

The Geomancy Group



Samhain weekend and AGM, Glastonbury 24-26 October 2003

Present: Grahame, Maria, Sally, Susie, Barry, Sig, Patrick, Karin, Sarah B, Brannie, Ros, Maryrose, Palden (cook).
Minutes taken by Grahame.

Although originally scheduled to begin on Friday 24, the official AGM was postponed until Saturday 25 due to people arriving at different times throughout the Friday.

Maria, Grahame, Patrick and Maryrose had energetically opened the weekend atop the Tor at approximately 00.30 – 01.30 on Friday morning with a declaration of intent and invoking of beneficial energies. Maria released her hold of the Group energy in order that other patterns might be free to emerge over the weekend. We left the summit just as Sirius was rising.

The circle was formally opened at 09.30 Saturday.

Sarah B called attention to the presence of an entity in the room. This led to a brief discussion of ethics as to whether we had permission to release entity. Eventually decided that we would have permission to banish anything from our working space for the time that we would be there, and the circle was formed again to reinforce this intention and set the parameters of our working space.

Maria gave a brief description of our Tor trip and her formal “laying aside” of the Group energy.

This was followed by a talking stick round where we caught up with what people had been up to since our last meeting.

Sig mentioned something that had come to him after a question asked during Grahame’s talk at the EEG meeting last weekend, which was the over-emphasis placed on detrimental earth energies by some people. This served as a reminder that a balanced viewpoint is important.

Maria mentioned that she had heard from Jamie, who is enjoying Portugal with his partner Sophia and her son, and voiced the possibility that we might see him at Imbolc. We may also be seeing more of Shaun, who has offered to facilitate an extra-curricular weekend for us in the Wye Valley around midsummer next year. This proposal was received fairly enthusiastically, with a desire to know more details.

Patrick mentioned the ‘Circles for Peace’ project in Vermont that he is involved with, alongside Ivan and other friends. This seems to be gaining support and a commission may follow soon. Patrick is also engaged in buying a house in Vermont at the moment.

Ros appraised the astrological situation for the weekend. Uranus in Pisces – the keywords were tolerance and individuality. We must each hold personal responsibility for our actions but still have support for others.

Maryrose voiced interest over those not attending the meeting; John, Paul, Sara, etc.

Karin said that she was currently redefining her spirituality following a period of ‘emptiness’. She also raised the issue of the Group’s attitude towards

substance usage, mentioning that she had been made to feel uncomfortable by an incident the previous day.

Sarah asked for people's opinions on some suspected geopathic stress in her house – a particular plant was not growing at all well. People promised to look at this during breaks.

She also raised a question over the need for the catering to be vegetarian, and asked if non-veggie options could be available. She also asked if it wouldn't be simpler to bring our own food. As it turned out, Grahame was the only vegetarian present this weekend. He stated that he had no problems if people wanted to eat meat, as long as it wasn't cooked in the same pan. He also pointed out that we had considered self-catering before, but we had felt that it caused too much disruption to the days with everyone competing for the kitchen at once, hence the decision to engage a caterer at our meetings.

'Sleeper' Members

Grahame addressed the issue by asking how we wanted to treat our "sleeper" members (those part of the core group but who have not kept up their subscription).

Sig asked for more discussion on what kind of group we were. Are there any other requirements for membership other than financial, for instance? This led to an interesting discussion on the nature of the group identity and membership policy.

Maria suggested that there should be an emphasis on someone's energetic commitment to the Group upon joining and not merely their financial contribution (subscription). Perhaps they have to write an article for the newsletter or facilitate a talk or workshop, for example.

There was some mention of focussing on who we are now and where we are going, but I didn't minute that well enough to remember it!

Barry said that one of the main reasons he wanted to join the Group was because Paul and Shaun were in it, and he would be sorry to see the Group lose them.

Patrick stated that he sees the Group identity as a magical meeting space of peers, and that he values the chance to have practical discussions of geomantic issues. He would like to see more of this, particularly discussions of case histories.

Sally: The Kinesiology Foundation has a process for lapsed members wishing to rejoin where they are allowed to participate in a restricted fashion for a probationary period. However, at the moment she thinks that anyone who has lapsed in the Group should be allowed to rejoin without handicaps.

Ros: People do come and go in groups. Some folk need groups for different lengths of time. The Geomancy Group is important as a support group and a forum for discussion. There is a lot of love and support within the Group. But if someone is not contributing subscriptions, their membership should lapse. Perhaps there should be a two-year period of grace for this?

Maryrose: People vote with their feet...there is no point in holding on to those who do not attend meetings or contribute in other ways – we should let them go. At the moment, the Group is not one promoting standards of professional practice, which is why she feels comfortable in it as she has no aspirations of

practicing. If any lapsed members want to re-join we can deal with it at that time; however the process should be easy.

Karin: Is also not a geomancer, but still values being part of the Group.

Sarah B, with surprising vehemence said that we should stop worrying about it and just let them go, but keep the door open for them to come back in if they want to.

Susie: Reinforced the value of the Group as a magical peer space, saying that she now looks forward to each weekend as she always learns something and spends some time processing events on a personal level afterwards. She is now very open to having new members join us, adding that the right people will be drawn to us if that is what the Group intention is.

Brannie: Agrees with Sarah that we should let the sleepers go. She is also open to having new people join the Group. Feels that commitment to the Group can be measured by attendance at weekends.

Sig agreed with this, but feels that membership should not be determined solely by subscription, but by some active commitment to the Group process, even if it is just an article for the newsletter.

Patrick: Suggests we adopt the Maple Dragon model whereby people who pay a subscription will at least get the newsletter.

Ros: Some people have personal problems with group environments and may be quite happy not attending meetings but would still like to get the newsletter.

CONSENSUS: There shall be a minimum membership requirement of payment of subscription, which will guarantee getting the newsletter. However, we shall press for a more active energetic commitment from everyone, even if just writing the occasional article for the newsletter. A letter to this effect should be drafted for sending to would-be members.

What is the Group identity? Where are we going? What do people want from our weekends?

It was felt that Patrick's definition of the Group identity is still valid. We are a "forum for the study, practice, discussion and promotion of geomancy and geomantic awareness", and our members encompass all levels of professional geomantic practice from zero to full.

Sig: We are a closed group that's open to new members.

(Sig requested permission for his daughter Jordan to attend our Imbolc meeting. This was unanimously given.)

Maryrose: The Group is like family. Inevitably, "stuff" always happens.

Grahame: The Group is perceived from outside as being a more organised body than it actually is. This leads to an increasing interest in joining the Group from other people. How can we control this inevitable expansion of the Group and incorporate people who may come from different backgrounds and how can we deal with the influx of these new individual egos?

Sig: The current level of admittance with two or three 'newbies' per year seems sufficient to maintain the core energy of the Group.

Patrick perceives that the Group is moving towards becoming a professional body, but feels that this is probably still a couple of years away at minimum. He sees that as the long-term trajectory for the Group. We need to ask ourselves: What does UK geomancy need over the next 5-10 years?

Sally: Felt that we could further explore Richard's suggestion at Lughnasadh that we could approach the National Trust and/or English Heritage with a view to generating geomancy work at their sites.

Ros mentions that there is a possibility of getting a commission to recreate a stone circle in Wales under the auspices of CADW and would like to see the Group involved in this. This suggestion was greeted with enthusiasm.

CONSENSUS: Generally felt that it is great to have guest speakers and further training in areas of interest. Would also like to have a regular session at weekends for Patrick's 'clearing-house' idea, where case studies are discussed.

Would also like to generate more project-oriented weekends, such as building Ros' stone circle. We need to look further into obtaining commissioned work for the Group, and work on developing a model we can apply to such professional transactions.

'Pending' members

Maryrose: Had heard from Ann Harris that she had enjoyed her weekend at Richards, and would like to attend another meeting at some point. Ann is a pharmacist and healer who utilises dowsing in her work. She is a member of the BSD Earth Energies Group. It is not clear whether Ann seeks membership of the Geomancy Group, or if she is happy coming along as an occasional guest.

Maria: On the issue where partners of members seek membership of the Group, would it be more appropriate if we had a rule requiring someone other than the partner to propose membership?

This led to a brief discussion on this topic.

Sarah & Brannie had been talking to an acupuncturist Matthew Kent, who had expressed interest in the Group. However, they haven't had any contact with him since.

Maria proposed that Jon Appleton be written to offering membership. Patrick seconded, and this met with general approval.

CONSENSUS: The general feeling was that, in Ann Harris' case, we would be happy to have her back as guest any time, but we should send her a letter asking her to clarify her intent towards the Group and what she would like from us; would she like to be considered for membership?

It was agreed that a similar letter be sent to Jon Appleton. It was also felt that an information pack for newbies would be a good idea as an attempt to get them up to speed with the Group's thinking and background.

Maria pointed out that we do tend to operate a lot in the 'oral tradition'.

Sig: Didn't this come up with Oliver? Maybe we could have a 'buddy' system where the sponsor is responsible for briefing and training the candidate?

Patrick joked that there could be specific training sessions for newbies on Saturday afternoons, whilst the rest of us wend windsurfing...

Sally: Maybe the person sponsoring membership becomes the 'buddy', but extra training could be shared out according to Group specialisations. This met with general approval.

Geomancy Group website and new member's portal

Barry talked at length about the new forum and 'web portal' site that he, Maria and Grahame have been playing with over the last couple of months. This is an attempt to find a new member's 'home' on the web since the demise of the Community Zero site. This new site is constructed from freeware 'modules' and can be configured however we like, with a wide variety of modules available for features like galleries, chat rooms and so forth.

Grahame pointed out some of the disadvantages of the modular freeware, such as lack of decent instructions and help files, non-intuitive text inputting etc.; and emphasised that it was still very rough around the edges, but that people were welcome to see what they made of it. One of the most functional areas is the forum, which is generally easy to use and reliable.

Question: Do we want to keep the main www.geomancygroup.org website, or move everything to the 'portal' site www.phpresource.org.uk/index.php?

Sig stated the desirability of keeping a simple HTML front page for public viewing and initial information, with a public forum or message board to provide some interaction with those seeking further information.

Maria asked how many people in the Group have referred people to the website? It seemed the majority of people there have done so.

CONSENSUS: keep the main public website but include link to the new portal if there was more publicly accessible information on that. Barry would try and provide a demonstration of the new portal on his laptop if we got time (we didn't). Main website to be looked at and updated as necessary (now done).

Brochure

Grahame had handed round a couple of copies of the proposed Group brochure in its latest form, with space for people to insert stickers with their own contact details. A quick poll revealed that at least six people would be interested in using the brochure. Grahame will investigate printing costs. It was generally felt that the picture of the Watcombe labyrinth should be changed to something else, as we are not currently clear about John's intentions towards the Group. (this has now been changed to a picture of Richard's circle).

Maria mentioned that she and Grahame had discussed the need for single-sheet flyers containing information on more specialist areas of geomancy that could be used as inserts to the brochure if needed. These could also be added as specialist pages on the website in the manner of Grahame's sacred geometry article. More energy needs to be spent on this area. We need more written stuff from people in the Group.

Ceremony

Maria raised the topic of ceremony and how everyone felt about it. Our original intention in trying to schedule ceremonies every weekend was to give people practice in designing and performing ceremony so that they would become more comfortable and familiar with it. However, over the last year our 'scheduled' ceremonies have generally not been enthusiastically received and have been energetically extremely variable with some very odd energies being raised. It seems clear that we do not have Group consensus on doing ceremony. Programmed events have in general been pretty disastrous, whereas spontaneous ceremonies such as Barry's initiation have been extremely successful.

Ros: Small groups can be more spontaneous in ceremony; larger group ceremonies are harder to control unless pre-focussed, and do require more planning and coordination. Beltane was a good example where no Group energy or intent was focussed beforehand. Uncertainty doesn't work – we need advance planning for ceremonies.

Sally: The Beltane ceremony seemed to be about individual intent, but perhaps this instruction had not filtered through to everyone involved. At Lughnasadh, things were effectively taken out of our hands and so people didn't feel comfortable or safe enough to do ceremony. People are not always ready to take individual control of such things, which is why we need to plan in advance. Barry's initiation was a great example of spontaneous ceremony.

Ros pointed out that Barry's ceremony had actually taken a fair bit of planning, citing Patrick's devastated Quaich as example.

Sally: Could we somehow develop our own style of ceremony? Something that would carry our own authority?

Ros: Ceremony is about power. One shouldn't mess with it in a casual fashion.

Susie: Ros's Mars ceremony as part of the school was a very powerful and scary ceremony.

Ros: That ceremony was about making a point.

Patrick suggested that perhaps instead of scheduling time for a ceremony during the weekend, we should schedule 'ceremony or celebration'. Either would be OK.

Sig said that the times of year that we meet tend to call for ceremony. Some animated discussion followed around this theme, mentioning Julie's comment at Lughnasadh that the new moon was not the best time to do ceremony (much to the surprise of Ros!).

Grahame suggests that perhaps we should have a floating core 'bubble group' whose task would be to outline and facilitate ceremony or celebration for upcoming meetings?

Palden: The key issue (astrologically) is to mark the moment. If there is an inability to program a proper ceremony, the simplest option is to choose silent communion to mark the moment.

Sarah B: Echoes Sig's comment about the importance of marking the Festivals in some way, either through ceremony or celebration. But ceremony does need to be led.

Sig: Who is to be bubble group for Imbolc ceremony (Ros' initiation)?

Eventually Patrick, Maria and Susie volunteered to take this on board.

Some discussion followed as to the nature of the Samhain celebration planned for that evening. A low-key celebration of the season was planned at which Grahame, as Lord of Misrule, would prepare a surprise traditional Scottish Halloween game!

Meeting adjourned at this point as Patrick was to lead a session on shamanic journeying.

Evening meal at GiGis restaurant followed by celebratory circle round fire in the garden and treacle-scone fishing, which proved suitably messy!

Sunday

Sig once again raised the issue of the Group's substance policy. This was an important subject, as many felt that a line had been crossed at Lughnasadh when certain infusions had been offered to the Group prior to the sweat lodge ceremony. Although there was absolutely no pressure involved, the very fact that this had been offered as a Group sacrament was a first. Some further animated discussion followed; it was generally felt that a 'not in my face' policy should be maintained.

Ethical Code

Maria suggested that we should revisit the Code of Ethics, originally penned by Sig and Patrick. Although there were one or two minor points needing readdressed, it was generally felt that this still stands as a model of good working practice.

Subscriptions

Maria: Subscription period will run from 31 October 2003 to 30 October 2004. Bearing in mind that we might have a smaller take up on renewals, perhaps we need to look at the level of subscription?

Grahame proposed that we maintain the current level of subscription at £30 until we see how things develop. **Sig** seconded.

Office bearers & constitution

Grahame: In view of the fact that our current treasurer John has neither attended this meeting nor indicated his intentions regarding the post (he has also taken his name, but not his address, from the building society passbook account), we need to elect a new treasurer. Proposed Susie. **Sally** seconded.

Grahame: We need to ascertain whether we need to be a constituted body in order to get a cheque account. It would be a large energetic shift for the Group if we have to adopt a formal constitution and would need further investigation.

Secretary – Sara has not indicated if she wishes to retain the post of Secretary. As this has not exactly been a demanding post previously, there

was some discussion as to whether we actually need a Secretary? This may again depend on requirements to obtain a proper bank account.

Sig asked if there was any reason why it couldn't be a Secretary/Treasurer? He then asked Maria to explain further about her pulling back from the Group on the Tor?

Maria explained that she had intended that only as a temporary measure to allow other Group dynamics to emerge this weekend, and that she was perfectly happy to hold the reins for another year if everyone wanted that.

Brannie enthusiastically endorsed this motion and proposed Maria for another term as Chair. **Sarah** seconded, and **Sig** supported this second! **Sig** proposed that Grahame be reappointed as Her Humble Assistant and Secretary. General approval.

Ros mentions that it is a good idea to have changes of officers after a period anyway to avoid burnout.

Schedule 2003 – 2004

The scheduled meeting dates for next year were agreed as:

Imbolc Jan 30 – 1 February.	Venue: “near London”
Beltane April 23-25.	Venue: Wales
Extra: Shaun's camp	Venue: Forest of Dean/Wye Valley
Lughnasadh July 23-25	Venue: ?
Samhain October 22-24 Extension: October 25-30	Venue: Aberdeenshire TBC the stone circles of Aberdeenshire!