke.

And if it lands on odd,  
get even,  
hurling silver tipped darts at a dartboard,  
covered by a skin, a picture of her face,  
better still,  
pop a poppet in your pocket  
and thread your anger deep.

Gotta get me some of that magick.

And transference  
still in play today  
with the blue blooded kind  
hammering bent nail into the floor,  
waiting for the poor to step over,  
take the fall,  
selling their warts to the forest refugees,  
groves of souls so desperate to be saved  
they'll take the blame in exchange for a  
bus ride or a shanty.

The tode stone,  
if true,  
will force the toad forward to you,

how we could all use a toad bone,  
to convince the climate change deniers,  
fracking fools,  
maybe they,  
if we plucked the thick fragment  
imbedded in their skulls,  
might suddenly start moving forward.

Bring me a Mars talisman,  
to cure these sick animals,  
infested with the capitalism virus,  
the petrol potions causing intoxication,  
the lust for suffering,  
bring me a Mars talisman  
to end the conflict  
and bring peace to all.

Make an inflated bottom replica of  
the inflated bottom of Donald Trump,  
mass produce them,  
ship out via Hermes to  
Mexico City,  
somewhere to keep their pins  
when manufacturing, producing,  
all those novelty tourist shaped American flags.

Perhaps Thamson Levertory,  
a pint of hot piss,  
can drown all these problems,  
so let's go a charmin'  
let's go a charmin'  
grab your tallys, trinkets and totes,  
let's go a charming'  
off we go a charmin'  
muttering along, all framed by motes.

### Post Muirum

Inspired by Prudence Jones' *Pagan astrology* talk.

A think tank of omens  
gathered on the horizon.

Orion lent a quiver to Ishtar,  
a new arrow tip to divine with  
and Betelgeuse, acting the magick ointment.

The writing's on the wall,  
its first draft sleeps in the entrails,  
but whichever version you read,  
all things act as a portent.

Weather gods,  
sky chiefs,  
fortified their positions,  
said it looked like a snowstorm  
but refused to  
inform where to buy

shovels or  
rock salt.

The fates have been condemning the certainty,  
East was victory,  
the battle was fought in the West.

Romulus was the favourite child,  
he got the right number of eagles.  
Remus demanded a recount

but the Empire was already hanging up  
'under construction' signs and  
'coming soon'.

They buried fruits from all their different countries,  
the gathered 28 stars of the blue sky,  
chucked into a pit,  
and spit on.

Jupiter turns its face,  
Fenris growls in the Far East realm,  
and the goddess of victory sighs  
as she's forced to hand her dates over  
and remove her foot from the lion's back.

### Poor Old Horse

Inspired by **Kate and Corwen's** *Obby Oss rituals* talk.

Hold your fire retardant werewolf gloves,  
keep your prosthetics,  
give me a horse head to wake up next to,  
following the after party of the hearty lot.

Keep your excitement contained in your corset,  
Richard's Rocky Horror, a cult of shape shifters,  
dress me as a lion,  
give me a nose bleed from rock art,  
I want amalgamation in antlered crown form,  
watch my dance moves on the  
sticky nightclub floor,  
doing the 'Little Stag',  
everyone's sporting a tremendous shamanic wood,  
exhilarating, censure me you horny devils.

I'm a straw bear,  
I'm a sea strand being ploughed by the  
traditions of  
our Celtic lands,  
climb the stilts with me,  
I'm a basket case in a basket head.

Disembowel me with your scissors Granny!  
Chop me up and send me to Canada,  
I hear Justin Bieber likes to dress up as Krampus,  
all part of the resurrection show,  
the biggest tour around,  
snaffle your copies of The Live Album,

conceal your body in it  
and inhabit  
the space between the space,  
where the dream world dances.

### Lady

Inspired by Roland Rotherham's *The Ladies of the Lake* talk.

Storytelling windows,  
shine patterns of the legend,  
cast down upon the floor,  
a lore more succulent  
and sustaining than a  
rustling pack of jelly babies.

In a ditch in the slabs,  
is a sacred puddle of water,  
dripped in from leaky roof,  
each drop makes a slapping sound  
like the clap of a midwife's hand  
smacking the cheeks.

From the puddle rises a lady,  
clutching a DVD box set of the BBC's version  
of Merlin.

She beckoned me to take a turn...

So we took a tour to the Lake Villages,  
camped out on top of Glastonbury Tor,  
drank so much Chalice water  
we got constipated on Pagan tales,  
held them in so tight  
with our iron enriched bodies,  
and oddly,  
we still keep them close within us today.

### Thom Boulton

A.K.A BLAIDH NEMORLITH

Poet Laureate for the City of Plymouth

website: <http://blaidhstales.weebly.com/>

face book: <https://www.facebook.com/BlaidhNemorlith>

twitter: <https://twitter.com/GreenBandDruid>



## Conference events

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The conference is also more than just the talks, great though they are. We are fortunate to have volunteers from the regions contribute their talents to the event, as well as local 'pagan' craft persons, authors, publishers and artists on hand, and of course, musicians.

### Charity raffle and 'Elephant' stall

This year we decided to look at the wider environment for inspiration and support a marine conservation initiative, especially with the latest concerns re plastics in the sea and soon the food chain. The raffle raised £400 for the Wembury Marine Centre (South Devon) (<http://www.wemburymarinecentre.org>), which runs educational events for schools, and rocky shore rambles for everyone, as part of the local Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (administered by Devon Wildlife Trust). Thanks for your generous support. Thanks are also due to the fabulous people who generously donated to and bought items from the 5th Elephant stall.

### Closing ritual

This year's closing ritual was devised and performed by the 'Elm Tree' moot (Redruth). The ritual brought the main section of the conference to end with a colourful display of the powers and gifts of the elements and season.

### Circle dance

And 'tis now the tradition' Merv Davey gathered all the rested and attuned souls from the closing ritual and called them to 'dance' once more around the space and Penstowe



**Saturday night music**

'And there's more', the more hardy amongst you enjoyed the delights of local musicians late into the evening, with 'Kate & Corwen' and 'Damh the Bard', back by popular demand.



### Friday night 'preparations'

But let us not forget the 'preparatory' celebrations on the Friday night before the conference.

The annual **Friday nights 'fiendish' quiz** was won by the 'We've Got A Hot Tub' after a 'tie breaker' with 'Billington Beauties'



Friday nights entertainment in the bar continued into the night thanks to the dulcet and folkish tones of **Arthur Billington**



Forthcoming events

# Devon and Cornwall Pagan Federation Lammas Picnic

Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2017 from 2pm

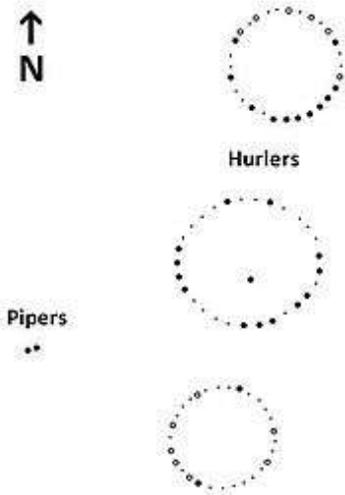


Join us for the seventh Annual  
**Lughnasadh Games!**

Games include the **Welly Boot Hurl**,  
**Discus Challenge**, **Skilful Quoits**,  
& **Creative Crafts**.

(Creative Craft skill points can be  
won by entering  
a Corn Dolly, a Lammas loaf,  
a Lammas poem/song or by making  
us laugh!)

Join us as we  
Honour the Champion of the  
Goddess  
& Celebrate the Lammas Harvest.



Families and well-behaved dogs welcome! Bring food to share and leave no trace.  
FFI: [dcf.devon@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dcf.devon@paganfederation.co.uk)

Meet at the Hurlers SX258 713. Good access, good parking.  
The Hurlers are sited at Minions village, the nearest town is Liskeard, Cornwall.

The Hurlers are a scheduled monument on Minions Moor. They date to the later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age (4100-3500 Before Present). According to English Heritage, the central circle is aligned with a processional way that runs from a stone circle on Craddock Moor. This crosses at right angles a second pathway that runs along the chief alignment of the Hurlers to a Neolithic enclosure on Stowe's Hill.



## Museum of Witchcraft and Magic (MWM)

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For further detail and booking of these and other events check out the MWM Events page <http://museumofwitchcraftandmagic.co.uk/event/>

### Other events

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**Devon Pagan Communities – coming events** . Moots are held weekly and if not listed are social moots.

4 April. Metal: the links between paganism and industry -- a talk by Joe Towler; “from the taming of fire, the magic of the first metallurgists to the Industrial Revolution”.

11 April. Aromatherapy. A talk by professional Aromatherapist and member of our group, Fay Lacey, explaining the basics of Aromatherapy; how it works and what it can do for you. Learn how to manage stress, improve health and generally make your life better in a wholly natural way.

25 April. “Intro to Paganism”. The first in a series of short introductory talks for those relatively new to Paganism. An introduction to the basic tenets of Pagan beliefs, and overview of some of the different Paths, the Sabbats, the Craft and related topics. Followed by discussion -- please feel free to talk about your own Path and beliefs or ask questions.

2 May. Beltane Open Ritual: It is Beltane! Come along and celebrate with us!

9 May. Intro to Ritual Working: The second in a series of introductory talks for those relatively new to Paganism: an introduction to Ritual Magic, beginning with Protection and Earthing (with a practical workshop to teach you how to do it!), then moving on to cover Sabbat rituals, tools and equipment, and briefly touching on more advanced types of Magic. Those at a more advanced level are very welcome to come along too and contribute their experience.

23 May. Pagan Clay Making II: Following our very successful Clay Making Moot last October, we are doing another one! Make yourself anything you like, from candle-holders to altar ornaments, Goddess figurines, wands, Green Men or whatever takes your fancy. All tools and materials provided, no previous experience necessary -- two experienced ceramicists are on hand to help.

30 May. Moon Magic Workshop. If you use Moon Magic, please come and talk about your practice; if you would like to learn about Moon Magic please come along! And find out which tradition treats the Moon as a masculine, not feminine, entity... and why (and how) this does not change the fact that it operates with feminine energy(!)... no, I'm not going to spoil the surprise, you'll have to come to the workshop

6 Jun. Aura Reading Workshop: By popular demand, a repeat of the very successful Aura Reading Workshop that we held last year. Even if you came to the last one, do come along again -- we'll be doing some more advanced work including an introduction to the use of Aura work in healing for those who are ready to progress.

20 June. Litha Open Ritual: It's Midsummer's Eve -- Litha! Come along to our Open Ritual and celebrate with us!

27 June. Magical Music III: Another Magical Music Moot, with even more instruments than before. Whether or not you have any musical experience, come along and enjoy chanting, drumming, twanging, bonging or simply trancing out. And maybe even find out if there's any truth to the rumour that Natalia and Heather can play the harp

**Natalie.**

**Druid Order of Tamaris** Regularly hold rituals on both sides of the border, some are family friendly. Their base is in Plymouth and can be contacted via their public Face book group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/42727913048>

## Moots

### Cornwall (Kernow)

#### Betwixt Moot (Redruth, Camborne, Truro, Falmouth)

Meets on the 1st & 3rd Mondays of the month. FFI contact Ann: 01872 863970

#### Bude Moot

Meets the 1st Tuesday of the month in the Conference Room at the Parkhouse Centre, Ergue Gaberic Way, Bude, EX23 8LD. Tea or coffee provided or vending machine. We ask for a £2 per person donation to cover room hire. Meet from 7 pm to start talks/ceremonies at 7.30 pm.

FFI Contact Lisa at [budemoot@lchambers.co.uk](mailto:budemoot@lchambers.co.uk) or [Debbie@specialdaysinspecialways.co.uk](mailto:Debbie@specialdaysinspecialways.co.uk)

#### The Dolmen Grove Ivy Moon Moot

Meets on the 1st Wed of every month, 7.30 pm, St Austell area. We hold talks, workshops, have outings and celebrate the Sabbats. Options to attend Camps, Larger Rituals, Stonehenge access & Samhain/Yule Ball. Friendly like-minded people, all spiritual paths welcome.

FFI contact: Karen tel: 077411 177 185

FB page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ivy-Moon-Group>

#### Falmouth Penryn Moot

Meets the third Thursday of the month at the Dracaena Centre in Falmouth at 7.30 pm. Contact Eve (RC Cornwall) for further details.

#### Fraddon Moot

First Tuesday of the month, 7.30 pm. Meets at the Blue Anchor Inn, Fraddon, just off the A30. Pagans (and seekers) of all paths very welcome. FFI contact Lou on: [fraddoncoven@hotmail.com](mailto:fraddoncoven@hotmail.com)

#### Liskeard Moot

Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 7 for 7.30 pm, The Long Room, The Public Hall, West Street, Liskeard PL14 6BW. FFI

FFI Contact Alli or Dave on 07840295635 or email [alli\\_99@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alli_99@hotmail.co.uk)

Facebook group: [www.facebook.com/groups/271716272934061](https://www.facebook.com/groups/271716272934061)

#### Ros Pagan (Pagan Wheel)

Camborne based Moot. Meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7.30 pm, at the Camborne Community Centre, (South Tce, TR14 8SU). Pagans of all paths – or those just interested in finding out more – very welcome. Meets for talks, discussions, rituals, and outings. We ask for a donation of £2 to help cover the cost of room hire. Refreshments provided. The Community Centre is close to bus and train links, has a large car park and full disabled access.

FFI contact Eve on [dci.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk) for more details.

#### Penwith Pagan Moot

Now holding four rituals a year and hoping to restart monthly meetings in 2016. FFI contact – Dave on [tarewaste@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tarewaste@yahoo.co.uk)

Website: [www.penwithpaganmoot.co.uk](http://www.penwithpaganmoot.co.uk)



## Devon (Dumnonia)

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### Devon Pagan Communities

A friendly and lively discussion, sharing and support network for Pagans from any and all paths in the Devon area. We hold weekly Moots at 7.30 pm every Tuesday at the Cowick Barton (Monks Room), Exeter. FFI please either check the DPC Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1691622644418864/> or contact [natalie@dawnmist.org](mailto:natalie@dawnmist.org).

### Plymouth Pagan Moot

Held on the second Saturday every month, aims to get back to nature and to have fun. Family orientated so children welcome, as is any one from any spiritual path. Moots will be held outside when the weather permits.

FFI email [Spanish.chick@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Spanish.chick@hotmail.co.uk) Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1600854500172058/>

### South West Devon Moot

Meets in the Stoke area of Plymouth, held on 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm. We are a friendly moot run in a private house in the Stoke area of Plymouth.

FFI contact Patrick on 07964565338 or 01752 338292 (evenings) email [pdq.mears@virgin.net](mailto:pdq.mears@virgin.net) or find us on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/paganfedplymouth/>

### Taw and Torridge Moot.

Meets 3rd Monday of every month at Torridge Arms, Torrington EX38 8BX. 7.30 pm for 8 pm start. Open to all paths. Please be aware landlady knows it as a Folklore and Antiquarian group. A copy of Pagan Dawn will be on the table. FFI Minerva on [oldcrone24@gmail.com](mailto:oldcrone24@gmail.com)

### Teignbridge Pagans

Meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Old Rydon Inn, Kingsteignton, 7.30 pm.

FFI check out the Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/203242459794674/>

or email Elaine leiane@hotmail.co.uk

### Three Moors Pagan Moot

Three Fold Pagans meets every 3rd Thursday of the month, at The Highwayman's Inn, Sourton, nr Okehampton, all are welcome. FFI please call Shadowlea on 01837 659656

<https://www.facebook.com/Okehamptongathering>

### Torbay/South Devon Pagan Moot

The Torbay Moot group is a long established eclectic group of like minded pagan people. We meet at The Noah's Ark pub on Totnes Road Paignton on the first Thursday of the month, from 7.30 pm. We meet for open celebration, study and and have an invite only women's moon group. Please feel free to contact myself Tania on 07812724213 or Roni on 01803 665599 or

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/370597919466/>

### Totnes Moot

Meets on the last Wednesday of the month, at Birdwood House, Totnes. 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

FFI Facebook [https://m.facebook.com/groups/members/search/?group\\_id=1514258918890054](https://m.facebook.com/groups/members/search/?group_id=1514258918890054)

### Swan Shield Moot

is on hold for the time being. Hoping to start up in the next few months at a new venue.

FFI [mirealms@gmail.com](mailto:mirealms@gmail.com) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1136136679770200/>



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**Temple of the Sun and Moon:** Contact us for bespoke Celebrations of Life and Rites of Passage, Oracular Consultation, Shamanic and Magical practices. Michele and Harvey, [templesunmoonoracle@gmail.com](mailto:templesunmoonoracle@gmail.com).

### Counselling

**Tamar Counselling.** Help and support with many of life's problems from a counsellor with a pagan perspective. Based in Bude/Holsworthy. Contact Steve Merritt on 07855 998890, email me via website, [www.tamarcounselling.co.uk](http://www.tamarcounselling.co.uk) where you can find further information.

### Retail

**Mystical Crafts & Gifts** - A great selection of pagan & wiccan items including essentials and an exciting choice of gifts including lots of fair trade items.

For a friendly service please visit [www.pagan-supplies.com](http://www.pagan-supplies.com)

**Wise Old Crow, Bude,** Cornwall for all things wicca, pagan and esoteric

[www.facebook.com/wiseoldcrow](http://www.facebook.com/wiseoldcrow) . Sue Clarke [www.sueclarkereadings.co.uk](http://www.sueclarkereadings.co.uk) [www.wiseoldcrow.com](http://www.wiseoldcrow.com)

### Museum of Witchcraft and Magic

Details of opening times, online shop and other interesting info can be found on the Museum website.

[www.museumofwitchcraft.com](http://www.museumofwitchcraft.com)

The Harbour, Boscastle, Cornwall PL35 OHD Tel: 01840 250111

### Cornwall School of Mystery and Magick

The latest newsletter from the Cornish School of Mystery and Magick

(<http://cornwallschoolofmysteries.co.uk/>) lists current activities and future events. It can be downloaded here

<https://gallery.mailchimp.com/8b4deb991eb99baf86ccce211/files/57fbca43-c6aa-457a-8fad-e04a87455325/SpringEquinox2017.pdf>



## Who is who locally

### Pagan Federation Devon, Cornwall & Isles

District Website	<a href="http://www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk">www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk</a>
District Enquiries	<a href="mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk">dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk</a>
District address for All Postal correspondence	PF DCI c/o, Torcroft, Commons Lane, Shaldon, TQ14 0HN.

### Your PF District Officers

#### District Manager:

Maia Miller: [dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk) 07747016220

#### Regional Co-ordinators:

Devon: Michele [dci.devon@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.devon@paganfederation.co.uk)  
Cornwall: Eve [dci.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk)  
Isles: Oak Leaf [dci.isles@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.isles@paganfederation.co.uk)

#### Newsletter Editor

Contact Harvey [DarkMirrorMagazine@gmail.com](mailto:DarkMirrorMagazine@gmail.com)

#### District Conference

Contact [dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk)

#### Interfaith officers

Contact [dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk)

#### District webmaster

Contact Charles [charles@cadgwith.com](mailto:charles@cadgwith.com) 0800 787 9208  
<http://www.cadgwith.com/>

National Website: [www.paganfed.org](http://www.paganfed.org)

Local Contacts are listed under 'Moots' (section above).



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Please visit the website <http://www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk>

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