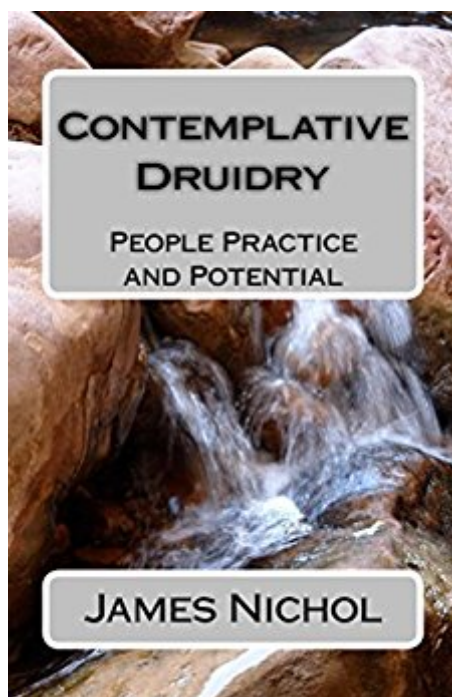


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Contemplative Druidry: People Practice And Potential



Synopsis

Contemplative Druidry is an evolving aspect of modern Druidry. Rather than talking in purely abstract terms, this book focuses first on the experience of people practicing contemplative Druidry now. Only then does it look at the bigger picture and draw conclusions for the developing spirituality of modern Druidry as a whole. 'Contemplative Druidry' takes the five months of March-July 2014, and offers a snapshot of how 15 practitioners of Druidry in England today understand and practice contemplative Druidry, and why they value it. Responding to a set of questions either in live interviews or through written responses, they describe both what contemplative Druidry means to them personally, and how they see it fitting in to the context of Druidry as a modern pagan spirituality. In this way 'Contemplative Druidry' acts as a contemplative inquiry, with many voices offering perspectives on contemplative Druidry, its place within Druidry as a whole, and its wider contribution to the development of modern spirituality, particularly within pagan traditions. The contributors, in alphabetical order of first names, are: David Popely, Elaine Knight, Eve Adams, JJ Middleway, Joanna Vander Hoeven, Julie Bond, Karen Webb, Katy Jordan, Mark Rosher, Nimue Brown, Penny Billington, Robert Kyle, Rosa Davis and Tom Brown. In his introduction, the author describes the experience which led him, already a practising Druid, onto a more contemplative path. He talks of how he turned outwards to his own community, as well as inwards to his personal practice, and brought together a group dedicated to developing a practice of contemplative Druidry in Gloucestershire, England. The book is in many respects a fruit of this work, and 11 of the 15 contributors are involved in the group. The other four are independently engaged with contemplative and meditative practice in Druidry, and agreed to be part of the book. The main section of the book is divided into three parts. The first is about the people involved - their childhood spirituality, their histories of questing for a spiritual practice and home that made sense, and their commitment to Druidry as an identity and set of values. The second is about practice - formal sitting meditations, ways of contemplative engagement with nature, forms of group practice, contemplative arts, and having a contemplative stance in every day life. The third is about potential - what the practice of contemplative Druidry can do for the individual and its benefits to the community as a whole. The book ends with a set of author's reflections and conclusions, including suggestions about how contemplative practices can become more widely adopted within the Druid community. There are eight appendices, which include models of group programmes and solo practices for contemplative Druidry, and also two threads from the Contemplative Druidry Facebook group, one about contemplation and mysticism and the other on pilgrimage. The book has a foreword by Philip Carr-Gomm, Chosen Chief of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, a significant contribution in its

own right under the title: 'Deep Peace of the Quiet Earth: the Nature Mysticism of Druidry'. The foreword endorses the view that contemplative Druidry is an idea whose time has come. 'Contemplative Druidry' is an introduction in that it raises awareness of contemplative practice in Druidry, and potentially in pagan spirituality more widely. It provides documentary recognition of the approach. And it sets a note of contemplative inquiry and exploration, rather than offering a fixed set of teachings that people are invited to assimilate in a top-down kind of way. The book is therefore of interest both to people with a personal interest in contemplative Druidry, and to those with a more general interest in the life and development of modern Druidry, pagan paths more widely, and evolutionary spirituality as a whole.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nichol interviews several contemplative Druids in a wide-ranging investigation of their spiritual origins, the current manifestations of their practice, their influences from outside of Druidry and their thoughts on the future of contemplative Druid path-working. The text includes sample meditations and retreats from the interviewees as well. Because the foundations of Druidry are fairly modern on the whole, and because the wider Pagan community remains so syncretic, books such as these

offer a valuable contribution to the cultivation of our spiritual heritage by thoughtfully collecting and presenting the wisdom of our fellow practitioners. Nichol accomplishes this expertly, and his work fills a much-needed niche in our modern canon.

This is an excellent book, and long overdue in the field of pagan spirituality. The absence of a genuine "mystic" tradition in the resurgence of pagan and nature-based "new" religions has consigned them to a generally spiritually irrelevant status. Books like this by Dr Nichol, and the accompanying work he does, will address that lack.

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