



Transcript Episode 15: Online and offline Heathenry

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00:08 Jochem

Hello. Welcome to the Wyrd Thing Podcast, episode 15. I am Jochem and today I will talk with Rich and Sif about online and offline Heathenry and heathen youth. Hi Sif, maybe we could start with an introduction?

00:26 Sif

Yeah, sure. Hi, I'm Sif. My pronouns are she/her. I am a Nordic heathen. I am obsessed with the Valkyries, historical sites, the burial rites, the Nordic soul, and all things Death Sphere. And I'm also one of the hosts of the Heathen Wyrdos podcast. I am the marketing officer for Asatru UK. I am the national LGBTQIA+ manager for the Pagan Federation, and I have also recently founded the Heathens of Mercia Kindred. I'm an artist, writer and editor, and I occasionally speak at events about mostly the Valkyries.

01:02 Rich

Very well said, I think.

01:03 Jochem

Thank you.

01:05 Rich

I wanted to ask first of all, Sif, how you first got into Heathenry.

01:10 Sif

I'll go back to the beginning, the very, very start. I was raised Church of England, as many people were. I was christened at the age of five, and I quickly learned or realised that Christianity just wasn't for me. So I became an atheist, quite an ardent atheist. I was one of those people, not quite anti-theist, but one of those people that definitely was like, I'll leave you to do your thing as long as you don't try and impede on me. You know, you can believe whatever you want, that's fine. But I always had I think many children did and still do an obsession with Greek mythology. Really, really obsessed with Greek mythology. Kind of like the age of nine onwards.

And I did do some research, you know, just about how if, you know, the Greek gods were still worshipped today, and I did bump into a few Wikipedia articles. And it peaks an interest, but also a fascination with like instead of just focusing on the mythology side of things, how the religion was practised historically, just in like across multiple religions. And I guess to a certain degree then I was fascinated with ancient religion as a whole.

And then [I was] about 21, 22 years old, I stumbled into Norse Heathenry, or rather just Paganism in the UK in general. And I was like, Oh, okay, there is a movement. There are people in the UK that practise pagan religions. Okay, this is interesting. Just let it sit for a little bit, a few years down the line. It still did kind of like background research. And then about five, six years ago I realised



that the heathen, like, the heathen religion was growing massively. And I thought, okay, this is interesting.

Still an atheist, but I was kind of starting to incorporate like animist ideas and just feeling a bit more of a connection. Because I was... In hindsight, I was feeling very adrift as an atheist. I felt very detached. My beliefs were very: I'm here by accident, it's chaos, it's entropy in the universe, and one day I'll cease to exist. And that's it. I didn't really feel grounded or connected. So by starting to do research into specifically Norse Paganism, Heathenry, I felt those first little threads of interest. And it's so cliché, but a rightness of being on the right path. Something that just clicked. And then I've spent a few years researching specifically about the beliefs of Heathenry before I actually called myself heathen. And that was about three years ago. Just so I knew that it was it wasn't quote unquote a phase. It was... It felt right, and this was the path I wanted to go down. So, yeah, I've been calling myself the heathen for about 3 or 4 years now. Yeah, that's the background, the full story.

04:09 Jochem

Sounds like an long and interesting journey.

04:14 Sif

Hm. I learned quite quickly that I'm not one to just jump into things. I wanted to make sure that, you know, this made sense to me, but it didn't completely clash with some, like, values of mine. Obviously, you know, there's a prevalent unsavoury aspect to the very online visible heathen space. So I wanted to make sure that there were inclusive spaces that definitely gelled with my personal values and, you know, I found them, so that was good.

04:48 Rich

Hm. And obviously you met a number of pagans and heathens on the road to this realisation, perhaps your beliefs. Did you encounter much? I won't say bigotry, but you know, because people often imagine that all pagans are lovely and fluffy and inclusive. But sadly, as we've discussed in previous podcasts, that's not always the case. Did you encounter any of that?

05:10 Sif

Yes, because I'm apparently perpetually online to, to perhaps a detriment. And it is quite easy to stumble upon... Because it feels quite niche anyway to kind of go into the areas of social media that are populated by pagans and heathens. It's quite easy once you get into those spaces to bump into the sort of bigotry and intolerance sort of areas. So yeah, and that was definitely moments of 'Oh, okay', because I didn't know about that.

Obviously, prior to becoming interested in Heathenry, I was aware that, you know, the alt right liked to use Nordic symbols. I was very concerned with making sure that there were, you know, a variety of people that practise this religion and not just just the right side of things. And yeah, I definitely bumped into certain spaces that I backed out of quickly and was like 'Whoa, okay, don't go back in there'. I mean, I quickly found spaces that were inclusive, so that was definitely, definitely a heartening to experience those. It was, yeah, that was definitely affirmation that I was doing the right thing.



06:32 Rich

I know you said you were terminally online and many people of younger generations are, but I just wondered: Did you sort of go to any events? And people said, 'No, no, I don't like the look of this person' or 'This doesn't feel right'. Did you encounter anything like that at all?

06:46 Sif

I did. There were few [events] before the pandemic. Unfortunately, the pandemic hit pretty quick after. [Laughs] It was..., yeah, 2023. So it was about... Yeah, it was, it was, like, the tail end of the middle of 2019, ish, I really started to get... to call myself heathen. And, you know, did do a little poking around to... It wasn't quite heathen specific, it was more just pagan general. And I mean from the outside, some of them definitely seemed like... If you asked them, they say, 'Yes, we are inclusive'. But it was like, what does that mean to them?

And obviously nothing too problematic. It was just felt, like, a tick box. Obviously I won't name groups, but... And then the pandemic hit, and then it became a thing of 'I've got to do most of this online' and try and see what other groups are out there. So I guess it was kind of a boon in a way. The pandemic definitely opened me up. Think much faster to the wealth of different groups available rather than like pigeonholing me in.

07:50 Rich

Yeah, I think it is. And we've covered on this podcast before. I think it was Jens mentioned there were certain events he went to that said they were inclusive, but it was very much just paying lip service. Perhaps not even intentionally, doing it from a good place, but just sort of not doing enough. If that makes sense.

08:08 Sif

Yeah, and it's definitely something I think needs to be improved on, or at least a greater awareness of what being inclusive actually means. I know that obviously from like the kind of surface level, I think many people would agree that lowering a strong LGBTQIA+ presence is inclusive, but then you kind of do an underlay of that of, well, are you accommodating for disabilities and accessibility? And I think that that's definitely something that needs to be improved on across the board.

08:41 Rich

Yeah, I think that'd be a very interesting thing. We are seeing that it has been a sadly a slower process than I think we would like, but at least it's happening. Yeah, at least in the spaces that I've seen.

08:53 Sif

I think it's hindered somewhat by the, you know, pagans. We love nature, so we tend to be like, Oh, we can hold a group at the very top of that hill. [Rich: Oh, yeah, yeah.] Without thinking like, wait a second.

09:07 Rich

If it's the hill you're talking about, even I struggle to get up it. Yeah.



09:10 Sif

That was a big hill.

09:12 Rich

Having said that, I know that Frigga, one of the other hosts, attended event that was an absolute mud bath, but managed to get her little mobility scooter through it. That was hilarious but fun. But yes, that was not on a hill though. But yeah, I completely get that.

09:26 Sif

Yeah.

09:27 Jochem

Yeah, or at least be clear about it.

09:30 Rich

Yes.

09:32 Jochem

I go to a queer pagan camp and I know it isn't fully accessible, but they state on their website we can provide this and this and this, but we can't provide that and that and that. So they are, for example, really good on all kinds of food intolerances. But when it comes to wheelchair accessibility, no. [Laughs]

09:57 Sif

Hm. I mean yeah, I mean my perspective is quite, I guess pragmatic is you want to include as many people as possible into, you know, your groups, your spaces. Obviously by putting a barrier up that's stopping people who want to join or want to participate from actually doing so. And yeah, I mean, definitely, again, it's something I'm seeing an improvement on, vast improvement even over the last three years. Yeah, it's there's a little bit of a way to go, but I mean we're moving in the right direction.

10:27 Rich

Hm.

10:29 Jochem

Do you see the same happening with LGBTQIA+ accessibility?

10:36 Sif

I think that's definitely more of a at the forefront, I would say, especially over recent years. Of course, there are certain groups that definitely have a rule of no politics, and unfortunately, LGBT+ presence is seen as political. So that's definitely something that... If I see a group that says no politics, specifically groups that I'm unfamiliar with, I definitely stay clear of those. But I'm definitely there's also the groups that sort of. Cause they're fine with it as long as it's not mentioned, which, you know, it's another kettle of fish entirely.



11:18 Jochem

Then it isn't accessible and it isn't open.

11:24 Sif

Hm. Exactly.

11:25 Jochem

Although to my experience that is the same what Jens said in the previous episode. If you don't mention it then it isn't there and so you're not welcome with all your parts.

11:38 Sif

Hm. Exactly. It's definitely my experience too. Unfortunately, as it's been very evident over the last couple of weeks, there's I think many groups coming out as being transphobic, that I've seen on Twitter, Sphere and Reddit and all of that. Not great. There's definitely moving parts of... I'm just moving backwards and it's absolutely damaging to the Paganism as a whole if we're not embracing inclusivity in all of its parts and variety of people. It's just yeah, it's just, yeah, a thing that's happening at the moment.

12:19 Jochem

One more question before we move on. You said that LGBT issues are in a lot of groups considered to be political, which amazes me. As an LGBT plus manager at Pagan Federation: Do you manage to come in contact to groups and talk about this issue?

12:46 Sif

Yeah, that's part of my... one of my main duties, not only just in a kind of pagan spaces, but in the general population too. It's... I've only had the role for about a year and a bit, but it's definitely a drive of mine to make myself known at, like, Pride Festivals. I did the Milton Keynes Pride Fest last year. And it is about connecting with pagan groups and non pagan groups into, like, an interfaith capacity and just making sure that...

Not only is the Pagan Federation known for being inclusive in that respect, but also just Paganism in general that there... People are informed about that Paganism is inclusive. It's not sort of, like, think some people, at least that I've met, aren't pagan themselves, but have this preconceived idea about specifically like Norse Paganism as being this like, 'Oh, Viking, you know, we're kind of armed with axes and shields and, you know, that's my woman over there.' And, you know, quite backwards sort of. It might have been a little bit rude to the Viking age, but certainly not true to the modern practitioners. And it is sort of getting that idea across that we are practicing the religion and not trying to revive the culture, you know.

And making it known that there are LGBT heathens out there and that they're vocal and present and really trying to personally for me, alongside, you know, the Heathen Wyrdos podcast - shameless plug - is, is making sure that there is definitely a vocal element of inclusivity for those that maybe even do a cursory sort of search online, they will hopefully stumble upon the podcast eventually. (Our SEO is pretty good.) Of being, Oh, okay, so it's not this idea that I had, it's this. And yeah, all of those different parts, the little roles that I have, it is definitely trying to show, at least in a... The peripheral sort of capacity at the very least. There is a way of practising Heathenry and being inclusive. They're absolutely not mutually exclusive.



15:00 Jochem

Hm.

15:02 Rich

I think along those lines, another thing that's hard to get across sometimes, but obvious once people get it, it's not a zero sum game. Just because queer people or gay people or trans people are going to be involved in Heathenry, that doesn't mean that your Heathenry has to change. You can still keep on doing whatever you're doing. It's not a zero sum game. There's plenty of Heathenry to go around.

15:22 Sif

[Laughs.]

15:23 Rich

It sounds obvious when I've said it. But people have this idea that there's a limited amount of Heathenry. If we do that, then, oh, what will happen to Heathenry then? Oh, I don't know. We'll just have a better time, you know?

15:37 Jochem

Yeah, I guess this is exactly the one of the things we talked about with Jay in our episode that was released in February in episode 11. [Sif: Hm.] Back to back to this.

15:54 Rich

Have you noticed a changes in the way that sort of particularly online heathen spaces have changed in the time that you've been involved in?

16:03 Sif

I think they've grown massively, even just over the last 3 or 4 years. I think the pandemic, definitely, hastened the movement towards digital spaces, even those groups that were probably just physical. And I think the online pagan Sphere is a beast. It's a Goliath and it's absolutely growing. And I believe that's probably why we're seeing such a resurgence among the youth in, in heathen spaces. Is that, back in my day, it was it was difficult to find. There wasn't Discord. There wasn't Facebook. And my first footstep into Paganism was a Wikipedia article on Hellenic Paganism, and that was basically it. There were forums, you know, if you could find them. But very little in terms of, like, storefronts, sort of pagan spaces, of clearly being pagan and... Easily found on the internet. And it's definitely something that obviously we've seen over this growth of social media, but definitely over the last 3 to 4 years. It's just exploded, because I think people are realising that, well, Paganism is growing for one. It's massively growing around the world. And chances are, if you have a flavour of Paganism you're interested in, there are groups online to join. With YouTube, and YouTube creators, and content creators, and TikTok, and Instagram, and all of that. There is a wealth of information just, as cheesy as to say, at your fingertips. And, and I think people are starting to realise, or at least definitely now capitalising on it, is that they can grow groups. They can grow communities. They can... you know, flourish and, and, and practise with like minded pagans in an online space.

And obviously this is very appealing to young people in Heathenry that are just joining, because they didn't have to go to some some random website or some random chat room to connect with



these people. They're on the social media channels that they already use and, you know, they're familiar with them, and all of that. And it's just... I think it's very interesting as a sort of, sort of paradigm shift that's happened. Because, yeah, it is easier than ever to find a community to join that aligns with your values. And obviously the values of the Gen Z, Millennial, and I imagine Generation Alpha are very important. I mean, how many, how many articles do you read about, like, all millennials and their values, or whatever, making them, like, work shy, or whatever. And, you know, and it's definitely a pattern that will probably continue. We want to find spaces that align with our personal values. And obviously many of those values are around inclusivity and yeah... And chances are you'll find a group that aligns with them, which is fantastic.

19:07 Rich

Definitely, but what sort of challenges do you think that sort of sort of inclusive Heathenry or queer Heathenry or anything like that has for the future?

19:17 Sif

Oh, wow. I think I think it's pretty clear on the kind of global scale of things, there is a massive divide happening between leftist and right spaces. And it's becoming a sort of - I'm not even going to say a war of attrition. It just seems chaotic from my perspective. - of for every leftist space, you have an equally awful right space. In terms of as good as a leftist space is, you have something that goes completely against that on the right side of things, or anti inclusivity. And again, like, fascist takes and whatnot. I think obviously that's going to become, in my opinion, more and more extreme. We're going to lose the central ground.

So one of the biggest challenges is that both sides are going to become more vocal. Obviously, that's great for the left side, but not so great for the right. So I think we've got to... leftist spaces have got to learn some lessons in terms of how to, how to promote themselves. Because again, it's one just has to look at the media to kind of get an outside perspective of things. And there's very little in terms of like public perception of leftists Heathenry and Paganism. So I think that's definitely something we've got to consider in terms of making sure that the intolerant, like, bigotry side of things doesn't take up all the oxygen in the room.

And we've got to really promote ourselves, and be a little bit more open and direct in terms of how we're here, you know, we we are inclusive. We don't agree with whatever this side is saying and all of that. And that's going to be a massive challenge going forwards. I mean, not just in Paganism, just in the general sphere of things. You know, you feel like I mean, if you're, if you're online, if you're on Twitter, and, like, Reddit specifically, it seems like it's overwhelming in terms of how much, you know, hate is out there. And, I don't want that to dissuade future pagans from exploring a path that fits them, and feel like that's a danger potentially of that might happen.

And obviously that's got me very concerned. Which is obviously one of the fuelling reasons for why I, you know, I became heathen, and then quite quickly decided: Okay, I want to make sure that there is a presence for inclusivity and, you know, information and, and grounded in like historical facts and all of that rather than, you know, potentially a historical revisionism and to fuel a hateful perspective. Yeah, there's definitely there's definitely multiple motivations for me to continue to do what I do and be present. And I'm happy to delve in, in whatever capacity is needed.

22:21 Jochem

That's great, isn't it. And I might be speaking as someone who didn't grow up with all these social media, but I see a lot that's on the internet, in social media groups and that kind of places that people tend to respond more extreme than they do in offline or physical spaces.



22:50 Sif

Hm, yes.

22:53 Jochem

So, all the extreme opinions... Isn't that a part of these kind of channels?

23:02 Sif

I think there's definitely an aspect of anonymity fuelling it. Then you have a screen name. Potentially these might be your like true viewers, because you don't have that immediate pushback in terms of one, knowing you personally. You said this sort of thing like in a in a more general physical setting, you probably would get immediate pushback and immediate consequences. And obviously, the internet has shielded people through, you know, various barriers that it puts up. But I mean, equally, I think we were getting... we're seeing people become more and more emboldened to take whatever rhetoric they were spouting online and putting it into the physical space. Again, the pandemic did have a bit of an impact on that and that people were forced to do everything online. But I think what we're seeing, especially in the Western world, is just a... of some... horrific views being made, real and physical. And it's dangerous and alarming in equal measure. But yeah, there's definitely... yeah, the, the extreme nurse, as I think been fuelled by the online space and the anonymity. And is now because they realise they can get away with it or have minimal consequences they're empowered to do it in the physical world now as well. So yeah, not great.

24:35 Jochem

Yeah. Now you are saying this, I think because the online world is this huge [laughs], because it's the entire world almost, it's much easier to find people who think the same as you do. So it's easier to find people who agree with an extreme opinion, while in the physical world. Because it is physical, it is more limited. [Sif: Yeah, absolutely.] So you're more likely to be the only one. And then because people react to your opinion, you might change it to a less extreme option.

25:19 Sif

Hm. Absolutely. I mean, yeah, there's just an aspect of... If you're sitting at your computer at home, you know, it's a couple of clicks away. It's, it's a Google away. It's depending on if you know where to look. In the physical space, you have to not only find people, but you have to go to where they are or meet up at a place where they are. There's a lot more like things in your path to start cultivating that sort of they call it the alt right pipeline, don't they? And we did an episode on that recently of, you know, it's... Unfortunately the internet is great, but it also has definitely fuelled the extreme pipelines. Because it is easier to get yourself into an echo chamber, to gradually dissolve away any sort of inhibitions towards going on that pipeline. And, yeah, you can find people that, you know, not only agree with you, but then say the next step, and the next step, and the next step. And it's just again, it's, it's concerning, but it lightly.

But again, we can also see it in reverse. The internet has also shown spaces that, you know, are inclusive and have - at least my very limited experience in this - all helped pull people back from going down that alt right pipeline. Because, you know, they're open to a wealth of different people, of different experiences, of different backgrounds, of different beliefs, especially in Paganism, where, you know, you go into one, say, General Pagan space, they on Discord and they're you've got a wealth of different perspectives, views, backgrounds, you know, nationalities, identities. And I



think that's definitely useful, because obviously that allows you to, to hear and speak to those different perspectives.

But unfortunately, yeah, the, the echo chambers do exist where it's just one type of person all saying the same thing very loudly. [Jochem: Yeah.] Yeah. So there is... there are swings and roundabouts to all of this. And I think as the internet, and the world in general, becomes ever more digitised and online, even, you know, post-pandemic, you know, this isn't going to go away. So it's a case of how do we navigate these sorts of easily accessible information, easily accessible groups and try and, like, sculpt Paganism and Heathenry into something we, we want it to be moving forwards. And I think it's going to be a bit of an uphill struggle in many ways. But I'm an optimist. I feel that the future of Paganism and Heathenry is bright, even if it's going to be a bit of a rocky road to get there.

28:01 Rich

It's worth noting that there's been various times when in the past when it seemed like Heathenry was on a big boom and a rise in America, where there was a couple of... inclusive for the time, shall we say. But then it all fell apart horribly because of, not because of anything sort of non-inclusive, it was just normally stupid activity, or in some cases criminal activity, that people have been doing, which, which undermined the whole sort of scene. There was a big festival, big scene, and all kinds of things were going on in various places. You could look back to a certain point where people were so enthusiastic about this group and things that were happening, and then it all just collapsed in on itself.

And so I think we have to be careful that, you know... And there's been other groups like that as well who are still ongoing. But there's a desire perhaps for me to grow or any kind of group to grow as quickly as possible, you know, all heathen all the time. But that isn't always the best way. But equally, that shouldn't mean we can't be inclusive along the way.

29:02 Sif

No, exactly. There is... I think you can get a bit carried away. You see, this is a population of people that, as I mentioned, is growing. Constantly. Like almost in a frightening degree, just sprouting out of the ground, apparently. So I think there is a compulsion to jump in and just be like, okay, there's a whole group of people here that can join my group and we can just run and run and run. And whilst they sometimes are very, very inclusive, or at least they are from the outset, there is a lack of direction and sort of doing the groundwork. Uh, in terms of setting up groups. But I'm always going to encourage more groups, more diversity in that respect.

But yeah, there's, I think we're seeing it with some content creators, who just seem to be capitalizing on the growth without thinking about the values that they represent. And I think that's quite a dangerous thing as well, is they're building communities without having that... or foundational sort of strength. Now that seems very vague, but because it's a niche market, but a market that is very enthusiastic, I'm doing this from like a business perspective. They want to be a part of a group. They endeavour to be part of a community. There are people out there who will take advantage of that, and that's its own dangers in and of itself. And yeah, that's, that's definitely something you're seeing in online spaces. And again, that's, that's a whole other thing. But yeah, equally as dangerous.

30:43 Rich

I think also because the online world is so vast. Somebody can build up a little sort of mini kingdom somewhere and the rest of Heathenry or indeed any religion or sort of... interest can be utterly



unaware of each other. [Sif: Hm.] You know, you see that where people somebody starts to say a hidden Discord. They're not part of any of the other groups. They're not political, you know, they're not this and they're not that. And people join it because they don't know about the other groups. They've never heard of the Troth. You know, they've never heard of A UK. They've never heard of, they, they've never heard of the AFA or anything else like that at all. You know, they have none of that. 'Oh, this is, this is heathen Viking stuff. Great.' And you can have, you know, several thousand people in there. And you know, if that's not managed carefully, then things can go very, very much off the rails.

31:32 Sif

Yeah, it wouldn't surprise me if there were several massive groups out there that we've just not heard of. [Rich: Sure.] I don't want to be like snobby about it, but, you know, the, the law and the research and all of that isn't a foundation. So they're just making it up as they go along, which might go some way to explain some of the awful takes I've seen on social media.

31:53 Rich

Yeah. I remember there was a pagan Discord server I joined. I can't even remember the name of it, so I can't even dox them. I don't know what it was. [Sif laughs.] This woman was posting about how evil druidry was, and I was like, 'Well, that's a pretty hot take. I mean, I'm not sure. I've met a fair few.' 'No, no, no. It's an evil religion,' because she cited all this stuff. I said, 'Well, that's from Julius Caesar. I don't think he's perhaps the best source, you know.' [Jochem laughs.] And there was another guy who claimed to be the expert on the server and he chimed in and goes, 'Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, all societies practise human sacrifice. So yeah, totally.' And I was like, 'What?' This just... Just somebody, just essentially, you know, pulls it out of their behind and this becomes fact.

And, and you can see if somebody knows nothing about these things, or doesn't know much about research, they could read that, you know, than you can go completely sort of... off the rails in terms of your system. [Jochem: Yeah.] And the worst part of that is even when you read the correct information, if you have any kind of critical thing, it's very hard to unpick that from your brain, if you've seen it enough. Like, it took me years to sort of, because I'd been reading crappy information in crappy groups, to unpick the fact that Loki wasn't evil, or people who worshipped Loki were just idiots. You know, just to sort of disabuse myself of that views, that's just one view. [Jochem: Yeah.]

And if you've had a whole bunch of toxic views, let's say non-inclusive views, without using any slurs or anything like that. If you've heard that as part of your Heathenry in some little pocket somewhere and then you roll into, shall we say, mainstream Heathenry, if such a thing exists, then you're going to get burned because you're going to think, 'Well, I understood this is fact, you know, because you know, surely Heathenry bars persons, because Odin says so something'. And the rest of them are going to go, 'What? What are you talking about?' But yeah, that's... I've seen that happen where people say, well I learned it from, you know, from my goatie, this person. 'Who?' 'Well he, he's written several books.' 'Have they?' And it'd be this complete little side little pocket of Heathenry, or something. [Jochem: Yeah.]

You know when people say 'Do your research' I wish people actually meant that. [Laughs.] You know, it doesn't just mean going to the first page of Google. [Sif laughs.] As a heathen you were duty bound to go to page two, or even page three of Google. Yeah. [Sif laughs.]



34:10 Jochem

But could we as representatives from Pagan Federation or with our other groups that we are involved in, what could we do to change this? Or to contribute to more general knowledge?

34:30 Sif

I mean, that was one of the founding ideas behind the Heathen Wyrdos podcast was obviously we had the inclusive side of it. Because we were seeing a lot of information out there that we just didn't agree with. It was kind of a drive to basically be, like, okay, we want something that's inclusive, easily accessible, pretty straight to the facts, be clear about what we don't know, what is UPG, et cetera, et cetera. Because there was, at least from my view and obviously the hosts, a lack of that, or very few. And kind of like amidst of several big content creators in the space that just were seen as experts because they were creating content and had built up a subscriber count. But other than that, their information was dodgy at best.

And once you think, me going from an atheist background definitely helped me in this regard, because they say that a lot about Christian baggage. So I was very much not carrying that. And so I didn't, for instance, use Rich's example, I didn't see Loki as evil from the outset. I would very much say, 'Well, I'm pretty sure he's done good things as well.' I very much have a pluralistic sort of background. There isn't a good and bad. There's, you know, everyone's a mixture. So that definitely helps me. But in terms of the organisations, it is just of, of getting with the times, to use that phrase, to use the platforms and the technology that, you know, other people are using and to be vocal and present.

And, you know, because, again, the world is becoming online. Well, it is online. So do you need to use it. You need to use it as a tool to spread good information and good practises. And I mean, we're seeing that with A UK. They've done a great job, I'm obliged to say that [laughs] in terms of really using like we've moved on to YouTube well a while ago, but we're now really using YouTube and obviously that's a platform that has tons of eyes on it, especially in the pagan space. And again, it's really about other organisations doing the same of, you know, going on Twitter and TikTok and YouTube. As much as you might not want to, if you want to grow a community, at least online, then you really do have to pick those, those tools up and use them because, you know, other people are.

37:11 Rich

Yeah, I do think it is about sort of getting content out because you're absolutely right. There are people who are consistently putting out, shall we say, very well produced content that isn't amateurish. And if they're producing something like that once a week, or maybe twice a week, or even in some cases daily, putting things out there, that consistency, that can have a huge impact. You know, if, say somebody, you know, like a video essayist puts out a something about inclusivity and Heathenry and it's a 1 hour video on YouTube that they spend a couple of months making versus the person putting out pseudo racist content, you know, daily. Unfortunately, the daily sort of information is going to have a bigger impact.

37:58 Sif

Yeah, that's the one of the big downsides of being well researched: It takes time. If you're doing stuff on the fly, you can just produce that thing. You just pump that stuff out because it's just off the top of your head. [Laughs.] So...



38:12 Rich

Yeah, because sadly, it takes a lot less effort to just make up a bigoted opinion. You know.

38:17 Sif

Yeah, that's definitely the downsides of being factual.

38:23 Rich

But we are, I mean, but the counter to that is because people are beginning to realise this issue. I mean, would you say that there is a broader sphere of positive information coming out now?

38:34 Sif

Yeah, absolutely. I think if, for instance, we have several people writing, you know, really well informed video essays like once a month, those add up. So I would say if, if you are interested in being a content creator and to put vlogs and videos and blogs and, you know, tweets even or TikTok videos out there and every little helps, in terms of building up this catalogue of available information. Because, you know, even just a few years ago, there was a handful of people doing this.

So anything anyone can contribute in terms of putting good, well-researched historical information in there, not just their own opinion or they remembered it once, maybe in a book that they read via like a 20th century author. You know, it's just. Anything would be great to help make the... an easier access for information. Good information for any newcomers I think is very, very, very crucial moving forwards. Ease that pathway. Don't make it more difficult for them to find information. You know, we need to get good at, you know, Google Analytics. Make sure we're at the top of the search bar, and not on page three.

39:55 Rich

[Laughs.] True. True. So I also wanted to, if you're up to it, if, if anybody who is listening to this is, is younger or whatever as a message to sort of, like, people just starting out on their journey in Heathenry.

40:08 Sif

Yeah. Hello! This is where I go into slang. [Laughs.] No, I would say that, you know, listen to what your values are? What's important for you? What's important to you? What do you want out of a group? Where do you want it to be? You know, who do you want to interact with? Because there is so much choice out there. And I guarantee that there is absolutely a group that adheres to those values and those beliefs and what you want out of your Paganism or Heathenry. And I would say keep looking.

Be very, very critical, I would say, of any information you hear. And again, do your own research. If you're a heathen, read the poetic and prose Edda. And I personally would recommend some archaeological based research as well. And some of it isn't dry, even if it might seem that way, there is the information available. And just take a little tip toe into whatever waters you want to investigate.

Again, TikTok is big, YouTube is big in this sphere, and just say, yeah, there is 100% the right group for you. And a benefit of being as dogmatic as we are, you know, chances are you will find exactly the right fit because there are no rules, as we say. There are no rules, we're free. Again, that's



that's it can be used for bad. But, you know, in this case, definitely a good thing. So yeah, there's definitely a community for you.

41:43 Rich

Fantastic.

41:45 Jochem

I would like to thank you both for today. In our next episode, we will discuss Heathenry from a more esoteric point of view. It promises to be another interesting episode, so please join us next time. Bye!

41:58 Rich

Bye bye, Craig.

42:00 Sif

Bye, Craig. [In a funny voice] [All laugh.]

[end tune]

The thing is, it's Craig. We reckon that one of the reasons that it wasn't working for a while, we may have misgendered Craig. It was like, 'Is he ready?' And no, no, no. And then, 'Wait, maybe Craig goes by they?' And suddenly Craig started to work correctly. [All laugh.]