



Gylden Magick

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Dec. 2021

PRACTICAL MAGICK & UNIVERSAL ENERGY FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

Editor's notes

by Gylden Fellowship

Welcome to **GYLDEN MAGICK** – the spiritual magazine from Gylden Fellowship that spans both traditional and newer pagan beliefs and practice.

The **Gylden Community** is one of the most extensive pagan libraries in southern England. Its website, www.gyldenfellowship.co.uk, is growing too – our Yule sabbat blog is projected to reach over 4000 people and we welcome new members constantly.

On Facebook, the **Gylden River LRC** (Learning Resources Centre) is a social learning hub with optional study units in key areas of magick.

Gylden Fellowship continues as a pagan support mechanism even under covid-19 constraints. We resemble **the library reference desk** at present, answering queries from

group members and offering advice to different FB sites. The uncertainty over covid-19 has meant a reduction in actual rituals, fayres and moots. So, we can't issue calendars at present, but we hope this will change next year.

We look forward to 2022 with real excitement. The January 2022 edition will be packed full of new series by new authors for you.

Our **Oak Moon** issue continues with the 25-page format with ever more guidance on spiritual issues and magick – this month has a definite emphasis on Yuletide. But no ads – after all, we're like a pagan public library and all the information is free.

Dates for your diaries – not least the **Blowing of the Midwinter Horn** in the Netherlands on 11 December (a custom that goes back 2 millennia)

and the **birthday of Nostradamus** on 14 December.

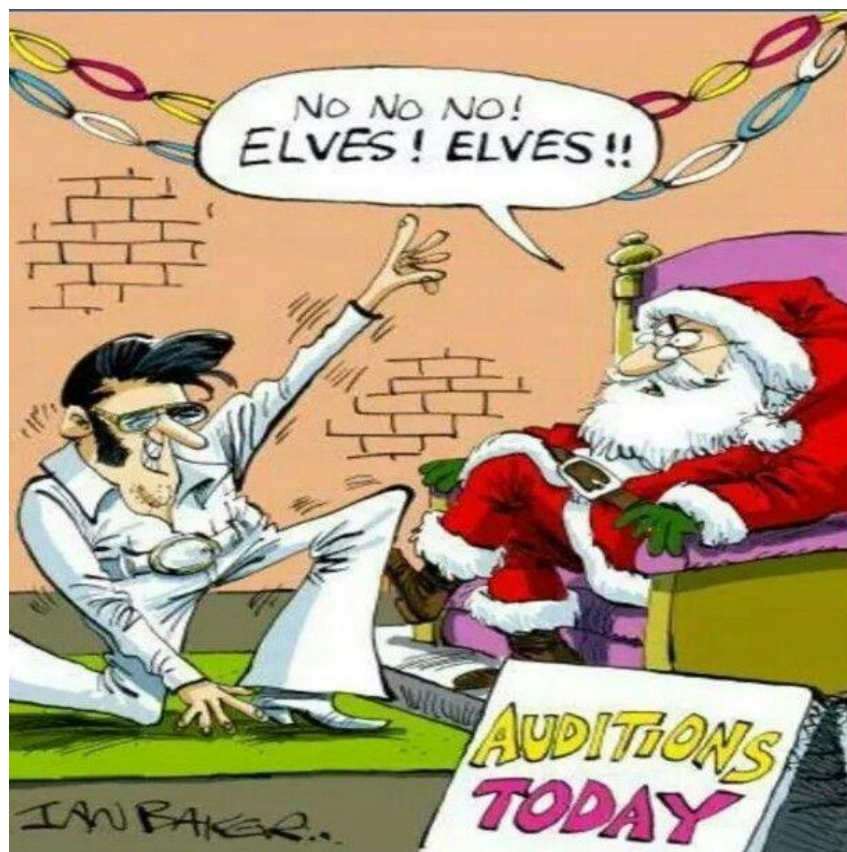
What else is there? Well, we have Egyptian alchemy, mushroom photos from Andrew Merritt, rhodocrosite crystals, celestial notes, news from the Sussex Wildlife Trust, the legend of Santa Claus, a folk tale from Shropshire and lots more.

Anything else? Oh yes, the title – we never forget that our faith is based upon Nature and that our strength comes from earth magick. Many of our sabbats are based upon the light, e.g. solstices and equinoxes, as vital to us now as to our ancestors.

For more info, why not join **Gylden River LRC** or **Gylden Fellowship** groups on Facebook today and see our archives or new briefings?

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Crystal clear: rhodochrosite

By Charlie Foreverdark

Time to send Yule greetings to another regular author to **GYLDEN MAGICK** – Charlie Foreverdark. Charlie is one of the blog writers for the crystal company and showroom, **Salt Shack**.

Rhodochrosite is a manganese carbonate mineral, prized by collectors for its interesting shapes and formations, which occur in both aggregate and crystal form. It is most commonly pink or red, but may sometimes feature white, yellow, grey or brown crystals. It forms as masses, columns, botryoidal and globular crystals within the cavities of sedimentary and metamorphic rock. It is often found alongside silver deposits, with some silver mines unearthing rhodochrosite as a mere by-product. Early miners noted the presence of rhodochrosite as a “**gangue mineral**”, which was a term reserved for materials considered to be of no value that were uncovered alongside the desirable minerals. How wrong they were to initially disregard this stunning mineral, quality specimens of which can easily command five-digit figures on the modern crystal market!

The **pink colour** of rhodochrosite is caused by manganese. Rhodochrosite is formed when the manganese dissolved by ground water combines with a carbonate material and then drips from the ceiling and down the walls of caves and crevices deep underground. Some substitution of iron in place of manganese can cause other hues. Siderite and calcium, as well as magnesium and zinc, can also substitute for manganese in the structure, leading to lighter shades of red and pink depending upon the degree of substitution within the solution.

In metamorphic rocks, rhodochrosite is found as a vein. It forms as a fracture-filling mineral as it precipitates from ascending hydrothermal solutions. Repeated crystallisation episodes allow layers of rhodochrosite to build up on the walls of the fracture. Each layer can represent a unique precipitation event and produce material with slightly different colours. The differing mineral content accounts for the characteristic, coloured banding of rhodochrosite, which gives a really unique character to the material for lapidary use.



Rhodochrosite is **a fairly soft mineral** – scoring between 3.5 and 4 on Moh’s hardness scale. Due to this softness and its perfect cleavage (in 3 directions), rhodochrosite isn’t typically faceted. However, that doesn’t mean that faceted examples don’t exist - just that they aren’t especially common. For jewellery items, protective measures such as bezel settings are highly recommended for rhodochrosite, but the beautiful stones mainly appeal to collectors as the mineral is challenging to work with and tends to be simply too fragile for most frequent-wear jewellery. It is incredibly rare to find well-formed rhodochrosite crystals. Therefore, gem-quality rhodochrosite specimens (in particular the more transparent examples) are extremely valuable and command high prices on the crystal market.

Global locations of quality Rhodochrosite include the USA, Peru, Argentina, Romania, Hungary and Mexico. The N'Chwaning Mines in South Africa are recognised for particularly noteworthy dark blood-red rhodochrosite crystals, as opposed to the more typical bright cherry red colour. The San Luis province in central Argentina has the oldest known mines, and the rhodochrosite from there has been named Inca Rose. The manganese saturated groundwater here allowed for rust-coloured rhodochrosite speleothems to form in the magnificent underground caves. This particular location is the only place in the world where gigantic rhodochrosite stalactites have been found. Measuring up to half a metre in diameter and 3m in length, the inner colour is only revealed once the stalactite has been cut. Being situated at heights of 10,000 to 11,500 feet makes access extremely challenging, hence mining rhodochrosite is no easy feat. Collectors value highly these tubular stalactic forms of rhodochrosite, which can be cut into cross-section slices and polished to clearly display the beautiful concentric banding within the stone.

Rhodochrosite draws its name from two Greek words: "rhodon" meaning rose, and "chroma" meaning colour. It was identified at the end of the 18th century under the title of "oxidized manganese by aerial acid", but Johann Friedrich Ludwig Hausmann gave the mineral the definitive name of rhodochrosite in 1813. However, the love of this legendary stone dates back at to the ancient Inca civilization of the 12th and 13th centuries. Upon discovering the gem in caves in Argentina, the Incas incorporated the beautiful pink crystals into their silver jewellery. They believed that rhodochrosite was the petrified blood of their fallen kings and queens and that the blood hardened to stone to demonstrate the strength, power and stamina of their past leaders. Thought to bestow upon them the qualities of their ancestors, the most beautiful rhodochrosite beads were reserved for the decoration of leaders.

In Mongolia, rhodochrosite was called the stone of love, and the interior of one of the palaces of capital city Ulan Bator is decorated with this stone. Historically in the East, rhodochrosite balls were used for facial massage. Attributed with the power of youth and vigour, the stone was believed to increase the elasticity of the skin, and remove wrinkles.

In 1966 an incredible pocket of fine rhodochrosite, reported to be around 7 foot tall, 4 foot deep, and more than 2 foot wide was discovered in Colorado by a land owner. Six weeks later, the owner returned to his precious find only to discover one of the miners had pilfered the entire pocket while the mine was supposed to have been closed for winter. The thief sold all the crystals and, leaving his wife and children behind, promptly disappeared to start a new life with his mistress and all of the profit!

Imitation rhodochrosite can be found on the market in the form of beads or cabochons. These are made from appropriately coloured mineral matter which is crushed into a powder and then bound together with resin. The powders are layered and swirled together with dyes and resins to produce a banded appearance similar to natural rhodochrosite, some can be quite convincing, but as with all resinous materials, will not behave the same way as the real mineral in the specific tests that we can use for the purposes of distinguishing.

Rhodonite, another pinkish stone, is often confused with rhodochrosite. Whilst rhodochrosite is banded with white, rhodonite typically features black dendritic inclusions of manganese oxide which contrast quite dramatically against the pink. The two are similar, but belong to separate mineral groups - rhodonite is a manganese silicate mineral, and rhodochrosite is a manganese carbonate mineral. In case you were wondering about the difference, it is all in the atomic structure. Silicates have a single silicon atom surrounded by four oxygen atoms. Carbonates have a single carbon atom surrounded by three oxygen atoms. Rhodochrosite can easily be distinguished from rhodonite, not only by the differing aesthetics but also by its inferior hardness, which can be ascertained with the simple scratch test.

Witterings: Alban Arthan/ Yule

By Nick the Witch

Alban Arthan, also known as Yule, celebrates the winter solstice, the shortest day and longest night, after which the days lengthen and the march of the sun towards spring is begun. For some druids, **Alban Arthan** means the light of winter (Welsh), while others believe it means the light of Arthur – this could be King Arthur Pendragon, who was seen as the sun god, reborn at the Winter Solstice.

The word, **Yule**, comes from an ancient Norse word, Hjól (yoh-l) meaning wheel, i.e. when the wheel of the year was at its lowest point awaiting the sun's return. At Yule, we celebrate the turning of the year towards the light and warmth of summer. This is the night on which the hope of life and the promise of spring is given, to give us courage in the coming cold.

And, on that note, here's [a little spell for a winter wish](#). It's best done at full moon, but is all right in a waxing moon too. You'll need a small silver charm or token, a white or grey bag and 7 blue or white stones (could be crystals or garden pebbles – cleansed).

1. Take all the items to a moonlit window-sill.
2. Write your wish (e.g. "I wish for my family to be safe from illness at present") on a piece of paper and anchor it with the charm/ token.
3. Surround the wish with the stones.
4. For the next 6 nights, add 1 stone per night to the bag and chant:

"Samhain has gone and winter's here,

With frost and ice and air so clear,

Bring peaceful nights with shining stars,

Grant my wish as solstice nears.

So mote it be."

On the final night, put everything remaining into the bag and keep it with you or close by. Hopefully, your family will remain safe and well during this time.

Each year, when it comes to Yule, I set up a **Yule** altar, which includes natural decorations, such as holly, ivy, pine cones, etc, all of which are readily accessible from the garden. The rationale is to set aside a place to reflect other seasonal bits and pieces, namely candles, crystals, statuettes, herbal ingredients, etc. Traditional altar colours are white, silver and black, decorated with red, gold and green ribbons or baubles. Sometimes, there's a small Yule tree, but this may be replaced by a bowl of potpourri.

Your altar should be located in the north, as this is the correspondence direction for winter and the element in Earth. Good scents for the altar at Yule include orange, frankincense or sandalwood. It's up to you, which rituals can be done at your altar – if you're a solitary practitioner, a Yule ceremony on 21 December is good, but other activities might include reflective practices, such as meditation.

Gylden
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Sacred art of Diwali (was 4 November 2021)

Collated by Gylden Fellowship



Ekadashi - 1 Nov, 2021 (Monday)

Dhanteras - 2 Nov, 2021 (Tuesday)

Kali Chaudas - 3 Nov, 2021 (Wednesday)

Diwali/Lakshmi Puja - 4 Nov, 2021 (Thursday)

Bali Pratipada - 5 Nov, 2021 (Friday)

Bhaiya Dooj - 6 Nov, 2021 (Saturday)







Sinterklaas

By the Storyteller

Santa Claus came from Saint Nicholas – in the Netherlands, his feast day (Sinterklaas) this year is 5 December.

Who was St Nicholas?

Nicholas was born during the third century in the village of Patara. At the time, the area was Greek and is now on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words **to sell what you own and give the money to the poor**, Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made a bishop while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known for his generosity to those in need and for his concern for children and young people.

Under the Romans, who ruthlessly persecuted Christians, Bishop Nicholas suffered for his faith, was exiled and imprisoned. He died on 6 December 343CE in Myra and was buried in his cathedral church, where a unique liquid formed in his grave. This liquid substance, said to have healing powers, fostered the growth of devotion to Nicholas. The anniversary of his death was a day of celebration.

Many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds. These accounts help to understand his extraordinary character and show why he is so beloved and revered as protector and helper of those in need, particularly children. Through the centuries St. Nicholas has been venerated by Catholics.



One story tells of a poor man with three daughters. In those days a young woman's father had to offer prospective husbands something of value — a dowry. Thus, this poor man's daughters, without dowries, were destined to be sold into slavery. Mysteriously, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home — providing the needed dowries. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas. **And so, St. Nicholas is a gift-giver.**

In France, a story is told of three small children, wandering in their play until lost, lured, and captured by an evil butcher. St. Nicholas appears and appeals to God to return them to life and to their families. **And so, St. Nicholas is the patron saint and protector of children.**

Celestial notes

By Joanna Bristow-Watkins, Harmony Healing

We are very pleased to feature **Joanna Bristow-Watkins** as one of our regular contributors for **GYLDEN MAGICK** and, here, we're including a few details about her expertise – many thanks to Rebecca Granshaw for suggesting Joanna. Joanna runs **Harmony Healing**, which may be accessed at www.harmonyhealing.co.uk

Forest Bathing+ Sessions with Joanna & Katie

We have *Harmony in Nature* forest bathing sessions at Newlands Corner, Guildford (Saturday 4 December), Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary, Shere (Saturday 11 December) and Horsell Common, Woking (Monday 6 December). **Important News about Newlands Corner:** Newlands Corner, our beautiful site in Guildford Surrey, have put up our site rental price so much that we don't know if we will be able to continue working there. So, if you want to join us at **Newlands Corner**, please book in ASAP for one of our pre-Christmas dates (2 and 30 October) as it is unlikely to feature as a 2022 destination. We will be forced to cancel Newlands events one week before if numbers are low, so please don't leave it to a last-minute booking or you stand to be disappointed.

Monthly Virtual Full Moon & Unity Consciousness Meditations

Our **Mindful Chakra Alignment Course** runs for three consecutive Wednesday evenings commencing 1 December (see listing below for details and link) and our **Full Moon Meditation takes place 7.30-9.30pm (UK time)** on Saturday 18th, with the **Solstice Full Moon** peaking the following morning at 04:36. Aligning with the moon cycle is very therapeutic, and our next Lunar Alignment Programme commences with the New Moon on 2 January 2022. We also have the **Geminid Meteor Shower** peaking 13th/14th. **Wednesday 1 December** is the start of Harmony Healing Virtual Module: **Mindful Chakra Alignment and Unity Consciousness (£66)**, 7.15pm-9.30pm (UK time/GMT = UK & USA friendly evening hours), 2¼ hours for 3 consecutive weeks ending 15 December, worth ½ unit towards **RSE Level 1**. Held remotely on Zoom.

Sarah Jane's **Women's Circle Moon Lodge** is meeting on Friday 15th. Aligning with the moon cycle is very therapeutic, and our New Moon New Vision: Moon Alignment Course runs for a full lunar cycle from New Moon on 6 October to New Moon on 4 November. Our **Full Moon Meditation takes place 7.30-9.30pm (UK time) on Wednesday 20 November**, with the Hunter Moon peaking earlier in the day at 15:57.

Other Harmony Healing Services

Harmony Healing activities are aimed at bringing harmony and wellbeing into your life. Currently, events are virtual, except for Forest Bathing+, hence distant readings and healings are proving popular and we have low cost **meditations** available as well as **distant 1-2-1 healings**. Joanna is a Reyd Sekh Em® Egyptian Alchemy Healer and Teaching Mentor. We also have **meditations** available and a number of virtual courses including **Reyd Sekh Em (RSE) Egyptian Alchemy Healing Level 1** (which is now fully available as interactive training modules) and a **monthly virtual healing circle** - details on **Harmony Healing Virtual Events**. Joanna also offers **distant intuitive readings (past life and/or aura readings) and distant 1-2-1 healings** and runs various **Meet-up groups in London and Surrey** and the **London & Surrey Alchemists Facebook Group** and posts regularly on **Instagram** and **Linked-In**. *We have Forest Bathing and Harmony Healing vouchers available as Christmas gifts.*

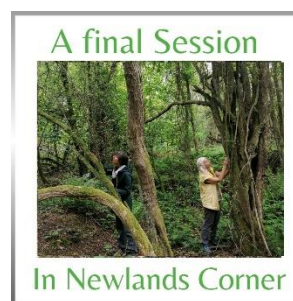
December in Britain is the month with the least hours of daylight, but sunlight hours increase from 21st onwards, after the Winter Solstice. The increased daylight - promising optimism - is celebrated as

Yule, and here in the UK, Christmas Day on the 25th, which pre-Christianity, in Roman times, was celebrated as the birth date of Sol Invictus (Roman Solar Deity).

Landscapes and gardens are skeletal now, except for the evergreens, looking charming when snow-covered and laced with spider's webs kissed by frost. Keep the shivers at bay with seasonal soups utilising Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, carrots, beetroot, parsnips, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, potatoes and winter squash. Enjoy nutty snacks from chestnuts, hazelnuts and walnuts. Late fruiting apples, pears and quince also remain plentiful together with mushrooms and black truffles.

*The month of December was named after "decem" meaning 10th in Latin, as December was the 10th month when the year started in March. To the Anglo-Saxons, December was called **Ærra Gēola**, meaning "before Yule" or "First Yule".*

*During December, we can also look forward to the Celtic Festival of Yule (Winter Solstice = 21st December) followed by the Christian Festival of **Christmas** (25th) which is also the Zoroastrian Celebration of **Zartosht-no Diso** and **St Stephens Day/Boxing Day** (26th) plus two annual Roman Festivals **Bona Dea** (3rd) and **Saturnalia** (17th), and the month culminates with **New Year's Eve** (31st), celebrated as a two-day festival called **Hogmanay** in Scotland.*



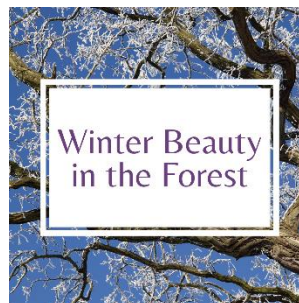
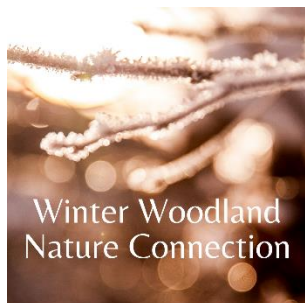
Friday 3 December is the Roman Festival of Bona Dea, this being a smaller festival than the one celebrated on 1 May but similarly for women only. In Roman mythology, Bona Dea (literally "the good goddess") was the goddess of fertility, healing, virginity, and women. She was the daughter of the god, Faunus, and was associated with supplying medicinal healing herbs in her temple garden. Bona Dea was also invoked for freedom from slavery; many of her worshippers were freed slaves and plebeians, and many were women seeking aid in sickness or for fertility.

Saturday 4 December, 10.30am - 12.30pm, Forest Bathing+ at Newlands Corner, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the Surrey Hills, £25 (+ Paypal fee = £26.25). This is a 2-hour Forest Bathing+ session which will take place in all weathers except 30+mph winds. A deeply relaxing and rejuvenating experience, and which, despite the title forest bathing, does not involve any swimming! Some of the scientifically proven benefits of spending time in woodland include reduced stress levels, stronger immune system response, and a stabilised cortisol cycle. [Booking link](#).

Saturday 4 December @ 07:43 is the New Moon, Supermoon and a total Solar Eclipse (only visible in Antarctica, but partially visible in South Africa and Namibia). A solar eclipse happens whenever the Moon passes between the Earth and the Sun, hence partly or totally obscuring the Sun for anyone viewing from Earth. This eclipse will not be visible in London but affects all of us energetically.

The **New Moon Abundance Ritual** should be carried out within 24 hours **after** the New Moon. It needs to be after the New Moon because the moon should be waxing (getting bigger again) to carry the

manifestation energy. There are video instructions on my [You Tube Page](#). The New Moon is great time to create Vision Boards. How about creating one for 2022?



Monday 6 December, 10.30am-1pm, Forest Bathing+ with Joanna & Katie at our new Woking (GU21) location in Horsell Common, £35 (+ Paypal fee = £36.75). Immerse yourself in the healing elements of nature and connect deeply with all your senses. Spend 2½ hours in the woods mindfully connecting to nature through simple sensory exercises and a treelaxation. Join us at this mixed woodland and heath location, featuring many Scott's pines and silver birches. This historic common land was featured in HG Wells' bestselling novel. A deeply relaxing and rejuvenating experience, and which, despite the title forest bathing, does not involve any swimming! Some of the scientifically proven benefits of spending time in woodland include reduced stress levels, stronger immune system response, and a stabilised cortisol cycle. This session which will take place in all weathers except 30+mph winds or electrical storms. [Booking link](#). Email to go on our forest bathing mailing list.

Saturday 11 December, 11.00am-1pm, 2 hours Forest Bathing+ session with Joanna at Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary (Shere, near Guildford, Surrey), £25. This Winter Forest Bathing+ session will take place in all weathers except 30+mph winds. A deeply relaxing and rejuvenating experience, and which, despite the title forest bathing, does not involve any swimming! Some of the scientifically proven benefits of spending time in woodland include reduced stress levels, stronger immune system response, and a stabilised cortisol cycle. Book via our the [Harmony Healing shop](#). Email to go on our forest bathing mailing list.

Monday 13-Tuesday 14 December is the peak of the Geminid Meteor Shower. The Geminids are considered by many to be the best annual meteor shower and are known for producing multi-coloured meteors, 65% being white, 26% yellow, and the remaining 9% blue, red and green. Rates typically peak at 100-120/hour; this high activity lasts for several hours. It is certainly possible to see 80-100 Geminids in a single hour, but only from a dark site! With the recent New Moon, viewing could be excellent, weather permitting. The Geminid Meteor Shower is expected to peak in activity on the nights of December 13-14, although some meteors should be visible from December 7-21. The radiant point for this shower will be in the constellation Gemini. Best viewing is usually to the east after midnight. The waxing Gibbous Moon approaching the Full Moon early on 19 December will hamper viewing due to light pollution. Go to timeanddate.com for further information.



Friday 17 December is the Roman Festival of Saturnalia. This was the popular banquet commemorating the dedication of the temple of the god Saturn. It was marked by tomfoolery and reversal of social roles, in which slaves and masters ostensibly switched places. The holiday was celebrated with a sacrifice at the Temple of Saturn, in the Roman Forum, and a public feast, continual partying with private gift-giving, gambling and a celebratory atmosphere that reversed the usual Roman social norms with masters provided table service for their slaves. The poet Catullus referred to it as "the best of days." Saturn was an agricultural deity who, in Roman Mythology, was associated with the Golden Age, when humans enjoyed the spontaneous bounty of the earth without labour in a state of innocence.

Saturday 18 December is our Full Moon Unity Consciousness Meditation, 7.30-9.30pm UK time (GMT/UT). This is the night before Full Moon takes place at 08:58 on the 19th. During this session, we connect with other like-minded people and together we work through a mindful chakra balancing process using colours and etheric crystals, with the aim that all participants will experience a degree of unity consciousness. Participants all receive a deeply healing experience. Cost to participate is £20 by online BACS payment (small admin fee added for PayPal). This activity serves as a good taster of Joanna's work in general. For more details and to book, see [Harmony Shop](#).

Sunday 19 December @ 04:36 (Winter Solstice Micro Full Moon).

Click here for [Angela McGerr's Full Moon Meditation with Gabriel](#), from Angela McGerr's [A Harmony of Angels](#), available from the [Harmony Shop](#) (signed by Angela). Between this date and the next New Moon is considered as a good time energetically for detoxing the body. A brilliant time for oil pulling. (Full Moon Image by Ruvim from Pexels.)



Tuesday 21 December is the Pagan Solstice @ 15:58. It's the Winter Solstice here in the UK - the shortest day of the year with just 7 hours and 49 minutes daylight. The solstice itself is the moment the sun is shining farthest to the south, directly over the Tropic of Capricorn, so the time varies every year, between December 20th and 23rd.

The solstice marks the moment the sun shines at its most southern point and has been celebrated as a major pagan festival, with rituals of rebirth, for thousands of years. Revellers gather at Stonehenge to watch the sunrise on the shortest day. Then, in the Northern Hemisphere, our days will gradually get longer until the summer solstice on Tuesday 21 June 2022 at 10:13.

Many of the traditions now associated with Christmas had their roots in pagan Winter Solstice celebrations; including Yule logs, mistletoe and Christmas trees. The Druids - an ancient Celtic order of priests, teachers, diviners and magicians who gleaned knowledge and enlightenment from sacred landscapes and ancient trees such as Tutorial Oaks - used evergreen trees, holly and mistletoe to represent everlasting life. Druids would consider the cutting of trees as an offence against nature, but would decorate them with colourful rags tied on the branches.

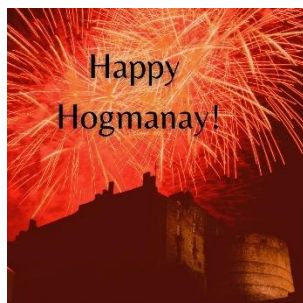
Saturday 25 December is the Christian Festival of *Christmas*, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

This date in the Fasli Zoroastrian Calendar is *Zartosht-no Diso*, commemorating the anniversary of the death of the prophet Zarathustra.

Sunday 26 December is *St Stephen's Day* in the Christian Calendar, also known as *Boxing Day*.

Friday 31 December is *New Year's Eve and Hogmanay* in Scottish tradition.

Many Scots had to work over Christmas because celebrations were virtually banned in Scotland for around 400 years, from the end of the 17th century to the 1950s.



The Protestant Reformation led to the Presbyterian outlook, branding Christmas as a Popish or Catholic feast which was therefore prohibited. As a result, their winter solstice celebrations took place at New Year when family and friends gathered for a party and exchange presents, especially for the children, which came to be called Hogmanay. Historians believe that the Vikings who, coming from even further north than the UK, paid strong attention to the passing of the shortest day and, hence, may have initiated the post-Solstice celebrations. (Image of fireworks over Edinburgh Castle by Chris Flexen.)

There's no definition on the origins of the word, *Hogmanay*. Many Scottish words have derived from Flemish, so one popular view is that *Hogmanay* came from *hoog min dag* which means *great love day*, whereas the Scandinavian word *Hoggo-nott* described the feast preceding Yule (a Scandinavian word commonly used in Shetland where the Scandinavian influence was strongest). Alternatively, Hogmanay could source from the Anglo-Saxon, *Haleg monath*, Holy Month, or the Gaelic for new morning, *oge maidne*. Phonetically, a good candidate might be the similar sounding French expression *Homme est né* which means Man is born. Also, in France the last day of the year when gifts were exchanged was *aguillaneuf*, though specifically in Normandy presents given at the year-end were *hoguignetes*.

In Scotland a similar practice to that in Normandy was noted, rather disapprovingly, by the Church. *"It is ordinary among some Plebians in the South of Scotland, to go about from door to door upon New Year's Eve, crying Hagmane."* Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence, 1693.

Common Scottish practices on 31 December, before midnight, involve a thorough cleaning of the house (including taking out the ashes from the coal fire) plus the superstition to clear all your debts. Immediately after midnight, the long-held tradition to sing Robert Burns's *For Auld Lang Syne* has now evolved into a popular international custom.

Many areas of Scotland often developed their own local *Hogmanay* rituals such as the fireball swinging rituals in Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire, in northeast Scotland. Chicken wire structures - filled with old newspaper, sticks, rags, and other dry flammable material - are attached to lengths of wire, chain or non-flammable rope. When the Old Town House bell marks the New Year, the balls are set alight and the celebrants set off along a heritage route, swinging the burning balls around their heads as they go. At the end of the ceremony, any fireballs that are still burning are cast into the harbour.

Saturday 1 January is *New Year's Day* and is a Bank Holiday in the UK and time for New Year's Resolutions!

Saturday 1– Wednesday 5 January (peaking on the 3rd, 4th January) is the Quadrantids Meteor Shower; visible from 1–5 January after midnight and peaking in the early hours of the 4th. With the New Moon on 2 January, it could be a good year. Typically, 40 or so bright blue and fast (25.5 miles per second) meteors will radiate from the constellation Bootes, some blazing more than halfway across the sky. A small percentage of them leave persistent dust trains. This shower usually has a very sharp peak, usually lasting only about an hour.

The particles that cause the Quadrantid meteor show originate from the asteroid 2003 EH₁ an asteroid that is probably a piece broken off from an obsolete comet. Since the orbit of 2003 EH₁ is highly inclined to the orbit of the Earth, the Earth passes through it very quickly. Thus, the Quadrantid meteor shower is an extremely short one, lasting only a few hours. With the recent Full Moon on 30 December, there could be too much light pollution to see much.



Tales for dark evenings: The Giant & the Pie

By the Storyteller

Once upon a time there was a wicked giant who took great delight in terrorising the good folk of east Shropshire. Mainly, he stole food from barns and farms or crops in the fields. Sometimes he would pile large boulders in the River Severn, causing floods in the town of Shrewsbury.

Many attempts were made to deter the giant from making so much trouble, but no-one was successful. Knights on horseback, hunters with hounds and even gold from the Mayor of Shrewsbury's private store were not successful. The giant just liked to be a nuisance and he laughed each time the River Severn flooded from his boulders.

At last, it became obvious that weapons and gold were not the answer and the giant could only be defeated by more subtle means. The Mayor thought long and hard and remembered that, more than anything else, the giant loved his stomach and his food. So, the Mayor called all the bakers of the town together and asked which one was the best and all agreed that the best baker in Shrewsbury was Mark, who sold his bread from a little stall in the Market Hall.

The Mayor gave Mark gold and asked him if he could bake a pie fit for a giant. Mark agreed and proposed a special recipe. The pie dish was huge and there were massive chunks of meat and seasoned gravy, all finished off with Mark's finest pastry. The smell was wonderful, but what the folk of Shrewsbury didn't know was that Mark's special recipe included such ingredients as fool's conecap, destroying angel and deathcap mushrooms and large amounts of belladonna and hemlock.



As the giant approached Shrewsbury that day, the pie was pushed out to him and the Mayor shouted out that the people of the town had baked a pie in honour of the giant. The giant stopped, smelled the meat and gravy and dropped his boulders. He ate his pie in three huge mouthfuls. Then he dropped dead. Where he lay became the hill known as the Wrekin and his pile of boulders made the little hill known as the Ercall.

As for Mark, well that was very sad, because he had picked most of his special ingredients by hand before baking them in the pie. While helping to push the pie out to the giant, he had caught his finger and sucked at the cut to make it better. The moral of the story is to always wash your hands during cooking!

Yule feast 2021

By Maxine and Baz Cilia

Spriggan Mists

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Environment: round-up

By Sussex Wildlife Trust

Center Parcs want to build a new holiday village at **Oldhouse Warren** near Crawley, West Sussex. We think this would be a disaster for the environment. Oldhouse Warren is an ancient woodland, sitting within the High Weald AONB. This woodland is a vital home for precious wildlife, including goshawk, marsh tit and lesser spotted woodpecker. Whilst we have nothing against a new leisure facility in the South East, this is clearly the wrong location. Please tell Center Parcs and our local councillors and MPs, that Oldhouse Warren ancient woodland is the wrong place for a huge holiday park.

November was a great month at **Rye Harbour Nature Reserve for Piscivores** - the animals that eat fish. Earlier in the year there were so few small fish in the sea that sandwich terns and Mediterranean gulls decided not to nest here. But recently there's been so many small fish in Rye Bay, in the estuary and in the saltmarsh that there's been many animals feeding on them.

In the saltmarsh there's been 20 or more little egrets, up to 7 great egrets and a regular spoonbill. Sussex Wildlife Trust has produced a video, in which the great white egret - with yellow dagger like beak - is shown with little egret and grey heron. For more details, see sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk

In the Rother estuary, common or harbour seals have been frequent, with an occasional goosander and guillemot.

But the best "wildlife spectacle" of all was out in Rye Bay with gannets, cormorants, red-throated divers, great crested grebes, guillemots, razorbills, some very late sandwich terns and, of course, many, many gulls. On some mornings, there were more than a thousand cormorants standing on the shore at low tide.

On a few days hundreds of gannets came close inshore at high tide and there was a spectacular feeding frenzy near the river mouth. Inland at the ditches and pits, there were also several fisherbirds...

At the Halpin hide, the long staying black-necked grebe was in its monochrome winter plumage, but still with its ruby red eye. From the Denny and Parkes hides, many little grebes were busy catching three-spined sticklebacks and prawns.

And along ditches, near culverts and occasionally on the posts in front of the hides, a Kingfisher was often seen flying off, but only a trail camera could give a close view. The small size of these dazzling birds is shown by the comparison with the stonechat and the robin.

We hope that the fish stocks in the sea and inland remain high so that next year the grebes, gulls and terns that nest with us will have plenty of food to raise their young and that some of the gannets that nest on Alderney will make the journey to Rye Bay for their catch of the day.

Sussex Wildlife Trust's Community Action Team recently took a trip to Billingshurst to meet with representatives from BilliGreen (Billingshurst's local nature and environment group) and Horsham District Council.

Earlier in the summer when Sussex Wildlife Trust had led a butterfly walk around the town, an area was identified which held great potential for butterflies. The field, to the west of the town, already held good populations of meadow butterflies (such as marbled white, small skipper, Essex skipper, small copper and gatekeeper) while the blackthorn surrounding the field looked good as a potential home for the rare elusive brown hairstreak.

Now plans are being made between Sussex Wildlife Trust, Horsham District Council and BilliGreen to start improving this site in 2022 and to involve the local community to ensure that everyone can enjoy the special wildlife that can be found here and learn more about it.

Magickal mushrooms

Photos by Andrew Merritt Photography Ltd

Contact: <http://andrewmerritt.zenfolio.com>





Reyad Sekh Em© (RSE) Egyptian Alchemy Healing

By Joanna Bristow-Watkins

My last article on Reyad Sekh Em Egyptian Alchemy Healing introduced Khemitology and ended as follows, where I would like to pick up (see *GYLDEN MAGICK*, October 2021).

By combining the traditional ancient wisdom I learned from Hakim, with my own experience of healing (as detailed below), and research into the energies of crystals and angelic beings, I brought it together as Reyad Sekh Em© (RSE), or Egyptian Alchemy Healing.

In early childhood I found comfort and inner peace in nature. I grew up close to unmanaged ancient woodland and spent many hours outside with my sister, soaking it all in, feeling connected to nature in a way that didn't *twig* at the time. I walked the short distance to primary school and back from a young age, together with my sister, then alone when she progressed to secondary school. I went home for lunch, so was always wandering back and forth. In fact, once or twice a week I would saunter back in the general direction of school, but not actually go there, but while away the hours in my own world of nature. Classes were large – 43 in my class – and registration was only in the mornings, so I honestly don't think the school noticed, if they did, I was never taken to task over it.

I would take off my shoes and walk barefoot on the grass, note the seasonal changes in the trees, always stopping to sniff the spicy aroma of the Cedar of Lebanon I passed, and fill my pockets with conkers and chestnuts in the autumn. In the winter, I could stare at the moon for hours and always found the evening sky mesmerising.

Mum was an emotional wreck, though kind and 'laissez faire' and dad was constantly working long hours or, at least, avoiding the home environment. It wasn't a happy marriage, but dad loved us kids without a doubt. My dad was a WWII pilot, so no doubt carried all sorts of traumatic memories; they needed to navigate by the stars and planets so perhaps his enthusiasm for the night sky influenced me too.

Anyhow, it seems that life circumstances led me to seek solace in nature and it became my teacher through observation. With hindsight, I become adept at noticing the energy of places and situations.

I originally studied sciences at school, then took a BSc in Psychology followed by teacher training. Post-university, my working life revolved exclusively around travel, initially as a professional trainer for the industry training board, then as Executive Director within my father's travel agency chain. He ran five shops in north-west Surrey, with an annual turnover of £8 million and employed about 50 staff. Then, on 18 October 1990, my father died suddenly. I found myself running his shops and offices through a massive economic recession and the ensuing Gulf War (when, like the last 18 months, barely anyone travelled). It was a daily struggle to maintain survival and it was a huge relief to sell the business in 1995 and relax into motherhood.

In the late 1990s, I first heard about **Reiki; a form of Japanese energy healing**, which was just making inroads into the UK complementary healing fraternity. Following a profound and unsolicited Reiki demonstration in 1998, I commenced a fast-track healing programme leading me to study Usui Reiki Level One in February 1999.

Amazed and motivated by the apparent healing energy unlocked by this first course, I was in danger of developing a morbid fascination for aches and pains amongst friends and colleagues, to experiment on whether I could get them to go away! I was not looking for a new career at all; my professional background had been pretty-much mainstream up to that point, with my last corporate role being highly stressful.

Now in adulthood, this discovery of energy healing came out-of-the-blue and was all-consuming. I was sufficiently hooked to want to progress at a faster pace than my Usui Reiki Master could support. Synchronicity led me to find out about **Tera-Mai Seichem™** (pronounced Suck-eem), nicknamed Egyptian Reiki, which was being offered soon at a local healing clinic. I'd always been enthralled by Egypt, so this was a major attraction for me. This Seichem system, devised by an American called Kathleen Milner, was described as harnessing all four elemental healing rays of earth, air, fire and water and sounded more complete. I went to meet the tutor and had a surreal experience, involving psychic surgery by a team of angels, whilst the tutor went off for a cup of tea!

It was all a bit too much for me; I was someone with a healthy scepticism for anything quite so whacky at that time! However, in addition to the inexplicable undulations I witnessed in my abdomen area (although I was sure there must be some other plausible reason for this) I also glimpsed some apparent shimmering in the healing room which I tried to attribute to reflected headlights from the traffic in the main road below. I scoffed at the suggestion that I would feel tender when I got down off the couch, which I did, and spent the next couple of weeks trying to avoid carrying anything heavy whilst not divulging that the cause was an apparent celestial operation!

However, the subsequent disappearance of my abdominal cramps, which had been previously identified as IBS or endometriosis, convinced me that Tera-Mai Seichem training would be a positive step forward. I enrolled for Level Two Practitioner training in June 1999.

In the meantime, I had persuaded my sister to consider embarking on a similar programme of spiritual awakening and our paths quickly converged with us completing the Mastery Programme together in December 1999, enabling us to teach all Levels. Later, we embarked on further expensive training involving higher levels of initiation into the fire and water healing rays with Kathleen Milner herself. We then trained up to Egyptian Cartouche Mastery on a separate Tera-Mai training course, based on an Egyptian divination kit devised by Murry Hope and involving initiations into 25 Egyptian symbols.

After a period of diligent practice on each other, we started to offer angel courses and Tera-Mai Seichem healing courses as co-tutors. My sister (Angela McGerr) developed a passion for angelology as a science and subsequently obtained a publishing deal with Quadrille for a series of angelic books and divination cards introducing the concept of inviting angels into everyday life. She is now a successful author (approaching 1 million copies sold in total) of a trilogy of angel card sets, two other angelic divination kits, five angelology books and *an Angelic Meditations CD*. (All, but one of the publications are now long out of print*.)

During 2001, Angela heard about **Drunvalo Melchizedek's Flower of Life (FOL)** courses teaching a Merkaba Meditation technique. I was hooked by the promotional claim as follows: *A Merkaba is an amazing liquid light body energy field extending over 50 feet around a person's body. The Merkaba is a living energy field. It is you and you are it. It is created using a special sequence of coordinated breaths and visualisations. This field can then be programmed however you wish.*

Angela felt instinctively that we should study this system and, by February 2001, we had both completed separate courses and considered training as FOL facilitators. We then enrolled on an *Earth-Sky* training programme with Drunvalo himself, taking place in October 2001 in Quebec, Canada. We decided to attend although this was less than a month after the September 11 Twin Towers collapse and most of the world population was in fear mode, we travelled on one of the first transatlantic flights thereafter. The Canada experience was life-changing and was soon followed, somewhat unexpectedly, by a sacred two-week trip to Egypt together in March 2002.

As well as teaching the system, I was offering Tera-Mai Seichem healing sessions. By now some amazing things had been happening. The most incredible was a lady who came for a healing with no real agenda, but 'to accompany her friend'. I found myself working over her sacral chakra for ages where my hand appeared to lock into position. I asked her if she'd had any health issues in that area and she said she'd had peritonitis as a young adult, with the resulting scar tissue around her ovaries meaning she couldn't have children, which her and her husband were very sad about. A month later, she was pregnant with a girl who must now be getting on for 20 years old.

There was no doubting that Tera-Mai Seichem offered very powerful healings indeed. I was very delighted to be working with it, and, indeed, teaching it. There was one tiny niggle, although it was referred to as Egyptian Reiki, there was NO mention of Egypt anywhere in the manual; not even, as I had found out through my own research, that the word *Seichem* itself featured in Ancient Egyptian dictionaries as meaning 'make complete' or 'inner master'. I felt this was a serious oversight. Now, as an ex-travel specialist, I thought this would be an ideal opportunity to find out more about their ancient philosophies and give my personal Seichem students some additional information. So that was my additional intention for the trip, along with it being a spiritual pilgrimage to a land I'd visited several times as a tourist.

Just before the Egypt trip, we decided to re-attune each other to the **Cartouche symbols** and during a mind-blowing inspirational session, we learned that it was an ancient form of the Ankh, dating back to Lemurian times that was the key. It would work as an alternative empowerment symbol to the *Cho Ku Rays* used in Reiki and Tera-Mai Seichem. We briefly speculated on substituting them into the initiation process.

Many more exciting events happened during our Egypt adventure; we felt that another spurt was taking place on a psychic and spiritual level. Sadly, just before the end of the trip we learned that our mother had died in England, yet even that seemed to spark off more communication with the spirit world and it seemed we were receiving regular downloads of ancient wisdom to be digested when we got home.

There were many more examples of seemingly miracle healings. A period of personal detachment ensued, during which I meditated more than ever and the path towards something profound seemed to be accelerated. If only I could grasp it...

I ventured to run my first healing course without Angela as she had veered off slightly into her own angelic career. We continued to discuss issues regularly and I reiterated my plans to include the ancient Ankh symbol we had rediscovered before our Egypt trip as part of my next initiation programme. I decided to shelve the plans until I had properly tested them with Angela, yet an enthusiastic bunch of students persuaded me to pilot it on them, despite one of them being pregnant (my miracle lady from the earlier session).

The initiations seemed very successful, so my quest commenced for developing a new system to reflect the raised vibrational frequency of the times in which we live. Subsequently, Angela and I both had a series of consciousness-raising experiences where we were shown updated attunement procedures and symbols for the Seichem attunements.

The trip to Egypt was immensely life-changing and providence led me to take several more sacred pilgrimages within a few months, before and after I met Hakim (an indigenous oral tradition wisdom keeper living by the Sphinx introduced in Part 1). These trips involved multiple private access visits to the inner chambers of numerous pyramids, including all three chambers of the Great Pyramid at Giza (as well as climbing the outside of the Great Pyramid, which is no longer allowed), the Red Pyramid in Dashur, the Step Pyramid at Saqqara plus the straight-sided pyramid at Maidum), meditating between the paws of the sphinx and privately inside temples at Luxor, Aswan, Tel El Amarna, Maidum, Philae, Dendera, Abu Simbel and more. Cumulatively, I have spent 12+ hours inside the King's, Queen's and Lower Chambers of the Great Pyramid and laid down inside the sarcophagus numerous times. I believe this was part of the dynastic (possibly even pre-dynastic) priesthood initiations into the ancient mystery schools taught in Khem. I feel so very fortunate as these wonderful opportunities have led to a plethora of enlightened moments.



Meditation in the Kings Chamber sarcophagus



Saqqara with snakes

Subsequently, Reyad Sekh Em© evolved from Kathleen Milner's Tera Mai™ Reiki and Seichem. Traditional Seichem Masters claim that their knowledge is derived from the same ancient Sanskrit texts where Dr. Usui re-discovered Reiki. The spelling of Seichem, Sekh Em, SKHM is purely arbitrary. Ancient Egyptians did not have vowels in their alphabet, so SKHM was a series of guttural sounds that, according to Hakim, reflect this pronunciation. Sekh Em is listed in Middle Egyptian dictionaries as 'make complete', 'inner master' or 'power'. Se Khem - another alternative spelling - would mean 'born of Khemit'. Reyad means 'Elemental' – a piece of heaven – the source of the Cosmic Spirit – also known as Chi or Prana.

The changes were gradual and had commenced before I met Hakim, but I found myself making new lines of discoveries having had animated dialogues with him. Following eight separate visits to Egypt, and various discussions with Hakim, a more authentic Egyptian approach ensued. This resulted in a new energy healing system, which is now very different to the original Tera-Mai Seichem. The eventual system, now called Reyad Sekh Em©, harnesses the five elemental healing rays, bringing in the fifth element of Ether (also known as Spirit or Quintessence).

The system involves initiations into the five stages of life as identified by the early Egyptians who called themselves Khemitians. At first Hakim told me that Reyad meant 'Elemental' but later he said that 'Reyad' was like a little piece of Heaven - the source of the Cosmic Spirit, Chi, Prana or whatever we wish to call it. He said that the meaning of the word vibrationally within you is much greater than any definition. The use of etheric crystals, colour breathing and sound vibrational healing has also developed and, of course, my sister's angelic philosophies are embraced.

In my final instalment, I will give an overview of how, following lockdown last year, the Reyad Sekh Em online study units came together to create a foundation for working with ancient wisdoms as an energy healing modality. An exciting tool in the aftermath of our recent global upheaval.



Joanna & Carol in the 4th dimensional tunnel in the lower chamber of the Great Pyramid

SEASONAL: JUST FOR FUN - MONSTERS

Here's a **family quiz** to while away the time spent at home, if it's icy or pouring with rain outside. *Blessings from Gylden Fellowship – answers in brackets.*

1. Which monster is quantum-locked and kills by sending you back in time? (Weeping Angel, Doctor Who).
2. What monsters did the dwarves find in Mirkwood? (Spiders, The Hobbit).
3. Davy Jones used which monster to sink ships in Dead Man's Chest? (The Kraken, Pirates of the Caribbean).
4. Beowulf killed Grendel + Grendel's mother, but which monster killed him? (The Firedrake).
5. What is a nosferatu? (Old name for a vampire).
6. A werewolf film from the 1970s was set in which capital city? (London)
7. How would a basilisk kill you? (With a gorgon's stare turning you to stone).
8. Which monster was seen by Charles Dawson in 1906 in the English Channel? (Sea serpent).
9. Can you think of 2 uses of gargoyles on churches? (To protect against demons and to get rid of rainwater).
10. Which monster is on the Vauxhall logo? (A griffin or gryphon).
11. Who wrote Frankenstein? (Mary Shelley).
12. Can you name three companions of Buffy the Vampire Slayer? (so many, e.g. Willow, Spike, Dawn, Angel, Giles, Xander, Oz or Cordelia).

How many did you get right? 12/12? = genuine monster-fighter



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