



Newsletter January 2021

FRIENDS OF BRIDE'S MOUND

C/O Glastonbury Opportunities, Unit 7 Abbey Mews, BA6 9DY.

Email: friendsofbridesnew@yahoo.co.uk

Dear Friends,

We continue to hope you are all well and safe during these difficult times. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we are delighted to share our news from Glastonbury, and send you all our very warmest wishes.

IMBOLC –1st February, 2021

The Friends of Brides Mound are not able to invite you to join us for the day, traditionally known as Imbolc, the feast day of St. Brigid.

The Chalice well will not be holding it's normal celebrations because of the pandemic and we cannot hold an official gathering at Brides Mound under the restrictions here in the UK.

However Serena Roney-Dougal will walk to Bride's Mound; starting outside the White Spring, where the White and the Red springs join, aiming to arrive at Brides Mound by around 2.00pm. You can join in spirit from wherever you may be. I look forward to feeling your beautiful energy surrounding me on this special day.

Wishing you all a very happy and safe Imbolc.

Serena Roney-Dougal

Friendships

We warmly invite you to renew your membership of Friends of Bride's Mound now (if you don't already pay your contribution with a standing order). To renew your membership via Paypal, or to download a membership form to renew by post, please visit our website here:

<https://www.friendsofbridesmound.com/friends.html>

If you set up a new standing order can you please e-mail us on friendsofbridesnew@yahoo.co.uk so that we know your details and can send you newsletters.

Your membership fees are a vital resource in our work to care for, and protect the land we purchased 15 years ago, when this precious and special site was threatened with industrial development. Back then the land cost us £82,000, and since then, thanks to your support, the loan has been reduced to under £20,000, a significant achievement! Of course, our aim is to pay the entire loan off, and to do this we count on your continued support.

Joanne Mudhar

Town Deal Fund Brides Mound Educational Visitor Centre

During the past year we have applied for government money that is being offered to Glastonbury called the Town Deal Fund. We have asked for £555,000 to build an eco centre with sedum roof, solar panels, ground source heat pump, to house a café, shop, toilets and display area. There will be disabled parking spaces and an enhanced access to the Chapel field with its orchard and the archaeological remain on the hill. We are collaborating with South West Heritage Trust who manage the Chapel field and also with Somerset Wildlife Trust who are proposing a wildlife corridor from Beckery to their Nature Reserve on Shapwick Heath. This will run along the northern side of Brides Mound through the Friends fields and out onto the moors.

South West Heritage Trust are proposing to create disabled access through the orchard and up to the chapel site. They are planning on marking out the plans of the three buildings on the ground, as well as creating a garden area. Interestingly the access path and garden area were part of the original vision of the Friends when we first started, and Natasha made some excellent landscape architect drawings of this vision which were used to help protect the land from the proposed Lorry park development.

Glastonbury has, from the era of the Abbey and probably for many millenia, been a place of pilgrimage. Tourists and pilgrims are the life blood of the town. By creating this centre we will hopefully enhance peoples' experience of Brides Mound by giving them all the information about the archaeological finds and the myths and legends of this sacred hill. Brides Mound is also an ancient gateway to Avalon, as the place where it meets the river is a natural ford and on the other side of the river are Bronze Age trackways leading from Sharpham. Therefore, the Wildlife Trust vision of linking Beckery with the nature reserves is very much in keeping with the spirit of this land. The Wildlife Trust are also planning on having a centre for people to hire bikes to get out into the wildlife reserves thus reducing the use of cars. Another of the Town Deal proposals is for a Park and Ride with an electric bus serving visitors to get to the town and hopefully also serving Brides Mound and other places in Beckery Village.

Our proposal has been accepted as part of the integral Town Plan, and will go before the Board in January. If the Board accept it then it goes to the government for their approval. With any luck we will know by April whether or not we can go ahead with these ideas. Keep your fingers crossed!

Serena Roney-Dougal

Land Management Report

We have continued progress with work on the land. The single bar gate has been installed to deter people from obstructing access by parking there. We have had very few problems with people camping on the land. This is due partly I think to maintaining a consistent presence through the year. The trees planted in the autumn 2019 had to be watered through the very hot and dry period in the late spring and early in the summer we cleared the prunings from the coppicing of the large willows on the Ridge and from other pruning jobs, creating some deadwood corners for wildlife and burning the rest. These jobs always give an opportunity to talk with people about the sacredness of the land and how many "friends" we have who value it. I believe it makes an impact on how the surrounding community view us.

The central hedge that we had laid a few years back has grown to full thickness this year and trees we have planted over the years are becoming more established. I'm aware that the pond is not very attractive when empty during dry periods. It really performs its job draining that end of the field so that when it does flood the water level on the grass retreats faster, so that the quality of the grass has improved there. This past year we have planted meadowsweet in the shallow end and transplanted bullrushes into the deep end and the natural yellow iris, transplanted a few years back is really multiplying. So hopefully the appearance of the pond when the water level is low, will improve through the years.

We have twice had nettles harvested for leaf protein demonstrations at Bride's Yard and there will be more demonstrations to come, if you are interested.

Lately the avenue of cherry and rowan have been cleared of weeds and mulched. Most are thriving, a couple not. We may need to replace one next year. I think the rowan need more shelter from the wind so that's a lesson learnt. Normally we plant a tree on Imbolc. This year we plan to plant dog-rose and field rose so I'm planning to do that on Imbolc in the briar patch opposite the kissing gate. It was tidied back earlier in the year so a perfect opportunity to plant there.

Jobs still to do; There are some fallen willow in the first field (coal yard entrance) that need cutting back. The kissing gate joining our land at the back of the mound, always need clearing for access and sometimes repairs. Clearing weeds from around the bench and the well marker stone are jobs repeated through the year. Anyone interested in helping can contact me; mirandabruce@hotmail.co.uk

All are welcome to walk on the land but if you have a dog can you please pick up and mess, especially on the track. Thank you for all your support.

Miranda Bruce

Some lovely items donated in support of the Friends

In addition to the generous donations we receive from our friends and benefactors we also raise funds through the sale of a few items generously donated. These include:

- Ivan McBeth's booklet 'The Swan Circle' in which he tells the story of the birth of a new stone circle at Worthy Farm, Pilton.
- Jon Cousin's booklet 'Remember Richard Whiting' in which he documents his attempt to unravel 3 well known Glastonbury mysteries.
- Anthea Mitchell's booklet 'The Glastonbury guide to Peace and Happiness' which is a workbook to create Self Esteem and for running courses.
- The Songs of Bride CD which is a compilation of songs from various artists celebrating Bride, Bridget and Imbolc.

Once the current restrictions have eased we hope to offer them via friendly retailers in Glastonbury.

Alison Scobie

The Friends of Brides Mound AGM

2021 cannot be held in public as of now. As we held last year's on June 3rd, and we are allowed to hold the next one up to one year and six weeks after the previous one, we may well be able to have an outdoor one sometime in the summer. We'll let you know when we decide what to do!

Serena Roney-Dougal

Forest Garden Project update

With great sadness we decided to delay further planning of the Forest Garden as organising volunteer days for planting trees over this Winter of 2020/2021 would have been impractical. However, we continue to plan, and hope to be able to invite people to help plant trees, the first layer of a forest garden, in Winter 2021/2022.

As a quick reminder, we are planning a permaculture forest garden on a part of the Friends's of Bride's Mound land, a good distance from the archaeological remains. A forest garden consists of several "layers" of food producing plants. Fruit and nut trees form the canopy layer, productive bushes grow between and beneath the trees, and the "forest floor" consists of self-seeding and perennial productive plants. Climbing plants rise through all these layers, providing yet another source of food.

Joanne Mudhar

