

# THE LIBRARY OF AVALON

## The Reading Room

### Summer Solstice 2006

#### Volume 1, Issue 5.

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The Library of Avalon had its AGM on the 5th June this year, slightly later than usual.

The evening was well attended and started with a brief meditation and welcoming speech from our outgoing Chairperson, Natasha Wardle.

Apologies were read and last year's minutes were accepted with minimal alterations.

The annual report and financial reports were read by Paul Fletcher. The main points arising from this were: that cash donations were steady and there was a fundraising effort underway preparing ten applications

- 2,057 books were donated in 2005 and major donors of books and other resources were acknowledged and thanked

- membership targets were not achieved, yet membership was steadily rising

- groups meeting in the LOA throughout 2005 were acknowledged

- the visit by members of RILKO in July 2005 was mentioned

- details were given about the September fundraising event (see details within and flyer)

### AGM.

- the "Reading Room" was said to be "a valuable part of our communication with the membership"
- the competition is set for a revival in 2007
- we are "endeavouring to meet health and safety EU recommendations"
- thanks and acknowledgements were given.

In the conclusion to the report it was urged that links be created with universities and other bodies "promoting spiritually diverse learning courses" in order for the LOA to develop as a major esoteric library for the country as a whole.

The financial report showed we were keeping solvent.

Most of the trustees stepped down after their two-year stint, leaving Izzy Cadbury to "[give] that vital continuity".

The new trustees were proposed, seconded and voted in unanimously.

Izzy has taken on the role of Chairperson, Alexandra Westwood, Andy Scott and Clint Denyer have been elected and they have co-opted M. Archer to help with auditing and financial planning.

The rest of the evening was spent socialising with tea and cakes provided by the outgoing trustees. This was valuable time that gave the retiring and new trustees, volunteers and members chance to discuss future plans and possibilities as the LOA prepares to move ahead into busier and, in some ways, challenging times of opportunity. The Library of Avalon needs to expand in membership and other ways to live up to its potential and the new trustees will work towards these aims.



The Library garden with our next generation of readers. Photo: Andy Scott.

# Lights, camera, action.

On the 8th March this year the Library of Avalon was transformed into a studio set for a few hours to provide the backdrop for an interview with Jules Cashford. When Jules arrived she very kindly donated two of her books to the LOA, signing them both for us.

She had been asked to contribute to a programme relating to "The Da Vinci Code" that was to be aired in May on "More 4".

The crew arrived and moved tables and chairs into place so that the camera could get good angles. Velvet table coverings and a backdrop were provided by the LOA to screen plain wooden backs of shelving and a few books on related subjects provided "props". The film lighting showed the library off to its best advantage and the interview was all set, (after a few false starts whilst the sound man asked for the office upstairs to be "hushed").

Jules really knows her stuff and was very forthcoming about her views on the female aspects of mystery schools in general and specifically to the "secrets" "uncovered" in Dan Brown's book. She was particularly focussed on the idea of the female archetypes, especially Mary Magdalene, and hinting at Gaia theory in her answers to some of the interviewer's questions.

The camera was moved to give the interviewer's angle when asking questions, which meant that the producer had to prompt as to what was said originally, and Jules had to re-start her answer. This showed how the editing process really works, as there was only one camera and cameraman, along with soundman, along with producer and assistant on hand. A few outside shots were taken, to give an introduction to the interview, then they all went off to get some footage of Glastonbury and the Tor, leaving a generous donation for use of the library. Andy Scott.

## "Libraries and the Occult"

In 2004 we had a visitor to the LOA who was researching for a dissertation for her MA at University College London with the above title.

We recently received a copy of the finished article from the author, Cecile Dubuis. In her covering letter she describes the LOA as "[being] the most welcoming and boasts a fascinating collection".

Her "abstract" shows how she looks at how libraries deal with occult collections and as to why [they] are not widely available to the public, along with classification difficulties and historical information. Censorship is discussed also, along with the impact of online resources.

The only other library with occult as main subject

is the Theosophical library and there are special collections such as the "Ferguson" and "Harry Price" collections mentioned. The "Wellcome" and "London" libraries are featured, along with the "Warburg Institute". Some public libraries get a mention and some overseas collections.

Other classification systems are described and a short example of ours is included with the proviso that our system is copyrighted. She comments that our "borrowings are recorded in a ledger using pen and ink; an antiquated system that seems to work for them". (!)

It may be a good idea to forge links with the other organisations she mentions and her dissertation is available for reference only in the LOA.

## "Avalon" in Library of Avalon.

This is just to inform members of the Library of Avalon that some copies of some of the early back issues of the Avalon magazine are available from the Library at the same rate as from the magazine (i.e. £3.00 per copy).

Unfortunately, if you want them posting we have to add postage and packing costs of an extra pound per single issue, (negotiable on multiple orders), but if you're in town and want

to pick them up we can arrange this when the LOA is open.

Please pay cash or cheque payable to "Library of Avalon".

Kate Gooch would like to remind all that back copies from number 20 onwards (current issue Spring 2006 is number 32 with 33 due end June 2006) are available from the magazine's post box address or by emailing [avalonmagazine@aol.com](mailto:avalonmagazine@aol.com)

# LOA Fundraiser in September.

Following on from an initial idea put forward by Clint Denyer and developed by Clint and Andy Scott, they, along with Alexandra Westwood, M Archer (and, recently, Penny Lester) formed a sub-committee of volunteers to look into staging a fundraising event for the Library of Avalon. Having decided on dates and an overall title for the weekend we began to contact potential speakers and within a very short space of time had the basis of what should prove to be a very interesting event.

All the speakers are giving their time and were very glad to be helping the Library of Avalon.

On the weekend of the **9th and 10th September 2006** the Library of Avalon will be hosting a two day conference with the overall title of

**“Spirituality in the 3rd millennium”.**

The main aims of the conference will be to raise funds for and awareness of the Library. Various speakers have been booked to appear including **Geoffrey Ashe, Palden Jenkins, John Clements, William Bloom, Mano Warren, Dearbhaile Bradley, Geoff Ward and Clint Denyer.**

The venues will be the **Library of**

**Avalon and the upstairs room at the George and Pilgrims** hotel, where the speakers will give their talks.

There will be stalls and workshops, including storytelling for children. We will be running short films by Chris Barnes in the Library and the Library and garden will feature artworks and sculpture by local artists.

Entertainment will be provided throughout the weekend. **See inserted flyer for more details.**

Doors will open at 11 am on both days with the programme of speakers starting at noon.

Members of the Library will be eligible for discounted tickets for the event. We are also offering “early bird” tickets.

This means that, as **members of the LOA if you book before the 23rd of July** tickets for the weekend will cost just **£35.00 (or £20.00 for one day ticket).**

After the 23rd of July this will be **£40.00 and £25.00** respectively.

**Non-members** will need to pay **£45.00 weekend (£30.00 day) early bird** and full price (after 23rd July) is **£50.00 weekend (£35.00 day).**

We are hoping to be able to either tape or video the speakers and offer the resulting media for sale after the event.



## Website news.

The Library of Avalon's website [www.libraryofavalon.co.uk](http://www.libraryofavalon.co.uk) holds an on-line version of our full catalogue and has recently been updated with current information (so you won't be able to find out who the trustees were in 2002 any more!)

We intend to re-vamp the site fully soon, (for example making “The Reading Room” available on there also).

We have asked for members to give us their e-mail addresses when signing up and may soon be able to send information directly, thus helping the environment.

Many thanks to Martin Wheeler.

## Jack in the Green.

*"Now winter is over, I'm happy to say,  
And we'll all meet again on the first day of May,  
And we'll all meet again on the first day of  
spring,*

*And go about dancing with Jack in the Green."*

So opens Dragonsfly's song, "Jack in the Green", from "The Ridgeway" CD. I was drawn to the song the first time I heard it but, as May Day approached, the words appeared more and more often in my head.

Jack intrigued me. As this fellow dies every autumn and is born every spring, I saw him as another manifestation of John Barleycorn, a symbol of resurrection and of the spirit of summer, a personification of the spirit of wheat.

Then I remembered an older song, also called "Jack in the Green", this one recorded many years ago by Jethro Tull and found on the album, "The Best of Jethro Tull". This Jack, with his long tail hanging down, sits under every tree, drinking from an acorn cup. He never sleeps. Jack signals the snowdrops that it's time to grow and, like the Green Man and the spirit of the wild wood, this Jack is immortal.

Alone in the Library of Avalon one dank afternoon, I decided to find out more. I discovered that this ancient symbol of the male aspect of nature has counterparts all over Europe. In England he can still be seen in Hastings on May Day, enclosed in a wickerwork cage (barring his feet and face), smothered with green branches and flowers.

Jack became associated with chimney sweeps during the early part of the nineteenth

century. Boys would join in the May Day festivities, often dressed in drag and adorned in cheap finery, black faces smeared with red brick dust for rouge. Dancing, singing, making rough music on shovels, brushes and whistles, they paraded the streets. Other tradesmen, caps and boxes held out for pennies, would also be involved in the celebrations, but the sweeps were jealous of their Jack and fights would break out if any similar figures appeared. Games for May often became rowdy and drunken affairs, particularly in the cities.

After Parliament forbade the employment of children as climbers for chimney sweeps in 1840, Jack, whose origins are lost in the distant past, was less often seen. But an upsurge of interest in folklore took place in the early 1900s, bringing with it a revival of Morris dancing, and Jack is still to be found in the company of the Morris men.

Green Jack, Jack in the Green, the Burryman, and John Barleycorn, all are different faces worn by the Green Man, a perennial presence who can be seen lurking in the boles of trees, winking at us from the hedges, or just watching and laughing in the undergrowth.

Izzy Cadbury.

*Major sources:*

*Frazer, James George, The golden bough.*

*First published 1922.*

*Hazlitt, W.C., Dictionary of faiths and folklore.*

*First published 1905.*

*Hole, Christina, A dictionary of British folk customs. 1978.*

**The Library of Avalon holds many books on folklore, \*local, \*\*national and \*\*\*worldwide. See sections \*\*'RR', \*\*\*'RB' - 'RS' and \*'W'.**

## The Glastonbury Chair.

Last year Mike Jones, manager of the Glastonbury Experience, donated a Glastonbury Chair to the Library of Avalon, in need of slight restoration (which is in hand). These unique chairs have quite a history. According to Jack Gale in his book *"The Circle and the Square"* the chairs were originally made by John Thorne, "ostensibly the abbey's treasurer" who "was a covert alchemist and occultist" (P.4). In 1503 Abbot Richard Bere went to Rome, returning a year later with ideas to furnish the abbey in similar fashion to what he saw on his travels. His sketches are said to have been the basis of the design.

They were originally designed to be folded to store flat and the distinctive upturned arms seem designed to rest elbows on when holding a book, (ideal for the Library of Avalon, then!)

The carving around the chair in Latin reads "John Arthur Monk of Glastonbury May God Save Him Give Him Peace O Lord. Praise be to God", thus the maker allowed himself to be immortalised in this small way after his grisly end along with said Abbot in 1539 on the slopes of the Tor.

The interlacing circles on the top rail have been interpreted as symbolising brotherhood and point heavenwards and the leaf motif on the back and side rails refer to life. The square on the front panel symbolises Earth and the circle eternity. The meeting of the circle and square takes us into realms of mathematics and gematria and John Michell's *"City of Revelation"* and other works are recommended to gain more insight into the architectural and religious significance of this symbolism.

The Library is proud to hold an example of this Glastonbury tradition and will put it to good use.

# Events and group news.

Alexandra Westwood and Penny Lester will represent the Library of Avalon at the Sunrise Solstice Celebration event between 16th and 21st. June

As this is the first of, hopefully, many such ventures where the Library of Avalon will be "on the road" this summer and beyond, we are all gathering resources for this and similar projects in the future. Alex and Penny will be displaying LOA information and membership leaflets. Andy Scott provided nine A4 size

laminated photos for a "backboard", Hazel Pegg from Glastonbury Online loaned camping equipment (to keep everything from blowing away), and Avalon magazine provided the latest issue to sell. (Profits to the LOA). Watch this space...(or festival... or literary event ...near you!!)

\*\* Full report with photos will be in the next "Reading Room" newsletter.

\*\*\* If anyone has camping equipment or collapsible "gazebo" could they contact the LOA as we will need something for further events, thanks!

## Donations Received.

A regular feature of the newsletter to acknowledge all the people who help to increase our resources. Since the last issue we have received donations of books, multi-media and magazines from the following people:

In January Chaz and Petra donated 16 books with other donations from Sharon Jacksties, RILKO and Alex Westwood. Heather Scott donated back issues of counselling magazines.

In February Mary Lane donated 42 books, Stephen Roberts donated 20 books, with contributions from Yvonne Quinn and Anne Stallybrass.

March and April were fairly quiet with small additions from Izzy Cadbury, Adrien vanClute, Chaz Heritage, Philip Genoux and "Jane".

May saw Linda Shakespeare, Storm Alteryus and "Buzz" giving small collections.

Martin Wheeler donated a "shareware disc" for the library to download.

Over the last few months we have had authors handing us their work.

Jules Cashford gave and signed two books (see article) and Dan Shaw gave his book on "Vortex Healing".

When William Rand was in town he donated multi-media Reiki material to the library.

Gothic Image have continued to supply copies of their new publications, the latest being "The Bardic Handbook" and Palden Jenkins' "Healing the Hurts of Nations".

And finally... Philip Heselton has very kindly donated all his published work to date, along with hundreds of magazines and journals, mostly with pagan, Earth Energy, dowsing and "new age" themes, along with a generous cheque to fund housing this material.

Many thanks to all!

## How You Can Help.

If reading the rest of this Newsletter has whetted your appetite to get more involved with the activities at the Library of Avalon and you are wondering how you can, we'll tell you.

**You can join as a borrowing member** of the library. For an annual fee you will be able to borrow up to three books for three weeks at a time as well as using the reading room facilities.

**You can offer your time as a volunteer.** We are always looking for people who commit to a

few hours per week, on a regular basis please, as we would like to be able to keep to regular opening hours, ideally to cover a six day week.

**You can donate your surplus good books,** (tapes, videos, CDs also welcomed) if they fit into any of our subject areas. See our classification list to see if they are appropriate.

**You can give us your money!** We are a Charity so rely on donations and memberships to help fund our very existence, the facts of life mean the bills have to be paid!

# The Library of Avalon

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The Glastonbury Experience

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[www.libraryofavalon.co.uk](http://www.libraryofavalon.co.uk)

The **Reading Room** is a Newsletter which aims to keep the membership (and possible future members) up to date with what is happening at the Library of Avalon.

***Any member is welcome to submit book reviews or items of interest.***

I would like to publish at the quarters of the year so the deadline for the next issue will be the ***beginning of August 2006***. Please leave these at the Library for the attention of **Andy** (address opposite left).

The Library is currently open from **11.00 am to 4.30 pm on Tuesdays, 1.30 to 4.30 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 12.00 to 5.00 pm Fridays, and from 12.00 to 4.00 pm most Saturdays.** We are currently training up new volunteers and hope to extend these times even further in the very near future.

This edition has been edited and typeset by Andy Scott with contributions from Izzy Cadbury, and Alexandra Westwood.

Current volunteers include Andy, Clint, Sandipo, Chaz, Adrien, John, Penny, Sally, Mary, M, Alex, Alyson, Evie, and Izzy.

Many thanks to all.

Also, many thanks to Petra for all her hard work in the garden.

## Book Reviews.

We have about 12,000 books in the Library of Avalon and we thought it would be a good idea to run a column of reviews of just some of the titles available.

The Act of Creation by Arthur Koestler  
(Hutchinson & Co Ltd 1976)

*The Act of Creation* is the second book in the trilogy, which includes: 'The Sleepwalkers' and the now infamous 'The Ghost in the Machine'. In book two Koestler proposes that the creative activities within the realms of science and art share a common pattern. This ambitious attempt to explore 'bisociative' behaviour and discover the blueprint of creative synthesis is extensive. Koestler seeks to enhance the interactions between the humanities and the 'exact' sciences

by identifying the underlying basis for invention. In an effort to understand human motivation Koestler examines the archetypes of: the Jester, the Sage and the Artist, and their associated modes of behaviour. Koestler writes in a disarming way, it is intellectual reasoning presented in a poetic and perceptive manner. He recognizes the metaphors relied upon by scientists, and identifies formalities that artists still abide by despite reckless intentions.

The chief aim of this book appears to be a quest for unity. His theory is over-shadowed by an unrelenting ambition to factually confirm our interconnectedness and to express obvious esteem for the irrational nature of mental processes. Koestler became absorbed with parapsychology at a time when such discourse was ridiculed and meant exclusion from academic circles. This book is evidence of his inspiring and unsparing intelligence.

A. C. Westwood