

## About The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids

The Order of Bards Ovates & Druids is a spiritual group dedicated to practising, teaching, and developing Druidry as a valuable and inspiring spirituality. Reverence for the natural world is central to the beliefs and teachings of the Order.

The Order was founded over forty five years ago (in 1964) by Ross Nichols and a group of members of The Ancient Druid Order, including the writer Vera Chapman. The Ancient Druid Order developed during the early years of the last century out of the Druid Revival which began about three hundred years ago. The ADO traces its origins to 1717.

The term ‘order’ is derived from the tradition of magical orders rather than from the tradition of religious orders. Neither the Order nor Druidry is a cult. A cult revolves around a personality, a charismatic leader, or a particular deity or saint. The Order and Druidry have none of these characteristics.

Membership of the Order is open to followers of all faiths and none, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or ethnic origin, and there are currently over ten thousand members in fifty countries. Although many Order members would describe themselves as Pagan, it is possible to combine Druidry with other faiths such as Christianity. Some members would describe Druidry as a religion, but others prefer to think of it more as a philosophy or way of life.

Both the Feminine and the Masculine principles are celebrated and represented in the Order’s teachings and membership. The Order is not patriarchal or biased in favour of men – many women are in leadership roles and over half the membership is female.

Although most members practise Druidry on their own, there are over ninety groups around the world that offer the opportunity for members to meet and celebrate together. In addition individual members and groups organise gatherings, retreats, conferences and workshops.

Since 1988 the Order has been offering a comprehensive training in Druidry which covers all three grades of Bard, Ovate and Druid. You will learn more about these three grades and what they do in future lessons. Professor Ronald Hutton, in his 2007 book ‘The Druids’ writes that the distance learning course offered by the Order “arguably represents one of the major documents of British spirituality from the late twentieth century.”

