e S P I N

SCOTTISH PAGAN FEDERATION
E-MAGAZINE VOL.1

FINDING OUR WAY IN LOCKDOWN 2020

October 2020
Welcome to the first issue of eSPIN the Scottish Pagan Federation’s online magazine which has grown from the SPF SPIN Journal previously edited by Jen Connelly, whose efforts over the years are greatly respected and appreciated. eSPIN is the new environmentally and economically viable option reaching out to the Scottish Pagan Community. While SPIN remains within eSPIN as its roots, new shoots will emerge which I hope you will enjoy. As we are all repeatedly reminded, we are now in the “new norm”, where we must adapt and grow.

In the days when COVID19 first began to spread, people and communities were shaken in disbelief. We followed directed guidelines and listened to our leadership. We held fast in our homes as the waves of daily news, conflicting medical directives and “R numbers” rolled over us.

We were forced to navigate an unknown, uncontrollable stream of news and media flotsam casting us upon shores unknown.

Those were difficult days under silent skies for many of us and while we face a new spike, it’s time to reflect. This issue is dedicated to you; a window into how our Pagan community responded while nature took back and we watched while hopefully listening.

With all this in mind, let’s reflect on our resilience.

We asked the Scottish Pagan Community to share with us their thoughts and photos of those dark days and they responded in a communal voice; Lockdown 2020 from the Pagan Perspective. I hope you enjoy the pages that follow for whatever path we take, we are all part of a Pagan community facing the new norm...together.

I do apologise for the delay in sending this to you. We, the eSPIN team were busy weathering our own storms but I know you will understand.

Jules Kelly
EDITOR

Jules affectionately known as “the scythe” is a short-story writer, Solitary Celtic Hedgewitch, Camping & Foraging Pagan
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We had a Viking Music workshop and Pagan Folk music by Kate and Corwen. We had a Paganism, Witchcraft and Magic Film Festival brought to you by the amazing Darren Charles in conjunction with Folk Horror Revival. We even had a special guest speaker in the form of Children of Artemis’s very own Merlyn Hern! All put on for free!

I am pleased to report that the event was a great success! We had 5,645 views of our event Worldwide, not including our discussion sessions, while our magazine was read almost 2,000 times for both the online and downloaded editions apiece. Our event had some amazing feedback, especially on our mental health and well-being discussion sessions where we were told it was “the best I’ve ever been on, and I’ve been working for a health charity for over 20 years”. Not only that, but with the generosity of the community we were able to mitigate the financial loss we were on course to make, and allow us to donate £1,000 split between our two conference charities: The Andrew Guthrie Memorial Plaque, and the NHS Charities for all their hard work during this pandemic.

Well done to everyone involved! Thank you for your support.

Steffy is a Sumerian Polytheist, Leader, Facilitator, Teacher and beloved community beacon.
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I sat and invited the Goddesses and Gods to join me, to share this space, to spend time together. It was beautiful. The most special part, for me, was the connection we had, our unique relationship.

In person centred counselling the relationship is essential. The foundation of this relationship is the core conditions of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard. From this relationship a client can explore what is going on for them, developing new awareness, and here change can happen.

Being true to ourselves resonates strongly with me: both as a Pagan and as a counsellor. People have had different experiences over this time; some have continued to work, while others have been at home more and many have lost loved ones. Everyone has their own ways of processing what has happened. The emotions that we have felt, including complex or painful ones, are all valid. How can we look after ourselves, particularly emotionally, moving forward?

During the lockdown I spent time communing with the Goddesses and Gods. Taking time to create a special and sacred space for us to meet. Sweet incense, music, candles all added their magick.
This is an extremely brief outline of Person Centred theory. I notice a parallel here with Paganism. When we approach the Divine or Goddesses or Gods we can build a relationship based on the same principles. The Goddesses and Gods embrace us offering us, compassion, honesty and accepting all of us, even the parts of ourselves we may not like. Experiencing this relationship can lead to transformation or reclaiming our power.

Our relationship with the Divine is unique and so is our relationship with ourselves. We may use tools, incense or other ways to help us to connect, but at the core is our relationship with nature, Deities or the Divine. I feel there is another parallel here: we can each build a unique relationship with ourselves, honouring our needs and emotions.

How we do this will depend on ourselves. Writing lyrics or poetry may help you to express feelings. If dancing helps you to connect with your body, then dance! Finding our own ways to connect and build that relationship with ourselves, as we do with Deities or the Divine can help us to understand ourselves better. Perhaps one way we can build this relationship is to be curious about ourselves, noticing what resonates with us and what we need. 2020 has been a difficult year.

I believe that fostering the relationship with ourselves is similar to how we work with nature and the Goddesses and Gods, all of which will help us as we look forward. I would love to hear how you have experienced these months, what has helped you through this time? What do you feel you need moving forward? Please do contact by my contact details provided below.

Matt is a person centred counsellor and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Officer for the Scottish Pagan Federation and a warm-hearted soul. To get in touch with him email: PaganMentalHealth@gmail.com
Lockdown from the Pagan Perspective: Photo Essay - Part I

We Crafted, Baked and Cooked...
Near to where we live in West Mainland, Orkney, is Wasdale Loch which has a small crannog on it with some stone ruins (HY 343 148). A crannog is an artificial island, usually attached by a raised stone path, and the earliest ones date from the Bronze Age (about 4000 years ago). The stone ruins at Wasdale have not been accurately dated, they could be the remains of an Iron Age broch tower, although the most persistent local tradition states that the low walls are all that is left of an early medieval chapel. Similar multi-period sites such as this exist elsewhere in Orkney - St Tredwell's on the island of Papa Westray for example.

We don’t normally have an opportunity to visit Wasdale. Normally our summers are a hectic whirlwind of non-stop tourist guiding and Orkney’s dark winters are not the times when we want to go for a long walk along unmade up paths.

Lockdown changed all of this: we were no longer busy in summer, we were allowed to go for a walk once per day as long as it was no more than 500ms from our home, the crannog was accessible wholly by footpath. So we started to visit most days. In doing so, we built a relationship with the path and the place, the plants, the animals and birds and the non-human people. We picked up litter and we left offerings (usually home-baked goods). We noticed how the wildflowers changed with the seasons and the order in which they bloomed. We watched the hares box and counted their leverets. We were watched by a pair of ravens who raised four fledglings - they still ‘buzz’ us when we visit - they have become accustomed to ’tidying up’ our offerings.

We played ‘Pooh Sticks’ whenever we crossed over the burn.
We saw trout jumping for flies and an eel wriggle. Every day when we left, a cormorant passed overhead - as if it had been cued to do so. I have come to think of these others as brother-fish and sister-bird and mentally, I greet them as such.

We experienced the 'good' (butterflies) and the 'bad' (horse-flies) and recognised them as part of the whole. We mourned at the carcasses sometimes found and the little flurries of feathers that screamed of a sudden ending.

Being archaeologists, we discovered parish boundaries showing up as crop marks in the barley. We found three of the Harray-Firth boundary stones and investigated the old workings for the weir - now broken, so only rainfall determines the level of the loch waters. We found some WWII foundations, which led to an appreciation of the topography and an understanding of how the valley would once have been perfect for positioning an anti-aircraft gun. This was a focused spatial adventure.

We took photos, and even some videos, and posted them on-line (FaceBook 'Spiritual Orkney') but I am kicking myself for not keeping a diary.

I did not cope well in lockdown because I felt so superfluous. I am still not dealing well, realising that a lot of change is still to come, and mourning that I may have to change career yet again and not at all confident that I have the energy to do that yet again.

Nevertheless, our daily walk was something I looked forward to and it helped by putting things into perspective.

Helen is a published author, archaeologist, celebrant, tour guide and warmly regarded as our cantankerous magpie.
Interview with
Damh the Bard

by Jules Kelly

Question: Damh, thanks for agreeing to be interviewed for eSPIN. It’s our first edition of the online magazine, by the way. I wonder if you could share with us, how you chose your name, Damh the Bard, and when you answered the call to your bardic and musical journey?

Answer: The name came to me before I recorded my first album back in the mid 90s. I was new to the Druid path, and was open to a Bardic/Magical name. I had first encountered Herne on the old Robin of Sherwood TV show and my feet took me into the woods to meet him in person. The deer, the Old Horned God, inspired me. The very thought of a Woodland Horned God was one of the things that drew me to the Path in the first place. I was in the OBOD Druid Grove run by Philip and Stephanie Carr-Gomm at the time and on one visit we got a preview of their Druid Animal Oracle, and as I perused the cards I saw the Stag card. Beneath the painting was the word ‘Damh’, pronounced ‘Darf’. My given name is Dave, and the card just spoke to me. It felt like it had given me my Bardic name, so I took Damh as my spelling of Dave, and of course within that word was also my connection and relationship with the Old Horned God.

Question: I have had a chance to enjoy some of your Lockdown Sessions. They have been a great boost. What kind of feedback have you had from the sessions?

Answer: It’s been quite overwhelming. When the lockdown happened and I saw every gig disappear over night I started to wonder how I could continue to play live without the festivals and shows. There was an online concert platform just starting and I did consider that, but I didn’t think people would buy tickets for an online show. It felt too soon. To me they could never replicate the energy of a live show in person.
Some years ago I played a few ‘House Concerts’ where I went to peoples’ homes and played to 10 or so people in a very intimate setting. They were great fun, and obviously a little less formal than the festival gigs, and some people really went to town and invited their friends around, had a BBQ, and when I played in gardens sometimes neighbours would hang out of their windows and sing along. They were great. So I wondered if I could at least replicate that. The Facebook Live gigs were thus billed as ‘House Concerts’. I would literally come to your homes via the internet and play a gig, just for you. The first show had 1400 people watching live. It utterly blew my mind. I could see people chatting in the comments area, saw hundreds of little hearts floating up the screen. It quickly occurred to me that it was maybe the first time many of those people had met up since the lockdown. What I thought would be intimate gigs gave the community the opportunity to meet up online with their friends. The response was so positive that I decided to play more.

It was important to me that these online gigs became a meeting place for people, as well as a time to just forget about the situation, join in community, share some space together, and be free, just for an hour or so. I thoroughly enjoy them too. It was weird at first, just walking upstairs in my home to play a concert, but I’m used to that now. The bit I didn’t like was pressing the ‘end broadcast’ button. After a live show I always go to the merch table to talk to people and give people a hug when they leave, but with these online shows I’m sitting there with hundreds of people one minute, then at the push of a button I’m alone again in my studio and go make a cuppa. It was odd. So I decided that after every show I would sit down and read all of the comments that people had posted during the gig – and there are thousands of them - but it just fills me up to read all of the joyous words people typed, and the ‘virtual’ singalongs they were having.

Bliss.

Question: Of all your songs, my personal favourite is Cauldron Born. It resonates deeply as I am sure it does with so many of your fans. Care to share some of your personal favourites from your repertoire Which resonates to your heart the most?
Answer: That’s always a hard question to answer. Songs are like children – they are born, you look after them as they grow, and then they sometimes go off and leave home, going on their own adventures. So it’s always hard to choose favourites. I love what people do with my songs. I’ve heard Antlered Crown and Standing Stone sung by a Pagan choir in an American church, I’ve heard the words of Sons and Daughters (of Robin Hood) being sung at anti-fracking protests, there are videos posted on YouTube of people covering songs. I love all of that.

Question: We are all coping with “life after normal” in the shadow of COVID19, do you have a personal reflection upon it to share in coping with our difficult times?

Answer: Early on in Lockdown there was one day when I really lost it. I got angry and lashed out, and realised I needed to reframe my relationship with what was going on. So I took Oscar for a walk and thought things through. I always try to live in the moment, but suddenly there was a real threat of death. I’m asthmatic and overweight which is not a good combination for Covid-19 survival. I decided on that walk that, if there really was a threat to my life, I was not going to spend what might be the last months or years of that life in fear, or being depressed. So I refused. I re-invested in my Spiritual Path and started my daily practice again, which had fallen to the wayside a little. I made a commitment to meditate every day for my mental health and try to live every moment to the full. That decision really helped, and I’m still living the same way. Who knows when or if what we were used to will return so for now it’s every day as it comes.

Question: Thank you, Damh for opening your home to us all during lockdown and letting us sit with you while you sang your heart out. I wonder what’s in the future for Damh the Bard and his creative cauldron?

Answer: I fully intend to continue the online live shows. It helps me, and I know it helps others stay connected and forget all of the shite for an hour or so. I’m starting to write new songs, and I’m also exploring the potential for an album of Sea Shanties – I’ve always had a deep love of the sea. Then there is the blog, and the monthly podcast, DruidCast, so there’s plenty of things to keep me occupied.
Lockdown from the Pagan Perspective: 
Photo Essay - Part II

Nature called to us...we watched her grow.
Lockdown from the Pagan Perspective: Photo Essay - Part III

Nature called to us...we watched in wonder...
Lockdown from the Pagan Perspective: Photo Essay - Part IV

We Lost a beloved and we gathered by Lughnasadh....
Lockdown from the Pagan Perspective: Photo Essay - Part V
Our Friends stood guard...
Andy Guthrie - the Passing of a Gentle Giant

By Jean Fowler
(edited by Jules Kelly)

A passerby might wonder how the Labyrinth at Dunure Castle was built but we within the Pagan Community, we know it was the work of a gentle giant known as Andy Guthrie. Born and bred in the village at Dunure, his family was one of the early settlers to the area. Andy enjoyed nature greatly in his life, so much so that as a boy his favourite subject at school was Nature Study. He and his father once rescued a turtle that had swum across the Atlantic; a rarity indeed. This same turtle was later placed in the Ayr Museum and Andy’s name in the Ayrshire Post. He met the love of his life and wife, Helen, and they had three children. Andy obtained his seaman’s license but showed he could turn his hand to many things throughout his career, including Tarot and crystal reading and gardening where his love of nature was allowed to manifest.

The Labyrinth near Dunure Castle was built as a labour of love in the hope that people might stop and reflect on the beauty of the place and the world around us and as a space for quiet contemplation for all. We sadly lost Andy in the spring of 2020 and will sorely miss this kind and gentle man but his legacy continues every time we walk the path he laid before us.

Andy was also a storyteller of tales of the Celtic Gods & Goddesses and as such a collection of his work is in the process of being published. Should you wish to inquire about purchasing a copy, please contact

https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1403112899/the-retelling-of-old-tales

Jean is a Priestess, author, public speaker and warmly regarded celebrant
Moots and Groups in Scotland
(please confirm with Organisers of Moots
due to COVID19 Guidelines as status may change)

NATIONAL

DRUIDS OF CALEDON
The Druids of Caledon meet to celebrate the festivals throughout the year at
Rouken Glen Country Park, for further details visit the events section on the
DruidsofCaledon Scotia Facebook page FFI
druidsofcaledon@hotmail.com

THE DRUID NETWORK
The Druid Network aims, through connecting individuals and groups
together, coordinating efforts and initiative, and actively interfacing with
public bodies and the media, to inform, inspire and facilitate Druidry as a
Religion. FFI druidnetwork.org

NORTH SCOTLAND

ABERDEEN MOOT
Currently meeting virtually only, please check Aberdeen Pagan Moot group
on Facebook for details of times etc. FFI annie4sky@aol.com

DUNDEE PAGAN COLLECTIVE
Now in its ninth year with an online Facebook group Dundee Pagan
Collective with meetings and events to follow. FFI Kymmy or Ilona via
lunawolf13@hotmail.co.uk or ilonaschwept@yahoo.co.uk

EAST SCOTLAND HEATHEN MOOT
Currently not meeting physically, though hoping to as soon as restrictions
permit. Heathens in East Scotland are encouraged to communicate via our
Facebook page East Scotland Wandering Heathen Moot – please request
membership saying where you are based in East Scotland. FFI Jenny via
jenny@wyrdswell.plus.com
HIGHLAND PAGAN OPEN CIRCLE
Informal, egalitarian group in the Highlands. Highland Open Circle Discussion on Facebook or domesticatedgoth@gmail.com

ORKNEY OPEN RITUALS & MOOT
For the foreseeable future all open rituals, moots and interfaith meetings in Orkney have been cancelled and each will be reviewed individually in line with guidance given by the Scottish Government. Updates will be posted on Orkney Pagans on Facebook or www.spiritualorkney.co.uk/open-rituals. Contact Helen or Mark info@spiritualorkney.com.

PERTH MOOT
Meets second Sunday of each month, Perth Subud Centre, 7 St Leonards Bank, Perth, PH2 8EB. FFI graeme.golding@gmail.com, 01738 842937 or Perth Pagan Moot FaceBook group.

SHETLAND PAGAN NETWORK
No longer meets, sadly, but happy to hear from, and will try to meet up with visiting Pagans. Hospital-visiting available and Pagans are welcome at local interfaith group events. FFI Karen 01950 431576 or text 0776 6224685.

ST ANDREWS PAGAN MOOT
Restarting in September on the last Monday of each month, from 8pm in the Friends Meeting House, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews KY16 9HL. Due to Covid 19 pandemic restrictions numbers are limited and contact details must be provided in advance. Check in advance on the FB group before each meeting. FFI standrewspaganmoot-owner@yahoo.groups.com or 07949 328022 or St Andrews Pagan Moot group on Facebook.

ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY PAGAN RELIGIONS SOCIETY
FFI kittymacpf@gmail.com

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND
BELTANE FIRE SOCIETY
For Samhuinn 2020, Beltane Fire Society will be maintaining Scottish Safety Regulations by working on creating performances, art and ritual during August-October 2020. The Samhuinn Digital performance will be posted online on the 31st October 2020. FFI festival@beltane.org or www.beltane.org
EDINBURGH MEADOW MOOT
Meets first Saturday of each month, time varies and currently in process of relocating, so please email or check FaceBook. FFI Jean via chariswitch@gmail.com, Pagans of Edinburgh on Facebook or https://sites.google.com/view/meadowmoot/home

EDINBURGH PAGAN MOOT
For the foreseeable future all walks and moots have been cancelled and each will be reviewed individually in line with guidance given by the Scottish Government. Updates will be posted monthly on Pagans of Edinburgh and Scottish Pagan Community on Facebook. FFI Keith via keithmerrymeet@gmail.com.

EDINBURGH ‘ÁES DÁNU – ACES OF ALL ARTS OF LIFE’ MOOT
Meets third Sunday of each month, 4:00-7:30pm, at Sofi’s Southside, 42-44 Buccleuch Street, Edinburgh, EH9 9LP. Introductory discussion topic, themes of enhancing life, plus meditative spiritual experience, followed by relaxing chat. FFI Geo via tuathadedanann@mail.co.uk

ELDER & GORSE DRUID GROVE (EDINBURGH)
New group in Edinburgh which meets to celebrate the wheel of the year, as well as host workshops and events for members. All meetings, including rituals, are currently being held online and plans for upcoming events will be reviewed in line with Scottish Government guidance. FFI Emily via elderandgorse@gmail.com or www.elderandgorse.org

FALKIRK AND FORTH VALLEY MOOT
Currently not meeting and awaiting Scottish government guidance on how to do so safely, however the Facebook page is still accepting new members and different discussions take place there. FFI Eliza via lizzieroberta@gmail.com or FaceBook https://www.facebook.com/groups/2341737432748894/

SCOTTISH BORDERS PAGAN MOOT
Thursday evenings, monthly, at Unit 1, Riverside Mills, Dunsdale Haugh Selkirk, opposite Oregan Timber Carpark. Different talks, occasional 'coffee social moots', and summer trips out and about. FFI and confirmation of date, time and subject for discussion, please request to be added to our Facebook page ScottishBorderspaganmoot or email auntylol@gmail.com
WEST LOTHIAN MOOT
Meets first Tuesday of each month at 7pm, at Just Sew, 57 East Main Street, West Calder, West Lothian. All paths welcome. A charge of £5.00 is made to cover hire and photocopying. FFI Esme 07443 944928 / westlothianmoot@yahoo.co.uk

SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND

AYR MOOT
Ayr Moot has now closed. Many thanks to Lennie Philip for her work with the moot over the years. A new Ayrshire Moot will be starting soon. Any queries in the meantime please contact Ayrshire.moot@aol.com

CLUTHA MOOT
Meets fourth Thursday of each month, 8pm until 10pm. Under COVID safety guidelines, the moot is currently held online on Zoom, details in the event section of Glasgow Pagans on Facebook. When we are able to meet in person again, we will be seeking a new venue. New members are very welcome. FFI Elaine via elayne1956@yahoo.co.uk or Bren via brenmacneil2019@gmail.com or Glasgow Pagans on Facebook

GLASGOW PAGAN COFFEE KLATCH
Meets monthly on a Sunday from February to June, dates to be confirmed and notifications will be provided. Held at the Tinderbox Cafe at 118 Ingram St., Glasgow between 2-4pm, but location may change on Sabbats. FFI Jules via julesk800@gmail.com (We are now meeting on FB Messenger and ZOOM bi-monthly meetings)

GLASGOW PAGANS
FFI www.glasgowpagans.org.uk or Glasgow Pagans Facebook group or email Bren via brenmacneil2019@gmail.com

PAISLEY WEAVERS MOOT
Meets third Wednesday of each month, from 8-10pm, in a small booth at the back of the Bull Inn, 7 New Street, Paisley, PA1 1XU. FFI join Facebook group or Jen / Steffy via TheWeaversMoot@gmail.com or 07878 016989.

SEASONAL FESTIVAL SOCIAL
Saturday nearest festival (Midsummer etc) from 12 noon, (in The Vault) The Counting House, 2 St Vincent Pl., Glasgow, G1 2DH. FFI Garry via oakdruid62@yahoo.com
SOUTH LANARKSHIRE MOOT
We have been quiet of late due to Covid-19. We are hoping to meet physically again soon. Moots will be at various locations, and dates, often at short notice, and mostly held out of doors. Details will be posted on South Lanarkshire Moot on FaceBook. FFI Scott via coldstorm93@googlemail.com or Thurzie via willowpixie65@gmail.com

WICCA WORKSHOPS
Interested in learning more about Gardnerian Witchcraft from a Wiccan High Priestess and High Priest? Introductory workshops for Glasgow & surrounding area. FFI Fee.Aquila@gmail.com

Meet the team
Who does what in the SPF

Elected Representatives

Presiding Officer
Steffy VonScott
po@scottishpf.org
von_scott@hotmail.com

Acting Deputy Presiding Officer
Helen Woodsford-Dean
orkneymagpie@googlemail.com

Elected Member
Lennie Philip
ayrpagans@gmail.com

Elected Member
VACANT

Appointed Officers

District Manager
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dm@scottishpf.org
von_scott@hotmail.com

Complaints Officer
Helen Woodsford-Dean
Complaints ONLY and STRICTLY in writing via PO Box 19624, BISHOPTON, PA7 9AD

Editor eSPIN
Jules Kelly
Julesk800@gmail.com

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### Community Support

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<td>Outreach Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Scotland</td>
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South Lanarkshire Local Organisers     TBC

Events

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Camp Organiser           Barbara James
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