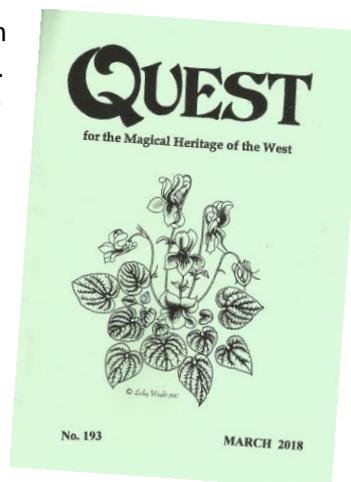


Getting together

We have just returned from the Devon and Cornwall Pagan Federation conference, feeling spiritually refreshed and recharged. This was the 20th anniversary of the conference, which we have attended for many years and I would go as far as to say it is our favourite event of the year. We were treated to five speakers, all well known in the Pagan world; names such as Julian Vayne, Penny Billington and Prof Ronald Hutton. I was also delighted that my first teacher Marian Green was scheduled to talk. I haven't seen Marian for many years and it was wonderful to reconnect with her. She is a renowned solitary witch, whose wonderful book *A Witch Alone*, I always recommend to those starting out on the Pagan path. I also took the opportunity to re-subscribe to her quarterly magazine, *Quest*. This is a feat of old 'cut and paste' technology; Marian chooses not to use computers! I read the current copy cover to cover and was delighted (and a little relieved) to find that it was reminiscent of the pagan publications of many years ago which provided the reader with thought provoking and well written articles. There were once a number of these publications, sometimes containing controversial material, in the days before everything went online or as in the case of the few remaining magazines, went 'glossy' and tried hard not to offend.



In one of the articles in *Quest*, I came across one describing the 'egregore'. An article by Harry Wendrich described how, at a gathering of magical people, he became aware of a presence enveloping them all. This was the egregore, something that is created by the 'group mind' which can become so strong that it almost exists as a separate entity. He describes this particular one as being masculine in nature, friendly and nurturing. The more I think back to the Cornwall conferences of past years, the more I realise that those of us there must have fallen under the influence of such an entity. This one, however, I would describe as strong and 'earthy,' redolent of the land of Cornwall itself. Its effect is restorative and renewing and lasts for some time after the event.

Conferences and gatherings are precious in the Pagan world. True some are more worthwhile than others, but the experience cannot be replicated by 'going on line' which so many of us do these days. Marian Green's conference in Bristol is now in its 51st year, and indeed, Marian probably began the conference tradition. I would advise anyone to attend such a gathering, given the chance. We have two upcoming events along those lines. The first is this Saturday 17th March at Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton. This is run by Ali and Matt Poole of Hawthorn Crafts and is a witches market which is free to enter. There will also be workshops, for which a small charge is made. The second is a conference run by Gary Nottingham, to be held at Montgomery Town Hall on 2nd June. Tickets cost £12 and speakers include Jake Stratton Kent on Greek Magical Papyri, Sian Humphries on Hecate and Gary Nottingham on Solomonic Grimoires. Further details of these events can be found on the Facebook group, Pagans in Mid Wales and Borders. Get along and 'feed your head'!

Should any of you wish to subscribe to *Quest* magazine, the cost is £10 per year (for four magazines, published quarterly). The contact details are *QUEST*, 80 Bishopsworth Road, Bristol. BS13 7JS UK. Cheques should be made payable to *QUEST*

Angela