

Minutes of Geomancy Group meeting 25/4/04

Venue: The Bunkhouse, Trecastle, Wales

Present: Maria Hayden, Grahame Gardner, Maryrose Price, Susie Shaw, Sally Smith, Sig Lonegren, Karin Lonegren, Patrick MacManaway, Ros Briagha, Barry Hoon, Jon Appleton, Ivan McBeth, Shaun Kirwan.

New members: Patrick's guest for the weekend, Shaun Kirwan, expressed his interest in formally joining the group, and as all Full Members present were very happy with his contribution to the weekend, he was welcomed into the probationary programme. His probationary period, like that of Jon Appleton, will run from Beltane 2004.

Old members: Maria reported that John Bullock had not renewed his subscription this year and had not indicated that he wishes to stay in contact with the Group. Grahame has exchanged one or two emails with him but again he gives no indication of wanting to remain as a member. John did send event details of a Watcombe labyrinth summer solstice celebration on Sunday 20 June at 12 noon.

Paul Barnett has renewed his subscription, but from talking to him at the EEG meeting in April, Grahame reported that he is happy to remain a member but does not feel he wants to come along to the weekends for various reasons.

Shaun Ogbourne: Although Grahame spoke to Shaun at the EEG weekend about his proposed Wye Valley outing in June, we have still not received any further details from Shaun about this, so it is difficult to see it happening in so far as it being a Geomancy Group event. Shaun has not renewed his subscription.

Samhain 2004, AGM + Aberdeenshire. Grahame is still trying to source a suitable venue for this one. The difficulty being that whilst some folk are happy to "rough it" slightly, others are clearly not, so finding something that suits everyone is a near impossible task. From a show of hands of those present and confirmations already received, it seems that we have around 12 people who are definitely coming, and of this there is a near-50% split between B&B/hotel accommodation and cheaper options like hostels. It may be that the best solution is to find a venue that will support the 'budget-conscious' attendees and serve as a meeting place, and let others make their own accommodation arrangements.

Sara asked if we could try and avoid scheduling the AGM during school half-term holidays (normally 18-30 October). Maria promised to consider this when looking at scheduling for next year.

Susie and Maria later realised that while they both have children on holiday at the same time, this works better than having weekends in term-time, so this is a difficult area.

Sig pointed out that he and Jon Appleton would be unable to attend events during the first week of November as The Labyrinth Society are moving their AGM to that period.

Lughnasadh, 2004. Approximate numbers interested in coming to this weekend were 9. Ros pointed out that the Saturday is her 50th birthday, so she would not be attending the weekend. The Group is, however, welcome to attend her party, which will take place at Mynyddcerrig. She suggested that we return to the Bunkhouse if it was still available, as everyone felt that it had been an ideal venue for the weekend and would be happy to return to Wales.

Later checks revealed that the Bunkhouse was still available, and so it was duly booked!

Eating Out: Sally instigated a discussion on the costs of eating out as a Group, and suggested that we should perhaps split the food and wine bills as she felt the shared total was disproportionate. Those people on limited income are not inclined to come and eat in restaurants due to this expense. Whilst many of us enjoy eating out as a Group as it allows interaction on a more social level, clearly this is not for all.

Support for those on low incomes: Maria called for ideas for supporting those members on limited income. One idea that Ros had suggested was that we could perhaps think about a scholarship programme that could fund one guest for a year.

Sara suggested that we should ensure that anyone who wants to should be able to attend at least two events per year.

This is fine in principle, but as the Group is entirely funded out of our own pockets, it remains an issue that is difficult to implement.

Sally suggested that a 'magic hat' fund is probably the simplest way of handling this sort of thing. The contributions will sort themselves out over the course of the year, and we shouldn't try and quantify it.

Jon suggested that we could perhaps support a bursary fund from optional extra contributions to subscriptions for those who felt they could afford it.

Sig proposed that we adopt this model for the moment, with optional donations on top of subscriptions to produce a bursary fund so that everyone who wants to do so can contribute and we are not reliant on just those who attend a weekend. This was accepted as consensus.

Website: Maria raised the issue of our payments for web hosting and support, currently £20/month composed of £5 hosting fee and £15 maintenance fee for 1 hour/month. Barry also has a free Group subscription, and usually attends weekends free of charge, in return for his services on the website. It is felt that the energy of this exchange is becoming somewhat imbalanced, and we need to look at the issue of what exactly we are paying for.

Sig pointed out that the real issue is not with the amount of work done on the site, but with originating the content of the site. If Barry is not given material to work with, then he cannot do any work. It was also suggested that we could perhaps look at posting selected items from past newsletters on the public site to increase content, in the manner of the EEG. *This is certainly worth looking into, although Grahame has already posted one or two articles on the portal site.*

Barry reported that he had been working on a new-look front end for the main website which looked very promising. Grahame had also seen this on Barry's machine and confirmed that it looked fantastic. Barry was also going to set up a basic page editor to make it easier to update information without having to rely on him. Grahame agreed to take on this role of site administrator.

This is now implemented at www.geomancygroup.org

The 'member's portal' site at <http://portal.geomancygroup.org> is now running pretty smoothly, although there appears to be a reluctance from members to actually post anything on it. Grahame again has been doing most of the administration on this and trying to keep it interesting by posting news articles and so forth. Although some sections of the site are visible to anyone who finds it, only registered members can post things on the site or in the forum. More people need to look at this and contribute items. If you are unable to log in or are not sure if you have been registered on the site at all, please contact Grahame.

Barry said that he will negotiate a reduced rate of £15/month for hosting and support, and that henceforth he will pay his own Group subscription charge and pay for his attendance at events as much as possible.

Ros said that payment in kind is a good energetic commitment in lieu of money for those on limited income, citing her own arrangement of providing astrology charts for the weekends as example. It was pointed out that this is what we do!

Ivan announced that he finally had a website, www.ivanmcbeth.com (very fine it is too!), and offered to put a link to the Geomancy Group site if we would return the favour. *Ivan's link is up on our website, however ours is not yet on his site!*

Maria: We need to decide what we are doing at Lughnasadh. Obviously much of the Saturday is going to be spent at Ros' party, but what theme should it be since Patrick and Ivan are not going to be there? Patrick suggested setting up a bubble group to sort this out. Jon offered to be part of this, suggesting that since it is the festival of Lugh something relating to fire and light would be a good idea. Clarity was not achieved on this point, and so the formation of the bubble group was deferred.

Sig suggested that it would be really good if people who hadn't previously organised something for the Group would take part in the process. Whilst there was general agreement on this point, the discussion did not really advance further. Many people expressed the view that they would enjoy the opportunity to have Sarah and/or Brannie lead some sessions; the same applies to Oli.

Unfortunately neither Sarah nor Brannie can make it along to the Lughnasadh Gathering and Oli is currently focussed elsewhere.

Susie confirmed that The Bunkhouse had been re-booked as our venue for Lughnasadh, weekend of July 23-25. Sara had asked if we could bring pets as she will have a new puppy, but this was not thought to be a good idea and was turned down by The Bunkhouse.

Camping is an option as there is plenty of space around the Bunkhouse, but regrettably they could not offer any discount on costs if people want to take advantage of this option.

Minutes by Grahame

27/10/2015