

# The Witchtower

Pagan Network Magazine

Autumn Equinox/Samhain 2008

**Explore  
Kilmartin Glen**

**Setting up  
an altar**

**Find out about the Great Goddess**

# The Witchtower

Autumn Equinox/Samhain 08

Published by Pagan Network  
www.pagan-network.org  
Email: witchtower@gmail.com

ISSN 1741-5683

## Staff Details

Co-Editor - Twilightgirl  
Co-Editor - Andy Norfolk  
Assistant Editor - Beith-ann  
Reviews Editor - Julia Oakmoon  
Layout/Design - Twilightgirl

## Contributors:

Andy Norfolk  
Twilightgirl  
Beith-ann  
Stilly  
Tricia Nymh  
Julia Oakmoon  
Michael Wolf

All articles are © of the member who submits them.  
Opinions expressed by members do not reflect that  
of Pagan Network or its management committee

## In This Issue...

### 3 Ghostbusters UK

*Drink to Me*

### 6 Ancient Circle

*Astrology and the Wheel of the Year*

### 8 Out of the Shadows

*No more Scapegoats*

### 9 Walk Between Worlds

*The Great Goddess and her brief reign*

### 10 Pagan Postcards

*Kilmartin Glen, Argyll*

### 11 Inner Sanctum

*Setting up an Altar*

### 13 Enchanted Earth

*Stilly's Potting Shed*

### 14 Stir the Cauldron

*Refresh yourself with some Herbal Teas*

### 15 By Candlelight

*Put your feet up and read the story of The Dead Wall*

### 17 Ancient Wisdoms

*Exploring Animal Totems*

### 18 Reviews

*A Calender and Nature's Children: Celebrating the Seasons in a Pagan Family*

## Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn Equinox/Samhain 2008 edition!

As the season turns colder why not try out the herbal tea recipes in our Stir the Cauldron section. Or wrap up warm (don't forget your broolly though) and explore Kilmartin Glen with Beith-ann's Pagan Postcards.

Stilly's Potting Shed this month informs you what needs harvesting and what you should be planting out now ready for next year. Also don't forget to feed the birds and watch out for those cute little hedgehogs hiding in your garden. You can also find out how and why we should all help support badgers through Andy Norfolk's article in our Out of the Shadows section.

In our beginners section this month we explore setting up an altar.

Don't forget that if you'd like to contribute an article to the magazine just drop us an email at the witchtower@gmail.com

Enjoy your reading!

*Twilightgirl and the Editorial Team*

This is only one of hundreds of true cases we have on file related by an English girl, Annie who now lives with her husband Geoffrey in the USA.

# Ghostbusters UK presents... *Drink to Me Only*

case swung open to reveal a door, through which was a passageway. Anne said it gave her a strange feeling and although the room was extremely warm she shivered. The young man told them that it was part of the original old house and

Her story concerns the time when they were on holiday, visiting friends and relatives in Europe. Annie is an accomplished musician, is keen on animal welfare, having worked for many years at Krefelder Zoo, and is also a physical fitness fan, being a very active sportswoman. Geoffrey is also keen on music and physical fitness and is an industrial chemist in the USA. It was whilst they were travelling across the English countryside, before visiting the continent on the last week of their holiday, that Annie's story starts. I can personally vouch for every word as I have known this lady for many years.

Here is Annie's story.....

It was late afternoon by the time Anne and Geoffrey left her father's house, she looked back as they pulled out of the drive, and continued to wave till the shrinking figure disappeared behind the hedgerow and their hire car hungrily began to eat up the black tar macadam surface of the road.

They made their way across country as they had planned, it was a very beautiful run through the English countryside, and they were heading for the Cotswolds. The weather was good, although it was quite cold at that time of year. It was early evening and already getting dark when they arrived in Stow in the Wold, and the orbs of light that surrounded the town twinkled a numinous welcome.

Stow is a quiet hill-top town in the Cotswolds, when travelling south it lies at the end of the Fosse Way, a straight Roman road running from north to south through the county of Warwickshire.

Daniel Defoe, author of Robinson Crusoe, noted that 20,000 sheep were sold at Stow Fair when he visited in the 17th century, but today it is mainly a local show, although some trade in horses and farm equipment is still carried on. In distant times it was the most prosperous wool town in England.

In the square behind the old stone houses is a medieval cross, and most of the houses round the square date from the 17th and 18th centuries. Documented evidence says that Oliver Cromwell imprisoned 1000 Royalists in the 12th century church there after a Civil War battle in 1646.

The old English word 'stow' is usually applied to a town or a village with a church. The rest of this Cotswold place name refers to the town's exposed position on a ridge between the valleys of the Windrush and Evenlode rivers.

Anne says they decided to look for a Hotel

straight away, and in the market square found a delightful old manor house.

At first they thought from its appearance that it might be too expensive for them but went in to enquire. It was a wonderful old hotel, richly decorated in traditional style, and felt as warm and friendly as the convivial staff that greeted their arrival. It was as though they had stepped through the entrance and back in time to an era of eloquent luxury. The rates were reasonable and they were offered a room with a four-poster bed, and told breakfast and an evening meal were available. The couple were shown to a ground floor room by a young woman who ushered them along the corridor and showed them to their room; she scurried forward and closed the curtains, turned back the edge of the Laura Ashley style bedding on the elegant old, ornately carved, four-poster bed, murmured something about the cold weather and bent down to feel the radiator to check that the heating system was working. Having satisfied herself that all was well she smiled and left them to unpack.

They settled themselves quickly into the room and decided that they would like to go out and have a look at the market square, as it was such a pretty little town and well worth exploring.

They found a quaint old 'Pub' and after a pleasant drink and a chat with the locals they returned to the hotel where they enjoyed a delicious meal and a glass of wine, and then retired to the library for coffee. Geoff said they were surrounded by towers of polished oak shelves, stacked thickly with books of every colour and size and to complete the atmosphere were leather armchairs and sofas, into which one could sink, to be willingly hypnotized by the tales of the countless authors that surrounded them.

He said they chattered easily to some of the other guests until one by one they left to go to bed leaving Anne and Geoff alone discussing their impending trip. They decided to have a last glass of beer before retiring and Geoff slipped out to fetch their drinks and returned to say they would be brought into them.

Within minutes a young man entered the room with their drinks and was very willing to talk and happy to answer their questions about the area. He told them a little about the town and the old Manor house in which they were staying, and then asked if they wanted to see a secret passageway. He walked quietly across the thick piled carpet to the corner of the room and as he moved part of the fittings on one of the shelves a section of the book-

dated back to the troubled times of Henry the Eighth in the 16th century, and that this was a priest hole which once had a passageway that led secretly to the church next door. As he spoke she wondered whether those poor unfortunate Royalists imprisoned there by Cromwell, after a Civil War battle in 1646, could have used this eerie connection.

She said they were fascinated at the sight of this secret passageway, and as she moved nearer for a closer inspection she felt musty smelling air pass over her as she tentatively entered the dark dank opening. Unaccustomed to the all enveloping darkness but feeling an overpowering urge to explore further she inched forward and stretched out her hand to feel her way, and gasped aloud as she found something cold and smooth beneath her fingers. Suddenly a voice behind her told her to stop as the floor was uneven and could be dangerous, and hardly daring to breathe she waited, then the click of a switch flooded the area with light. Anne jumped and recoiled at the sudden bright light, expecting to see some evidence of the past there before her, instead the light revealed the incongruous sight of a 20th century vacuum-cleaner, obviously stored there for use on the library carpets.

This instantaneously popped the magical bubble and brought her back to earth with a bang, and laughing they returned to their waiting drinks. The two tall glasses of beer had been placed close-by, on a round wooden table, of the type found in many such hosteleries, which was supported in the centre by a single wooden column.

The young man whose name they now knew as Ben then closed the door and replaced the bookcase, and left them to enjoy their drinks, but the most astonishing experience was yet to unfold before their incredulous eyes.

Geoff and Anne were sitting in comfortable seats by the table discussing their theories about the strange Priest hole, and the rest of the day's events, and whilst they chattered Anne caught a movement out of the corner of her eye and saw that one of the glasses was moving slightly towards them from the middle of the table. Anne thought it was probably wet on the bottom, and that it was slipping along the surface on a wet patch. So to ease her curiosity she pulled a paper tissue from a box nearby and picked up and wiped the bottom of the glass and the table, and replaced the glass. They continued to talk together but this time she paid a little more attention to the glass, and as she watched, it moved several inches towards them again.



Anne then asked Geoff if he had seen it, and to her surprise he said he had also been watching this time and that it had definitely moved. With that Anne got down on her hands and knees and examined both the top and the underside of the table, to try to find an answer to the movement, whilst Geoff placed a one pound coin on its edge on the table top to see if would roll, thus showing the top to be tilted - it didn't, so finding nothing untoward they then examined the glass again, but could find no reason for the strange movement. She said they made a joke of the whole incident and she said laughingly that 'there must be ghosts here!'

Once again the glass was replaced on the table. They continued chatting and laughing, when suddenly the glass shot violently across the table, and then flew into the air straight at Geoff, emptying the entire contents over his trousers and the carpet. It really flew at him, she said and there was no mistake about it, they both saw it but could do nothing to stop it because it was so fast, like an old-fashioned cowboy movie, when the bartender throws the drinks sliding down the bar!

She said it still makes the hair on the back of her neck prickle when she thinks about it. At the time they both leapt to their feet Geoff was cross and shouted, 'what the Hell' and she responded to the shock by saying aloud to the presence, she felt may be there, "Now don't think you're going to frighten me." Geoff was a commonsensical man, not given to what he called 'flights of fancy' but he could find no logical explanation to the incident and that annoyed him, and he tried to brush away the icy wet liquid as it soaked through his trousers.

Geoff was so wet that they thought it was best if they went straight to their room and got themselves ready for bed. He went to the bathroom for a shower, and Anne picked up his wet trousers and tried to sponge out the smell of the hops from his clothes. She then placed them over the bathroom radiator, and got herself ready for bed, with the incidents of the day running round and round in her mind.

Even though the day had been strange, Geoff and Anne had no trouble sleeping that night as the long journey, good meal and bottle of wine, and the warm soft bed had a duly soporific effect upon them both.

The next morning, they awoke early and lay talking for a while about the previous night's events. Finally, not being able to find a completely rational answer to what had happened, they made a cup of tea and Anne opened the bedroom curtains. She stood staring for a moment and then called Geoff to the window, there directly outside their bedroom window stood the church and the graveyard with several very ancient looking graves only a few feet from where they stood, Ann laughed saying they must be in the 'dead centre' of the town.

After breakfast Anne began packing before they moved on to Bristol and Stonehenge.

Alone in the room she moved about collecting the remainder of their belongings. Their open suitcase was on the top of an X-shaped stand, the type found in a lot of hotels to save the bed from being damaged by heavy luggage. She added her nightgown and Geoff's pyjamas to the clothes already packed, and then remembered his trousers drying on the radiator from the previous night's adventures. Walking quickly into the bathroom she picked up the trousers and turned to add them to the already packed case and stood back to look about her, to check for items forgotten.

Before she had a chance to move she watched rooted to the spot as the stand shook so violently that the trousers she had just added fell out onto the floor.

Anne stood for a moment looking down at the item of clothing lying quite still at her feet, then stepped back, stooped down and picked up the trousers, re-folded them and placed them resolutely back on top of the other clothes, and shaking her head snapped the lid of the case firmly shut locking the catches, and placed it close to the door ready to be taken to the car.

She was beginning to feel that she would be glad to be out of this strange hotel but decided not to say anything to Geoff about the shuddering case and busied herself checking the room for anything they may have missed. After the latest incident she looked at the case stand and ran her hands down the wooden frame, to check it out, and finding nothing untoward she folded it up, collapsing it flat, and placed it out of the way against the wall, and continued to tidy the room. When everything looked straight Anne went over to the mirror and started to brush her hair to be ready to leave. The room was 'L' shaped, and she had turned the corner to be able to use the mirror. She was just returning back into the main area, where the bed was, when the carefully folded and propped suitcase stand suddenly flew several feet across the room.

Although it landed harmlessly enough, it gave her quite a shock and she reacted instinctively looking around the room she remembers saying aloud, to no one in particular, 'Now look, I don't think this is very funny, but you are not going to frighten me.' Then she carefully picked up the stand and put it back

against the wall and just stood staring at it for what seemed several minutes, but nothing else moved. On reflection, she said she was

surprised at how calm she remained, but I suppose you never really know how you will react to unusual happenings until they actually occur, and having worked most her life with wild animals she was always ready for the unexpected, but this was all getting a little too strange.

Finally Anne says; she and Geoff left the hotel and went on to finish the rest of their holiday as planned which they are glad to say was without further incident.

They have discussed the strange happenings at the hotel and have promised themselves that one-day they will return there for a trip down memory lane. Geoff is a sceptic as far as the paranormal is concerned but even he will admit he can find no answer to what happened when he was on the receiving end of the flying glass of beer. Anne was brought up to be open-minded about such things, as her mother was very sensitive to strange phenomena, and said that they have had unusual, unexplained things happen to several members of their family' but this was odd to say the least

### Comments

I find Anne's story very interesting. I know her well enough to accept that she would not make up such a story, she would have no reason to do so, and agree with her that her husband is very sceptical about paranormal phenomena - they did investigate the table in the library very thoroughly at the time and could find no reason for what happened. They were both witness to the glass first moving and then 'flying' at Geoff, soaking him with its contents, although the glass did not contact Geoff and fell harmlessly to the floor which in itself is quite strange, as it had moved so fast.

She has tried to explain away Geoff's trousers falling out of the suitcase by saying that she must have knocked the case and dislodged them, but also admits that she saw the suitcase shake violently and was not close enough to touch it at the time!

There is also little doubt that the suitcase stand did fly across the room toward her but neither she nor it came to any harm, which is often reported when such phenomena occur.

The case shows -

1. A type of apparitional haunting even though a ghost/apparition/phantom proper was not observed at the time, a presence was felt within the area.

2. A substantial amount of RSPK (Recurrent Spontaneous Psychokinesis) is evident - yet it does not follow a typical poltergeist type haunting.

Both Geoff and Ann are rational, hard working people and do not seek prominence of any kind. They discussed with me what happened to them on that night and they have of course given me their permission to put this case into print since then. I have done so in the honest opinion that I feel something strange and unaccountable did happen to them in this hotel. I have changed their names in an effort to keep their identity from prying eyes as, like myself, they value their anonymity.



They are both confident in their description of the incidents involved -

1. The glass did not slip off the table, it flew through the air with some considerable force - In Anne's words "Like a glass being thrown down a bar in an old 'Western' style movie".

2. Although Anne tries to logically explain her husband's trousers falling out of the case - she also admits that the case did shake violently on the stand - I suppose there could have been a logical explanation for this - but at the time of the event she can think of none - and certainly there were no earthquakes reported at that time - and the room was situated in a quiet area away from any traffic from the local roads, adjacent to a graveyard attached to the local church.

3. Geoff says, although he did not witness it, he knows his wife would not exaggerate about the case stand flying across the room - after all why should she - there is no benefit I can think of for so doing, in fact to the contrary, it could be thought, unless you know the couple as well as I do, that they may be a little odd. Nothing could be further from the truth. I feel it only right that Geoff and Anne should have the last word on the matter.

Anne says -

"We know that our extraordinary experiences in Stow will probably be just another ghost story but to us they were very real. Even the passing of time and a distance of thousands of miles does not stop the hair prickling on the back of my neck when I think of what happened on that cold winter's night, in a little English town in the Cotswolds."

Geoff says "I find it very difficult to accept what happened and if I had not been there to witness the strange events would not have found it easy to believe - but it did happen, and I cannot explain why, which I find very frustrating."

**Hypothesis**

If we accept Annie's story as a true account of her and Geoffrey's experiences we could say it was an unusual poltergeist type haunting.

So if we have a 'ghost' that is a conscious entity, could that entity be observing and in some way as yet ill understood, interacting with the living participants in this curious encounter?

Could the unseen world be impinging upon our realm of existence and an entity or entities have an interest in what we are doing?

And if we can to some extent accept that hypothesis, then the next logical step would be to further surmise that the entity in question in this particular case has a male orientation and that, not to make too fine a point about it, has taken a liking to Anne, and further more resents Geoffrey, who is of course the male in her life.

The chagrin of such an entity would no doubt be considerably relieved by the act of throwing the booze over Geoffrey. It certainly put Geoffrey out of countenance, and brought the comfortable relaxing evening to an abrupt ending.

Then to cap it all, when the time comes for them to leave, the suitcase holder is thrown forcibly across the room, giving

Anne a bit of a scare, but it is really a sort of farewell gesture in the manner of "well OK, so go; what do I care anyway!" - Perhaps a bit of sour grapes there?

The RSPK energy, which may emanate from a locus person of a poltergeist haunting, does not seem at all applicable in this case.

We would be the first to agree that there is a lot of generalising from the particular here, but it seems that any alternative suggestions needlessly complicate a problem, which is in any case quite complicated enough.

Certainly something actually happened, and certainly there are other possibilities and other ways of interpreting the events as told. But when all is said and done, it is a fascinating account and, until further evidence concerning the Unknown World comes to light, we surely must be satisfied to abide by the present interpretation.

**Finally**

During the past year I visited the Hotel concerned in this case. When I arrived there was just one young lady in reception who appeared extremely busy with a very demanding telephone. She apologised for keeping me waiting and I made tentative enquiries about the hotel tariff and went on to ask about the 'priest hole' that I had been told was in the lounge/library - she agreed that there was such a place in the hotel and pointed out that it was mentioned in the hotel Tariff/Guide, which she produced for me from beneath the desk.

I explained that I was part of a group that investigated unusual phenomena and she asked if I were a medium, to which I said that I was not.

Then she explained very apologetically that she could not show me the priest hole concerned as the hotel was full of guests using the facilities, as she seemed a little uncomfortable and extremely busy I thanked her and added that a stay in the hotel would be very interesting. She agreed and said I would be most welcome, and suggested I take a tour of the gardens and look at the menu open to non-residents. I said my husband was waiting for me with our two dogs at the car, she said very apologetically that the hotel could not accommodate dogs, and then returned to another enquiry from the telephone.

After such a brief encounter I went out into the extensive and beautiful gardens for a look around. I did take some photographs of the

back of the hotel and saw just how very close the bedroom concerned was to the graveyard, but was this any reason for thinking that such an unusual occurrence was more likely to happen - in this case I don't think so, as the close proximity to the graveyard was not discovered until the following morning by the couple concerned, as they had arrived in the dark and the maid had drawn the curtains, and therefore the graveyard being so close would not have had a disturbing effect upon Anne or Geoff, who are sensible people not given to either irrational behaviour or exaggerating stories.

So this case was added to the many we have on file as an unusual and unexplained anomaly which would augur a more thorough investigation. Maybe one day a stay in this particular hotel would be on the cards - watch this space!

By Tricia Nymh ©  
<http://www.ghostbustersuk.co.uk/>

**The Witchtower  
Subscriptions Options  
for Web Members**

All full members receive access to a PDF version of the Witchtower Magazine on its release date as part of their membership. However, web members can only access the free PDF version of the magazine after a significant time period has passed, and by this time a lot of the information in the magazine is out of date.

So, if you would like to receive a PDF version of the magazine on its day of release, without having to become a full member, you can subscribe to the magazine.

The cost of subscription for the PDF version of the magazine is either £1 per PDF issue or £4 for one years worth of PDF issues as released (totally 4 issues).

If you would like to subscribe to the magazine please email [wichtower@gmail.com](mailto:wichtower@gmail.com) and we will provide you with payment information.



Distance between Hotel and the graveyard

# Ancient Circle

We come to the Autumn part of our journey but first, we are dealing with the element of:-

## The Element of Air

Gemini, Libra, Aquarius.

The third element that we find in the Zodiac is Air. It is the element of communication. If you think about the qualities of air, in the form of gasses, it is all around us, it touches everything and when you consider that little can exist in a vacuum it shows us how very important air is in our lives. If we can live three weeks without food and three days without water, as with warmth, we can only really last thirty seconds without air.

It is totally unfettered and practically impossible to control unless we contain it in a balloon or an inflatable dingy. We can harness the wind as in sailing ships, windmills or wind turbines, but we cannot control it. As sailors over the centuries have discovered, to depend on the wind is to depend on the whims of nature. When it's not there, you can't manufacture it. The air that we breathe is a mixture of gasses, but they are all vaguely of the same structure. It is the most "liquid" of the elements in the fact that it flows most freely. Water has form, air doesn't. It can contain the oxygen to fuel fire or blow it out. Fire and water together make water vapour, both a gas and a form of water.

Air is linked with the THINKING psychological type so we can see that a lot of air's existence is in the head. The keywords are COMMUNICATION, KNOWLEDGE, MENTALITY and LOGIC. To an air person the phrase "I think therefore I am" is the stuff of life and unless there is a plausible theory to it, it doesn't exist.

Air types find their security in communicating with others, Geminis just talk, Librans like to communicate affection and Aquarius likes to tell us what we should do to save mankind. They like to structure their thoughts and pass them on. A lot of journalists and broadcasters happen to be Air signs and so do a lot of romantic novelists. Air signs can't keep a secret and they don't see why the hell they should. Information should be shared and enjoyed by everyone. It is the stuff of life, where would mankind be today if everyone kept everything a secret. They are not the most discrete element.

Air signs need to understand everything; they need to make systems to describe every

function in the universe. Their life work is to understand it all. They love groups, from the writer's guild to 'Star Struck Weirdos Who Believe Everything Debating Society,' it is bound to be peopled by air signs. This doesn't mean that air signs are particularly glib, (there would be a larger turnover of members in the S.S.W.W.B.E.D.S. than there would in the writer's guild) it just means that they are particularly nosy and particular know-alls too.

Air people need friends; they need others to bounce ideas off of, to share things with, to convert to their way of thinking. There is nothing more smug than an air sign that has got his message well and truly across.

For all their intelligence, air signs have a charming, childlike quality which is caused by a continuing sense of wonder. They are playful, mischievous, trusting, idealistic and emotionally naive. They can also be clingy, dependent, egocentric and prone to tantrums. However, they always have a good reason for being like this and lack the feelings of guilt and responsibility that the other elements are racked with.

Because of their rational response to everything, they are usually accused of being rather cold and stand-offish, even the romantic Libran is more in love with love than they are with a particular person. The reason is this - Air needs space to move and be themselves, and any form of emotional or practical demand on them effects this. They easily get claustrophobic when the word commitment is mentioned and are best as free-lancers or new-age travellers. Give an Air sign a ticket to the world and you won't see their heels for dust.

The correspondences for Air are fairly obvious. Communication and mental pursuits as well as travel and moving house. Mercury is the 'airiest' planet being the swiftest moving in the solar system and from the Earth's perspective, he moves around with the Sun. If you have the necessary tables and can read them, look at the position and aspects of Mercury if you want to work with Air for any reason. Obviously the Moon in the Air signs is also a good time. Use Air correspondences when you want to get your message across, pass an exam or travelling to learn or achieve something. It is a most stimulating element.

## The 'Autumn' Signs

The turning of the seasons and the running down of nature towards sleep is reflected in the signs. The preparation for the coming coldness. During Cardinal Libra there is the final hectic gathering of the late harvest, with Scorpio stabilising and focusing on what is to come with the final blast of Mutable Sag. as the Sun reaches its weakest point.

# Astrology and the Wheel of the Year

## Libra

Element:- Air.  
Quality:- Cardinal.  
Ruler:- Venus.  
Keyword:- Harmony.

The 'glyph for Libra stands for the scales, which is rather appropriate as its start coincides with the Autumnal equinox, the time of the year when day and night are exactly the same length. After this the nights will draw in. It is a time of the year when the larger animals are beginning to sort out their future family. Rutting starts and vying to be the dominant male also gets under way. On the whole, Libra is the most aware of the signs of the importance of polarity, of the Male/Female balance and this shows up in nature as being the time when the balance swings from the light part of the year to the dark part

Although Libra has the reputation of being always in love, they are more in love with love than they are with anyone in particular. Remember, Libra is an air sign and it is the IDEA of romance and sharing with another person that is important. The balance of the year is reflected in the need for Libra always to be in harmony. They are the diplomats and the counsellors as well as the generals because they always have an idea of what someone else is going through or thinking. 'If I were in their shoes I would do ....' is a natural statement for Libra, and they usually get it right. They listen well because they are aware of the importance of sharing, especially information

Again, this is another sign where you shouldn't be fooled by their reputation for fairness and think that they can be a bit of a push-over. Oh YES!! they can be easily flattered and cajoled into all sorts of things, and their reputation for indecisiveness is well earned, however, BALANCE is the important thing to them, and if you remember rightly our first female Prime Minister was a Libran and she could not be accused of being sweetness and light all the time, whatever else she could be accused of.

When Libra perceives an imbalance, real or imagined they will push strongly in the other direction to try and balance things. And being an Air sign, at worse

By  
Beith-ann



# Ancient

# Circle

# Astrology and the Wheel of the Year

can be just as opinionated as a 'clever dick' Gemini or 'holier than thou' Aquarius, THEY KNOW BEST and 'is not for turning' until the balance has been redressed. Again, Libra is not the sign of 'open enemies' for nothing.

## Scorpio

Element:- Water.  
Quality:- Fixed  
Ruler:-Pluto/Mars.  
Keyword:- Death/Rebirth.

The main pre-occupations of the Scorpion is said to be sex and death and this is shown quite clearly in nature. It contains the Halloween or Samhain festival of the dead and ancestors. It coincides with the time before freezers and central heating, when the animals were brought down from the summer pastures and any who were not going to survive the winter or for whom there was not going to be enough feed to see them through, were slaughtered and preserved as well as possible. The rut was also well under way so that any young born would have a good chance of survival because they came into the world as the weather picked up. It was also a time when people were more aware of mortality than at any other time of the year.

Scorpio gets a very bad press in this day and age. Mainly because the Scorpio personality is concerned with the things that most of the rest of society find baffling or taboo. This time of year is a sensitive time of year when we tend to have to come to terms with a whole lot of things we would rather not face up to. These are the sort of things Scorpio knows instinctively, they are a sensitive sign. They may not show it but they are probably the most sensitive sign, psychically and emotionally. They have to find a balance between the femininity of the Water element and the masculinity of their ruling planets. When they do it is heaven for their friends, hell for their enemies

It is easy to cut Scorpio to the quick; it is not so easy to escape the vengeance they are likely to pour upon you. They will wait for literally years to get their own back and just when you thought it was safe, POW you won't see it coming and you won't know where it came from. That is half the fun for secretive Scorpio, knowing something you don't know. And they won't forgive you, they can quite easily forget you exist afterwards.

You would think butter wouldn't melt in their mouths but look behind a Scorpio eyes and you will see a certain smugness that comes

from knowing more about you than you know about yourself.

On the plus side, Scorpio is a fixed sign and you'll never get anyone more loyal to you once you have been chosen by them, that is why they are so hurt if you let them down. They would do their damndest to make sure they don't let you down. They are intense in their love for you; they don't believe that anything less than intensity of emotions is valid. And SEXY!!! you bet!! So, sex, death and internal journeys, keywords for the Scorpio time of year and personality

## Sagittarius

Element:- Fire.  
Quality:- Mutable.  
Ruler:- Jupiter  
Keyword:- Magnanimity.

There seems to be a bit of a dichotomy here, a sunny upbeat sign which marks perhaps the beginning of the darkest part of the year. However, the generosity of Sagittarius is reflected in the need for co-operation to prepare for the oncoming winter. It is the change-over from Autumn to Winter. Also, there are a lot of festivals of light held around this time of year like Divali or Christmas, both of which ostensibly celebrate the re-birth of the Sun/Son. It is also the sign of orthodox religion, which also reflects the number of religious ceremonies held during the Sun's journey through this part of the zodiac.

Because of their ruler, Jupiter, Sagittarius has the reputation for being generous and magnanimous. Well, this is true up to a point, but their generosity comes from giving what they think you need, thinking you ought to be grateful, instead of asking what you need. They have large, expansive personalities and always give out a lot of warmth. But, like all fire signs, it is because they want to shine.

Sag. will shine by the amount they know, and like to tell you all about it. They like to talk, rather a lot actually and they are the type of people who will walk into the room, make a statement completely out of context with whatever else is going on, put everyone off their stride and walk out of the room again

They come over as know-all, which is exactly what they are, irritatingly enough. Their pursuit of knowledge and the need to find out as much as they can about any subject means that you can very seldom catch them out when it comes to knowing about anything. They don't tend to make statements that they can't back up with facts, although they can be rash in other areas of their lives

They can see the greater view but can't be bothered with detail which is where they fall

down a lot of the time. They take risks and can be over-optimistic and trust too much to luck. Mind you, more often than not they tend to succeed because they have an innate sense of good judgement

They are the story tellers and bards of the Zodiac, and the mythmakers, taking the bare bones of a story and making it into something special and allegorical. They love performing and are always entertaining. A must for an impressive Yuletide dinner party guest, if you can take what they say with a pinch of salt (they are known to exaggerate a bit you know).

So, that about wraps it up for the Autumn signs. In the final part I will be dealing with Earth and the signs Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces

By  
Beith-ann

# Out Of The Shadows

## No more Scapegoats

We probably all know badgers from Rupert Bear's friend Bill and of course Mr Badger in "Wind in the Willows" as friendly and trustworthy characters of great integrity. I love to see them ambling gently along a country road or path looking as though they are some sort of animal child playing dressing up who has borrowed their granny's best fur coat which is too big for them. They eat earthworms, but are omnivorous and will eat carrion and particularly like the grubs on wasps and bee nests and will also dig up bulbs.

Perhaps because they are nocturnal, although they are quite common, there is relatively little folklore about badgers. Grian turned the sons of Conall into badgers because they attacked her sidh at Cnoc Greine and Cormaic Geileng then hunted, killed and ate them. Adamnan says in his life of St Columba that "a Pictish magus or holy man is named Brocan, 'badger'. Some strange stories have been told about them. Edward Topsell wrote in 1658. "He hath very sharp teeth and is therefore accounted a deep-biting beast: his legs (as some say) are longer on the right side than on the left, and therefore he runneth best when he getteth to the side of an hill". They were once regarded as good to eat and jugged badger was a Boxing Day dish in Somerset. An ointment of their grease was used for healing wounds, their hair for shaving brushes and their skins for sporrans and also "The skin being well-dressed is very warm and comfortable for ancient people who are troubled with paralytic disorders." (Neal 1948). They don't appear much in Pagan lore - no mention of them in the "Druid Animal Oracle" for example, or in Doreen Valiente's "Natural Magic". However the general view seems to be that they are associated with the element earth and are tenacious and wise.

It's very odd that creatures, which were seen as useful and apparently held in some affection, were severely persecuted for centuries. Badger baiting was outlawed in the Cruelty to Animals Act 1835, but carried on, as we know. Further laws were passed of which the most important were in 1973, 1981, 1991 and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The last law gives a great deal of protection to this animal, which is much loved by the general public, but which many will only ever have seen on the television.

Of course this story hasn't mentioned TB yet. Cattle were tested for bovine TB from about 1935 and there is clearly some link between badgers, cattle and bovine TB. Did the cattle give it to the badgers first? How does it get from one species to the other? The government started to kill badgers as a means of controlling the disease as long ago as 1975, following the discovery of a badger that tested positive for TB. Between 1975 and 1995 it was estimated that some 30,000 badgers were killed. Did this stop bovine TB? No! Did it slow its spread down? No! In May 2005 the results of a study of TB by Environmental Research Group in Oxford published in the journal "Nature" showed that actually cattle movements were by far the most

*Brocks snuffle from their holt within  
A written root of blackthorn old...  
They stretch and snort and sniff the air,  
Then sit and plan the night's affair*

Eden Phillpotts, "The Badgers"

important factor in the spread of this disease.



Finally after a very extensive research programme lasting for 10 years and involving the killing of many more badgers in June 2007 the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB, published their final report "Bovine TB: The Scientific Evidence".

(Available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/isg/index.htm>) Please note that this is the independent scientific group. Their findings were published in peer reviewed journals as they proceeded and were closely scrutinised. Their conclusion repeated in several places in this report are that "badger culling can make no meaningful contribution to cattle TB control in Britain".

In July 2007 Sir David King, the government's scientific adviser published a report on Bovine TB. In it he said "the removal of badgers could make a significant contribution to the control of cattle TB in those areas of England where there is a high and persistent incidence of TB in cattle". This was clearly complete nonsense and provoked a strong response from members of the ISG who explained why it was wrong (also available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/isg/index.htm>). King and his cronies are wrong and have misinterpreted the scientific evidence. Luckily it seems that the government has realised this and Hilary Benn announced in July this year that there would be no cull. Don't assume that this means badgers are safe.



Benn's announcement provoked outraged responses from those who have probably never read the ISG report, or perhaps don't want to. They are trying to claim that he ignored the scientific evidence. He didn't. What he did was to follow the scientific evidence from the ISG and ignore the flawed interpretation of it by King. The farming lobby is up in arms and still want to scapegoat badgers, even though it is now clear that killing even more of them will do nothing to solve the problem and that the best way to deal with bovine TB is better cattle movement controls and the development of a vaccine. Unfortunately it seems some MPs don't understand the science either. What this means is that there will be great pressure on the government to reverse its decision and that meanwhile some farmers may act illegally to persecute badgers.

Does this matter to Pagans? I believe it does. If we are concerned about the place we live and what we share it with, then I think we have a responsibility to care for it and them. If you want to do something on this issue join your local badger group and keep an eye out for illegal badger killing. You can find out more about the current situation at The Badger Trust <http://www.nfbg.org.uk/Content/Home.asp> and about local badger groups at <http://www.nfbg.org.uk/content/Groups.asp>





# Walk Between Worlds

## The great goddess and her brief reign

In the late 1960s I was finding my way in the world and trying to make sense of things that were happening to me and around me. I read a many of the great sacred texts and a lot of other things besides, though there were very few books on Paganism at the time. One of the books that I read that had a lot of influence on me at the time was "The White Goddess" by Robert Graves. The idea of female deity was something that was part of the beliefs of the people I mixed with.

Now we all know there's a 'Great Goddess', an Earth Mother widely venerated in prehistory throughout Western Europe and perhaps more widely still. This idea goes back further than Graves and it may come from a Greek myth about the mating of a male sky god and a female earth to make the cosmos. Johann Jakob Bachofen probably began the modern idea of female power in prehistory in his book "Mutterrecht", (Mother-Right), published in 1861. Sir James Frazer added to the story with his descriptions in "The Golden Bough", published between 1911 and 1915, of the 'Great Goddess' and her male son/consort 'The Dying God'.

A plethora of books amplified this theme and many blended psychology and archaeology absorbing Jung's view that the 'Great Goddess' was an archetypal primal being representing the unconscious. For example Glyn Daniel, who was one the foremost archaeologists of his time, wrote 'The great megalithic tomb builders of Western Europe were imbued by a religious faith, were devotees of a goddess whose face glares out from pot and phalange idol and in the dark shadows of the tomb walls, whose image is twisted into the geometry of Portuguese schist plaques and the rich carvings of Gavrinis and New Grange' (in "The Megalith Builders of Western Europe" published in 1958). A year later EO James published "The Cult of the Mother Goddess" about the importance and ubiquity of the worship of the 'Great Goddess' in prehistory and said that this was "an essential element very deeply laid... centred in and around the mysterious processes of fecundity, birth and generation". For archaeologists and other academics it was an established fact that there had been a 'Great Goddess' and the archaeological discoveries in Greece, Malta and north-western Europe were interpreted to fit this idea. In 1967 James Mellaart published the results of his excavations at Çatalhüyük between 1961 and 1965 and claimed that this was a centre of 'Great Goddess' worship. Many of you will have heard of Çatalhüyük because of Mellaart's work. Many more of you will have heard of Marija Gimbutas and her books on the place of the Goddess in prehistoric Europe the first of which was published in 1974.

So perhaps it's not surprising that in the late 60s people like me were discovering that our feelings of connectedness with the land and nature and the deities of it could be seen as a modern recognition of The Great Goddess of the earth. Oops! Just as we were finding our feet, the ground was being pulled from underneath us, only most of us didn't notice. You see the archaeologists who had told everyone about the Great Goddess changed their minds. They led us up the garden path and then quickly ran back the way they had come. In 1968 and 69 as I was finding my path, Peter Ucko was busy showing that assumptions that the earth divinities in that ancient world were wrong and that the way in which figurines had been fitted into the Great Goddess theory didn't fit the facts. Andrew Fleming wrote in World Archaeology magazine in October 1969 pointing out that there was no proof whatever to support the interpretation of many of the abstract prehistoric carvings as representative of the Great Goddess. This process has continued and in current archaeological books, for example the "Penguin Archaeology Guide", you won't find "The Great Goddess".

Meanwhile this change was being quietly ignored and subsequently occasionally railed against very noisily by Pagan authors and especially those belonging to the "Goddess Movement". The way in which this complete reversal of views by archaeologist has been handled by writers from the Pagan, new age, feminist camp has been to simply pretend it hadn't happened. This means that many

books or web sites written by this kind of author now do not refer to current archaeological theory and only quote each other's books as if they were in some parallel world in which this change had not occurred.

For example Marija Gimbutas continued to publish books such as "The Language of the Goddess" in 1989. Web sites continue to tell their visitors that the Great Goddess is alive and well in archaeological theory, when this isn't true and hasn't been for about 40 years. One example is Dr Cristina Biaggi, a sculptor who claims that "According to archaeological, mythological and anthropological evidence, the Great Goddess was probably the principal deity worshipped along the Mediterranean, in Europe, the Near East, much of Russia, North Africa, India and even parts of China during the Upper Paleolithic (30,000-10,000 BCE) and in the Neolithic (roughly 7,000 to 2,500 BPE)." Her full article can be found at <http://www.goddess-pages.com/Issue1/Articles/GreatGoddess.html>. Unfortunately this simply isn't true and hasn't been part of archaeological theory for decades.



Some of the ideas about "The Great Goddess" come from the way that Palaeolithic and Neolithic figurines used to be interpreted by archaeologists. The ones we all know, such as the Venus of Willendorf with her woolly hat pulled down over her eyes, are rare. Most of the figurines are not identifiably female and of those that are most do not show the fertility characteristics which some see as being representative of "The Great Goddess". There is even considerable debate about whether the exaggerated female form of some is representative of fertility or perhaps "merely" womanhood. Other central planks of the Great Goddess concept are rotten or missing entirely. Although some feminist writers still claim that it is the foremost Goddess site, Çatalhüyük is now explained very differently by archaeologists. Bluntly there is now seen to be no evidence for matriarchy there and no evidence for a Great Mother Goddess being universally worshipped there. The same seems now to be true of Malta, where actually only about half the figurines are the supposedly classical fat figures of which few are certainly female and where there is evidence of a patriarchal society.

So - where does this leave me, and those like me, who have a soft spot for the Goddess? Well in my case in much the same place I was in the late 1960s. Not at the end of the garden path, but certainly in a garden in which the natural world, my part in it and how I relate to it are an essential part of my beliefs and in which divinities of place and the land are very important indeed. You see I could never quite see the "Great Goddess" as more than a convenient way of explaining attitudes to female divinity throughout the world. Obviously there were, and are, a great many goddesses worshipped in many different places and contexts. I had read a great deal of sacred texts and there were great differences between, say The Mahabharata, and the attitudes in Tibetan Buddhism (I still have a fine poster of the Green Tara from about 1967), the stories of ancient Ireland and the myths of classical Greece. In the years since then, I have had encounters with deities and assorted other world folk in my rituals and daily life. I have no doubt of their existence, but I don't believe in "The Great Goddess" as once espoused by and now abandoned by the archaeologists. It isn't that it might not be handy to have such an easy concept to hand, it is a very empowering idea for many, but I have always felt that the world is a lot more complicated than the simple stories we humans tell ourselves to make sense of it all.

By Andy Norfolk

Recommended further reading

Ronald Hutton, "The Pagan religions of the Ancient British Isles", 1991  
Lucy Goddison and Christine Morris (editors), "Ancient Goddesses", 1998



Kilmartin Glen, Argyll  
Rock Art Heaven

# Pagan Postcards

If you ever get a chance to explore Argyll in the West of Scotland, please make a point of stopping off in Kilmartin Glen. If you don't, you will miss an area that is a genuine treasure.

It is situated on the A816 between Lochgilphead and Oban, the first thing you will notice about Kilmartin is that it's a quaint little Scottish village with a Hotel, a post office a few houses and a Church. Nothing spectacular until you get out of your car and visit the museum next to the Church. It's only a small museum, but the exhibits show that this is a much more important site than first imagined.

About a mile south of the village lies a line of Cairns called Nether Largie. There are 3 main ones called Nether Largie North, South and Mid. Ok - so they look like a pile of stones, but the entrances are obvious and in Nether Largie Mid, you can scramble up to the top of it and enter it by a heavy metal sliding trap door and some steps. Inside there is a large stone with carvings on it. These are copies of the original, but no less spectacular. These are part of a line of 5 cairns that make up something called the Kilmartin Linear Cemetery.



Copyright Richard M Carr

Nether Largie South is the only chambered Cairn in the group consisting of 4 chambers. These have been excavated and human remains and broken pots have been discovered. It is believed that they were built around 2500 years ago and were used consistently over a period of 1000 years.



Copyright Richard M Carr

On the other side of a single track road, there is one of the most enigmatic stone circles I have ever seen. Actually there are two on the Temple Wood site, one larger and much better preserved than the other. The better preserved southern one is an almost perfect circle -12m (40ft) in diameter- and was one of the few sites around Kilmartin which was treated to a thorough excavation and it seems to have been used for various burials over the years, both inside (a small cist is in the centre of the cairn) and outside the circle. The circle, restored, is shown in its final form with 13 stones, almost covered by a cairn of stones

Excavations leave this cist's date still uncertain though it probably post-dates the surrounding stone circle. Four slabs are set partly below, partly above ground, with no capstone. It was originally covered by a cairn with a ring of kerb stones. Cremated remains lay within the cist.

Through the excavations (1929 and 1974-9) the sequence of structures has been established; the earliest construction was a circle of 22 stones. Two were decorated with concentric circles and a double spiral.

Around the end of the 18th century a hoard of coins, presumably medieval, was found near the centre of the circle. The trees around the circle were planted in the late 19th century and the site was given the name Temple Wood.

The smaller northern circle has about 6 stones remaining and was thought to be aligned to the mid day Winter Solstice Sun.

Also carved on stones on the hill is a bowl shape that water collects in, some undecipherable ogham writings and a shallow footprint (around about a size 9, my companion informed me as he took off his shoe and put his foot in it. However I only have his word that it was a comfortable fit!). No-one knows for sure what these carvings were used for but the assumption is that they were used in Royal inaugurations up to and probably beyond Christian times.

Coming back south towards Lochgilphead and about 7 miles from Kilmartin there is a single track road to the left that takes you to a dedicated car park for Achnabreck. On the rock faces about ¼ mile along the track (uphill I might add) are probably the most extensive groups of rock carvings in Scotland. The most common motif is a hollow or cup surrounded by up to seven rings, often with a gutter running from the cup outwards. Other figures include spirals, multiple rings, peltas, ringed stars and parallel grooves.

As with all examples of this type of rock art nothing is known about the motivation of those who spent hours or days creating these wonders that have been preserved because over the years a layer of turf formed over them. We can only wonder at them when these treasures have been uncovered for our enjoyment.

If you get the chance for a holiday in Argyll, please don't miss out on the ancient sites of Kilmartin Glen. I have heard it described as Rock Art Heaven, and I can confirm that it is.

Peruse this interactive map and see just how extensive the ancient history is around this magical place.

<http://www.kilmartin.org/kilmartin/sites-map.html#mapback>

By Beith-Ann  
All Photographs © R.M Carr



Copyright Richard M Carr

# Inner Sanctum

The series for beginners!

## Altars

Excited about setting up your altar but confused how to do it? Then read on....

Altars come in a variety of shapes and sizes, some traditional in their set up and others more free spirited. Altars can be a permanent or temporary fixture such as for a celebration or ritual. One thing to keep in mind is that there isn't a right or wrong way to have your altar.

When you set up an altar you are creating a sacred space within your home that connects you to the divine within and around you. Your altar will be an expression of yourself and a focal point for your spiritual work. If space is limited you can set up a temporary altar that you bring out for the occasion you need it, or you can have a simple altar that is out of the way or inconspicuous, such as on a windowsill, a shelf, in a drawer!

Altars can be simple or elaborate. A lot of how your altar looks will depend on your personal taste and what feels right for you. Learn to listen to your inner voice and this will guide you with the placement of your altar and altar items. You don't have to buy expensive equipment to grace your altar either, you can use whatever is meaningful to you, whether it is found in nature, bought or something you've made.

Not only does having an altar create sacred space in your home, it can be a place where you sit and mediate, perform magic, divination, or celebrate the Wheel of the Year. You can also have an outdoor altar if you choose to or several altars at various locations such as an office altar on your desk.

What you use for an altar can vary from a small table, cabinet top, kitchen worktop, desk, bookcase, dinner tray etc. But if you live somewhere that makes it impossible for you to have an altar set up permanently, you can spread your altar items around, such as grouping items on shelves, in corners, windowsills, on coffee tables etc. Just about any niche in your home could be used to hold items for your altar. It's always good to remember that it's your intention that is most important when choosing items for your altar, not how expensive or large they are or where they are placed.

If you are going to have an altar that represents the Wheel of the Year, there are many websites online or books that show the correspondences for the Sabbats.

Your altar doesn't have to be static in its contents; in fact having a static altar couldn't be worse. Your altar will grow and change as you do. Don't be afraid to remove an item from your altar if it no longer has any meaning to you. You will probably find that the altar energy will start to reflect your life. If your altar is cluttered, unloved and dusty, you'll find your life reflects this, where as if your altar is tidy, clean and loved then your life will be.

A question that troubles many a beginner is placement of your altar. Every book you read, every website you visit, will more than likely tell you a different placement for your altar and the items on it. It's no wonder there is confusion! But as mentioned earlier, there isn't a right or wrong way. If you are still unsure as to the placement of your altar ask yourself the following questions.

1. What do I plan to use my altar for, and how big/small do I really need it?

2. Do I want to keep my altar private or am I happy for others to see it?

3. Do I feel a spiritual connection to the altar in this area and is it pleasant to look at?

4. Is this area where I want to place the altar safe enough to leave candles burning? (if it isn't and you still feel this area is the best location you could always use flameless candles).

5. Is this area safe from the reach of the tiny inquisitive hands of children and pets and will the area withstand being knocked accidentally?

You can also move your altar around. Don't think to yourself that once you have set it up in one particular place or direction that it has to stay there. You could move it around to various locations in the room every Sabbat if you wanted to. From personal experience I know my altar only feels comfortable to me if it is facing either East or West. North sometimes feels okay but South to me really doesn't feel comfortable, yet I couldn't give you a reason why this is!

As to where you put the items on your altar once it is set up, is again down to you. Mostly this will depend on what your spiritual beliefs are. If you believe in both a Goddess and God, you may choose to divide your altar in half, one half representing the Goddess and the other half representing the God. Usually you'll have items that represent the elements on your altar. Again, depending on your tradition or belief system you may already have set areas where you will place the items you choose to represent the elements, i.e if you have divided your altar in half to represent the masculine and feminine you would choose to place water on the feminine side and fire on the masculine side, or you may choose to follow the four compass directions and place the items that represent the elements so that they correspond with these directions. Really it's whatever works for you and you feel strongly connected to. Using your intuition is your best guide.

If you need to make your altar inconspicuous you could use a shelf or windowsill and have the following representing the elements - a houseplant for earth, a candle for fire, a seashell for water and wind chimes for air. You could have a frame photo of an image that to you represents the Goddess and God. Then to the normal eye your shelf or windowsill would just look like that and not an altar!

Okay, so you've decided where you want to place your altar and you've decided the positions for the element representations. So now what tools do you need?

On the next page is list of tools that usually appear on an altar, but again you don't have to have all these, in fact if you did there wouldn't be much room left for anything else! Choose what feels right to you, rather than what some book insists you can't live without. One thing to note is that some people have negative associations with certain items, this could be from the way they were brought up or just from experiences in their lives, for example, some people associate knives with violence and therefore would be uncomfortable having a knife on their altar or even using one in ritual. There are many things you can use instead if you really do feel you need something to represent a knife such as a letter opener, a pointy stick etc.



# Inner Sanctum

The series for beginners!

**Altar Cloth** - useful if you want to cover up the base of what you are using for an altar, especially if its something that distracts you. It can help with your mind set and has the added benefit of protecting the base of your altar from dripping candle wax.

**Athame** - this is used to direct energy usually when creating a sacred circle.

**Bell** - a ringing bell can be used to clear energy after a ritual or to attract energy or attention

**Boline** - a knife used to cut herbs or carve runes on candles or other objects

**Book of Shadows** - where you record your work or rituals or other information that you consider important for your spiritual work.

**Bowl/Dish** - this holds incense and herbs

**Cauldron** - (3 legged) used to burn things in such as incense and herbs but can also be used to hold spells in liquid form.

**Candles** - different coloured candles can be used to represent the different directions or they can be used to represent the Goddess/God or other deity. When used in spell casting they can represent yourself or others.

**Censer** - a metal incense burner for censuring

**Chalice** - the chalice signifies the Goddess and water. This can be as fancy or as plain as you like. The chalice can be used for ceremonial drink.

**Feather** - can be used to represent air, but also useful for fanning incense and cleansing the aura through smudging.  
Incense - represents air/fire element

**Offering Bowl** - a small dish or bowl where you can place offerings to the Goddess/God.

**Mortar & Pestle** - used to crush/mix herbs & potion recipes

**Pentacle** - (five-point star in circle) usually placed in the centre of the altar.

**Salt** - represents earth element

**Stones or Crystals** - represents the earth element.

**Statuary** - Deity and Spiritual symbols

**Water** - represents water element

**Wand** - Wands can be used for divination and channelling energy. They can be used to cast circles, in place of the athame.

Now you've chosen what you want on your altar it's time to cleanse and dedicate the items. There are several ways you can cleanse an item. With items that won't be damaged easily you can use a sea salt bath. Either wash the item or leave it standing for a while in a solution of sea salt water or bury it in a bowl of dry sea salt. Or you could bury the item in the earth outdoors, but remember to leave a marker so you can find it again! If you feel a particular infinity to the moon, you could leave your items out in moonlight to cleanse and recharge them. Although you will usually need to leave them for a full moon cycle. Smudging is another option and one I personally prefer, especially if some of your items are delicate. Smudging is done by passing the items over the smoke from a bundle of smouldering cedar or sage.

Dedicating an item might sound daunting but it's not. It's simply setting the intention you have for the use of the item. So first pick up your item. Sit quietly and sense the items energy. Focus on the item and clearly visualise what you want to use this item for. Send the image towards the item asking if the item would be willing to be used for the purpose you have in mind. Then await your response. You may feel an increase in the energy of the item, which you may feel is the item saying yes they agree with your intention. If you get no response it could be that your intention isn't clear or that the item has another reason for being in your life. If this happens look at your intention to make sure it's clear. If you still don't get a response from the item try asking the item to reveal to you its reason for coming into your life, then put the item to one side until the reason is revealed. This can be frustrating but it happens to all of us, don't worry about it. Items come into our lives for a reason and leave when they are ready to move on.

By Twilightgirl

## Donate A Book Scheme

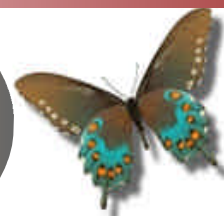
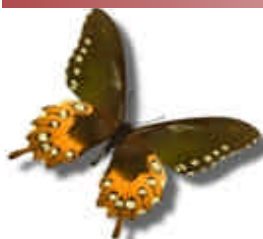
Do you have a Pagan book you no longer want (or were given by that well meaning relative!)?

If so The Witchtower Magazine would be happy to receive it to review. It doesn't matter if it's an old or new book, or whether its Pagan fiction or non fiction.

Unfortunately we are unable to buy the book from you or pay the postage cost, but we would be happy to mention that you donated the book to The Witchtower Magazine for review, and you will get your name mentioned in the magazine, along with a PDF copy of the magazine that your book appears in!

If you do have any books you wish to donate please email us at the [wichtower@gmail.com](mailto:wichtower@gmail.com) to let us know and we'll tell you where to post it.

Don't forget you can always submit your own reviews for publication too!



# ENCHANTED EARTH

## Stilly's Potting Shed

Well hello, I'm just digging over these beds ready for next year. My, my doesn't the year come round quick. Well come down to the shed, I have a couple of beers tucked away somewhere. Ahh, there we are, can't beat a nice cool ale after a bit of graft.

I see you have done very well on your plot this year, well done. Going at this rate you won't need my advice much more, you will be growing stuff better than me. Well we are into the autumn now and there is plenty to do, actually this is probably the busiest time of the year for us down on the allotment.

"What's to do" you say, well let's see. You should be harvesting most of your crops now, especially potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beetroot, courgettes, runner beans, French beans to name a few. You will have to watch out for them frosts as the nights draw in as well as that will put paid to the tender crops. As the crops come out you need to start preparing the ground for next year and for that you need muck and plenty of it. Once you have dug over and weeded you will need to put at least a 2 inch layer across each bed, this helps return the nutrients to the soil that the last crop used. I don't go for that horrible artificial stuff, doesn't do the soil any good and doesn't add structure either.

When you are digging be a bit careful. Make sure you warm up before you start and it is best to take a few breaks as well, mind you, we get enough of those round here especially with Andy about, crikey talk about talk. Anyway, back to the subject in hand something, to drink is advisable (if nothing else I suppose water would do) and never take on too much at once, best to do a little and then come back and do some more, than do too much and have to be laid up for a week with a bad back.

You can start planting some bits and pieces now ready for next spring, broad beans can be planted now along with garlic and Japanese onions, also sweet peas can be started off now and overwintered in a greenhouse or cold frame, peas can be planted although the mice can be a bit of a problem so I normally start these off in lengths of guttering in January.

One of the best times of year as well as the seed catalogues start dropping on the mat. By using these I can decide what I want and then draw up a plan of what I want where this gives me an idea of space and where things will fit. If possible buy from your local garden centre rather than one of the big DIY chains, they will be better informed and will have a wider range of choice. Some items such as Garlic, Onion sets and Potatoes will normally be ordered via mail order to guarantee that they are around before planting rather than trying to get them at the Garden Centre where choice will be limited. Also, after a period of time you will find varieties that you like and grow well in your soil and these may not be varieties that your local GC stocks.

One rule of thumb is to grow 80% of what you know you will like and 20% of new varieties, this year I have experimented with different potatoes and beans, I grew Cannellini beans and borloti beans alongside my normal varieties for a change. I also changed my varieties of

potato from Pentland Javelin and Maris Piper to Kestrel and Sturon, the Kestrel survived the slugs and eel worm OK but were not very good for flavour, the Sturon are still in the ground and have not been lifted yet but are looking the better bet. So I will probably go back to the older varieties. You will always find some varieties like your soil more than others and also, over time, the structure of the soil will change the more manure and compost you add, making it suitable for a larger range of crops.

You will also find crops vary from year to year, for example this year I have really struggled with carrots and parsnips but my beetroot cabbages and beans have been far better than last year. So just because one thing doesn't grow don't give up on it, try the following year and if it fails after that then try a different variety.

Planting onions, well you need to prepare the soil, I find a good covering of chicken manure really helps, the best is the pelleted variety you can get in buckets - it is easier to handle and it covers a large area. You will need to put this on at least 2 weeks before you plant your sets so that it has time to breakdown a bit in the soil. Once you have done this rake the soil over to get a good level surface. Once you have a level surface you need to plant your sets about 6 inches apart and about 1 inch deep or just so the tips are showing, cover with wire netting to prevent the birds from pulling them out. For garlic you will need to plant them about 4 inches deep but the soil preparation is the same.

If you have rhubarb then this will benefit from a mulch of manure as well but leave the crown open as it needs a cold spell to help with promoting growth the following year. Trim your raspberry canes - the canes that have fruited this year need to be cut out, give these a good mulch as well. Blackcurrant bushes can also be trimmed back quite hard, again a good mulch of well rotted compost or manure for these. When mulching soft fruit bushes be careful that the mulch does not touch the stems as this can cause them to rot off.

It is also a good time to clear out and tidy up any cold frames and green houses to make sure they are in tip top condition for next year. Make sure you have enough pots and seed trays and also think about potting and seed compost and if you are going to buy it PLEASE ensure that it is peat free so that we can protect the peat bogs of Ireland and North England.

If you have a lot of leaves then you can make leaf mould - this is an excellent soil conditioner. First of all rake all your leaves then place them in a wire mesh frame and leave for about 12 months to breakdown. Turn your compost every couple of weeks but please be careful as hedgehogs, grass snakes, frogs and toads will find them a nice place to hibernate. This goes for bonfires as well, please check before you set it alight and if Mrs Tiggywinkle is hiding there leave it till the spring and sort it out then.

It is also that time of year for really starting to feed the birds, fatballs will invite Tits and Robins. Seeds will get Robins and Finches. Peanuts will get a variety of birds and Niger seed will attract Goldfinches and Greenfinches. Don't forget to scatter some on the ground for Thrushes, Blackbirds, Dunnocks, and Wrens. You could also start putting up nest boxes now so that they are ready for the spring and the birds are already used to them being there.

Stilly



# Stir the Cauldron

## Herbal Teas

Herbal Teas are made from the roots, bark, leaves, berries and seeds from a variety of plants and herbs. Unlike traditional teas, most herbal teas do not contain caffeine, so are safe to drink before retiring for the night or if you are simply trying to cut back on your daily caffeine intake. Herbal teas come in a wide range of delightful flavours (and some not so delightful depending on your taste buds!) and they can be drunk hot or cold. Herbal teas are reputed to have healing properties and these are absorbed into your body through the tea.

As with any herb or medication caution should be practiced. Herbs should never be used as substitutes for a doctor's prescription. If you are being treated for any illness and are taking prescription medication seek the advice and consent of your doctor prior to taking herbs. Children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers should not take herbs without a doctor's consent.

The most convenient way to make herbal tea is to buy it already made up in a bag, plus you know that this way you're not going to get any surprises in your tea such as a boiled bug or caterpillar! However, if you want a pure flavour with more health benefits then

opt for making your own herbal tea. This is easy to do and you can mix a variety of herbs together to form some unusual flavours.

Herbs can be bought either in dried form from the supermarket or local health store or you can grow your own herbs. If you're going to use fresh herbs, you should tear and bruise the leaves so the aromatic oils can be released into the water. You will also need to use more fresh herbs than you would with dried herbs. With most plants, you can just pluck off a few leaves whenever you want to make tea, although try not to strip your plant bare or you could end up killing it!

If you are making herbal tea consisting of leaves and/or flowers this is called an Infusion. To make an infusion place one or two teaspoonfuls of dried herbs into a tea ball and place this in your cup. Pour on boiling water and place a saucer or cover on top of the cup. Covering the cup enables the herbs to infuse. Leave for around 5-10 minutes. After several experiments you will discover the exact timing for your taste buds. Remove the saucer/cover and tea ball then sit back and prepare to enjoy your tea.

You can also use herbs in a teapot. Place 1-2 teaspoonfuls of dried herb per cup in a teapot, pour on boiling water and give the herbs a stir. Replace the teapot lid and leave for up to 10 minutes. When pouring the tea, use a tea strainer.

If you are making a tea using herbs with a hard woody texture, such as roots, bark or seeds, this is called a decoction. Place the herbs in a non aluminium saucepan and cover the herbs with water. Place a lid on the saucepan and bring to the boil. Once boiled allow the herbs to simmer on a low heat for 10-15 minutes. Then strain and drink.

If you find that your herbal tea isn't sweet enough for your taste buds you can add some honey, a squeeze of lemon or even a sprig of mint.

By Twilightgirl

## recipes

### Wake Me Up Tea

- 1 cup lemon balm leaves
  - 1 cup spearmint leaves
  - 4 tablespoons of grated orange peel
  - 1/2 tablespoon cloves
- Pour the boiling water over the herbs and steep for about 5 mins.

### Bring on the Sunshine Tea

- 3 tbs hibiscus flowers
- 3 tbs mint leaves
- 3 tbs lemongrass
- 1/2 cup chopped pineapple
- 2 oranges, sliced
- 1 papaya, sliced
- 1 mango, sliced

In 2 quarts of water bring the herbs to a boil and leave to steep for 20 minutes. Strain out the herbs. Then mix the fruit in a large jar or bowl and pour the tea over top. Leave in the fridge overnight. Serve chilled with or without the fruit.

### Let It Bee Tea

- 10 fresh purple sage leave
  - 16 fresh lemon balm leaves
  - 12 small mint leaves
  - petals of 1 red rose
  - 6 cups freshly boiling water
- Pour the boiling water over the herbs and steep for about 10 to 20 mins.

### Anise Tea

- 1 cup boiling water
  - 1 tsp. dried anise leaves
  - 1 tsp. honey
- Pour the boiling water over the leaves and steep for about 5 mins. Strain and sweeten with the honey.





# By Candlelight

Stories gathered from all corners of the land

## The Dead Wall

I get a kick out of it, you know? No one ever gets onto me, no one that matters, anyway, and I'm making a hell of a living. I perform a live stage show of "talking to the dead," using a form of sleight of mind called cold reading. Some of these poor bastards actually believe they're talking to their croaked grandfather, aunt, puppy, or whatever-and that's okay. They seem happy. Happy enough to unbend their wallets, so everyone's prancing in daffodils.

So this girl came on to me after the last show. She was a cute brunette with three short lengths of beaded hair on the left side of her head and a killer body. She learned of my "supernatural abilities" from the television commercials I run before arriving in each town. She couldn't have been more than twenty three, but these are the fruits of being a celebrity. I'm just cruising the profiteering band wagon of the '80s. Women just throw themselves at me like I'm a rock star or something. I have lost count in the last couple years.

She wanted to talk to her deceased brother. My assistants ran her credit card information to find the funeral industry had recently billed her for an extremely expensive burial. Looking through the obituaries of her hometown, they deduced her brother had committed suicide.

My well oiled lines for this kind of thing soothed her pleas for details of why he killed himself. She gave me his name and he "spoke to her through me." He assured her he was in a joyous place surrounded by loved ones at peace with happy memories of her.

Yeah. And all good dogs go to Heaven.

Later, I had her backstage for a private reading. Hey, if the mortuary business can take advantage of her grief, why can't I? It's amazing what a little fame can do for you.

\*\*\*

So now I'm heading to a gig on Texas Highway 37. Out of nowhere, the engine begins making this clanging sound like a monkey wrench in a Laundromat dryer. Dammit, I just dropped a sultan's salary on this rig.

I need to get off the road so I take the next exit where a bent and shot up sign announces the town of Finnigan, Texas. It doesn't say Finnigan is seven more miles off the highway.

By the time I limp into town, the wind is picking up and I'm stuck while the local mechanic-Gooper, I could swear his name was-looks at my ride.

I shield my face from blowing sand and see the only place I can wait is a bar named Gary's. I walk into the place noticing it is like an Army barracks, a lot deeper than wide, but

deceptively large. I'm feeling a little nausealately like I have the flu or something, so I figure I might get something to eat to settle my stomach.

About a dozen good old boys are lolling in cheap rotting upholstery to the sound of outdated country music. They tend their interests, from dominoes to two tired pool tables and the liquor bar.

A wall of plaques with photographs hanging from them run to the far end of the building. There, the light bulbs are unlit, leaving the long wall fading down into darkness.

Avoiding a broken stool, I sit. At the other end of the bar is a slight, girlish form in a mocha tan sundress billowing with white flowers. Her back is to me and slight movements reflect a shivering luster off her satin black hair. She is transfixed to a TV wedged above the bar.

I had to see her face, so noticing her empty drink I ask, "Can I buy you a refill?"

"Hi." She turns and flashes a youthful smile. "You surprised me."

My surprise far outweighs hers. Her crystal Caribbean blue eyes offset by lavish indigo hair staggers me to the core. She is a diamond amongst the dirt clods in this drunk hut.

"I think I might get in trouble for buying a drink for an underage cutie." I say, because she is definitely a minor.

She blushes and takes a stool closer to me. "S'ok, I'm eighteen, nobody cares I'm here-I'm just drinking pop." She glances across the room. "That's Dale, the chief of police, over there." She tilts her head toward a chubby, uniformed man absorbed in a game of dominoes.

I motion to the bartender, point to her drink, and look around. "So this is the local hotspot, huh?"

"Hotspot? More like a lukewarm stain."

I smile and offer my hand. "I'm Ricky. Ricky Peterson."

She takes it with a cool softness. "I know who you are. I seen your commercials on the TV."

She pronounces it "Tie Vie" but that's the way they talk around here. I couldn't help but notice her being a perfect mark for a psychic reading and old enough for some "quality time" with me.

"You look thinner in person." She says.

I froze. Time to reroute this seduction. "Well, you know television adds ten pounds." Truth be told, in the last six months I've been dropping pounds like loose change, but I'll gain it back after the stress of the tour.

"What's your name, farm girl?"

"Amy."

"Does your Dad work around here, Amy?"

"Used to before he died. Now he's over there." She doesn't look up or down but over my shoulder with a sour expression to the wall covered with plaques.

"No, I mean his spirit-his soul," I say, turning to look at the wall. It shows a variety of small brass memorials. They are all just names with a year inscribed below, mostly men. "What is that, anyway?"

"The Dead Wall," a baritone voice says from behind me.

I turn to see a tall lean man, holding a pool cue straight up by his side like a castle guard's pike. He is dressed in complete Old West attire. All black except for silver filigree around the edges. He has an Adam's apple sticking out like an internal elbow.

"The Dead Wall? What are you saying? I had you all pegged for Christians," I say, "Heaven or Hell, you know."

"Even Hell has its standards," goes the cowboy and spits into a floor spittoon with uncanny accuracy.

Amy snickers sourly, beyond her years. "Besides, I ain't got a post card or phone call from Heaven yet." She points her chin up at the trophies. "Up there, that's something different."

So I turn around and I'm looking especially at a plaque with borders painted red and blue in the sloppy motif of a toddler. The pictures of four young children and a teenage girl adorn its edges. The inscription is simply "Jim Cadistro," dated this year. A distant bell rings from the boundaries of my brain.

"This Jim fellow must have been a father or a teacher of some kind," I say as I reach out to touch the memorial. "You have to admire people like this because-"

When I touch the placard, something wonky takes place. My hand goes into the brass, breaking the skin of the metal as if it was perpendicular liquid. Something else happens. Happens to my mind. I am hearing someone. Someone else. Someone thinking.

*Animals. That's all they are.*

Someone who is angry.

*Yeah, they're the future of the world and all that other crap, but to me they're just life enders.*

Extremely angry.

*I'm in this miserable cracker box home a ways outta town, with a wife who insists on taking in foster children.*

We need the money we get for them. I can't think of a better solution, so I shut up and sit in the smell of dirty laundry and cat piss enduring the situation. For now.

Always squalling, bawling and needing. They're like pigeons. Disease infested vermin swimming in bacteria, that's all they are.

There are five. My two slack eyed imbeciles, two booger factories whose names I

can never remember, and Courtney, she started it all.

Courtney. So fresh and nubile. Fifteen years old and she don't have a clue how sexy she is. The way she talks, the way she moves, the lines of her body, all cry for the wild. But when I come to her room at night, she only pushes me away. Why doesn't she want me? And now my wife is getting suspicious.

Been a long time in the thinking and more than a few beers before I am out in the yard at three a.m., dousing the siding with gasoline. They're all asleep. I quietly fix long screws in all the doors and windows, sealing them in.

One match is all it takes the fire to embrace the house. The screaming comes a few minutes later. I have my gun in case one gets out, but I'm going listen to the shrieks until they stop before I put the barrel in my mouth.

I stand outside Courtney's bedroom. I laugh while she begs and claws at her window for help.

*So I'm there in the light of the fire, thinking of what they've done to me, listening to their pleas, when I see the damnedest thing. A huge image of a sitting woman, overlaid on the flames.*

*The woman's image competes with the fire for reality. Soon the blaze and the screams are flying away and a different world comes flickering to the forefront.*

I'm at that bar. The bar in Finnigan, Texas.

"He's back," booms the cowboy, chalking his pool stick in front of himself. He makes a mocking face. "Did you have a 'ghostly experience'?"

Dizzy and out of phase with plain sight. Covered with the poison film of Jim Cadistro's insanity, I stumble to the nearest stool and accidentally put my head down in the middle of an ashtray. I rise spitting and bating the butts off my face.

Jim Cadistro. Something important about that name. Jim Cadistro. I shake my head and remember. The girl with the three short beaded braids on the left side of her head. He was her brother.

But we're a hundred miles from nowhere. This doesn't make sense, so I point to the memorial and ask, "How did you get a plaque to this guy? Did he live around here?"

Amy shrugs. "New ones appear all the time, and the rest just move back down to the end of the building." She points to the blackness swallowing the far end of the lengthy room. "We don't ask questions and we sure as hell don't touch 'em like you did." I watch her and the cowboy bow in private laughter.

"She had a name, you know," Amy says, who is definitely on the dark side of thirty now, "Do you even remember?"

I turn to her with a stupid grin feeling a cigarette butt fall from my chin. "What?"

"Her name. The girl with the braids. You spent last night with her."

This is impossible. Amy's hair is now more pewter grey than sable. She is aging before my eyes, and what's with the mind reading routine?

"The girl's name is Twila Somers," Amy says into what now looks like a whiskey sour. "She works for a place called Rozer Pharmaceutical. I guess she's some kind of undiscovered genius. In five years, she's going to find a cure for AIDS. Well, she would have if you hadn't killed her."

"What are you talking about?" This is too

much. "I didn't kill her!" As I speak, I watch Amy age into her '90s or even '100s. Her skin cracks and I see one of her fingernails fall into her drink. The cowboy by her side, who seemed fine a minute ago, now wears the sagging skin of a dying Basset hound.

"You have AIDS, Ricky Peterson," she rasps while standing. "Why do you think you've been ill lately?"

Smiling nervously, I get the schtick. "Oh, okay. This is some kind of mentalism spook show here. You really had me going." I say, edging away. "You ought to take this on the road."

Amy grins at me, a tooth falling out of her wilting face and rattling onto the bar. Her eyes, dancing in the light of youth not a half hour before, are now milky and blind.

I back toward the door as she speaks, her skin falling away in filthy, decayed rags. "In fact you will kill dozens because for the last two years, during the most sexual time of your life, you have been spreading this disease."

A jolt of 200 proof panic and my wise guy image is gone. I crack. Running back to the door, I fumble for the exit. Realizing it has changed to a realistic mural on a solid cement wall, I slump in disbelief.

I turn and suddenly see living, glistening eyes in Amy's dead skull. "And those dozens you will kill will also kill others, unaware of their condition. The numbers will keep doubling as they infect more innocents."

I look to the bartender for help but he is now only a heap of a darkly webbed substance. Frantically searching the room, I see an emaciated woman eating the guts out of a reclining Officer Dale who is unconcerned; as if he is pondering his next dominoes move.

The cowboy is standing aside with the meat of his body dropping away, splattering onto the floor in slimy chunks. Now a near skeletal form, he says, "Time for his walk, Amy." He snatches my arm above the elbow.

I try to scream at his cold, wet touch but can only expel a squeaky chirp. Amy's peeled cadaver quickly moves forward. I try to kick at them, but it is like punching marble statues. In a blink, Amy grabs my other arm.

They drag me toward the far end of the building. Toward an inky howling nothingness. Loose paper flies by into the suction of the icy void. I screech and bawl until my face is a sheet of bubbling snot but they only join in clattering laughter. As they pull me screaming to my fate they stop and briefly point me toward something on the wall.

A plaque inscribed "Ricky Peterson" and today's date. Attached to its edge hanging sideways is a photograph of Twila Somers, smiling with life's promise.

Michael Wolf  
wolfswork@verizon.net

## Shops supporting the Pagan Network Full Members Discount Scheme

### **Black Cats and Broomsticks**

(online shop only)

Website - [www.blackcatsandbroomsticks.co.uk](http://www.blackcatsandbroomsticks.co.uk)

### **Halcyon Daze**

55 Wellfield Road, Roath, Cardiff, CF24 3PA

Tel: 02920 454432

### **Halcyon Daze (little shop of calm)**

1 Westgate, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan Tel:

01446 771166

### **Hippypottermouse**

The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds, LSI 7BR

Website - [www.hippypottermouse.co.uk](http://www.hippypottermouse.co.uk)

### **Madeline Rose**

121 Kirby Road, Leicester, LE3 6BE

Tel: 0116 2536320

### **Moonshadows Realm** (online shop only)

Website - [www.moonshadows-realm.co.uk](http://www.moonshadows-realm.co.uk)

### **Opal Moon**

De Courceys Arcade/Cresswell Lane, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, G12 8AA

Tel: 0141 3386010

### **Pentacle Magazine**

For those in the UK, you can obtain a subscription to Pentacle Magazine for just £12 (instead of £14)

Website - [www.pentaclemagazine.org](http://www.pentaclemagazine.org)

### **The Gem Tree**

Ground Floor, Indoor Market, Leicester, LE1 5HG (Open Tuesday to Saturday 9-5)

Website - [www.thegemtree.com](http://www.thegemtree.com)

### **The Green Cross Toad**

(online shop only)

Website - [www.greencrosstoad.co.uk](http://www.greencrosstoad.co.uk)

### **The Magick Sage**

29 High Rd, Nottingham, NG9 4AF Tel: 0115 9224117

Website - [www.themagicksage.co.uk](http://www.themagicksage.co.uk)

### **Thirteen moons Trading Post**

(online shop only)

Website - Thirteen moons Trading Post

### **Witchcraft Ltd**

10 Benedict street, Glastonbury, BA6 9EX

Website - [www.witchcraftshop.co.uk](http://www.witchcraftshop.co.uk)

# Ancient Wisdoms

## THE FROG

Frogs and water, the two are never far away from each other, so it makes sense that frog represents cleansing, not only of our physical bodies, but also our minds, emotions and environment. If you find yourself holding onto your emotions, especially negative ones or emotions that are no longer useful, frog is the totem to turn to in order to help cleanse yourself of them. Often tears are a good cleansing tool for our emotions or standing under a shower or in a good downpour of rain and allowing any negativity to wash away from you. With frog by your side he might be reminding you not to become swamped by

American Indian cultures believed that Frog called down and controlled the rains. In many cultures frog was revered as a symbol of sexual awakening, fertility and abundance.

## THE SQUIRREL

Squirrel is the boy scout of the animal world - Always be prepared!

Squirrels always seem to be busy, scurrying from one place to the next, gathering nuts and seeds in preparation for winter. Squirrel's behaviour asks if you are so busy rush-

that you have been too quiet recently and not feeling very social, squirrel could show up to tell you to speak up for yourself and observe how others react to you. However, if it's simply that you find the noise around you too distracting it could be that squirrel is telling you that you need to find the quiet and stillness within yourself and quietly observe what is going on around and within you.

by  
Twilightgirl



## Animal Totems

others' emotions or situations. Learn to let their emotions or situations wash over and away from you so you don't become bogged down with them, that way you will be able to help deal with them more clearly. Learning psychic cleansing is another very useful tool for those into whose lives frog has hopped.

Frog often represents transformation and regeneration due to living a life cycle in two stages, from egg to tadpole and then developing into a frog. Frogs are also seen as a symbol of fertility due to the tadpole shape resembling a spermatozoa. Because they live two life cycles frog totems, when they appear, are often regarded as a new start in life or a time of healing and growth.

Because frogs live both in and out of the water, they are linked to two elements, water and earth. Not only do those with frog totems often have the ability to cleanse themselves and those around them but they also have the ability to bring about growth, whether this is through releasing new ideas and dreams using the creative process or bringing out physical growth. Frogs possess sharp eyes on each side of their head enabling them to see in almost all directions. There isn't much that can get past a frog or you if you have frog as a totem. You are able to see what is going on around you and may even show clairvoyant abilities.

Frogs have a very complex language ranging from ribbets to croaks. Often those with a frog totem are good at learning other languages or working with people who have learning disabilities.

There is a lot of mythology surrounding frogs and they have been used in various cultures for making medicine and potions. Some

ing around that you have ignored preparing for a rainy day. Do you need to take time to slow down and look at your life and see what you have planned for the future? By being prepared you can alleviate a lot of life's stresses.

Although squirrel prepares by gathering nuts and seeds and hiding them away in the ground for winter, squirrel is often accused of hoarding. Could this represent your life as it currently is? Are you a hoarder? Is it time you cleared your life of things that you no longer really need? Whenever we create space in our life the universe sends something better to fill the space.

Being agile creatures, Squirrel stay focused on the task at hand, only then bounding off in a burst of endless energy to their next task. Squirrel reminds us that we need to slow down and concentrate on what is important at the time instead of trying to multi task too much and spread our energies too thinly. When one task is complete you can bound off to focus on the next using all your energy. Squirrels are also extremely persistent when there is something they want!

Squirrels are very observant and sociable and often you'll hear them chattering. If you find



# Reviews

By Julia Oakmoon

## The Wheel of the Year Calendar and Year Planner by Stephen R Butler - www.two42.com

Designed and photographed by Stephen R Butler this calendar has a lovely, simple and easy to navigate layout. On the front cover is a diagram of the wheel of the year with elemental and astrological symbols over a peaceful photograph of the sun just peeking over the horizon under starry skies. The photographs are beautifully simple, not a maiden, mother, crone, horned god or otherkin in sight, which is always a blessing

The first page starts at 1 November 2008 which is a refreshing change for those who feel at odds with the calendars which they usually buy and which don't really have much relevance to the way their year runs. The page ends at 21 December - Winter Solstice - which of course means that page two starts on 22 December. Well, I thought, this is going to take a little getting used to until I remembered that the 1st of the month usually passes me by completely unnoticed

The pages are remarkably uncluttered whilst containing lots of useful information such as bank holidays, lunar phases and the point at which the new astrological sign kicks in, as well as a smaller Wheel of the Year in the bottom, right hand corner

And so it continues, each page covering not a month but the period between festivals. I don't know whether any other calendar or diary follows this layout as I don't normally buy specifically pagan ones but I shall certainly enjoy trying this one out to see how it feels

The Year Planner is set out in exactly the same way. Very simply with space to write all the goings on in our increasingly busy lives. I use wall planners to save myself that "oh buggar" moment when I turn the page over on the 3rd and realise that it was someone's birthday or dental appointment on the 1st

Stephen donates £1 from every sale to Friends of the Earth so why not check out his website and, if you're happier with ferns and dandelions than fairies and thin women, get your calendar/wall planner from him and see how it works for you

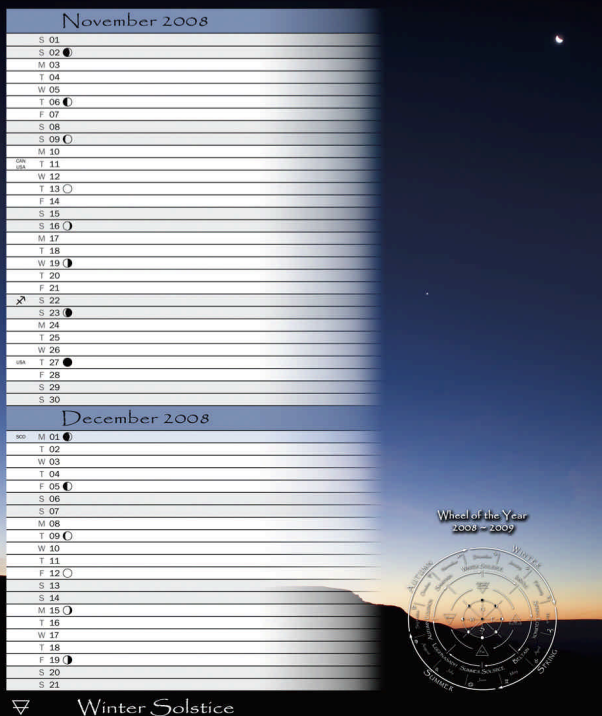
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews

Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews

Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews  
Reviews

## The Wheel of the Year 2008~2009

### Winter Solstice



### A Calendar with a difference

two42 are proud to present the "Wheel of the Year" Calendars and Wall Planners based around the eight seasonal and traditional festivals.

The "Wheel of the Year" is a page per festival format. Nine individual and very beautiful prints form the background for the weeks leading up to each particular festival, with the days each having a one line space in which to make notes. There are also icons to denote the changing phases of the moon, the zodiac and the normal public holidays. The wall planner follows the same theme but with all celebrations on a single page.



The Calendar is A3 in size, the wall planner A2. Each is printed on mixed sources FSC paper with vegetable based inks. two42 donates £1 from each calendar and 25p from each planner sold to Friends of the Earth.

Available now

<http://www.two42.com/woty/>

# Reviews

By Julia Oakmoon

**Nature's Children: celebrating the seasons in a Pagan family by Rachel Mayatt**  
Published by Capall Bann (ISBN 1-86163-285-1)

Rachel Mayatt says that she is an experienced third degree Wiccan with over 20 years experience and mother of three which qualifies her to write on this subject. The book is organised in a yearly format, following the seasons and the 8 major festivals of the year and is aimed at families with pre-teenage children although teenagers may also enjoy the activities



All the festivals include circle casting where the children are given jobs such as sprinkling the salt or ringing the altar bell. Candles and incense are kept out of reach and athames are banned for obvious reasons and there is always lots of singing and dancing which children love

At Imbolg Rachel and her children make birdseed balls, plant seeds and look out for local fairs and customs in which they can participate. They also get out into the garden to prepare the earth for planting. There are instructions for making birdseed balls, cheese pastry wells, Brigid dolls and children's wands

At the Spring Equinox the family go out to collect things for the altar or for craft making. They make runes, mobiles from shells and feathers and mandalas with shells and sand. They also make chocolate eggs and cakes and there are stories and more music and dancing. There are instructions for making rune sets and egg nests and there's an egg shell spell and a simple song that young children can learn which involves hopping like bunnies

At Beltane they introduce some folk songs and old rhymes and there's camping and outdoor cooking as well as lots of traditions and customs to investigate - 'obby 'osses and Morris dancing, fairs and festivals. There are instructions for making a portable maypole, masks, tissue flowers, poppets and a hobby horse and there's a simple song 'To the greenwood'

At Summer Solstice there are sunflowers and cheese rolling and many fetes and flower festivals to attend as well as picnics and summer fruits. There are instructions for making tissue stained glass window hangings and summer bunting and there's a five fold blessing which is an adaptation for children of the five fold kiss

Lughnasadh brings the first harvests of grain and apples and there are more picnics with racing (three-legged, sack, etc). There are instructions for making chinese lanterns and soda bread

Autumn Equinox brings lots of walks to make the best of the weather before winter sets in. There are harvest festival type events and collecting of blackberries and nuts. There are instructions for making corn dollies, honey and lemon syrup and cinnamon sweets

At Samhain it's finally dark enough again to look at the stars and moon before bedtime and it's a good time to make a moon phase clock and hang an astronomy chart. Moonlit walks in the park are an excellent way of introducing children to the fact that everything looks different in the dark. There are pumpkins and costumes and we have a gentle introduction to death and decay

Winter Solstice brings fayres and pantomimes, paper chains and, of course, a tree for decorating. There are instructions for making clove fruit, biscuits and sweets

Chapters five and six cover Pagan parenting including education and celebrations of birth, coming of age and death (that of older relatives and pets) as well as a few chants and prayers. There are also some simple astrology notes which are a good introduction to the subject

In all this is a very useful book for Pagan parents even if it only inspires them to come up with their own ideas. It's very Wiccan/Neo-Pagan with a mish-mash of old and new but I know that there's a bit of a gap in the market for this particular type of book and you could probably do much worse