

FRIENDS OF BRIDE'S MOUND



NEWSLETTER JAN 2011

INTRODUCTION

Somerset County Council are liaising with Friends of Bride's Mound, hence their leaflet being enclosed with our Newsletter and the renewal form for your Friendship fees for 2011 (please ignore this if you pay by standing order). Those of you who have visited the Mound recently will have noticed a big improvement. Meetings are being held with all interested parties present and some simple land management plans are afoot. Of course it all takes time and money, with the possibility of opening up the Mound and our land with permissible footpaths. Please visit the Mound and our land to enjoy it, and the birds and other wildlife it supports.

We thank you for your support, very much appreciated as we still have our bank loan to pay and wish you all a very Happy New Year.

LAND MANAGEMENT REPORT

This winter we started the hedge restoration along the Ridge (re-planting and laying) and will be continuing into March. Most of the cutting out of bramble and dead wood has been completed but there is still plenty of work to be done. We have been working along side British Trust of Conservation Volunteers and any one is welcome to join in. There is usually a bonfire and hot water for tea and each day starts at 10.00 am until we run out of light. You can join in at any time of day and leave when you like. Just turn up and muck in and bring good gloves and tools if you have them but don't worry if you don't. Up coming dates are; Friday 28th Jan, Friday 11th Feb, Friday 25th Feb, Friday 11th March, Wed 23rd March. If you want any further information you can e mail me; mirandabruce@hotmail.co.uk

Miranda Bruce

IMBOLC and A WALK WITH FRIENDS OF BRIDES MOUND On TUESDAY 1st FEBRUARY, 2011.

Friends of Bride's Mound will lead a walk, leaving the Chalice Well car park at 1pm through town and down to Bride's Mound for a ceremony, starting at the river and finishing on the Mound with a fire (in a dish) at 2pm. Bring food to share and dress to keep warm. Before that the White Spring opens its doors at 10am for their Imbolc ceremony. At 11.30 – 12 noon the Monks Gate on Well House Lane will be open to allow free entrance into Chalice Well Gardens. There is also free entrance into the Gardens from 10-12 using the main entrance. The Chalice Well Imbolc ceremony is at 12 noon and refreshments will be available to buy there before the walk to Bride's Mound.

Unit 7 Abbey Mews, 56 High Street, Glastonbury, BA6 9DY

THE SWAN

Swans feature in different mythologies and are one of Bridget's totems. This association of Bridget with the swan is shown in an old Gaelic poem called 'Carmina Gadelica' according to Robert Graves writing in "The White Goddess". This takes the form of a dialogue between Bridget and Her son:

"Bride speaks:
'Black the town yonder,
Black those that are in it,
I am the White Swan,
Queen of them all.'"

Bridget is connected with alchemy and spiritual alchemy – a process of transformation in which either the search is for base metal to be changed into gold or spiritual gold is sought within. Gold on any level is related to the Sun and the swan is a solar symbol linking with Bridget as a Solar Deity and as Keeper of the eternal Sacred Flame. Alchemists regard the swan as a symbol of Mercury as the bird is associated with shifting elements. The Myth of the Children of Lir and Hans Christian Anderson's 'The Ugly Duckling' tell of the process of transformation.

Glastonbury is regarded as a place of transformation and swans can be seen on the watery moors and levels, especially in winter when they flood.

Bridget is regarded as midwife to souls of the newly born and also to souls dying, both are times of transition. A painting by John Duncan shows St. Bridget being transported across the sea by angels to be the foster mother of Christ. Swans are said to symbolise the soul with their beauty and grace. A swan sings its beautiful, haunting song before death – the swan song.

The swan, like Bridget who forms a bridge between the pagan and Christian worlds as Goddess and Saint, the higher and lower realms, inner and outer worlds, cross boundaries as they fly in the air where the inspiration to write poetry originates, swim in the waters and nest on the earth just as Bridget is a Goddess of Poetry, wells and the hearth fire – the heart of every home.

Swans are associated with the British monarchy and laws exist to protect swans in certain areas as they are the property of the reigning monarch which is very apt for a totem of Bridget as tutelary Goddess of Britain.

In the starry heavens, the constellation of Cygnus, the heavenly swan, can be seen flying from the North Pole along the Milky Way which is visible in the northern hemisphere culminating in July.

Jane Marshall

AGM on TUESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2011.

Please arrive at 7pm to begin at 7.15pm. There will be drinks and snacks available and time to chat before we need to leave at 9.30pm. At this meeting we will be voting in the members of the committee, so if you are interested in the internal workings of Friends of Bride's Mound, do come along.



Many thanks to Lesley for her beautiful pictures of swans.