

WITCHTOWER

Summer Solstice/Lammas 2006

Vol 2 Issue 4

£2.50

*Ancient Wisdoms
What does the future hold for you?*

See who's been
calling from
Beyond The Grave!

**Reviews, Poetry and a
Competition!**

The Pagan Network Magazine

Wichtower

Vol 2 Issue 4

Summer Solstice/Lammas 2006

ISSN:1700-1103

Published by
Pagan Network
BM Wiccauk
London
WC1N 3XX

www.pagan-network.org

wichtower@gmail.com

Editor: Twilightgirl

Email:wichtower@gmail.com

Contributors:

Jools	Beithann & Candlespirite
Peller	Arwen
Milliefive	Beoloch lasair
2stepfan2	BB Allen
Ravenous	Deb Kilroy
MouseDemon	Moyne
Steve Wilson	Melanie

Wichtower Team:

Editor: Twilightgirl

Review Editor: Deadly Whispers

Reviewers: Beith-ann, Rhiannon, Milliefive and Julia Oakmoon

Proof Readers: Beo, Illarane, Julia Oakmoon & Casidhe

Article Writers: Morgraine & Ravenous

Layout Editor: Twilightgirl

Subscriptions Manager: Casidhe

Distribution Manager: Jude

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

Contents

Folklore & Customs - Summer Solstice	4
Lid Off The Cauldron	7
Magic & Misadventure at the Pagan Network AGM 2006	8
Beyond the Grave	9
Book Reviews	11
Donate a Book Scheme	11
Interview with a Pagan	12
Zucchini Bread	15
Poetry Corner - The Grove	16
Write for the Witchtower	17
Advertising with the Witchtower	18
Pagan Network Discount Scheme	18
Vacancies	19
Moots: Local Reviews - Leeds & Chippenham	21
Regional Representatives	23
Buy At with Amazon	24
Word Search	26
Classified Section	27
Crafting, Past & Present	28
Folklore & Customs - Lughnasadh	29
Blackberry Pie	31
Competition	32
Diary of a Sacred Tree - Part 3	33
Interview with a Pagan	36
Subscription Details	37
It's Your World	38
Cultivate the Magic	39
Trading Cards - Crystals	40
Ancient Wisdoms	41
A Short Course in Tree Lore	43
Full Membership Details	46

Editorial

As this is my first issue as Editor of the Witchtower magazine, I would like to welcome all old and new readers. I have many plans and changes that I want to implement over the coming months, including setting up a subscription service for web members, and for those members without the luxury of broadband we will be producing the magazine as a web page so that it can be viewed online. We will of course still be producing it in a PDF version as well.

As the new Editor, I wanted to take the magazine in a different direction and decided to give the magazine an overhaul. I hope you like it! We have introduced several articles that will be run over the next few years, some light hearted and some informative. Over the next three issues we will be introducing even more. So as you can see, each issue is going to be bumper packed!

As always we are looking for submissions from members, be it articles, poems, recipes, reviews or artwork. Remember, in order for the magazine to thrive we need your submissions. If you're struggling for an idea of what to write about, check out the Witchtower section on the Forums where you will find a long list of ideas.

So put your feet up for an hour, coffee in hand and peruse through the pages of the new Witchtower!

Twilightgirl
Witchtower Editor

PS – don't forget to enter the competition!

Cover Artist

Melanie (aka Twilightgirl) is a woman of many creative talents. She is a digital artist who has seen her work published in magazines, calendars, cd covers and more recently as a series of stage backdrops for a band. She also enjoys expressing her creativity through graphic design, film production, writing and making/designing Pagan cards.

More of her work can be found at www.sensorychaos.co.uk



Folklore and Customs

Summer Solstice



The Summer Solstice, also known as Litha and Midsummer, is known as one of the four 'Lesser Sabbats' or 'Low Holidays'. It is usually celebrated on June 21st, but varies somewhat from the 20th to the 23rd, dependant upon the Earth's rotation around the Sun. According to the old folklore calendar, Summer begins on Beltane (May 1st) and ends on Lughnassadh (August 1st), with the Summer Solstice midway between the two, marking MID-Summer. This would make more sense than suggesting that Summer begins on the day when the Sun's power begins to wane and the days grow shorter. Incidentally, calling Midsummer 'Litha' is a recent development and the name is probably derived from Anglo-Saxon.

Midsummer is when the hours of daylight are longest. The Sun is now at the highest point before beginning its slide into darkness. As with the other festivals, with the coming of Christianity, the priests of the Church were unable to convince the people to give up the old traditions so they incorporated them into their own practices. June 24th is known as St John's day for John the Baptist, and it was long celebrated as Midsummer, but this practice seems to have waned lately, and the old date is observed more than ever.

This is the time that, astrologically, the Sun enters Cancer, a Water sign. Our ancestors believed that as the Sun set 'into the sea', its flames were extinguished. In Ancient Egypt, the Midsummer holiday marked the flooding of the Nile, and was celebrated as the New Year. The festival was held in honour of

Isis, the Lady of the Moon, Who Controls the Tides.

Humans have been celebrating Midsummer and the triumph of light since ancient times. On the Wheel of the Year Midsummer lies directly across from Yule, the shortest day of the calendar year, that cold and dark winter turning when days begin to lengthen and humanity looks wistfully toward warmth, sunlight and growing things. Although Midsummer and Yule are low holidays or 'lesser' sabbats, they are celebrated with more merriment than any other day on

the wheel except perhaps Samhain. The rituals of Midsummer celebrate the verdant Earth in high summer, abundance, fertility, and all the riches of Nature in full bloom. This is a mad-cap time of strong magic and empowerment, traditionally the time for handfasting or weddings and for communication with the spirits of Nature. This is an excellent time for rites of divination.

This festival is celebrated with bonfires and parties. People believed that the Litha fires possessed great power, and that prosperity and protection for oneself and one's clan could be earned merely by jumping over the solstice bonfire. It was also common for courting couples to join hands and jump over the embers of the solstice fire three times to ensure a long and happy marriage, financial prosperity and many children. Even the charred embers from the bonfire possessed protective powers - they were charms against injury and bad weather in harvest time, and embers were commonly placed



around fields of grain and orchards to protect the crops and ensure an abundant reaping. Other customs included carrying an ember of the bonfire home and placing it on one's hearth and decking one's home with birch, fennel, St. John's Wort and white lilies for blessing and protection.

In addition to these fires, the streets were lined with lanterns, and people carried cressets (pivoted lanterns atop poles) as they wandered from one bonfire to another. These wandering, garland-bedecked bands were called a 'marching watch'. Often they were attended by Morris dancers, and traditional players dressed as a unicorn, a dragon, and six hobby-horse riders. Just as May Day was a time to renew the boundary on one's own property, so Midsummer's Eve was a time to ward the boundary of the city.

The customs and traditions associated with Midsummer are many and varied. This is partly because, according to the climate of the area, many of Beltane's rites were performed at about the time of the Solstice. For example, in Sweden, Germany and even in some parts of Wales, the Maypole dance is performed on June 23, and is called the Midsummer Tree or Midsummer Birch. In Wales, the branches of the tree are cut and used to decorate the pole. The dancing, beginning at noon on Midsummer Eve, is said to have continued for nine days in ancient times.

Midsummer Eve was the time that divination and dowsing rods were cut, and herbs for the festival were gathered. It is also thought that the legend of the Wicker Man came from solstice celebrations, as druid rites of midsummer involved the burning of wicker giants. Dragons were also associated with Midsummer, and in Norwich, England, the Tuesday before Midsummer is called Snap-Dragon Day, and features a procession led by a giant dragon.

Another custom is to send flaming wheels (as a representation of the Sun) downhill at Summer Solstice, showing the decline of the Sun's rays in the months to come. It was said that if the Wheel kept burning all the way down, there would be an abundant harvest, but if the fire went out, the crops would fail. This is still done on St. John's Day in many parts of the UK and the world.



The all-night vigil was common to many cultures at Midsummer. Some were observing the stars, as in the Egyptian temples, but there were many other, more personal reasons. In the British Isles, it was believed that the spirits of those who would die within the year could be seen walking abroad on Midsummer Eve. Many people would stay awake all night to prevent their souls from wandering. It was also a night for unmarried women to keep vigil, hoping to be visited by the spirits of their future husbands. Certain courageous souls might spend the night keeping watch in the centre of a circle of standing stones. To do so would certainly result in either death, madness, or (hopefully) the power of inspiration to become a great poet or bard. This was also the night when the serpents of the island would roll themselves into a hissing, writhing ball in order to produce the 'glain', also called the 'serpent's egg', 'snake stone', or 'Druid's egg'. Anyone in possession of this hard glass bubble would wield incredible magical powers. Even Merlin himself (accompanied by his black dog) went in search of it, according to one ancient Welsh story!



Snakes were not the only creatures active on Midsummer's Eve. According to British faery lore, this night was second only to Halloween for its importance to the wee folk, who especially enjoyed riding on such a fine summer's night. In order to see them, you had only to gather fern seeds at the stroke of midnight and rub it onto your eyelids. But be sure to carry a little bit of rue in your pocket, or you might well be 'pixie-led'. Or, failing the rue, you might simply turn your jacket inside out

which should keep you from harm's way. But if even this fails, you must seek out one of the 'ley lines', the old straight tracks, and stay upon it to your destination. This will keep you safe from any malevolent power, as will crossing a stream of 'living' (running) water.

As at the Winter Solstice, mistletoe is sacred at Summer Solstice, when it is in bloom. The Druids gathered it on Midsummer Eve, cutting it with a golden scythe, and catching it in a cloth, never allowing it to touch the ground. They believed that mistletoe could open all locks, cure all ills, and was a lightning conductor. In Wales, a sprig of mistletoe gathered on Midsummer Eve and placed under the pillow is said to bring prophetic dreams. This is seen as the second of the three 'Spirit Nights' and is a good time for all forms of divination. Mugwort is sacred at this time and vervain (and as a later addition, St. John's Wort). It is traditional to burn nine different herbs in the midsummer fires. The herbs burned are mugwort, plantain, watercress, cock-spur grass, mayweed, stinging nettle, apple, thyme and fennel. Nine are burned because nine represents a cycle of completion.



A lovely and unusual custom, practised in South America and in Austria on the Danube River, as well as in some parts of Cornwall, is the 'burning boat' or 'candle boat'. These paper boats are filled with flowers, set afire and sailed off on the ocean or river, to carry prayers to the Goddess. The strangest thing about the 'candle boat' is that the custom should appear in places so far apart, with no explanation or connection. If you are near a body of water, this would be a wonderful addition to your own Midsummer festivities.

Midsummer Eve is also the time for communicating with Nature Spirits and faery folk, and to cast spells for love or protection (or even both!) If you wish, you could act out the battle between the Oak King, God of the waxing year & Holly King, God of the waning year, or scenes from Shakespeare's "A

Midsummer Night's Dream". This is also a good time for a re-dedication of faith and rites of inspiration.

Summer Solstice is still observed publicly by modern English Druids, both at Boadicca's Tomb, Parliament Hills, London, and at Stonehenge. All night vigils take place on both sites, and at Stonehenge, there is a second celebration at Noon.

Although the Summer Solstice may seem at first glance to be a masculine observance and one which focuses on Lugh, the day is also dedicated to the Goddess, and Her flowers are the white blossoms of the elder.

As has been mentioned, a lot of the Beltane customs were used for Midsummer, and maybe Midsummer has become less glamorous for modern pagans in recent years, but it is an important time for the Wheel of the Year as it marks the height of the Earth's abundance. Also, if the weather is fine, there is still something uncanny about keeping vigil on Midsummer eve and seeing that the sun only just dips below the horizon, and true night does not appear. Just be aware of the spirits and faeries at large!

By Jools

LID OFF THE CAULDRON

A round up of all the news happening over at Pagan Network

During the months of September and October, Pagan Network underwent both a Forums and Server transfer. Despite a number of minor teething problems with the Forum software, all of which now seem to have been resolved, the move was considered a success thanks to the hard work of our Web/Server Team. So we'd like to say a big thank you to them. Well Done Guys!

It is with regret that we inform you of the resignation of Twilightgirl, who has been the Membership Manager for Pagan Network over the last 4 years. However, Twilightgirl will not be leaving us, as she will still be staying with Pagan Network and taking on the role of Editor of this magazine. We wish her lots of success.

The Pagan Network Shop will be opening for business shortly. Cuvalwen has been appointed as the Shop Manager and is currently in the process of stocking the shop. There will be an announcement on the forums when the shop is open.

If you haven't heard already, Pagan Network has a new telephone number - 0116 285 2383 (put it in your diaries people!). This telephone line will be manned by Rainbowleigh.

The Pagan Network Photo Gallery is back up <http://pn.fotopic.net/> Yes, we all love trying to guess who is who! so if you have any photos to submit email them to webteam@pagan-network.org

On the 14 October 2006, in the wilds of Scotland, well, Strathclyde to be precise, the Pagan Network AGM took place. There were a number of positions to be voted on due to several resignations of Committee members over the last few months and a motion for a complete restructure of the Organisation and Constitution.

The following members were voted into vacant or newly created positions:

RainbowLeigh was voted in as the new Regional Co-Ordination Team Manager

Beolach Lasair was voted in as the new Technical Services Team Manager

MouseDemon was voted in as the new Chair, leaving her old position as Communications Manager

Deadly_Whispers was voted in as the new Forums Manager

Beith-ann was voted in as the new Members Liaison Officer

An EGM is to be held within the next few weeks to appoint a full member to the positions of Membership Manager and Volunteers Manager. At the EGM a number of other motions will be voted on which were carried over from the AGM for further clarification. The results will be in our next issue!

Magic and Misadventure at the Pagan Network AGM 2006

We landed in Scotland on a dark and eerie night. Many miles away from our final destination, our bodies weary, but hungry for adventure, we hunt for transportation to our abode for the weekend. Something like that anyway!

The AGM this year was a mixed success. It was low in numbers, but the members that did manage to make it, made it on the whole an enjoyable experience. It was lovely seeing people that we often only manage to see occasionally and catch up with all their news.



What we didn't expect to happen was for one of our Committee members to maim herself on the streets of Glasgow! Andy is much better now, but I am sure she will remember the weekend for a long time! We must remember to ask her to show her scars when we next see her!

The venue itself was very nice, although some of us did find the pictures of demons on the wall slightly disconcerting. Especially for a Quaker House! I think we may have made some of the other people using the venue slightly disconcerted, but soon enough they realised we weren't really freaks and weirdoes!

The meeting itself was a mixture of serious debate and much Monty Python. The discussions were forthright and sometimes heated, but in the end were very successful.

Much drinking of the red wine and socialising occurred in the evening (although the newly elected Chair and her husband sneaked off to watch Robin Hood at one point). Later that evening some members indulged themselves in lots of folky-style singing which was very amusing.

The next day a slightly subdued and weary set of travellers went their separate ways home, and that was the end of an AGM that will stay in everyone's memories for a long long time.

We are in the process of finding suitable venues for the AGM 2007, so keep a look out for that announcement. Any suggestions would be greatly received.

And finally, Wales does exist!!!!!!

Michelle Ward
Chair of Pagan Network

BEYOND



THE

GRAVE

Experience By Peller

A number of year ago when my children were quite young, we decided to rent a holiday cottage for a week in North Devon, quite close to the village of Clovelly. The cottage was quite small with two rooms and a kitchen downstairs with bathroom and two bedrooms upstairs, and it looked out directly over the sea. The whole family thought the cottage was warm and welcoming. The cottage was privately owned and had been in the same family for a good number of years.

Downstairs was the main sitting/family room which was bright and cheerful, but the second room, laid out as a dining room was quite the opposite. It was dark with dark furnishings and certainly did not feel as welcoming as the other rooms were. In fact, I looked into it briefly just after we arrived, and felt the hair on my neck start to rise, so we shut the door and kept it shut until we left.

During our search around the cottage we discovered a good assortment of board games and toys held in an antique wall cupboard in the family room. So we settled down to play some of the games for a few hours. We decided that evening that we would go out to eat, so we tidied the games away back in the cupboard and my wife went up to the bathroom to get the children ready to go out. I was sat in the family room reading whilst waiting for the rest of the family, when I sensed or felt a small draft of air, I looked up and around to see if I could detect where it was coming from. My eye was caught by the catch on the games cupboard door that was turning, apparently of its own accord. The door of the cupboard swung open quite slowly to show the games neatly stacked on the shelves. Slowly, as if being gently pushed, some of the boxes started to drop out, the boxes opening and the contents spilling on to the floor. My first reaction was to completely freak out, but I managed to contain myself and said in a loud, and I hope firm voice (but I wouldn't guarantee it!) something to the effect of "we've just tidied that up, now look at the mess." As soon as I had said the words there was a rush of air past me, the kitchen door was flung open and just as quickly closed. I then started to tidy the games up.

We had no other strange experiences that week and the cottage remained warm and friendly with the exception of the dining room. When we left the cottage and with my family in the car, I went back in for one last look around. I opened the door to the dining room and said something to the effect of "thank you for letting us stay and enjoy your home." I left the door open and turned back towards the front door. In doing so I heard the door to the dining room quietly shutting on its own.

BEYOND



THE

GRAVE

Experience By Arwen

Some years ago I was using the computer in my parents bedroom. I was home alone and the heating was on in the house. After a while I could hear the windchimes in my bedroom making a noise, so I went to my room to investigate. As soon as I walked in the room I instantly felt how cold it was even though the heating was on full blast!. The room felt freezing, and the windows were closed and double glazed so no draft could be causing the windchimes to move, but there they were moving, and chiming away. I stopped the chimes and suddenly felt as though there was someone standing right behind me, I could literally feel the hairs on the back of my neck stand up, I swear I could feel someone breathing on me but when I turned around but there was no-one there.

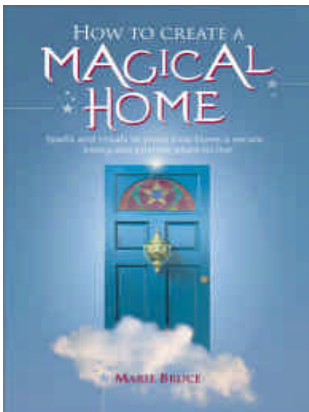
That was the first time I felt the cottages ghost, it did freak me out a bit at first but I'm used to her now. Since then she often sits on our beds and on our feet when we're in bed, and the cats are always watching her. We found out through a psychic friend that our ghost is a young woman who died in the early 1900's, apparently she's happy here, the place wouldn't be the same without her here.

Have you had a
spooky experience that
you would like to
share?

Experience by Isauria

The week after my dog died, I remember hearing him. I could hear him lapping up water when I was in the corridor, I could hear him sniffing at the bottom of the door like he used to when he wanted to come into the lounge and I could hear his dog lead rattle on the hook. This lasted for about a week and I believe it was my dog coming back to say goodbye.

Book Reviews



“How to Create a Magical Home” by Marie Bruce.
Published by Quantum, Berkshire, England (2004).
192 pages £8.99. ISBN 0-572-03204-8

Marie Bruce doesn't leave a corner of your home uncovered in this enjoyable and informative book. Starting with a simple cleansing ritual and the magical meanings of the colours you use around your home, through to protection spells for your precious possessions, dealing en-route with doors, halls and kitchens and even the horrors of a teenager's bedroom. No previous experience or skill is necessary: ideas range from simply placing a chair facing your door to protect an empty house from burglars to the more fantastic and daunting suggestion of building a stone circle in your garden. The book goes through the house room by room, explaining the god and goddess or folklore associated with that room and giving ideas for colours and decoration, then adding scents and sounds and accessories. At the end of each chapter it gives a list of the oils, crystals, angels, elementals and animals most suited to that room. Included within the chapters are recipes for both potions and foods to enhance the magical nature of your home.

Having recently moved house myself, I was delighted to come across this book and put some of the ideas into practice. Creating a home filled with magic does not have to be difficult or expensive: Ebay proved a great place to find model salamanders to protect the hearth and decorating my daughter's nursery with fairytales was an enjoyable afternoon, made even more so by the knowledge we were painting in love and protection along with the emulsion.

Personally, I found some of the suggestions to be a spell too far – I'd feel foolish blessing my washing machine for example (more fool me when it breaks down tomorrow!) and the wording of some of the spells didn't work for me – but I always prefer to write my own and it is good to have them there as a starting point. All in all, this is an inspiring and useful little book that you can either use to add subtle magical touches to your home or, like me, to use as a diving board into the fascinating history of household folklore and traditions.

Review by Milliefive

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 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 for review, and you will get your name mentioned in the magazine.

If you do have any books you wish to donate please email the wichtower@gmail.com to let us know what you wish to send so we can keep an eye out for it. All books should be sent to BM Wiccauk, London, WC1N 3XX, unless you are attending a moot where one of our reviewers are and then you could just hand the book over. Our current book reviewers are Deadly_whispers, Beith-ann, Rhiannon and Milliefive

INTERVIEW WITH A

PAGAN

A series of interviews with members of the Pagan Network.

Here, 2stepfan2 puts the questions to Beolach Lasair

PAGAN IDENTITY

PN: Name / username

Beo: Beolach Lasair

PN: What does it mean?

Beo: It's very botched Gaelic, roughly meaning a long living fire – Be in most Brythonic languages means life and living. Although because my knowledge of the language is so little, I might be a bit off – but it fits, and I like it. I did find it a few years ago, and it just stuck.

PN: What age are you and where do you live?

Beo: I'm 18 years old, living in Uxbridge. Before that I lived in Cardiff for the past 18 years of my life.

PN: How would you describe your spiritual path?

Beo: I'm a polytheistic Pagan, with I suppose a small dash of Hellenic belief because of my personal experiences; the practice and worship of which is still evolving.

PN: How did you get involved with this path? What's your "history"? How did your personal background influence this?

Beo: I first became involved with Paganism when a friend of mine approached me. She was very

interested in Wicca, mainly because a boy she fancied was as well. But, sensibly, she wanted to read and find out as much as she could, and wanted me as an outside point of view – Devil's advocate if you will. So during this process, she decided it was silly, and something sparked in me. And I didn't look back; that was five and a half years ago. Since then I did the fluffy thing, but avoided the Pagan scene and forums like a plague – I didn't want to be embroiled in something I didn't understand for one thing, and I was also afraid of being seen as too young and scorned at. Over time as my reading expanded from the books you get at the bookshops in town to other avenues, and then two years ago I had a very powerful and changing experience, which set me on the path I am on now and is also where the Hellenic beliefs come in, and the polytheism.

PN: Have you always felt the same way about your spirituality, or have there been changes? If so, when, and how?

Beo: As I said, two years ago there was a very large change in my spirituality, before then I was very, well, fluffy. I'm not ashamed of it. It was when my reading had expanded, I was looking beyond the confines of "Wicca 101" books and spent a lot of time

down at a local park in the nights, and on one night I had this experience with a deity, and changed everything. It's that point that I became more at home with my spirituality, and where I realised that I wanted to absorb as much of it as I possibly could.

PN: Have you ever been physically attacked or discriminated against because of being a pagan?

Beo: No, never.

PN: Has anyone ever made assumptions about you (good or bad) because of being a pagan? What were they?

Beo: I had the odd devil worship comment, but after a quick three minute rant from me they changed their minds soon enough!

HOW PAGANISM FITS INTO YOUR LIFE

PN: What do you do for a living? Is there any conflict between your work life and your spirituality?

Beo: I am a student reading Law, and find no conflict. I'm not sure if afterwards in a legal career I will find conflict; the risk of becoming a suit is ever present in my mind, but hopefully it's a fate that's avoidable!

PN: What are your hobbies and interests?

Beo: As you may guess from being Web Team, I'm very much a computer person. As well as this, I enjoy taking walks in any direction, without purpose, and I'm a big music person. I play the piano, and sing sometimes. Pieces from musicals are currently my favourite things to play, they just have so much emotion that it really equates to me; everytime I play the piano I feel very connected to the music and feeling coming out in the notes.

PN: What about your family and friends? Are they of similar spiritual paths to you, or are there differences?

Beo: My family are staunch Roman Catholics, though they love me anyway! My friends are generally all from very different backgrounds; Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, Pagan, Jewish, and all these differences make for very interesting discussions round the breakfast table sometimes!

PN: How would you rate the importance of the following aspects of your life? (Use percentages, total equally 100%)

- Time with family
- Time with partner(s)
- Time with friends
- Spiritual time alone
- Spiritual time with others
- Your work, career, or time in education (if a student)
- Hobbies and pastimes
- Other (please describe)

Beo: I don't think there are enough percentages to be honest; I've thought about this question for about ten minutes and just couldn't think of how to

answer, since the importance I place varies so much. Generally, time with family, partner and spiritual time alone are up there at the top.

BELIEFS

PN: Do you believe in the existence of a 'deity'? If so, have you ever had any divine experiences?

Beo: I believe in the existence of many, I worship two specifically. I've had experiences in the past with these divinities, as I said above, and that's what shaped my path. I believe that they're up there, but they aren't necessarily the benevolent love and light that so many would wish them to be!

PN: Do you believe in the existence of 'spirits' – human or non-human? Have you ever had any experiences of 'spirit'?

Beo: I do, I believe in spirits both human and non-human. I have, however, had no experience of them. There's just something that says they're going to be floating around somewhere!

PN: Do you believe in the existence of magic? As a believer, how would you explain it?

Beo: The existence of magic to me is very much a practice of skill, which can be wielded by the experienced and the knowledgeable, and essentially those skilled in it, but to those who aren't experienced, or skilled (whether through training or by some sort of gift) magic will seem to either be pointless, or even not real. I believe that magic is the practice of using the mind to 'bend' the world around us to create some form of change, and how that bending takes place varies, but somehow it finds a way, but

again, to those not skilled, it would be like someone who can't do DIY trying to put up a desk, a disaster!

PN: Do you practice your spirituality alone, in a group, or both? Was this a deliberate decision or a necessity?

Beo: Alone mainly. I have practiced in a group before, however I found it stifling. So whereas previously my isolation was through circumstance, it is generally through choice now.

PN: If you've done both, which do you prefer?

Beo: I'm not averse to group work, but I do prefer practicing alone.

PN: Do you believe in the reality of curses? Would you ever do one? What types of spell would you include in your concept of a 'curse'?

Beo: Yes, I certainly do believe in the reality of curses, however I don't believe that I would do one, although I've never been in a situation where I've been so incensed I've thought about pre-meditated cursing. My concept of a curse would be anything wishing ill on another.

PN: Do you think the law of three-fold returns exists?

Beo: No. I believe that the only way Karmic laws could occur is by balance – eye for an eye, if you will. I think that the universe does balance itself, but it can't balance itself by going three times the other way for a single imbalance on the other side.

ACTIVITIES

PN: What practices are regularly incorporated in your spiritual life? (E.g. meditation, prayer, ritual, magic, visualisations, trance work...)

Beo: I try every day to have at least a bit of meditation and prayer during the evenings, and ritual and visualisation I tend to keep up regularly at least once or twice a week, it's just keeping myself disciplined enough to go through it. Trance work is usually quite dangerous for me, I'm hypnotised very easily!

PN: Do you think having a catholic background has been a help or a hindrance in your practices?

Beo: I think it's a help. When I was in a Catholic service I had a great sense of ritual, I loved it. I enjoyed watching the Eucharist being held by the priest, I loved the incense, and the chalices, and it still awes me when I watch it. I might not believe the intent behind it, but it is such a beautiful ritual that I can't help but adore it.

PN: What festivals, holy days, special occasions etc do you mark as part of your spirituality?

Beo: The main eight festivals – from Samhain all the way through to Mabon and so on. I never really recognised Mabon or Lughnassad on as large a scale as I do Samhain and Beltane say, mainly because I never felt that connection there, though recently it seems that Mabon onwards is my time of the year, when the good things happen, and the last two Imbolcs have been rather depressing, due to events occurring on or around them. So pos-

sibly I should start ignoring Imbolc just for my own sanity! Other than that, I try and mark the full and dark phases of the moon, but sometimes I do lapse – mainly because of time, the world is such a busy place I just don't always have the time to focus as much as I would like to.

PN: Wow! All of that and academic work too... how DO you find the time?

Beo: To be honest, I don't. Either one or the other falls behind, usually academic work, but then I find a way to catch up so that's fine. The festivals occur once in a specific period of time, whereas academic work I can catch up on any day of the week!

PN: Have you ever done magic to get something and did it work?

No, I wouldn't risk it. I tend to have such bad luck with such things that I wouldn't go near it, and I think I want to leave myself fallow there until I feel ready to get into practicing magic.

PN: Do you spend much time in nature, in the wild? Do you spend enough time out there?

Beo: I spend as much time as I can, but never enough. I sometimes go off into the wild, the fields, just on a random walk somewhere, and do that as much as I can. But again it's the time – finding the time to get away between my studies and everything else that's going on.

PN: Do you think paganism works better in the country than in the city? Why?

Beo: I think it's easier, but I don't

think it's better. I do think it requires more effort to be able to focus without the smog, and the oppressive atmosphere, and the general noise and nuisance, but there's no reason why you can't – there is nature everywhere, and the Gods are everywhere, why would they all avoid the cities?

IDENTITY ON PAGAN NETWORK

PN: How long have you been a member?

Beo: Just over a year as a member, I became a Full Member in December, and became part of the Web Team in January when it was created. I took over from Veratien as Web Team leader at the end of July, and then a month later became a moderator on the LGBT forums. I'm also an event organiser on the Convention, and moderate the Demographics forums now. So a large amount of growth in that year!

PN: Is this your main online hang-out? Where else do you go to regularly (especially pagan / Wicca / magic-related)?

Beo: Yes, this is my main (and only) online hang-out. One site wouldn't let me in, and I've only tried one other, didn't really take. Somehow I managed to stay with PN!

PN: Do you like the style of discussions that happen at Pagan Network? Do you like the subject matter?

Beo: I do generally, I think that some people aren't very nice and civil, with the flame wars, and the holier-than-thou attitude, but on the whole I like the discussions.

PN: Do you think it's always fresh or too repetitive?

Beo: A little from column A, a little from column B. It's starting to cycle back, and the Wicca/wicca debates are, to be honest, a little irritating now. There are already tonnes of threads on this subject already! I do understand why it cycles, there's only so much to talk about. But then that's where people need to try and inject fresh ideas, rather than letting the old ones cycle. But that's also easier said than done!

PN: What would you change about Pagan Network?

Beo: I'd like to see more committee/membership interaction, and less of the holier-than-thou flame wars, but apart from that there's nothing I'd change! And those are minor things.

CONTENTIOUS PAGAN NETWORK QUESTIONS

PN: How do you define the term "Wiccan"? How do you feel about the idea that "Wiccans" are people who have been initiated into a lineage Wiccan coven?

Beo: I define the term Wiccan as being someone who is, or has been, part of a Wiccan-lineage coven – i.e. one that came from Gardner and his group. I believe that Wicca should be kept in lineage sense, but there's nothing wrong with saying that you follow a Pagan path with "Wiccan influences" – that's not saying you are Wiccan, it's just saying that parts of Wiccan belief/practice influences your own belief and practice.

PN: Is Wicca and paganism generally too "fluffy"?

Beo: As far as the books from the mainstream bookshops go, the media interpretation and so on, yes there is too much fluffiness. But looking beyond that, not at all. You get the fluffy people, I was incredibly fluffy a few years back, I'm sure a few here would say I still am probably! But people change and grow, and fluffiness generally doesn't survive in general Pagan circles, and those who persist in it get bored and drop out over time. But then it comes down to a person's definition of 'fluffy'.

PN: How involved are you with the Pagan 'scene'? What are your views on the Pagan community – its strengths, weaknesses and any issues facing it?

Beo: I'm not very involved – I'll go along to PN moots, and a few Moot With No Names. I think that the Pagan community is very political and bitchy, which to be quite honest isn't what it should be. I would like to have that feeling of community spirit, that commonality that we all share at least something. I think that at times though it is a great place to share ideas and debates, and I've had some interesting discussions over a few pints at the Blue Posts.

PN: Does British Traditional Witchcraft represent a real surviving ancient form of witchcraft pre-existing Gardnerian Wicca?

Beo: In a word, no.

AND FINALLY...

PN: Are there any other things about your path that you would like to share?

Beo: No, I think I pretty much covered it above!

Zucchini Bread

INGREDIENTS:

*3 cups flour
2 cups zucchini, grated
1 cup walnuts, chopped
1 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
3 tsp cinnamon
3 eggs
1 cup vegetable oil
2 cups sugar
3 tsp vanilla*



PREPARATION:

Grease 2 8x4 loaf pans and preheat oven to 325F. Combine flour, salt, baking soda and powder, and cinnamon in a bowl. In another mixing bowl, beat together eggs, oil, vanilla and sugar. Add dry mixture to egg mixture and beat some more.

Stir in zucchini and nuts. Pour batter into loaf pans. Bake for 40-60 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean.

Makes 2 loaves

Poetry Corner

Grove

Pale light stained chartreuse by the filter of leaves
Comes softly to rest on deep green carpet.
Beneath years of neglect and armour of algae
Life lingers in the derelict pond.
Frogs jump from lilies, or hide under stones.
Mayflies dart on water's edge.
Summer is paradise in the cool dark woodland.

Trees sigh, the garden breathes
Subtle soundtrack of fauna and breeze;
Quiet like the buzzing of electric at night.
An apple rots slowly to become sweet soil
Life and death are one, and there is no fear.
All who die are reborn as one.
All who live will dust become.

By BB Allen



If you would like to submit a poem or recipe please email to thewitchtower@gmail.com

PUBLICATION DATES 2007 FOR FULL MEMBERS & SUBSCRIBERS

Ostara/Beltane issue to be published (PDF) - 15 March

Summer Solstice/Lammas issue to be published (PDF) - 15 June

Autumn Equinox/Samhain issue to be published (PDF) - 15 Sept

Yule/Imbolc issue to be published (PDF) - 15 Dec

Want to have your 15 minutes of fame?
Then write for the Witchtower magazine.

We are always looking out for new writers/artists/poets. Even if you're not too sure whether you would be a good writer, you can always send in your article/poem/story/artwork/review to wichtower@gmail.com and we'll take a look at it for you. So, come on, take that first big step, who knows you might even surprise yourself, give it ago!

*Make your mark
on the
world....*



Write for the Witchtower

How to Contribute

1. First decide on what you want to write about. If you are not sure whether the subject has been covered before you can email Twilightgirl to check or look at our list of previously published articles on the website.
2. Email us at wichtower@gmail.com to tell us that you intend to write an article and what it will be about. That way we can keep checking in with you on your progress, as we like to look after our writers/artists/poets. Also don't forget to give us an estimated date when your article is expected to be finished. Although please don't worry if you don't finish the article by the estimated date. We all have lives outside of Pagan Network and we are very understanding of this.
3. Let the Muse flow.....Write your article/create your artwork/pen that poem!
4. Email your finished masterpiece to wichtower@gmail.com. We will acknowledge receipt of your work and will also inform you of any changes that need to be done or what issue your masterpiece will be published in. Should we decide that your work is not suitable for publication we will also let you know. But don't let that put you off... practice makes perfect!

Now the Techy bit

LENGTH GUIDELINE

Anywhere between 1/4 side of A4 to 3 sides of A4.

Ideal length is 1 side of A4.

If your article is too long, consider breaking up into two articles.

Artwork should be 300dpi

FORMAT PREFERENCES

(in descending order of preference)

Microsoft Word (any version)

RTF file

Plain text file

Body of email

HTML file

Typed manuscript

How to Advertise in the Witchtower

With the Witchtower magazine being downloaded by hundreds of our members on each occasion, what better way is there to advertise any items for sale, your shop, course, magazine, or website?

We have recently reviewed our advertising rates and plan on opening a classified section shortly in addition to our normal standard adverts. So if you would like to take advantage of our great advertising rates please contact Melanie (aka Twilightgirl) at the witchtower@gmail.com to discuss your needs.

The discounted rates shown below are for shops who decide to join the Full Members Discount Scheme.

Standard Advert Size

	Standard Rate	Discounted Rate
6cm x 4cm text box	£5.00	£2.50
Half page	£15.00	£7.50
Full page	£25.00	£12.50
Inside Back Cover	£30.00	£15.00
Back Cover (full colour)	£60.00	£30.00

Classified Adverts

To advertise in the following sections:

Sales & Swaps, Moots or Websites you can do so for a maximum of 30 words/numbers. The cost of this is £1.00 per issue. You can pay in advance for one years worth of advertising (4 issues) for £4.00

Shops, Courses or Magazines you can do so for a maximum of 50 words/numbers. The cost of this advert per issue is £2.00 plus 10p per word after the maximum 50.

Please note that Pagan Network does not accept responsibility for advertisers. Please use your own judgement and if in doubt contact the advertiser first before handing over any money. Pagan Network can also not accept responsibility for the content of websites.

Pagan Network Full Members Discount Scheme

One of the advantages of becoming a Full Member of Pagan Network is that your membership card entitles you to discounts at shops taking part in our Discount Scheme.

If you run a shop (on or offline) and would like to take part in the scheme please contact Rainbowleigh, our Shop Liaison Officer to discuss further details on 0116 2852383

Below is a list of shops currently taking part. Further details can be found in the Full Members forum.

Black Cats and Broomsticks (online shop only)
Halcyon Daze - Wales
Madeline Rose - Leicester
Opal Moon - Glasgow
The Gem Tree - Leicester
The Magik Thread - Nottingham
The Witch Path (online shop only)

Moonshadows Realm (online shop only)
Hippypottermouse - Leeds
New Aeon Books - Manchester
Pentacle Magazine (online only)
The Heathern Peddler (online shop only)
The Thrifty Pagan (USA)
Witchcraft Ltd - Glastonbury

VACANCIES

We are looking for volunteers in the areas listed below. If you are interested please pm Julia Oakmoon

Server/Web Team

(This position will require further testing of knowledge/skills before appointment can take place)

Duties

Ensures the smooth running of the organisation's web presence and server

Acts as an advisor to the Committee regarding issues relevant to the running, management and development of the web presence and server.

Installs software to keep the website running

Maintains in-house programs

Performs regular server maintenance

Acts as first point of contact for technical queries and issues regarding organisation's online presence

Acts as liaison between the organisation and server hosting.

Advertisers for the News/Media & PR Team

Duties

Look at ways of moving Pagan Network up the search engines, along with searching out new ways to promote/advertise Pagan Network.

Actively promote/advertise Pagan Network by issuing promotional materials at moots/events/shops as well as online.

Writers for the News/Media & PR Team

Duties

Draft and issue press statements once approved by the committee.

Produce a number of Pagan Network leaflets about Paganism and other subjects, these may be written by the committee/team leaders/teams.

Write articles about the organisation, such as reviews of events etc

Graphics Department

Pagan Network has its own graphics department headed up by Twilightgirl and Illarane in order for members to have one central area to contact.

We are currently looking for several volunteers who already have experience in graphic design to join the graphics dept. The work involves designing and printing convention tickets, business cards, banners, logos, adverts, flyers, leaflets etc.

If you are interested in volunteering for the graphics department please pm Twilightgirl detailing your experience.

Regular Article Writers for the Witchtower Magazine

Duties

Provide ideas for general topics for articles

Write articles - at least one per issue

Search out articles/artwork, contacting the authors for permission to publish the article/artwork. Ensure no copyright issues involved.

Track down copyright free graphics.

Prepare and carry out your own work timetable to meet production schedules issued by the Editor.

To work as a team, providing support/additional help to other team members when required.

Suggest new ideas for improving the magazine

VACANCIES

Research Officers for the Witchtower Magazine

Duties

Provide up to date information for submission to the magazine on Pagan Network Moots and Meetings. Search out articles/artwork, contacting the authors for permission to publish the article/artwork. Ensure no copyright issues involved.

Track down copyright free graphics.

Prepare and carry out your own work timetable to meet production schedules issued by the Editor.

Seek out interesting information on what is going on and happening in the Pagan Community

To work as a team, providing support/additional help to other team members when required.

Suggest new ideas for improving the magazine

Advertising Officer for the Witchtower Magazine

Duties

Deal with all queries regarding advertising and have knowledge of the current rates of advertising in the Witchtower

Accept suitable adverts for the magazine once approved by the editor, ensuring that these are in the preferred layout and pass details onto the layout editor

Ensure that invoices are sent out in a timely manner and liaise with the Treasurer over whether payment has been received. If payment has not been received, chase.

Promote and encourage advertising in the magazine to outside agencies/organisations.

Hold accurate records of all advertisers, including contact details, dates adverts published and whether payments received.

To work as a team, providing support/additional help to other team members when required.

Suggest new ideas for improving the magazine

Regional Representatives

Duties

To be the public face of PN and understand the responsibility of being the public face of PN.

Have local knowledge of the area they cover and become acquainted with their local community.

Set in motion and run moots/events where needed and meet and greet members who wish to attend.

To liaise with other pagan groups where possible

To attend other pagan events where possible as the PN representative. Can also run a stall or leave flyers with permission.

To assist other RR's in their roles

To liaise with their local shops, with a view to leaving flyer's/cards (if any want to take part in the 10% scheme all details to be passed to Rainbowleigh).

Encouraging members to sign up for full membership by promoting the benefits of membership.

To keep members informed if a problem with the web site (downtime etc) happens.

To keep members details (with their permission to put them in touch with others in their area)

If wanted and needed a RR would also be able to sit on their local interfaith council.

Also with our backing they would be able to approach their local government (council) with a view to holding rites/rituals/ picnics on parkland. If the council permits it.

All details of the above need to be passed to the RR supervisor so that the committee can manage insurance etc (if over 30 people attend)

To try and help the pagan community in general by being the public face of a large pagan organisation.

Moots - Local Reviews

If you would like to submit a review of your local moot please email to the Wichtower@gmail.com

Leeds Moot - 21st October 2006

The Leeds Pagan Network moot has recently undergone a change of both venue and organiser. It was originally held at the Hogshead, then at the Revolutions Bar, which the moot left in July in search of a quieter home more conducive to discussion. To this end it's now moved to the spacious and comfortable surroundings of the large 'O'Neill's' pub, on Great George Street.

Arriving slightly late (it starts at 1:00pm), we easily found the group in a cosy non-smoking annexe at the far end of the pub. Apart from the two organisers: Amayadaw and Rohan Wood, there were already several other members present from the Pagan Network forums. A little later in the afternoon a few people from the Leeds 'Dragondale' moot arrived for their first Pagan Network moot, as did the organiser of the Leeds University pagan group; 'Pentagram' (formerly known as 'Kabal'). It was nice to see different local pagan groups supporting each other's events!

After quick introductions and a round or two of drinks, Rohan Wood passed around pendulums for everyone to practice with, as she gave an entertaining short talk entitled 'Pendulum Divination'. Starting with a bit of historical background and some personal anecdotes, she covered a variety of ways to use the pendulum as a tool for divination. Then we all had a go with the ones she'd provided, with varying degrees of success!

Flyers for other regional moots were handed out, and there were lots of back issues of the earth mysteries magazine 'Northern Earth' for people to peruse. At previous moots various other pagan magazines have been available to read.



The atmosphere was very informal and welcoming, and the conversations ranged across a wide variety of topics, not all of which were pagan-related! People came, went and came back again as they braved the crowds of the city centre to go shopping. Around six o'clock those of us who were getting hungry ordered from the modestly priced menu and we tucked into some surprisingly tasty pub fare. Sharing food and chatting over drinks just added to the already relaxed mood. After the meal it was time for people to start catching buses and trains home, although I reckon the last of the attendees eventually left around half past eight!

Altering the venue or organiser of a moot can sometimes signal the beginning of the end. But the Leeds Pagan Network moot seems robust enough to handle both these changes and appears to be settling into its new home comfortably. The people who attend these moots are often a good mix of ages, experience and pagan paths: Wiccans, Heathens, Thelemics, Eclectics, Solitaries, even the odd Christian! On the day we visited we found the whole afternoon an enjoyable and informative experience, but most of all, it was fun!

So, was I impressed? You betcha! It's already in my diary for next month...

By Ravenous

Moots - Local Reviews

If you would like to submit a review of your local moot please email to the Wichtower@gmail.com

Chippenham Moot - 6th September 2006

This was the second attempt to get a moot in Chippenham up and running. The idea for a moot had originally sprung from an obvious lack of pagan activities within the area, despite a number of calls for people within the community to have something established. When it was initially announced, it seemed we were justified in our attempts to establish one, with messages of support and interest coming from the PN Forums and our own group of friends. However, there was little in the way of confirmations of attendance, so that we were only partly surprised when it turned out to be a complete flop – only myself and my husband turned up. Luckily, the amount of interest this time had seemed more promising, and the advertising had been somewhat better, so that we were expecting at least one other brave individual to come to the next one.

The choice of pub for this month's moot had been a bit of a stab in the dark: Chippenham is full of bars, but they all belong in the town centre, are rather samey, and often not particularly welcoming. Those which do have a good atmosphere tend to have no seats left by 6.30 pm. The Bear Hotel therefore seemed like a good compromise – it is relatively upmarket, an interesting Georgian (ish!) building, and in a central location. It has comfortable furniture and is relatively clean. Unfortunately, it doesn't sell much ale on tap, is quite open-plan in the interior, has a TV in one corner, and insists on playing (not very good) music increasingly louder.

My husband and I arrived at the Bear Hotel shortly after 8pm, to find two other people waiting anxiously for someone wearing a pentagram to arrive. That totalled four people, and we sat around talking amiably, if haltingly, about general topics, waiting to see if anyone else would arrive (I have never found pagan timing to be particularly accurate!). These were apparently the 'scouts', hoping to get an idea of the Moot before inviting friends and family to the next one (if they approved!). When it was clear that no one else was going to come, I talked a bit about the reasons behind setting up a moot and what I imagined could be incorporated into it, and what I expected from this meeting. I laid down the basics of how I imagined the Moot in future would run, and presented several options which could be put to a democratic vote. One choice was over the structure of the Moot – should we have an elected person each month to do a presentation, followed by a general talk on the subject up for discussion? Should we each research the next month's topic and then talk informally about our ideas when we felt ready? Should we utilise a talking stick to try to add some element of discipline to the discussion, and to stop it sliding into general chit-chat and gossip? As some members of moots can be shy, it was decided that putting someone on the spot and asking them to do a presentation was not necessarily a good idea. Likewise, a talking stick could also put someone in the spotlight, but on the other hand could encourage them to speak their opinions in a less formal manner, whilst discouraging those who are naturally louder from monopolising the conversation. The idea of 'field trips', where relevant, was also discussed and found to be an interesting and possibly very productive, new twist on moots. While this on the whole would make use of the locality, it could also be extended to make group trips to places further afield cheaper and easier.

Another issue up for discussion was how topics for subsequent moots should be decided. All agreed that this, too, should be done democratically, with a number of suggestions being voted on each month. This naturally led on to what our individual experience and interests were, and the variety of topics we would find appealing to talk about in this arena. The four of us have come from very different backgrounds, with resultant different levels of knowledge and experience in paganism and related topics, which should, as such, add some interesting perceptions to our debates. A general interest was found to be in pre-history, modern

Continued...

pagan history, and landscapes, with particular emphasis on Bronze Age monuments, and this, in a shortened term, was decided to be the topic for the next Moot – ‘The Sacred Landscape of Wiltshire’. Other topics touched upon included witchcraft in fiction (including the obligatory references to Terry Pratchett and HP!), and how this would affect the new breed of pagans. The use of sound in ritual was briefly discussed, and then noted as a future topic for the Moot, awaiting the conclusion of my husband’s paper on the subject, as was ‘magickal personalities and how they have shaped current belief and practice’.

As it was now half past nine, and the introductory Moot was in danger of turning into a full session, we discussed next month’s location – the current found not to be as amenable as we’d hoped – and said our goodbyes. All in all, it was a slow start and a promising end. The variety of personalities and experiences, coupled with a guarantee of more bodies next month, should lead to lively, intelligent, and well-balanced and argued debates.

By Debbie Kilroy

Regional Representatives

Pagan Network has a number of Regional Representatives based around the country who organise moots and events for members as well as liaising with other groups. If you are interested in becoming a regional representative please see our vacancies section for more information.

CURRENT REPRESENTATIVES

Rainbowleigh
Jacq
Rhiannon
Europa
Mousedemon
Illarane
Janika
Belladonna silver
Ravenous
New Aeon
Donyea
Deadly_Whispers
Julia Oakmoon

AREA COVERED

East Midlands/ Leicestershire
East Midlands/Derbyshire
West Midlands/Birmingham
Wales and at the moment NI
London
London
East/North yorkshire
Scotland
West Yorkshire
Manchester
Lancashire
Guernsey
Bristol, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall,
Gloucestershire and Dorset

If you haven't heard about it, we've been running a BUY AT scheme for several years now. Its a perfect way to buy all you need and help support Pagan Network at the same time, as anything you buy through the shops on the scheme raises funds for Pagan Network. There are a whole variety of high street shops taking part that you can buy from. Amazon is one of our favourites, so much so that below you will find a selection of books from Amazon to wet your appetite! So take a look over at <http://buy.at/pagannetwork>

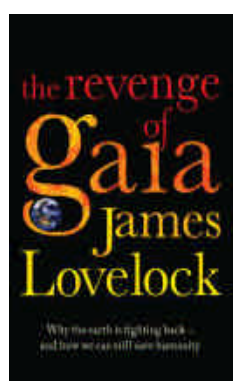
BUY AT WITH AMAZON

The Sourcebook of Magic: A Comprehensive Guide to NLP Change Patterns by L. Michael Hall, Barbara P. Belnap £18.99



Synopsis

In the newly revised version of The Sourcebook of Magic you will discover afresh the basic 77 NLP patterns for transformational magic. What's new? A change from merely describing the patterns to presenting the key questions that allow you to guide a client. The newly revised version streamlines the patterns so that they are even more succinct and offers some new insights about how the patterns work, that is, the cognitive-behavioural mechanisms that make the neuro-linguistic and neuro-semantic approach so powerful. The Sourcebook of Magic arose in 1997 from a desire to collect in one place the basic or core NLP Patterns. Today it remains an excellent resource for coaches, therapists, psychologists, trainers, and managers. The book uniquely sorts and separates the patterns in key categories, those that deal with Self, Emotions, Language, Thinking Patterns, Meaning, and Strategies. This Sourcebook of Magic also provides guidelines for knowing what to do when and why. An excellent gift for those interested in the cognitive-behavioural model called NLP.

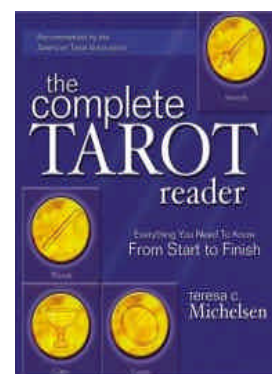


The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth Is Fighting Back - and How We Can Still Save Humanity by James Lovelock £10.19

Synopsis

Lovelock's unique authority and original perspective sets this book apart from other books on environmental change. He speaks as a planetary physician with more than forty years' experience of thinking about how to respond to the Earth's needs as a living organism. Illustrated with examples drawn from his experiences around the world, Lovelock draws many radical conclusions, most controversially a passionate advocacy of nuclear energy. This, he argues, is not only a secure, safe and reliable source of energy but also the only way to counter the lethal heat waves and rising sea levels, which will increasingly threaten civilisations. Lovelock argues that the only way for humankind to come to terms with Gaia now, and have a chance of surviving, is to embrace science and technology, not reject them. This is his passionate manifesto of how to do that and so lessen our impact on the Earth before it is too late.

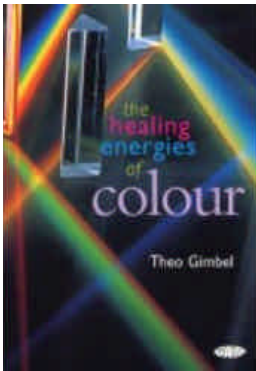
The Complete Tarot Reader: Everything You Need to Know from Start to Finish by Teresa Michelsen £11.99



Synopsis

Teresa Michelsen's self-study programme helps students develop a long-lasting, intuitive approach to Tarot reading. Instead of memorising standard card meanings and spreads, readers are encouraged to use their own life experiences and knowledge to craft a personal understanding of the cards. Included are study goals, progress activities, and easy exercises for exploring the suits, court cards, major arcana, and a variety of reading techniques.

BUY AT WITH AMAZON



The Healing Energies of Colour by Theo Gimbel £6.59

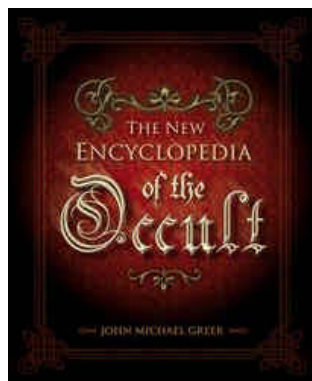
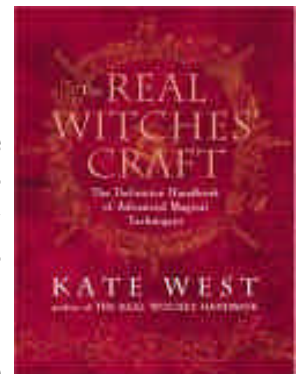
Synopsis

Discovering the healing power of colour and its connection with past, present and future science will teach you how colour affects your life. This book reintroduces the ancient art of colour therapy. Learn the techniques of colour practitioners by following the practical guidance for working with colour on yourself and on your friends. Explore the healing powers of coloured light, decorate your home to suit your personal needs, adjust your mood with the colour of your clothes, understand the colour energies of your body's aura, discover how colour surrounds and permeates your body, and assess your colour needs through dowsing and personality tests.

The Real Witches' Craft: Magical Techniques and Guidance for a Full Year of Practising the Craft by Kate West £8.57

Synopsis

A follow-up to the best selling *The Real Witches' Handbook*. The book includes more practical advice on becoming a Wiccan and teaches the skills and techniques necessary for celebrating this craft. The content of the book enables you to take your magic on to the next level and provides the further skills and techniques for powerful magic making. It provides the sort of guidance and development usually found in the first year of Coven life. *The Real Witches' Craft* moves on from the simple spells and rituals of *The Real Witches' Handbook* to more advanced magic, teaching the skills and techniques of practising magic. This book will teach you how to: - Balance the elements to create effective magic. - Raise, focus and direct magical energy to powerful effect. - Strengthen the five senses in order to help towards developing the 6th sense. - Use divination and scrying - tarot, runes, fire, etc. - Design your own spells - Use the Moon's phases for magic.



The New Encyclopedia of the Occult by John Michael Greer £23.75

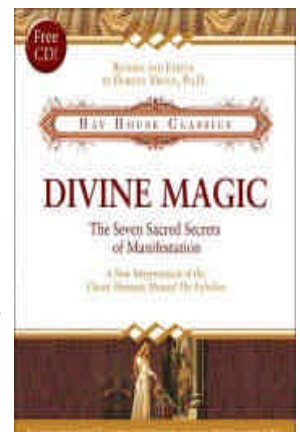
Synopsis

With this one text, you will gain a thorough overview of the history and current state of the occult from a variety of Western European and North American traditions. Its pages offer the essential knowledge you need to make sense of the occult, along with references for further reading if you want to learn more. You will find here the whole range of occult tradition, lore, history, philosophy, and practice in the Western world.

Divine Magic: The Seven Sacred Secrets of Manifestation by Doreen Virtue £8.57

Synopsis

You have natural magical abilities that can elevate your life to a whole new level, as well as heal and help your loved ones and clients. The original teacher of this Divine magic was an Egyptian sage named Hermes Trismegistus. His teachings, called "Hermetics," were only taught verbally or in very cryptic writings. In 1908, three Hermetic students wrote these teachings in a book called "The Kybalion". Yet, this book was still difficult to understand because of its archaic and confusing language. Now in "Divine Magic", Doreen Virtue presents a clearly edited version of "The Kybalion", written in understandable and modern language. She gives comments and practical suggestions based upon her own success in using Hermetic teachings for healing and manifestation. With "Divine Magic", you can master your moods, release negativity, manifest new levels of abundance, and attract wonderful opportunities in all areas of your life.



WORD SEARCH

C	T	A	C	W	A	K	S	F	E	S	F	G	B	R
H	G	B	G	I	W	O	E	I	C	L	C	O	D	S
T	F	A	R	C	C	T	I	R	N	A	Q	D	H	A
R	L	L	R	L	F	Q	R	E	A	T	D	D	S	M
A	S	K	O	D	A	D	A	B	Y	S	R	E	P	T
R	F	B	X	B	N	Z	L	J	O	Y	A	S	I	O
R	M	Y	A	R	G	E	S	R	V	R	Z	S	R	R
I	P	L	H	B	S	P	R	D	R	C	I	Y	I	A
T	A	B	M	S	S	M	E	I	I	N	L	O	T	T
H	R	G	I	C	I	W	H	D	A	U	A	W	S	V
U	H	N	M	O	D	S	I	W	L	N	R	G	J	N
C	G	W	A	L	E	S	N	O	C	R	N	D	A	R
S	T	O	N	E	H	E	N	G	E	A	J	M	M	P
N	A	S	W	B	D	S	B	W	I	R	N	P	J	C
V	Y	M	W	A	I	A	O	A	U	O	T	D	P	X
P	J	R	H	K	N	T	H	D	C	U	D	E	L	H
G	Q	C	I	A	H	D	P	M	S	X	C	L	O	E
C	E	E	Q	C	I	F	S	T	Z	M	E	X	E	G
X	R	M	T	G	H	N	S	S	E	V	R	R	D	A
Z	F	I	S	O	I	Y	D	Y	V	P	E	H	Z	P
M	W	S	R	I	H	D	L	R	O	W	M	Z	Z	M
M	O	S	V	T	N	N	T	E	Z	U	O	G	A	L
O	E	S	E	P	N	A	U	B	Q	U	N	G	L	V
T	R	M	E	L	A	M	M	A	S	Q	I	W	U	H
G	A	M	N	B	U	P	G	A	B	C	A	I	N	K
E	E	T	T	I	M	M	O	C	H	I	L	A	A	V
G	R	E	E	N	M	A	N	R	Z	S	R	A	R	V
M	L	H	D	H	U	Y	F	F	W	B	G	C	T	J
A	M	B	E	R	L	W	N	U	I	K	Q	G	H	N
O	E	W	F	H	D	X	L	L	Q	C	H	X	T	M

AIR
 ARIES
 BLESSINGS
 CLAIRVOYANCE
 CRYSTALS
 GARDNERIAN
 HORSE
 LIBRA
 MAGIC
 REIKI
 SPIRIT
 WALES
 WITCHTOWER

AMBER
 BESOM
 CANDLE
 COMMITTEE
 DRUIDS
 GODDESS
 IMBOLC
 LIZARD
 PAGAN
 SAMHAIN
 STONEHENGE
 WAND
 WORLD

AMETHYST
 BIRCH
 CEREMONIAL
 CRAFT
 FIRE
 GREENMAN
 LAMMAS
 LUNAR
 QABALAH
 SHAMANISM
 TAROT
 WISDOM

Classifieds

Shops

Black Cats and Broomsticks

(online only)

18 Berry Edge Road, Consett, County Durham, DH8 5DS

<http://www.blackcatsandbroomsticks.co.uk/>

Halcyon Daze

55 Wellfield Road, Roath, Cardiff, CF24

3PA Tel: 02920 454432

<http://www.halcyon-daze.biz/>

Halcyon Daze (The little shop of calm)

1 Westgate, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan

Tel: 01446 771166

Hippypottermouse

The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds, LS1 7BR

<http://www.hippypottermouse.co.uk/>

Madeline Rose

121 Kirby Road, Leicester, LE3 6BE

Tel: 0116 2536320

Moonshadows Realm (online only)

<http://www.moonshadows-realm.co.uk/>

New Aeon Books

95 Oldham Street, Manchester, M4 14W

Tel: 0161 839 9293

<http://www.newaeonbooks.co.uk/>

Opal Moon

De Courceys Arcade/Cresswell Lane,

Glasgow, Lanarkshire, G12 8AA

Tel: 0141 3386010

Pentacle Magazine

<http://www.pentaclemagazine.org>

The Gem Tree

Ground Floor, Indoor Market, Leicester, LE1 5HG

(They are open Tuesday to Saturday 9-5)

<http://www.thegemtree.com/>

The Heathern Peddler

<http://www.heathenpeddler.co.uk/>

The Magik Thread

29 High Road, Nottingham, NG9 4AF

Tel: 0115 9490673 or 0115 9394777

<http://www.themagikthread.co.uk/>

The Thrifty Pagan (USA)

Green Street, Fairhaven, MA02719, United States

<http://www.shop.thethrifypagan.com/>

The Witch Path (online only)

<http://www.thewitchpath.shop.co.uk/>

Witchcraft Ltd

10 Benedict street, Glastonbury, BA6 9EX

<http://www.witchcraftshop.co.uk/>

Solstice Designs (online only)

<http://www.solsticedesigns.co.uk/>

CRAFTING - PAST & PRESENT

Our ancestors didn't have shops where they could go and buy whatever their latest needs were, be it an incense holder or wand. Instead they crafted their tools of magic with their own hands, ensuring a stronger connection to their tools. So in this series we plan to show you how to craft your own tools from the past and present.

How to make a Besom

Lammas is a perfect time to go gathering tree branches that have been blown off the trees, and its always a good idea to leave a little thank you gift behind when you take a fallen branch, such as a crystal or you could plant a handful of flower seeds.

Materials:

A tree branch, as straight as possible, and one that comes up to at least your waist in height. Alternatively you could substitute this with the handle off a traditional sweeping brush that you have cut down, or a piece of dowel from your local DIY store.

Ball of strong string (choose a colour if you want)

A pair of scissors

For the broom part you can use straw or thin twigs that you have gathered. If you have some strands of dried herbs you could include these too.

Instructions

If you are using straw for the broom you will need to soak it overnight in luke warm salted water. The water swells the straw slightly, so that you can bend it without breakage, the salt dispels former energies. When the straw has finished soaking you will need to remove it from the water and let it dry for a bit, keep checking on the straw though as you don't want it to stiffen up too much!

Next take your tree branch or handle/dowel and start lining the straw or twigs along the branch. You will need to place the straw or twigs about 5" from the bottom of the branch. If you find the first layer difficult to keep in place, try using a thin layer of double sided sticky tape just to hold it. Once the first layer is in place, tie it tightly with the string. You will need to tie the string about 3" down from the top of your straw or twigs. Then build up another layer and again tie it tightly in place with string. Continue doing this until you reach the fullness you require. You can intersperse the twigs or straw by tying in strands of herbs.

If using straw, when you have reached the fullness you want, bend down the top of the straw above where you had secured it and bind this tightly. Leave the straw to dry for a couple of days and trim off any excess at the end to even the base out. You can also trim the twigs too.

Now you can decorate your Besom, If you find the binding area of the straw or twigs isn't very pretty looking, you can either tie a strong tape around it (I like black electrical tape), or tie a pretty coloured ribbon around it (or both!) You can also attach charms, crystals or even fabric flowers to it.

With the handle of the Besom, you could paint it or carve symbols into it. On my own personal one, I have attached a ribbon at the top and wound it down to the base in a spiral pattern.

By Melanie

If you would like to submit your own crafting instructions/photos please email the wichtower@gmail.com

Folklore and Customs

Lughnasadh

The festival of Lammas, or Lughnasadh, marks the end of summer and the beginning of autumn. The days are growing visibly shorter and by the time we've reached Samhain, we will have gone through the heat of August to the cold and (sometimes) snow of November. Lammas is a cross-quarter day, one of the four High Holidays or Greater Sabbats, occurring 1/4 of a year after Beltane. August 1st is the day Lammas is typically celebrated but the celebration proper would begin on sundown of the previous evening, July 31st, since the Celts reckoned their days from sundown to sundown. Lammas was the mediaeval Christian name for the holiday and it means 'loaf-mass', for this was the day on which loaves of bread were baked from the first grain harvest and laid on the church altars as offerings. It was a day representative of 'first fruits' and early harvest. This is still celebrated in churches today as the Harvest Festival. In Irish Gaelic, the feast was referred to as 'Lughnasadh', a feast to commemorate the funeral games of the Irish sun god Lugh. He is also known as and associated with: Lug, Llew, Lugos and Llew Llaw Gyffes, as well as with the Roman God Mercury.

To the Celts, Lammas was one of the four Great Fire Festivals. The custom of lighting bonfires to add strength to the powers of the Waning Sun was widespread. Brands from the Lammas fires were kept in the home, through the winter, as protection against storms and lightning, and against fires started by lightning. The Need-Fire seems to have been an integral part of most Fire Festivals, but was not limited to them. Since the ashes from such a fire had properties of protection, healing, and fertility, a Need-Fire might be lit at any time a "need" for such things existed.

Lammastide was the traditional time of year for craft festivals. The mediaeval guilds would create elaborate displays of their wares, decorating their shops and themselves in bright colours and ribbons, marching in parades, and performing ceremonial plays and dances for the entranced onlookers. A



highlight of such festivals was the 'Catherine wheel'. Although the Roman Church moved St. Catherine's feast day all around the calendar with bewildering frequency, it's most popular date was Lammas. A large wagon wheel was taken to the top of a near-by hill, covered with tar, set aflame, and ceremoniously rolled down the hill. Some mythologists see in this ritual the remnants of a Pagan rite symbolizing the end of summer, the flaming disk representing the sun god in his decline. And just as the sun king has now reached the autumn of his years, his rival or dark self has just reached puberty.

In some areas, Lammas was a time of sacrifice. Sacrifices at Lammas were made to thank the Deities for the first fruits and to guarantee an abundant harvest. The victim was often the king, who was God Incarnate to his people. Sometimes a substitute king, a fool or "scapegoat", was sacrificed in the king's stead. The last recorded sacrifice of a king of England may have occurred at Lammas, in the year 1100. King William II (Rufus the Red, or William Rufus) rejected the relatively new Christian beliefs, and openly declared himself Pagan. His death in a "hunting accident" on August 2, 1100 c.e. is believed by many historians to have been a case of the traditional sacrifice being disguised for the sake of the Christian priests.

Lughnasadh celebration is associated with John Barleycorn, an image of the barley grain that goes into making malt beverages such as beer! At Lughnasadh many grains, seeds, herbs and fruits can be harvested and dried for later use through the remaining year. Corn is one of the vital crops harvested at this time. Corn dollies are fashioned in the shape of Goddess and God. In some areas the sacrifice of the corn king or corn dolly is performed. This figure, originally made from the first sheaf, would be saved until spring, and then ploughed into the field to prepare for planting. (The Maiden thus returns to the field at spring.) Most of us, today, have no first sheaf nor do we prepare a field at spring, but as a means of adding continuity to our festivals, the maiden can be made from the husks of corn served at the Lammas Feast, then saved for use as a brideo'g at Candlemas.

Local Celebrations

August was the month in which Lammas Market was held in Kirkwall. The market took place over 11 days, and was proclaimed through the streets of the town by the town officer, preceded by a drummer. These days, however, the market is forgotten.

In its heyday, the Lammas fair attracted folk from across the islands, who all headed into the town to be entertained by showmen, tricksters and entertainers. An interesting tradition surrounding the fair is that the young men were advised to place a four-leafed clover in their boots. This was believed to give them the power to see through the tricks employed by the visiting cheap-jacks. Examples of the reliability of this charm are actually recorded. One story relates that a crowd gathered around a Lammas booth to watch a dancing cockerel were asked by an old woman why they were so interested in a bird



with straws fixed to its legs. It was only then that the sheepish onlookers realised that they had been hypnotised by the crafty showman. The woman was immune to his tricks because there was a four-leaved clover hidden within the grass she carried.

Telltown, Teltown, or Tailtean Marriages were temporary unions entered into at Lughnasadh. In Kirkwall, taking a sexual partner for the duration of the fair was a common practice. Such couples were known as 'Lammas brothers and sisters'. For couples thinking of a slightly longer-term commitment this was a traditional time for handfasting. Couples would join hands through a holed stone, such as the ancient Stone of Odin at Stenness, and plight their troth for a year and a day. Many such temporary unions became permanent arrangements.

Lammas Fairs, held annually throughout the British Isles, still exist today. At the Exeter Lammas Fair, a large, stuffed glove, decorated with flowers and ribbons, is fasted atop a pole and carried about the fairgrounds. It is then placed on the roof of the Guild Hall to signify the opening of the fair. A gift of money for gloves (to servants) was also traditional at Lammaside. One source tells us the glove represents a unit of measure, indicating a fair rate of exchange. Another compares it to the Egyptian "open hand," representing friendship and fortune.

Hilltop Assemblies

Assemblies on hilltops are a traditional part of the proceedings. In Ireland and the Isle of Man many of these hilltop gatherings have survived to the present day. Some have become associated with Christian saints. A pilgrimage, often barefoot, would often be followed by drinking, dancing, fighting, and very unruly behaviour. On the Isle of Man the inhabitants would climb to the top of Snaefell on Lhuany's Day. There is a local story that the custom died out when a clergyman started to take a collection on the summit!

Holy Wells

Lughnasadh was a day for visiting wells and those on the Isle of Man were said to be at the peak of their healing powers. St Maugold Well near Ramsey is reputed to cure sterility if the sufferer throws a pin in the well or dips their heel into it. Assemblies at wells would often be celebrated on the feast day of the local saint, but many of these gatherings were moved from the saint's day to late July and early August; probably evidence of an earlier Pagan cus-

tom reasserting itself. In many English villages, wells are dressed with elaborate floral tributes on various dates, but notably on the Feast of the Assumption, or Marymass, on the 15th August, four days after Old Lammass Eve. Many sacred Pagan wells were renamed after Mary and this festival and its customs are very clearly yet another example of the Christianisation of earlier traditions and beliefs. In northern Scotland, where the harvest was later, Marymass replaced Lammass as the festival of the first harvest. Mary took on the characteristics of harvest goddesses depicted in robes decorated with ears of corn.

Games and Contests

Lugh is said to have founded annual games to commemorate Tailtu, his foster mother, and sports are a common feature of Lughnasadh survivals. The various Highland games are probably a descendant of the Lughnasadh games. Some are still held around the traditional time of Lughnasadh, but nowadays they may be held at any time during the summer or autumn, allowing champion sportsmen to compete at several different venues.

Faction Fighting and Battles

Faction-fighting was a customary feature of many Lughnasadh assemblies. Groups of young men from rival villages would gather and fight. Faction-fights could be fierce and lead to injuries and very occasionally death, but it was the observance of the custom that was considered important, rather than winning at all costs. There is a strongly held belief in Irish folklore that the success or failure of the harvest was dependent on the fairies, and was decided by a battle between two troops from neighbouring areas. This idea that success in battle bought fruitfulness to the crops of the winning side is probably the origin of faction-fighting. The Battle of the Flowers takes place on Jersey, one of the Channel Islands, in mid-August. The 'battle' is between groups of islanders who compete to see who can make the most original picture from flowers. Since the nineteenth century these have been paraded on flat trucks like a carnival float, but the local tradition of making floral patterns and pictures is much earlier.

So again we see the continuation of pagan celebrations in the British Isles. Although christianity has tried to absorb the festivals, we can see that the essence of the old ways are carried on even today.

Blackberry Pie



INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups blackberries, fresh
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 9-inch double pie crust
- 2 tbs milk
- 1/4 cup white sugar

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 425F.

Combine 3 1/2 cups of the berries with the 1/2 cup of sugar, and the flour.

Pour mixture into the unbaked pie shell. Spread the last of the berries on top of the sugared ones.

Cover with pie crust.

Crimp the edges and brush the top with milk, and sprinkle the 1/4 cup of sugar on top. Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 375F.

Then bake pie for an additional 20-25 minutes

By Jools

COMPETITION TIME

As so many people now a days have digital cameras, we thought a photography competition would be a good idea. So each issue we will be running a photography competition related to the Sabbat that the magazine is issued.

So, how does it work? To enter the competition you need to select a title from the list below and take a photograph of what that title means to you or a photograph that best represents the title.

There will be three winners, one winner will be chosen per title.

All winning photographs from this competition will be shown in the Yule issue.

To submit your photograph email it to the wichtower@gmail.com along with the title you have chosen so we know which category to judge you under. Photographs can be any size as we can always resize them for the issue. Photographs must also be your own (no stealing them off the internet!).

Judges will be Twilightgirl and Deadly Whispers (and no, sending us chocolates will not sway our judgement!)

This competition is open to all Full Members and Subscribers of the Wichtower.

The closing date for this current competition is the 11 December 2006.

So choose your title and get those cameras clicking!

Summer Solstice/Lammas Issue (choose from the following titles)

- 1. The Goddess in her many colours**
- 2. Monument**
- 3. The Wheel Turns**

The three prizes for this issues competition will be the Pentagram shown (made from fine pewter, nickel free)



DIARY OF A SACRED TREE - PART 3

Written by Beith-ann & Candlesprite

The Oak Tree has been standing in woodland for many years now. It has seen many things, rather enjoyed the tranquillity of being on private land and not being bothered by anyone except a few rampant squirrels and conifers who thought rather a lot about themselves. However a couple of years back things began to change, some dodgy amateur archaeologists had discovered a Mediaeval rubbish dump and the 'bush telegraph' turned it into the residence of a Celtic King and possibly his sacred temple. The farmer that owned the land was very nearly traumatised for some time with people in silly outfits knocking on his door and asking stupid questions about Celtic rituals and could they possibly buy a bottle of mead from him. So he sold it to the Council at a knock-down price who then opened it up as a sort of nature trail. Since then the Oak's peace has been broken by drunken hippies, New Age revellers and warring groups of Druids and Witches.

This is the continuing diary of events. Any resemblance the characters have in this story to persons living or dead is completely intentional.

Lughnassadh

Something big happened here a few weeks ago when people came for a particular sunset and sunrise. Goodness knows why; the sun is there every day although you can't always see it, and sometimes it sets earlier and rises later which allows the visitors to get back to their homes and leave me alone sooner. It's all that drum beating and chanting that gets on my twigging nerves. It only serves to wake up those wretched squirrels who seem to be moving more and more of their family in - all that jabbering and scratching and trying to hide mouldy nuts in the little holes in my branches. I suppose that's the downside of being as old and venerable as I am. At least these humans haven't attached steel supports under my limbs like they did to old Great Uncle Major down in Sherwood. Now that would make me feel old! The only thing that bought some light to my life during the long daylight event is that those damn bickering Druids and Witches didn't turn up during that day. I overheard a conversation between some swifts that there was a big celebration going on down south somewhere amongst some stone erections, and from the descriptions of the people

involved it could have only been the Fartarses and the Fiddlers going at it hammer and tongs – again!

There has been lots of other comings and goings around here as time has gone on, too. The men from the Council have been really busy. They have been laying paths, putting bits of wood across a stream, which means that they can get at me from all directions now, putting in benches for people to sit on and pinning notices up everywhere.

Recently they erected a shed nearby which they call a 'Visitors Centre'. They originally built something that looked like a bus shelter with a few pictures of the flora and fauna around – and a rather amusing painting of me, but shortly after someone came up and parked a caravan nearby. They started selling bits and pieces, mainly twigs with rainbow coloured glitter on it, calling them magic witch wands and charging sums of money that made most peoples eyes water. Not that they actually sold anything much.

The Council then found out about it, had them 'summarily removed' as the police put it, which meant that they towed the van off the site in the middle of the night and put up boulders and bollards so they couldn't get the vehicle up there again. It



was after that the Council put up the shed and started selling plastic birds, rubber snakes and cans of pop.

That chap's been back; the one that sits quietly writing or whittling away at sticks and occasionally a female joins him. They perhaps have something to eat and sit and talk for a while but they're not around very long. I seldom see them when there are a lot of people around. I wish everyone was more like them, just getting on with life and enjoying the place without making too much of it. The ribbons that others have tied to me are beginning to tickle and look tatty and those little metal discs that the multi-coloured twerp hammers into my bark on a regular basis still sting. How would he like it if I hammered acorns on his nose, I wonder?

You humans can actually be quite amusing though. There was a strange woman dressed in pink muslin a couple of day's back who went around to each tree in turn in the area and stood for about five minutes mumbling something. I couldn't make out what it was for a while, even when she came up to me. After about half an hour of this palaver she whipped a saw out of her back pack and started to cut down a little sapling tree that has only been there a couple for years. I would have felt really sorry for it but it was another of those self-obsessed conifers and it was already beginning to get tetchy – it seems to be in the sap, you know? Apparently Muslin Maiden was asking all the trees around if she could cut down this particular one. Ha! Ha! Ha! What does she think? She didn't need to ask our permission – we were only too glad to get rid of the moaning wretch...and the woman! Before she finally left she left an offering of a 'Lemurian' crystal. I know it's Lemurian because it told me so – Muslin Maiden had charged it with Lemurian energy and left it with me because she thought I needed healing when really all I needed was to be left alone.

Over the past few weeks the sun has been setting earlier and the days have been getting cooler. In the fields surrounding the woodland the corn and wheat has ripened and the farmers have been cut-

ting it down with huge contraptions. My branches have beautiful green acorns on, too. I'm rather proud of the fact I can still produce seeds at my age and I'm really looking forward to autumn when I can get my own back on the visitors (and the squirrels) by dropping acorns on their heads. It's now the time of year the humans call Lughnassadh and once again they're planning a party.

The day arrived and their party started in the late afternoon. The Coven of the Rainbow Fartarses arrived and started setting things up - fires, candles and wheat, marking out a circle, the usual stuff that they get up to. A few were in a huddle a bit further off and there was some giggling going on and then a couple scooted off somewhere. I don't know what they were up to but there was no good in it I can

tell you. They arrived back some time later with stupid grins on their faces giving thumbs up signs.

Then they started putting on their costumes. Goodness knows what they thought they looked like. It was bad enough when they used to turn up all in black but this time they've gone from the sublime to the ridiculous. There was one dressed in a costume made of dried wheat, which kept dropping bits of grain from time to time.

I'm sure the pigeons and squirrels will love him – free food always makes them hyperactive! One of the women did put on a long black cloak and painted her face white (no change there then). There were a few that were still in the black crushed velvet but a group of them, which I can only describe as the Greek Chorus (Geek Chorus is a better description), were dressed in short multi-coloured tutus and headdresses that looked like rainbows made out of cardboard. Truly Tragic! – Especially the men who thought they looked iconic with their beards and fairy wings.

Sometime later the Grove of the Unicorn Fiddlers arrived, but their faces were as black as thunder and the bottom half of their robes were wet. The Fartarses were in fits of laughter until one of the Grove walked up to one of the Coven and punched him in the mouth. It came to pass that in order to get up here before the Fartarses the

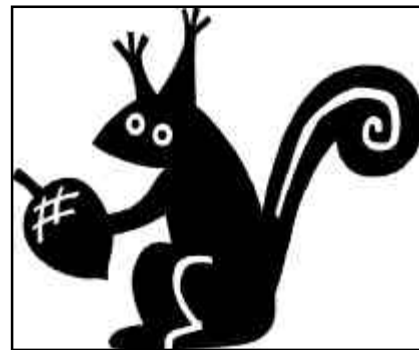


Fiddlers had discovered another quicker route, which took them over one of the bigger streams which the council had so kindly put a bridge over. The Fartarses had found out about this and left even earlier to get here quicker and in the time they had to spare had taken the supporting beams out from under the bridge, so when several of the Fiddlers walked over it the bridge had given way and they had fallen in the stream.

One of the men was wearing what was supposed to be a deer skin but had the appearance and smell of damp dog. (What is this obsession humans have about trying to look like furry creatures – Wolves and such but you never see one dressed like a squirrel!) I am sure someone had seen him coming when they sold it to him. Dog Man didn't look the type who could bring down and skin a deer – too weedy. You could tell how puny he was because the skin had now become very wet and he could hardly drag himself along and he was supposed to be head of this group. This was obvious because he had the biggest staff with strange symbols carved onto it, although he could hardly carry it. It wasn't him who had done the punching of a Fartarse – it was his wife! There was much shouting and scuffling and various threats bandied about but in the end they settled into their respective groups and started to do their usual things.

The Fiddlers were having a bragging contest because apparently that is what Groves do at this time of year, which gave the Fartarses plenty of ammunition to heckle, laugh and make rude comments, especially to the damp Dog Man who seemed to have started to steam slightly. That is until their main Fartarse bought them back into line because they had their thing to do. Now, the chap with the wheat costume was supposed to be the 'Spirit of the Corn' (looked absolutely nothing like the corn spirits of my acquaintance – too hairy to begin with) and was going to be 'cut down' by the woman in black to symbolise harvest. They all got very serious and stood in a circle (thankfully no fire was lit this time) holding hands and there was this long convoluted theatrical performance which culminated in the woman in black cutting Wheat Man's legs off, symbolically you understand – sadly! As he fell to the ground feigning death and the Geek Chorus started to moan, some grains of wheat shot out of the husks around him which attracted the squirrels – all of them...all at once!

I know what it's like being nibbled by a family of squirrels – it's not a nice sensation at all! Certainly this man didn't find it so either, especially as he was mainly naked under the costume. He was leaping up and down and running around trying to slap the squirrels away from him. Even so, some squirrels managed to infiltrate the gesticulations and one attached itself to Wheat Man's finger while another had buried itself under the costume and found nuts of an altogether different variety. Wheat Man screamed and I laughed so hard that some of my upper branches worked loose and I was able to finally shake free that 'Lemurian' crystal that Muslin Maiden had practically hammered between a fork in one of my branches.



It was now the Fiddlers' turn to laugh which then started another fight. Grains of wheat and dog hair were flying everywhere. The Council wardens had to come along and escort most of the people off the premises. However, it wasn't an easy job because the wardens were laughing so hard at the antics that they couldn't grip anyone. The presence of the wardens did seem to calm things down and eventually the bruised and battered witches and druids took their things and went their separate ways – and the bridge gave way under the Fiddlers again!

INTERVIEW WITH A

PAGAN

A series of interviews with members of the Pagan Network. Here, 2stepfan2 puts the questions to Moyne

PAGAN IDENTITY

PN: Name / username

Moyne: Hannah Witham and Moyne

PN: What age are you and where do you live?

Moyne: 29 and Bromley in Kent

PN: How would you describe your spiritual path?

Moyne: One very sacred to me, as a person. I choose to worship that which I can see and appreciate as something unique to nature.

PN: How did you get involved with this path? What's your "history"? How did your personal background influence this?

Moyne: My Mum has always been what I would describe as one with nature. She told me from a young age to enjoy and love all that is nature. She always celebrated full moons and certain times of the year in her own unique manner and that stuck with me. Though she was never interested in magic she has always told me to go with my heart. My Dad is Jewish, however this has only gone as far as supporting Spurs.

PN: Have you ever been physically attacked or discriminated against because of being a pagan?

Moyne: No, however I feel it dis-

heartening when people I respect, feel my ideals are a bit of a joke.

PN: Has anyone ever made assumptions about you (good or bad) because of being a pagan? What were they?

Moyne: I think I have escaped this.. I have been asked for the odd anti curse or love spell, but I have always advised people to look and find answers for themselves. Most do not believe in magic and turn to me in despair, when really they just need good advice.

HOW PAGANISM FITS INTO YOUR LIFE

PN: What do you do for a living? Is there any conflict between your work life and your spirituality?

Moyne: I am a student nurse, so naturally at college people leave me alone. Or tolerate what they conceive of as a phase. However during my working years no one has ever been bothered.

PN: Did you do magic to get on your nursing course?

Moyne: No, because despite my beliefs that would be totally unjust. It would be like pushing religion on to someone. I am studying child nursing so to me that would be wrong. People (including children) have a choice, they do not need my personal

intervention in their treatment.

PN: What are your hobbies and interests?

Moyne: I love to cook! I enjoy reading and growing herbs. Drinking down the pub is also good, good fun!

PN: What about your family and friends? Are they of similar spiritual paths to you, or are there differences?

Moyne: As I said above, my family are wonderful with my beliefs, especially my Mum who is desperate to come to the next London Moot with me.

BELIEFS

PN: Do you believe in the existence of a 'deity'? If so, have you ever had any divine experiences?

Moyne: None as such.

PN: Do you believe in the existence of 'spirits' – human or non-human? Have you ever had any experiences of 'spirit'?

Moyne: Though I don't have any personal experience, yes I do. Once apparently when I was small and my brother had just been bought home after his birth my parents both experienced activity that could not be explained.. My Dad is the most cynical person you will ever meet!

PN: Do you believe in the existence of magic? As a believer, how would you explain it?

Moyne: Yes indeed.. Magic is a form of science yet to be fully discovered.

PN: Do you practice your spirituality alone, in a group, or both?

Moyne: Alone. For me, since I call myself neither a real pagan nor a Wiccan, I choose to be alone in my path. I am happy doing so.

PN: Do you believe in the reality of curses? Would you ever do one? What types of spell would you include in your concept of a 'curse'?

Moyne: Yes I think they can work, however I have never felt the need to do one, nor want to.

ACTIVITIES

PN: What practices are regularly incorporated in your spiritual life? (E.g. meditation, prayer, ritual, magic, visualisations, trance work...)

Moyne: I do as I please. Some times I explore magic, and trance work, but it has never been a daily thing with me. However I would love to explore tarot. I need to set the time aside to do this though.

PN: What festivals, holy days, special occasions etc do you mark as part of your spirituality?

Moyne: I follow most of the Sabbaths in my own way. That can mean anything from planting a plant, or cooking a nice meal, to doing a ritual. But it has to be personal.

PN: Do you spend much time in

nature, in the wild? Do you spend enough time out there?

Moyne: A hell of a lot of the time.. I live on a farm in the middle of a huge town that says it all!

PN: Do you think paganism works better in the country than in the city? Why?

Moyne: No. It depends on the person; where someone lives makes no difference. However, I prefer the countryside... townie life depresses me.

IDENTITY ON PAGAN NETWORK

PN: How long have you been a member?

Moyne: Just over a year

PN: Is this your main online hang-out? Where else do you go to regularly (especially pagan / Wicca / magic-related)?

Moyne: Yes... all the others I have explored seem to be quite snobby and stuck up.

PN: Do you like the style of discussions that happen at Pagan Network? Do you like the subject matter?

Moyne: Subject matter is usually cool, but I still sometimes feel a little resentment from the more experienced ones. Saying that... others are welcoming and lovely

PN: What would you change about Pagan Network?

Moyne: No, nothing really, though I wish more people came to the chat room

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 (and a printed version once funding has been secured in the future). 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. An added benefit of subscribing is that all subscribers and full members are allowed to enter the competition too, but web members are not allowed.

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. When funding is available for the printed issue, subscribers can pay £2.00 an issue or £8 a year. Otherwise the magazine (when printed) can be bought at anytime for £2.50 if you don't subscribe.

If you would like to subscribe to the magazine please email the wichttower@gmail.com and we will provide you with payment information.

It's Your World



In this series we will be looking at ways to help the environment, along with making you aware of worthwhile causes to support. If you know of any causes that need supporting, or you would like to contribute an article to this series please email the witchtower@gmail.com

Clothes Swap Party

Ring the changes in your wardrobe with a Clothes Swap Party - they're great fun and a good excuse to get your mates round for an evening.

Avoid disposable batteries

Use rechargeable batteries instead of disposable ones - they'll save you money in the long term. You can buy solar powered rechargers if you want to reduce your environmental impact even further.

Clean and green

Get rid of the dust on your houseplants and give them a refreshing shower by popping them in the garden during a light rain. This saves on your water bills too - and avoids the need to buy special wipes to clean the leaves. Alternatively, use a discarded teabag or the inside of a banana skin to wipe the dusty leaves of houseplants and give them a shine.

Put carrier bags to good use

If you have plenty of old plastic carrier bags, use them as bin liners, drainage systems at the bottom of plant pots and hanging baskets, or instead of bubble wrap when packing. See if your local charity shops would like any surplus bags, and get into the habit of taking a re-useable bag next time you go shopping, to avoid picking up more carriers.

Coffee grounds

Used coffee grounds can go straight on the borders in your garden, or in pots, to make instant compost. It's also ideal at deterring slugs from your plants.

Treat your tiles

Give tiles a clean by wiping with a simple solution of 1 part white vinegar to 4 parts water. Rinse then wipe dry.



Tips from of Friends of the Earth

Uses for old carpet

Carpets have a huge environmental impact so try and make yours last as long as possible. Even when they really are no longer suitable for the floor, there are a number of ways to re-use small pieces. Use to line bottoms of cupboards or the boot of the car - easy to remove for cleaning. Also ideal for lining pet's baskets, for use as doormats, lagging for pipes. Small pieces are great to put underneath plant pots on windowsills or shelves, so they don't damage the surface.

Sound savings

Put your money where your mouth is, and invest your savings ethically. The Co-operative Bank - <http://www.co-operativebank.co.uk/> - leads the way on the high street with its ethical policy based on social and environmental criteria, and has a range of savings accounts. The Triodos Bank - <http://www.triodos.co.uk> - has savings accounts that allow you to be specific about how your money is invested. For example, you can choose to support organic food ventures. Their Earth Saver account supports environmental and renewable energy businesses, and Friends of the Earth gets a small donation each time one of these accounts is opened

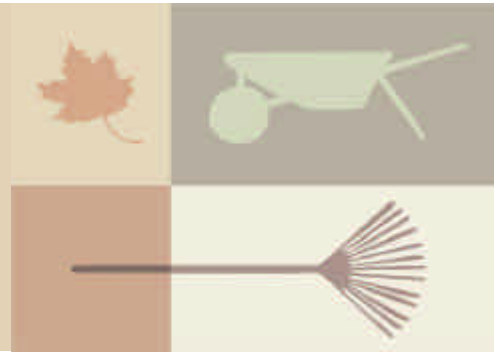
Shut it

Avoid leaving fridge doors open. Each minute the door is open takes three minutes of energy to cool down again

Tap tip

For a quick and cheap way of saving water, replace worn tap washers (approx 20 pence each) - and save a fiver a year. If you install new taps anywhere in your home, put spray heads on them and fix any taps that drip - these can waste up to 4 litres of water per day

CULTIVATE THE MAGIC



In this series we will be telling you about the folklore of plants, showing you how to create Pagan themed gardens, along with lots of other helpful hints and tips on gardening in a Pagan way! If you would like to contribute to this series please email the witchtower@gmail.com



Anemone

In folklore the anemone is believed to bring luck and protection against evil. If you see an Anemone closing its petals it means that rain is on its way. Fairies were also believed to sleep beneath the petals of the wood anemone during the night after they closed at sunset.

Anemones were associated with Adonis who was loved by Aphrodite. In an attempt to keep Adonis safe by hiding him in the Underworld, she was worried Adonis might be hurt whilst hunting, but he ignored her. One day, whilst hunting wild boar, Adonis shot a particularly large and

nasty boar, who when hit by the arrows of Adonis, turned on him and gored him to death. Aphrodite got to him just as he died and whilst she wept over his lifeless body, Zeus created a flower that arose from the ground where the blood had soaked in.

Bluebell

Bluebells are believed to summon fairies if the bells are rung, however if a human hears the bluebell ring it is said they would soon die. It was also thought that a mass of bluebells contained spells and that it was unlucky to walk through them. However, if you wear a bluebell, it is said that you will be compelled to speak truthfully and if you are able to turn one of the flowers inside out without tearing it you will eventually win the one you love.

The Latin name for this flower is Endymion who was the lover of the moon Goddess, Selene. The goddess put Endymion into an eternal sleep, so she alone could enjoy his beauty.



Creating an Elemental Garden

This garden can be divided into 4 or 5 sections. I prefer to have the elements facing the corresponding direction and the spirit element in the centre. If you feel creative enough you can create a planting design that contains symbols representing each of the elements! I also like to put a little something representing the element in each section, for example with water, I have a little bird bath and crystal chimes for Air.

EARTH - Honeysuckle, magnolia, peas, roots and tubers.

AIR - Broom, clover, dandelion, lavender, mint, mistletoe, sage.

FIRE - Basil, coriander, fennel, holly, marigold, rosemary, sunflower.

WATER - Crocus, foxgloves, daisy, jasmine, poppy, lettuce, lily.

SPIRIT - Larkspur, lobelia, morning glory, passionflower, valerian.

TRADING CARDS

Each issue we will bring you two Trading Cards containing information on various crystals and gemstones. These Trading Cards can be cut out and glued into your Book Of Shadows should you wish to do so.

HEMATITE

Hardness: 5 - 6

Occurrence: England, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Brazil, New Zealand and the U.S.

Appearance: Metallic grey, or black-gray, black or brownish red. When cut very thin, it is red and transparent.



Hematite is a grounding and stabilizing stone and can help you think in a logical and original manner. Hematite has been known to decrease blood and nervous disorders by having a purifying and energizing effect on the body. It helps circulate oxygen throughout the body, therefore enhancing the blood and mind.

Hematite can be used for protection of your home and against negativity directed at you. Hematite helps you overcome fears, inhibitions and self doubt. Hematite is associated with the base chakra.

Hematite can be used as a scrying device because of its dark reflective quality.

RHODOCHROSITE

Hardness: 3 - 4

Occurrence: Romania, Spain, France, Russia, Argentina, Mexico, Germany, Italy, South Africa, United States (Colorado, Montana).

Appearance: Rhodochrosite is a remarkable rose-pink coloured by manganese.



Rhodochrosite is used to cleanse the heart and emotional body of old hurts and traumas. It helps bring balance back into your body and mind. It can release suffering from past lives. Rhodochrosite aids the digestion, the heart, the kidneys, circulation of blood, and the thyroid.

Rhodochrosite encourages positive thinking and creativity

Rhodochrosite is associated with the heart chakra

ANCIENT WISDOMS

In this series we will be looking at Tarot Card meanings as well as showing you various spreads. The card meanings in this series are from my own interpretations that I have learned over the years. Every tarot deck provides you with general meanings related to the tarot cards, but I mainly use my intuition first and foremost in connection with the meaning of cards from various books.

The Fool

The Fool is the first card of the Major Arcana and therefore signifies the start of a new phase or journey in life.

The Fool represents seeing life/situations in a new light, with the innocence and trust of those who refuse to let past situations damage them or hold them back. The Fool has complete faith in the future and absence of fear. The Fool can be a joyous and exciting card, providing the power and self confidence to move through whatever challenges are thrown at us in the knowledge that every step we take we are trusting and believing that the situation will work out in our best interest.

However the Fool also warns of rushing blindly into situations, behaving in an unrealistic or irresponsible manner. There is a difference between running blindly into dangerous situations with no forethought and approaching situations with an open heart, new eyes and faith.

The Fool can also warn of indecision, apathy, hesitation, immaturity, impulsiveness or lack of responsibility and motivation. Sometimes it is easy to allow our fears to prevent us from moving forward in life, stopping us from taking on a new experience or new learning, but the Fool reminds you to believe in yourself and see life in a joyful and innocent way.



Images taken from the The Tarot of a Moon Garden

The Magician

The Magician represents wisdom gained through experience and learning. Through communication and understanding of how the world works the Magician shows that you can achieve anything you set your mind to, but the Magician also warns of being careful what you ask for. The Magician represents someone with many talents and skills who has the ability to transform situations through the correct use of wisdom.



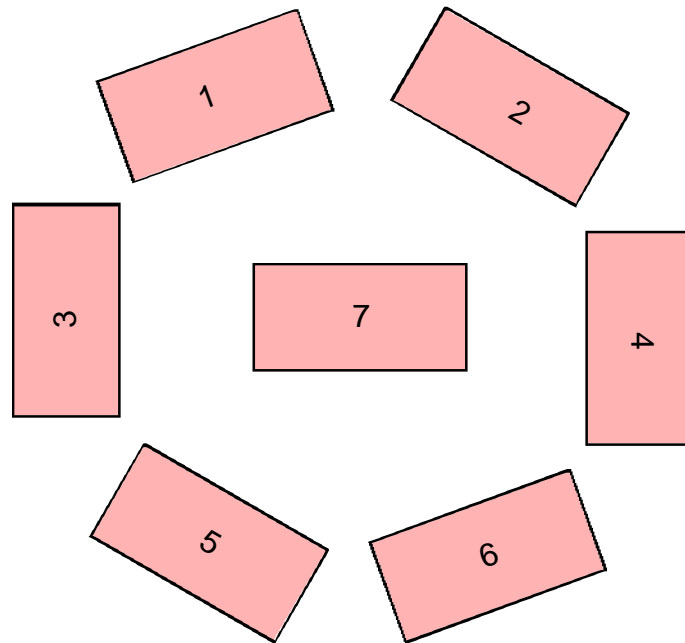
The Magician also warns of being aware of your thoughts and intent at all times, it is easy to let your thoughts slip into negativity and deception, this can cause you to misuse your wisdom in a destructive way, manipulating people and events for control to bring about your goals, so take positive steps with confidence and forethought.

The Magician can be a powerful card when used for the highest good. It can open doors to new opportunities, it can also signal magic coming into your life or a growth of your intuition.

The Magician can also warn of others trying to control or manipulate you.

Opportunity Tarot Spread

This tarot spread can be used when you are faced with a new situation/opportunity and you are not sure what to do.



1. Where you find yourself/how you feel right now about the situation/opportunity



2. What you should be aware of/what is influencing this situation/opportunity

3. What immediate benefits would this situation/opportunity bring

4. What immediate negatives would this situation/opportunity bring

5. What will aid you with this situation/opportunity

6. What you will need to let go of to move forward with the situation/opportunity



A Short Course in Tree Lore

By Steve Wilson

Due to a change over in Editorship and the number of magazine issues being reduced from 8 single issues to 4 double issues, this series on Tree Lore was never completed and only two articles were published. We are therefore pleased to announce that this series will be run to its completion, and to remind you all what it is about, we will be running the first article again over the next few pages, with the second article in the next issue and so on.

INTRODUCTION

While there is a lot of controversy over the origins and nature of Druidry, the connection with trees is definite. Some derive the word “Druid” from an ancient Indo-European root Dru-Vid – tree-wise, and the word may be linked to the Dryad of Greek mythology (the Greeks would have pronounced it Druad). This ancient root-word “Dru” may also be the origin of such words as True, and even Tree itself.

There are actually very few ancient references to druids acting as priests, as we understand the concept today. The three grades – the Bard, Faidh and Druid – were respectively poets, magicians and judges. One of the aspects of the Law on which Druids gave judgement was the illegal felling of trees. The illegal felling of “Royal Trees” was punishable by death. If only illegal logging companies in tropical rainforests were subject to such laws today! Caesar mentions Druids “making sacrifices to horrible Esus”. We know of Esus from three images (one without his actual name), which show a man felling a tree with a peculiar double-bladed sword. Perhaps these “sacrifices” were simply judicial executions.

During the last phase of classical Druidry a system of writing was invented called the Ogham. Each sign was associated with a particular aspect of nature, and the way it was learned was by memorising the tree

whose name began with that particular letter. To this day the Gaelic for (alphabetical) letter means tree.



There were originally 20 Ogham signs. This corresponds with the 20 years it took to learn to be a Druid. The Druid definition of what constituted a tree (as opposed to other related things, such as bushes) was different than nowadays, and there are letters for “Holly”, “Vine”, “Ivy” and “Reed” for example. How they attributed particular spiritual properties to the trees was also very different from western post-Christian magic. It was how the trees were of use to people in practice that determined what they symbolised. This is also very true of the runes that are named after trees (except in the Younger, Icelandic Futhark – there are apparently no trees in Iceland).

This is intended to be a 20 festival course, that is, there will be one article for 20 issues of the Witchtower. Since the practical uses of the trees from which the meanings are derived didn't change the moment that Christianity arrived, it is also relevant to those interested in Witchcraft – especially Archaic Witchcraft, which derives symbolism from practical uses of, well, everything.

*So, are you interested in doing the course?
See the next page for more details.*

How to do the course

If you are just interested in reading the articles, that is fine. But there are also practical methods to take the meaning of the trees within, to connect with them. If you are interested in actually qualifying as a Druid please pm me on Pagan Network (username Sethur) and additional tasks, practical out of door stuff and meditations, for example, will be given. There is no charge, the course will take no longer and the Druid group to which you will be initiated at the end - the Order of True Wisdom - will only be for people who have done this course via the Witchtower. This is not a recruiting exercise for any other group. For those interested in initiatory lines, the OTW has a direct line back to Britain's oldest Druid revival groups in the 18th century through Ross Nichols, an Ancient Druid Order initiate (along with Gerald Gardner).

In order to get the additional material please pm me on Pagan Network – this course is not available to non-members except in exceptional circumstances – such as if someone really doesn't have access to the internet.

The First Tree

BIRCH

Known as Beth in Gaelic and Beorc (but pronounced Birch) in Anglo-Saxon the Birch has many associations. Above all it is a Tree of beginnings. Not only does it begin the Tree Alphabet, it also begins the process of colonising newly uncovered land. 10,000 years ago, when the last glaciers retreated from Britain, the newly-formed island (we had been part of mainland Europe before that) was covered with Birches, along with other “pioneer trees” such as Sycamore. 10,000 years later, the replacement of steam railway engines by electric motors meant that dead embers were no longer shovelled to the side of the tracks, and the Birch reclaimed the banks. The result – leaves on the line. The Birch is a deciduous tree, but not only does it shed its leaves every year, it does so over just 3 days. The result, as we know all too well, can be that the trains slither to a halt.

The word for Birch begins with the letter B in many languages, dating right back to “Bhurzah” in

Sanskrit. This makes it one of the least-changed words in our language. There are several types of Birch, unless otherwise noted the following refers to the Silver Birch.

OGHAM



The Ogham character is a single line running to the right of the central stave used in all of the original Ogham characters.

PRACTICAL USES

A hardwood, Birchwood is popular in interior settings because of a quality that is mentioned below, but its abundance also makes it a main source of plywood. It is often used for furniture. It was also used for arrow-shafts, a use that appears in the Faerie Queen (1.1.8) – where a different list of 20 trees is recorded. It is also a source of an aspirin-like compound but its use is rare in Europe due to the abundance of Willow, which is a better source.

For fires, Birch burns hot but quickly. It will burn unseasoned but is best mixed with slower woods.

There is a tradition that witches' brooms were made of birch twigs around an ash stave. This is an appropriate mix – Ash is the last tree of the first set of Ogham characters, but I am not at all sure that this combination wasn't simply a standard way of making a tough yard-broom.

INTOXICATION

The Birch is the direct source of one form of intoxicant and the indirect source of another. Birch sap can be used to make a wine or a beer, is easily obtained (too easily perhaps) and is available in Spring, the opposite half of the year from Apple and Grape juice and the fruit of the Barley. In certain parts of Eastern Europe, overtapping almost destroyed entire forests. At a time when fermented drinks were safer than drinking water, Birch Beer was a staple of the building industry and, along with Sycamore and Service beer, and was known as “Checkers”. A pub called the Checkers is usually of Mediaeval origins, no matter how recent the modern building might be. Here the men would be paid on Checkered boards (across for how many days they had worked, down for how many hours each

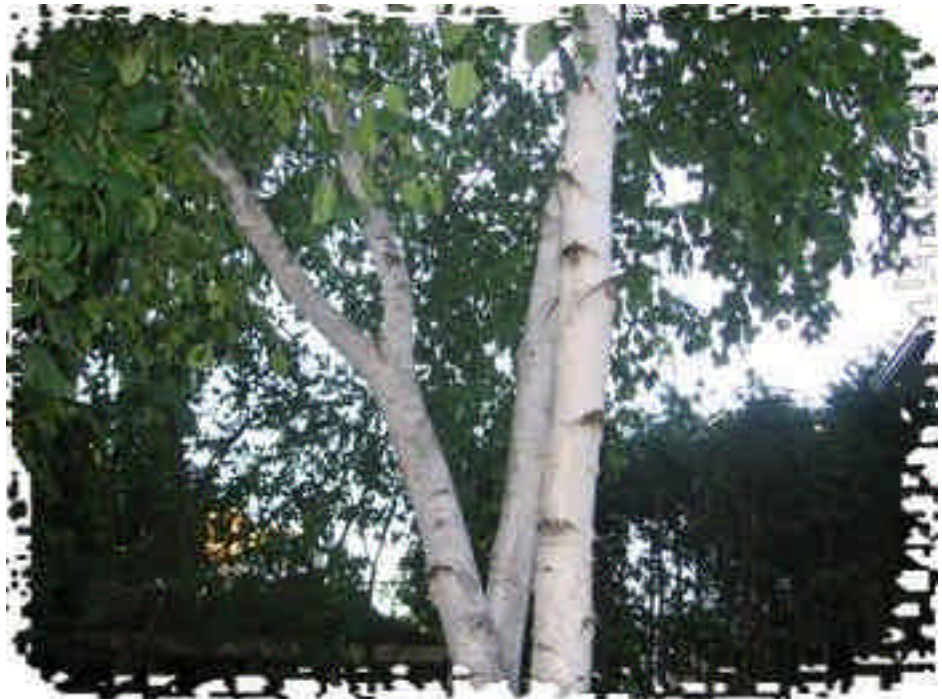
day). The word “Exchequer” comes from this period, as does the Checkerboard floor of Masonic Temples.

The second, indirect source of intoxication is the Fly Agaric Mushroom, which habitually grows at the foot of the Birch. The source of Shamanic visions for both humans and reindeer, Father Christmas and Santa Claus are descended from Mesolithic reindeer-hunting shamans. It is noticeable too that the great Spirit Guide who inspired the founding of Psychic News was called Silver Birch, and though usually depicted as a “Red Indian” made it clear that this was simply because this is how people expected him to appear. Rather, he claimed to be a spirit of 10,000 years ago. People who think of Spiritualism as a bit fluffy and simplistic should read the book *Teachings of Silver Birch*. But not any of the sequels (they are a bit fluffy and simplistic).

MAGIC

As the Birch begins things, it is associated with learning. Even Tolkien noted this! Birch bark was used as the source of a primitive type of writing-paper, so it is appropriate to always begin with Birch. Since cleansing is also a good way to start any magical working, a birch-whisk (just a bundle of birch twigs tied together, without a handle to make it into a broom) can be shaken around the sacred area or used to symbolically sweep around it.

The Druids also seem to have been particularly concerned with the first letter of words. They felt that they connected things together. In the case of the Birch, the goddess Brighid (Bride in modern Gaelic) would seem to be the most obvious deity and Beltane the obvious festival, as it begins the summer months and is the month (Beltane is actually the whole of May, it was just the feast of Beltane that was marked on May 1st) when the Birch sap rises and can be tapped. Brighid was the Goddess of poets – Druid learning was originally all done in verse – as well as of smiths, and is thus associated with fire, as is Beltane itself, when cattle would be driven through two fires.



JOIN AS A FULL MEMBER AND SUPPORT YOUR ORGANISATION

Pagan Network is a non-profit organisation, run by committee and financed by our members. Profits from membership and the sale of our magazine along with other merchandise help us fulfil our aims of promoting acceptance of Paganism as a belief system within the UK and providing a safe and secure networking platform for those who practise those beliefs.

BENEFITS OF FULL MEMBERSHIP

Becoming a Full Member of Pagan Network not only helps support the organisation financially, but you also get the following benefits:

- A copy of our Pagan Network Directory, with details of local moots, events, groups and shops around the country
- Personal Membership Card (in a choice of designs) which gets you reduced entry to Pagan Network events and discounts from an ever growing list of shops
- A Pagan Network keyring
- An annual subscription to Witchtower magazine PDF version
- Access to restricted areas of the Pagan Network website
- A chance to have a say in the running of Pagan Network

Full Members are given full voting rights at our Annual General Meeting, where issues can be raised and discussed with other members and the management committee. Members can also stand for election to the committee. You can also suggest what kind of work you'd like Pagan Network to become involved with, and nominate projects, organisations or events for us to support.

Pagan Network is truly a membership based organisation, and if you want to help shape the future of it, please become a full member today!

COSTS

- £20 Single Working Adult
 - £10 Child (under 18) (Form must be signed by parent)
 - £15 Unemployed/Student
 - £30 Couples (2 adults)
 - £40 Families (2 adults plus 2 children)
- Membership can be paid either by paypal or by cheque.

JOINING

There are two ways to become a Full Member, you can download the Application Form that can be found on the main index page of Pagan Network (www.pagan-network.org) under the membership section or alternatively you can fill in the opposite page and post to BM WiccaUK, London, WC1N 3XX

Full Membership Application Form - Membership runs for 1 year

Your Details

Your Name	
Address	
PN Username	
Email Address	
Date of Birth	

Membership Information

Do you authorise your details to be sent to groups or events organisers	
Do you wish to receive The Witchtower?	
How did you hear about Pagan Network?	
Membership No. for Renewal, if applicable	

Membership Choices

Which membership card do you wish to received? see www.pagan-network.org under the membership section.	
---	--

Type of Membership Required

£20	Single Working Adult (1 card, 1 pack) Optional -printed copies of Witchtower
£10	Child (under 18) (Form must be signed by parent) (1 card, 1 pack) Optional - printed copies of the Witchtower
£40	Families (2 adults plus 2 children) (2 cards (one for each parent) and 1 pack) Optional - printed copies of the Witchtower
£30	Couples (2 cards, 1 pack) Optional - printed copies of the Witchtower
£15	Unemployed/Student (You must provide proof of your unemployment status or proof of being a student, along with details of how long you expect to be a student) (1 card, 1 pack) Optional - printed copies of the Witchtower
Organisations - currently under review, please enquire via the Membership Manager	

I wish to pay for membership by:	Cheque - (post cheques to BM Wiccuk, London, WC1N 3XX)	Paypal - make payments to "andromeda@pagan-network.org"
---	---	--

Data is held confidentially for the duration of your membership
 I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the above mentioned information is correct and wish to commence membership of Pagan Network

Signature..... Date.....
 Must be signed by a parent or guardian if aged 16 or 17