

Newsletter January 2022

FRIENDS OF BRIDE'S MOUND



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

Email: friendsofbridesnew@yahoo.co.uk

IMBOLC – Tuesday 1st February, 2022

The Friends of Brides Mound invite you to join us for the day, traditionally known as Imbolc, the feast day of St. Brigid.

1pm Walk to Bride's Mound with Serena Roney-Dougal;

meet outside the White Spring, where the White and the Red springs join.

Wear clothing and footwear suitable for wet and muddy conditions!

2.30pm Gathering around the fire on Bride's Mound.



Photo credit: Richard Mudhar

Everyone is very welcome to join us either for the whole walk or just for the gathering on Brides Mound.

Serena

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 (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 12 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 £12,000 a significant achievement! Of course, our aim is to pay the entire loan off, and to do this we count on your continued support. As a group of volunteers, we make very careful use of all funds raised, and our wonderful volunteer Land Manager Miranda Bruce secures government support for our significant environmental work on the land, as well as renting the land out for grazing, which not only maintains the special traditional quality of the land, but also brings in vital revenue. We also extend our sincere thanks to the stewards who volunteer each year at Glastonbury Festival (when it takes place!) to bring in vital financial support for the Friends of Bride's Mound. For information re stewarding contact Serena friendsofbridesnew@yahoo.co.uk

Joanne Mudhar

The Friends of Brides' Mound AGM



Photo credit: Richard Mudhar

Our AGM is on Tuesday 22nd March 2022 at 7.00pm at The Library of Avalon, Glastonbury Experience back courtyard, 2 – 4 High St. Glastonbury, BA6 9DU.

Followed by drinks and nibbles and general chat. Everyone is welcome.

Please do join us – Covid permitting!.

Serena

History of the Friends of Brides Mound (aka Bride's Hill) 1980 - 1996

My story starts in 1981 when I was first taken to Brides Mound. We went up the track that goes from the main road past the former Mapstone farm, which is now called Northover Manor House and owned by Parsons and has been turned into flats. At that time the track went on past what is now Bridey's Yard and up through what are now the Friends fields to the chapel site. Since then Parson has closed off the track.

It was love at first sight. I remember being told that it was called Brides Mound to distinguish it from Castle Mound at the other end of Beckery Island, which is now called The Mound and is where Keswick's Meat wholesalers are located, along with several other industrial units. This was a Romano-British site with later mediaeval castle building and was formerly known as Glastonbury Castle. It was destroyed in 1972 for industrial development. I may also have been told that it was called Brides Hill, and then confused it with the Mound and called it Brides Mound, so the incorrect name is my fault entirely and I think we should return it to its original name that it was known by since the 1500's. So I shall call it Brides Hill for the rest of this story.

On that first visit, I was introduced to the story about the hiding by John Goodchild in 1898 of the Blue Bowl, under a stone in a sluice pool where a ditch flowed out to the river, this being found by Kitty Tudor Pole, and Christine and Janet Allen in 1906. This was given by Wellesley Tudor Pole to Chalice Well in 1966, where it is now kept. I was later taken to Chalice Well where I was able to hold the Blue Bowl, which at that time was kept in a cupboard in the upper room of Little St. Michaels.

Then, in 1986, (if my memory is correct!), we started the Imbolc ceremonies. On Imbolc eve a woman would make a Bridey doll which was brought to Chalice Well at 10.00, and a circle of women would give gifts to the Bridey doll. The men would be creating a bed for Bridey in the Assembly Rooms, which is where we all met up in utterly memorable ceremonies in the evening, but this meant that the women had the day, and so I started to take people down to Brides Hill. One year, on a rainy day with a wind from the West, just two of us left Chalice Well to walk down, and were met by Sue with her child in a push chair, and the three of us walked to Brides Hill. Another time Tipi Jean was with us and, along with a horse and a dog and Jean playing her penny whistle, a whole crowd of us walked down. Another time Maya Love played her bagpipes all the way from Chalice Well to Brides Hill. One time there was a rather feisty horse grazing the field, which startled people rather, so I climbed over first, caught hold of its halter and spoke to it in stern horsey woman tones, which subdued it sufficiently to let the people pass on up. Fortunately there was a man with us this time who also understood horses, and who found a rope with which we were able to tether the horse and join the others on the Hill. When we had finished and were returning he and I went to free the horse and found it had managed to tangle itself in the wire fence, but fortunately was unhurt and we were able to set it free once again.

And one time, Sue Palmer recorded me telling her all about it for the Glastonbury Internet radio that she and Steven Clarke had recently started up. Up until then we had just been climbing over the barbed wire fence to get in, as the gate which is at the bottom of the Friends track, was padlocked. At this time it was still owned by Morlands and the sheepskin factory was in its last days. And this year Mr. Wilkey, who was manager for Morlands, had given us the key to the padlock so that we were officially and legally meeting on Brides Hill!! Hence the recording of a historic occasion. And since that time we have always had permission to hold Imbolc ceremonies on the Hill.

Doing this Imbolc walk every year meant that Brides Hill started to get known about. One day Tina Redpath, who was running the Goddess and Green Man shop in the Glastonbury Experience Courtyard, stopped me in the High Street to say that an Irish man had been in her shop complaining about the dreadful state of Brides Hill, and why were the women of Glastonbury not taking better care of it. That year, Mrs. Parson had her Jacobs sheep on the land and at least one of them had died. So Tina and I contacted several women and we all met in Tina's house, which at that time was in Magdalene St. We all decided that we need to do something and each of us took on a different task. Mine was to research the history of the chapel site, and so I joined the Antiquarian Society and bought Philip Rahtz book about his excavations of the chapel. This formed the basis of the article I wrote for the Avalon magazine in 1996.

And around the same time Jaine Raine had a meeting of women in the Bridget Chapel, which was in the Glastonbury Experience and is now the Library of Avalon. The Bridget chapel was the place that the women would all meet on Imbolc in the evening to prepare for the ceremony in the Assembly Rooms, so it was a very fitting place for me to talk about Brides Hill and the need to take care of it. One of the women there, Natasha Warner, was a landscape architect and she got enthused to the point that she did a series of landscape drawings showing the vision we had created during that meeting. This vision is still slowly being realised.

By this time Morlands had been sold to GF Holding Co. who had put plans into Mendip District Council (MDC) to turn the bottom end of the Brides Hill field into a lorry park. Mendip District Council were at that time developing their Local Plan and so it was really important that we protect the land from development. The other thing to come out of that meeting in the Bridget chapel was that of forming the Friends of Bride's Mound on 10th May 1996, as an Unincorporated Charitable Association, a legally recognized group that could present our objections to the development and ask for the land to be outside the development limit. At Imbolc earlier that year, 1996, I announced the planned formation of the Friends and asked women to sign up as founder members. Jaine Raine, Patti Howe, myself and Sue Barnet then created the cooperative constitution, opened up a bank account and the Friends were formed. We also organized a display in the Library which at that time was in Northload Street, which included the beautiful banner made by Annie rudder which used to hang in the Bridget Chapel.

Patti Howe, Janie Raine, myself and many other helpers then set to preparing all the documents we needed to present to the Inspector at the Mendip District Council Local Plan Public Inquiry, as well as starting an application to become a Charity. One sentence which hides hours, weeks and months of work!! We contacted Martin Palmer of the Sacred Land Project, and John Smith from that project came down to the meeting with the Inspector in June 2000. John Brunson, a Town Councillor and chair of the Conservation Society, also supported us at that meeting and the Inspector found in our favour – the land would be outside the development limit and protected!

Serena Roney-Dougal

Jane Marshall's Story

I visited Glastonbury for the first time in the early 1990's and am a person who reads about a place so knew I wanted to go to the Tor and to Bride's Mound, as it called to me.

Armed with Kathy Jones' "The Goddess in Glastonbury", which contains a small map of the area, I caught the bus to Pomparls Bridge, walked along the bank of the River Brue, coming to what is now the Friends land and Brides Mound. The views of Chalice Hill, the Tor, Wearyall Hill and the silence told me that this was a sacred place. – the Gateway to Avalon, the Mystical Heart of Glastonbury as I call this Area.

I continued to visit Glastonbury regularly as I wanted to move here and knew that Bride's Mound would be important in my life. I joined Friends of Bride's Mound and wrote a letter of support to the Public Inquiry in 2000. During these years I held Imbolc ceremonies in Sollesbury, Essex where I lived, always mentioning Bride's Mound and the need to protect that land.

In 2001 I and my husband Mick, moved to Glastonbury. I joined FOBM Committee soon becoming Secretary, as I knew I would, as this has happened with every organisation I have joined.

In 2004 I encouraged the Committee to purchase the land. I am not normally a rash person but knew it had to be done, though I also realised that it was not without risks. Shortly before the auction was due to take place, early one morning, I visited the land to get a feel of it and saw a wonderful sight – four hares boxing, very special and magical, a blessing. I have never seen this before or since.

Purchasing the land took the Friends to a new level, especially regarding finances. I helped Miranda with a car boot sale at Yeovil, Beth and Jaine with stalls at the Assembly Rooms and Marian Green's Quest Conference in Bristol.



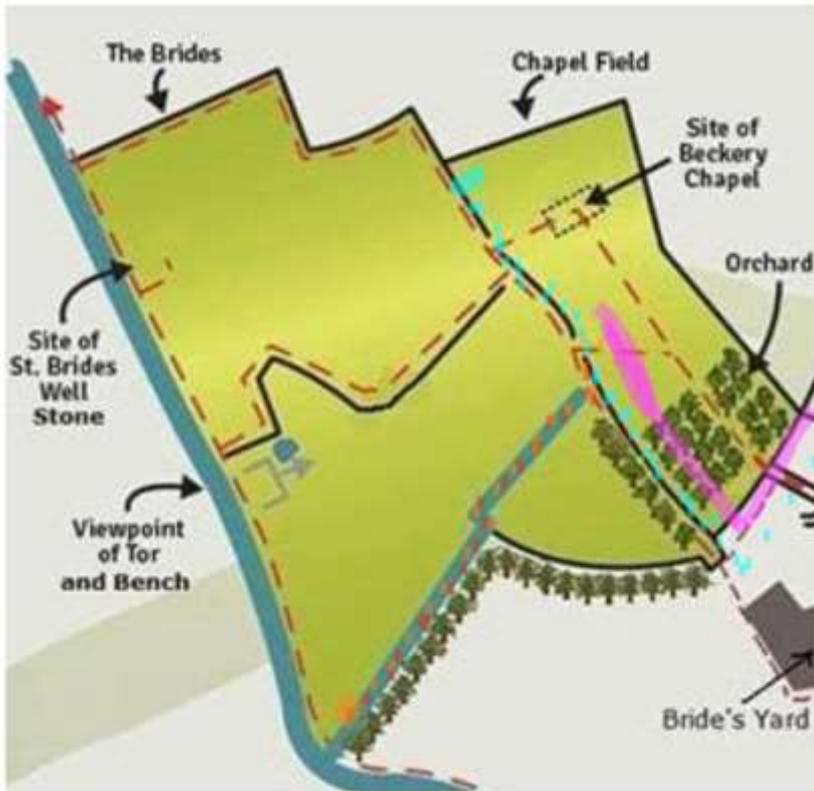
I am still a Director and will always take an interest but sadly rheumatoid arthritis stops me taking an active role now. I would like to thank all the Committee and Friends for helping to maintain our vision.

In these chaotic, changing times, more than ever, we need the contact with Nature in a natural setting and the wildlife the land supports as this feeds us on all levels – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Jane Marshall
(Director).

Land Management update

We had a productive days recently with the people who responded to our request for help to clear rubbish on Bride's Mound; If you are interested in volunteering when we have work to do on the land, please contact me mirandabruce@hotmail.co.uk



A warning for anyone who has not visited for some time, it is a rather devastating sight. Not helped by some severe trenches (highlighted in pink), that were dug by the County Council when people were moved off the site, to prevent vehicles from returning. We have been assured that these will be backfilled. In the meantime, the newly signposted entrance (orange highlight) from the bank of the River Brue, is no longer safe because of the trench. An alternative route and useable gate onto the Mound, is highlighted here in turquoise.

Now that we have the information sign on the top of the river bank, we would like to continue with work on

the hedge between our second field and the Mound so that there is a clear view of the Mound from that vantage point. Some work on that boundary was completed two years back and we have now two sizeable donations to go forwards with the entire project.

Miranda Bruce

Wildlife reserve plans for the Friends' Land

In previous newsletters we spoke about very early plans for a permaculture Forest Garden on a small part of the land owned by the Friends of Bride's Mound, and we'd like to thank the friends who contacted us in support of this project. Since this early exploration, for various reasons, we have decided to focus instead on developing the land as a nature reserve in partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust as part of our wider work with them, along with the South West Heritage Trust, on the Town Deal Fund Bride's Mound Educational Visitor Centre and related projects.