

Transcript

Which Glastonbury

Dr Marion Bowman:

Normally each summer many thousands of people would be thinking about going to Glastonbury. But people can mean very different things when they say they're going to Glastonbury. For many Glastonbury is synonymous with Glastonbury Festival. Actually, not held in Glastonbury at all.

But for thousands of others each year going to Glastonbury means visiting the town of Glastonbury which is one of the most popular and sacred pilgrimage sites in Britain. Glastonbury attracts a huge variety of visitors and spiritual seekers on account of the myriad claims made for it and the many myths that surround it.

Many are convinced that Glastonbury was once an ancient Celtic centre of goddess worship while others believe there was once a Druidic university there which attracted seekers and scholars from all over Europe and beyond.

For many Christians Glastonbury is significant as the cradle of English Christianity. The site where, according to legend, Joseph of Arimathea established the first Christian church in the British Isles.

Glastonbury has also been associated with Arthurian legend and Glastonbury has been identified with the Isle of Avalon where King Arthur was taken for healing after his last battle.

Certainly, by the Middle Ages Glastonbury Abbey allegedly built on the site of Joseph's church was a major pilgrimage centre. Boasting many relics and a fine library. One of the richest monasteries in the land. However, it was brutally suppressed in 1539 at the time of the Reformation. But throughout the 20th century spiritual seekers, visionaries, diverse religious and spiritual groups have all found themselves drawn to Glastonbury and it's now perceived by many to be the heart chakra of planet Earth. A centre of Earth energies. A node where ley lines converge and generate powerful forces for healing and transformation. New people, ideas and practices are constantly coming to or passing through Glastonbury. And it is in response to these varied pilgrims and visitors that a huge unique spiritual service industry has arisen. And that includes alternative bookshops, a huge variety of healing, shops selling inspirational art and spiritual tools.

So, going to Glastonbury might mean climbing Glastonbury Tor which some see as an ancient three-dimensional ceremonial maze or as the entrance to the fairy kingdom or as an interplanetary

communication centre. Or going to Glastonbury might mean visiting Chalice Well whose red staining waters are associated with the Holy Grail said to have been brought to Glastonbury by Joseph of Arimathea. Others see these as the menstrual flow of the goddess.

There are many Glastonburys. So, going to Glastonbury might mean all or any of these things. Or it might just mean spiritually shopping around.