



Gylden Magick

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Feb. 2020

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 Imbolg sabbat blog is estimated to reach over 3000 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, i.e. visiting groups, Interfaith work, fayres, calendars, helping our moot friends with rituals or meetings, etc.

Our **Storm Moon** issue continues with the 20-page format with ever more guidance on spiritual issues and magick. This edition has a definite emphasis on Imbolg magick - the altar colours for this period are white, pink and rose. 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 **Enchanted Market** in Bracknell on 15-16 February and, also, the **Big Purple Psychic & Holistic Fayre** in Chessington on 23 February. If you're into the beliefs of Ancient Rome, don't forget that 15 February is/ was **Lupercalia** – a key fertility festival, commemorating the legend of Romulus and Remus and the wolf.

What else is there? Well, we start our new series about Wiccan roots with Stregheria and Charles Leland, the wolf as an animal spirit guide,

runes, photos from a recent wassail, Imbolg magick, a preview of the Enchanted Market, the Council of Ancyra, first steps for new or young pagans showing easy charms for daily niggles, herbal healing with violets and our crystal of the month is fluorite. Also, we have an Imbolg ritual report from Basingstoke Pagan Circle.

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, eg 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 calendar, updates or briefings for February?

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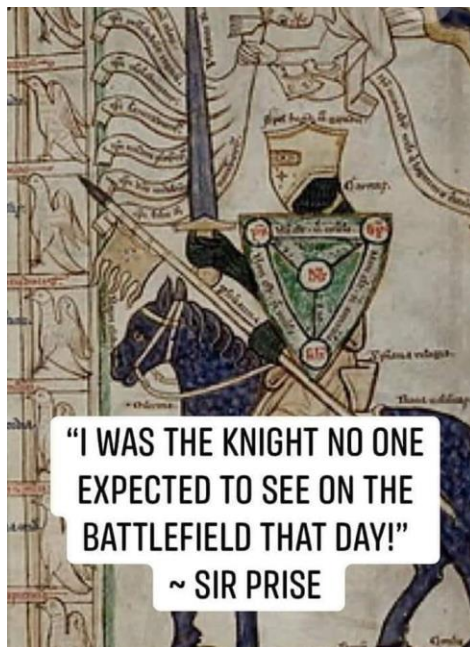
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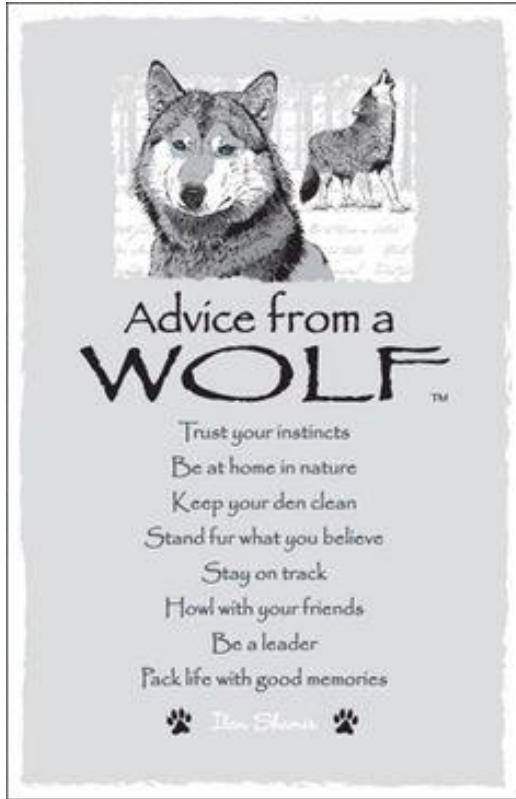
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Animal spirit guides: wolf

In the first part of this series, we looked at the *Place of Meeting*. OK then, you've crossed into the Otherworld and a spirit comes to you in the form of a wolf – what does a wolf symbolise? Well, let's start by saying that all spirits assume a shape with which you will be comfortable – if you're scared of snakes, your spirit guide will not be a serpent.



The key point about a wolf spirit guide is that it will support and teach you about such things as balance, communication, power and self-control.

Wolves are team players and, just as in real life, a wolf guide will emphasise the emotional love of family or friendship. To take this point further, a wolf guide helps you to define your sacred territory, to find those of a similar mindset and to defend that area.

A wolf guide will talk to your third eye chakra and aid your intuition. Apart from anything else, a wolf will show you how to break free of your conditioning and think or act outside normal constraints.

Sometimes, you may meet your wolf guide in a place of solitude, rather than with other wolves – this is normal. You will be guided to look inside at your true feelings or dreams and to use your voice to howl them aloud.

Crystals: fluorite

Fluorite is a key crystal for those who wish to have serenity in their lives and, also, to improve their concentration. It appears mainly in purple or green shades, as illustrated below, but the polished version often accentuates a wand form and the crystal may show many colours under a UV light. Sometimes known as fluorspar, fluorite is the crystal form of calcium fluoride.

I use a fluorite crystal in a number of spells, mainly for its amplification properties. If you add some fluorite stones or wands to others, such as quartz, aquamarine, blue lace agate, etc, you have a good basis for moonlight charms.

And what of its **healing or magickal** properties?

- It rejects any negative energies, frustration, stress or anxiety.
- Fluorite causes peace via its green and purple hues and is very good for meditation.
- It is particularly good when used with the third eye or heart chakras – for cleansing the heart energy and promoting spiritual awareness in the third eye chakra.
- Fluorite is good for enhanced creativity and soothing over-active minds.
- So, it helps to heal those with ADD, ADHD or ODD issues.
- Similarly, fluorite is known for helping ease the tension caused by migraines (or any sort of headache, really).
- It helps to clear any mental blockages, either by laying on of the crystal or by including fluorite in a bath.
- It can also enhance other crystals, eg within a healing grid.
- As a calming crystal, fluorite helps with new ideas, decision-making and better concentration.



Herb of the month: violets

The violet is a **correspondence plant for February**. It falls under the viola family (*Violaceae*) and the most common example in Europe is the sweet violet (*Viola odorata*) – this is an edible plant and can be used with salads or other such meals (not the roots). It is also known as the wood violet or English violet.

Healers use the leaves or flowers to make medicines, but the roots can cause vomiting. Here are some of the ailments that can be treated with sweet violet.

- Coughs and sore throats (as a tea or syrup)
- Cleansing of the blood – the leaves have high Vitamin A and C content
- Decreasing high cholesterol levels
- Bronchitis, COPD and whooping cough
- Dis-eases of the lymphatic system, where violet is usually applied as a tincture or essential oil
- Haemorrhoids
- Varicose veins
- Dry or rough skin (used as a poultice, macerated oil or ointment)
- As a salve or cream, it's also good for insect bites or eczema as an anti-inflammatory and soothing agent.

Another good use for violets is the **feng shui effect**, particularly for those with depression or high levels of mental stress. By placing a bowl of sweet violets in a room, any negative effects will be dispersed – through a combination of the natural fragrance, the calming colour and the peaceful nature of the plant. In folklore, violet was known as *hearts-ease*, to restore a broken or dis-eased heart – in such cases, violet tea is the best remedy.



Recipe: milk jelly

Well, here's a **correspondence food for February**. There was a choice of lamb or milk and I decided on an old recipe for milk that was very popular for invalids – and there are a lot of colds around just now. Milk jelly need not be made with dairy milk: almond, soya or coconut milk are all OK for those who are lactose-intolerant.

As the name suggests, this one is a traditional pudding recipe that shouldn't take long to make. It was a staple food in Victorian households, along with souffles and omelettes. My guess is that this recipe makes **about 4 servings**.

Ingredients

1. 125ml water
2. 15g gelatine
3. 75g caster sugar
4. Juice of 2 large lemons
5. 2 eggs
6. 275ml milk

Method

1. Put the water and gelatine into a cup in a saucepan of simmering water.
2. Stir the mixture in the cup until the gelatine has dissolved.
3. Put the sugar, lemon juice, eggs and milk into a bowl and beat well together
4. Add in the gelatine mixture and beat again.
5. Strain the mixture into a 550ml mould.
6. Leave in a cool place until it's set.
7. Lift out of the mould and serve.



The Witches' Runes

By Rose Egan

About 12 or 13 years ago, I was doing a bit of research into the runes, specifically finding out about the different systems (elder futhark, etc) when I came across a reference to **The Witches' Runes** in Kate West's book, *The Real Witches' Year* (Llewellyn Publications, Sept. 2008).



She described a set of 8 Runes, used to “answer particular questions rather than for whole life readings”. They are dropped, by the questioner, onto a cloth, any that are face down are discarded and the rest are interpreted. Any runes close together will influence each other and the more important runes are closer to the questioner. Kate West then gave a list as follows.

- ✚ A golden rayed Sun = the male principle, success, honour, fame and expansion
- ✚ A crescent Moon = the female principle, conception, childbirth, change within the month
- ✚ Two pink interlocking rings = romance, love, marriage, partnership
- ✚ Two red crossed spears = strife, quarrels, healing after accident or illness
- ✚ A blue reverse S = the curling wave, those close to you, relatives, travel and journey
- ✚ Three birds, one red, one white and one blue = unexpected news, documents, writing, major life changes
- ✚ A yellow ear of corn = money, luck, prosperity, social advancement, plenty
- ✚ A black rune with a white H or # = change, fate, reversals and sometimes misfortune.

It was easy to make a set, using 8 flat pebbles and using enamel paints to paint them (or you could use sharpies). I have been very happy with the result - they are easy to use and very straightforward.

Further research into The Witches' Runes brought up American websites where a set of 13 stones was suggested. The runes represent the 8 Sabbats as well as the 5 elements. Here though, meanings, dates and gender can all be interpreted in a simple or complex reading. One site suggested that the runes that fell furthest from you were the leading runes and, consequently, had the most importance. Personally, I much prefer my own home-made runes to their uniform black and white ones (offered for sale). While I don't use them as often as I might, I find the 8 runes provide enough information for particular questions and the runes closest to the questioner have proved to be the most significant.

References

www.wiccan-world.com

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Spriggan Mist Wassail: 19 January 2020

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Ancient peoples: The Council of Ancyra

By Gylden Fellowship

Here is a very well-known instruction or law from the King James Bible that states, "*Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live*". If you're reading the New English Bible, it reads that "You must not allow a witch to live". All clear so far? Well, you might think that it's very clear and straight to the point, until you include one very important factor – this part of Exodus is far from clear and not to be trusted in plain English.

The whole phrase is a wonderful example of a mistranslation that has gained evermore credence over the centuries. Early versions of the passage translated the word, *witch*, as a herbalist – someone who used herbal medicines to cure or, sometimes, to poison people, but the original Hebrew script has only one real term for witch ("kasaph", to enchant or practise magick through the use of herbs).

Don't worry about too much about the Hebrew phrasing, but the law in Exodus 22: 18 was that, "You must not sustain a witch", that is do not pay a local wise woman or man so that he or she can make a living from magick. This is an exhortation against local village witches who might charge exorbitant fees for their services and the law was confirmed when the Decree of the Council of Ancyra in 314 CE banned witchcraft, when associated with people using herbal medicines (such as the Gnostics).

Nevertheless, it is also a far cry from condemning accused witches on the basis of conjuring spirits or divination, to hanging or a visit to the ducking stool. This later conclusion arose from the King James edition, which translated the Hebrew word, "khaw-yaw" (to sustain life or live prosperously), as "chayah" (to live or to exist).

Such mistranslations are very common when we examine the Old Testament, because what tended to happen is that the original versions were recorded orally for hundreds of years before being transcribed in Hebrew, commonly during the time of the Babylonian captivity.

After that, the books were translated into Latin in about 350-400 CE and, much later, were published in Britain. The only caveat is that few were published as such – some were written again in Latin, while others were copied by

hand into Middle English/ French, often by monks working by candlelight. And mistakes tended to creep in.

The Council of Ancyra in 314 CE was one of several ecumenical councils that met under the ægis of the Early Christian Church to define non-Christian practices and pronounce penances. Ancyra was the capital of Galatia. For example, sorceries and heathen ways were defined and people who were found guilty of taking part in heathen feasts would be punished.

Within the Jewish sacred texts – the Tanakh parts of the Bible, several practices are forbidden by God and which relate to Exodus 22:18. However, even here, it should be noted that there is a difference between sorcery and witchcraft. The list below details some of the practices defined as sorcery.

- Onein (observing times or seasons as favourable or unfavourable, using astrology) (Lev. 19:26)
- Nachesh (doing things based on signs, portents, charms and incantations) (Lev. 19:26)
- Ovoth (consulting ghosts) (Lev. 19:31 and Deut. 18:11)
- Yid'onim (practising as a wizard) (Lev. 19:31)
- Kisuf (magick using herbs, stones and objects that people use) (Deut. 18:10)
- Kessem (a general term for magickal practices) (Deut. 18:10)
- Chover (casting spells over snakes and scorpions) (Deut. 18:11)

Sorcery was punishable by death, because it was a crime against God and transgressed the first commandment to have no other gods. However, many people confuse Biblical sorcery with witchcraft, when many witches were simply creating herbal remedies and charging for their knowledge.

So, the Council of Ancyra is important for those who are interested in the history of witches. Here's an extract from Canon XXIV: "They who practise divination or follow heathen customs or who take men to their houses for the invention of sorceries, are subject to the canon of five years' penance.

Poetry - Hare

Running through grass and leaping aloft,

What could it be, but a hare?

Long back legs and smooth brown fur,

Mad jumping here and there.

But some hares are not so mad,

And this one has an air,

Of acting almost deliberately,

Seeming randomness everywhere.

A closer look reveals the truth,

This hare's eyes are blue,

Every other natural trait,

But the eyes, they give a clue.

This isn't a hare in any sense,

A witch transformed – it's true,

Keeping special vigilance,

O'er problems old and new.

If livestock ails or crops die down,

If a family is always at strife,

A normal, pleasant front is kept -

A household on a knife.

A witch can see, via the hare,

To find pressure that is so rife,

And try to heal the fissures,

Restoring peace to normal life.

Daily niggles

By Nick the Witch

One of the common problems of being a modern witch is that it is not always possible to set aside appropriate time for the gathering of ingredients and the actual spells, when you have a presentation at work next day, an early meeting, an urgent report, etc.

Similarly, a key point that is emphasised throughout my particular brand of witchcraft is that of the **mindset**. As a Celtic witch, spells and rituals are important, but your daily outlook on life is as much a part of magick as a group ceremony at a moot. Here are **some daily tasks** that any pagan can do, each one taking a minimum of time.

1. Offer a morning blessing to your deities: whether you're on the train, bus, walking to work, cycling or in the car.
2. Set aside 15 minutes a day for meditation: I did this during lunch breaks, using an amethyst or quartz crystal, but the visualisation and methods are different for all.
3. If it's really difficult to meditate at work, go for a walk: feel the sunshine, the breeze, the rain or the earth underfoot.
4. Try to eat healthily: food helps to motivate you. Any red, orange or yellow food is symbolic of the energy in sunshine. A herbal tea mid-afternoon is good for soothing stress.
5. A shower or bath immediately after work is good to remove stress: the thing to do is to add herbal oil to the water and to imagine all the negative feelings from the day draining or washing from you and into the water.
6. We all have bad days at work: budgets are cut, low pay rises, unrealistic targets or others taking credit for your ideas. The key to help you is to step away from the source of the pressure and bring in a little magick to unravel the problem.

Problems at work

Complex or knotty problems can be resolved using **a knot spell**. You can do a crystal meditation for 30-45 minutes if you're really stressed out about something, but this little spell can be performed in a quiet place or at home with just basic ingredients.

What you will need: a black pen, a notebook, a lighter or matches, an ashtray or saucer and a long black shoelace.

1. Try to imagine your spell reaching out to all other pagans who are experiencing problems at work.
2. Think about the problems that are affecting you in your work.
3. Write down these issues in the notebook with the pen.
4. Read what you've written, tear the page out and roll it up into a small cylinder.
5. Carefully, set it on fire and allow it to burn out in the saucer or ashtray, thereby burning up the problems.
6. Take the shoelace and make the first knot in the middle, the second knot at one end and the third knot at the other end, while chanting softly, "*By knot of one - my job is fun, By knot of two – work problems are few, By knot of three – stresses cannot bother me*".
7. Bring the two ends of the shoelace together and tie them in a final knot to create a circle and say, "*Keeping this circle ever in my sight, I know that work problems lose their fright; my path is that of joy and peace – and all the pressure now can cease*".
8. Keep the knotted shoelace with you at work, eg in a drawer or coat pocket and some of the stresses should diminish fast.

Debts

One of life's truisms is that there is never enough money or, to put it another way, there are always more debts than income. It isn't really ethical to use magick for personal gain, but here is a spell to help reduce personal debts.

What you will need: a small bag, a black/grey candle, a candle holder, a lighter or matches, your athame and 3 iron pyrites (fool's gold).

1. Put the pyrites in a triangular arrangement.
2. Work out your total debt and carve this figure into the candle with your athame. Or, carve each debt separately onto the candle, rather than the total.
3. Light the candle in its holder and place in the centre of the pyrites.
4. Chant 9 times, "*Credit is my enemy and debt has brought me low – I ask for help to pay it off and finish all my woe*".
5. Let the candle burn down and place the pyrites in the bag – carry it to protect against the temptation of credit until your debts are cleared.

Personal control

With control, I'm not going for world domination here, but reflecting that it's sometimes easy to be confused about other people's motives or hidden agendas. In the long term, taking back control of your life is not a quick spell, but more of a process really. I find that it helps to look at the people around you: friends, family, work colleagues and even partners in terms of disguises. Very few people live their lives without masks and, if you look closely, you'll see that they change their masks according to the impression they wish to give to others. That may often be the case in the workplace. So, how can you reassert yourself and take back some semblance of control in your life?

What you will need: a small piece of paper, a pen, a tea light and holder, a fire-proof dish and a lighter or matches.

1. The best time for this spell is during a waxing moon.
2. Ensure that you are in a quiet place.
3. Put the tea light in its holder and light it.
4. Ask the Goddess to help you regain control of your life.
5. Write out this incantation on the piece of paper, "*Hidden agendas – their powers are gone, I'm in control from this day on, From the fire to come – my life is free, Controlled no more and my enemies flee*".
6. Chant it aloud 3 times before using the tea light to set fire to the paper and let it burn out in the fire-proof dish.

Temporary banishment

There are many times that a person or events in our daily lives get on top of us and peaceful dialogue does not seem to work. This spell is a temporary banishment, to create a breathing space for you from problems that will not go away. We use mint, because it is a traditional method of warding off evil and/or repelling people who are troubling you.

What you will need: a small container that can be sealed (not glass), spring water, 3 fresh mint leaves, a piece of paper, a blue or black pen and 2 sewing pins.

1. Start by defining your intent – who or what needs to be banished and the reason.
2. Write its name on the paper, lay a leaf of mint on it and roll up or fold tightly.
3. Add the two remaining mint leaves one on each side (top and underneath).
4. Pierce and bind the package with the pins.
5. While concentrating on your intent, fill the container with spring water, place the parcel into it and seal the container.
6. Depending on where you live and time of year, either place the sealed container into the back of your freezer or a far corner of your property, if the temperature is icy outside.

Preview: The Enchanted Market 2020

By Maxine Cilia

Every year on a cold and (often) chilly weekend in February, Bracknell hosts one of the biggest eclectic markets (of its type) in the UK. Now in its 10th year, **The Enchanted Market** rolls into Bracknell on 14 February, to set up and start organising for the giant market on 15-16 February 2020. The venue is **Garth Hill College, Bull Lane, Bracknell RG42 2AD** and so, begins a weekend of magical fun. The **times** are 10am-5pm on Saturday and 10am-4pm on Sunday.

The Acoustic Couch in Market Street (Bracknell) is host to the **pre-party** from 6pm on Friday, 14 February, where all visitors coming to stay in Bracknell can meet for a drink and to see the fantastic pagan duo, **Corvus**, as well as the rock band, **Free Peace Sweet**.

On Saturday, 15 Feb 2020 at 10am, the market opens with a bang. Drummers welcome the visitors and, after an opening blessing, it begins. The market consists of over 150 stalls, selling such goods as:

- Crystals
- Alternative clothing
- Handmade crafts or jewellery
- Books
- Incense
- Antiques and many more
- And a special Steampunk Alley, full of games, workshops, fun activities and stalls.

In addition to the stalls, there are different types of healers and readers to assist anyone with common aches, pains or ailments, using natural and holistic methods, eg:

- Reiki
- Mediumship
- Tarot and angel card readers
- Divination practitioners for visitors to find out what 2020 has in store.

There's also a mead bar and café, full of delicious treats, including healthy juices and vegan delights. The Enchanted Market has a full programme of workshops and talks, featuring such speakers as:

- Rachel Patterson
- Wort Moon
- Jonathan Argento
- Barbara Meiklejohn-Free
- Pixie Mikey
- Gylden Fellowship (Nick O'Connor)
- Flavia Peters.

All through the day, there are musicians from all over the UK, who perform on one of several stages – including a special Steampunk stage, run by Duke Box. On the Saturday evening (6-10pm), the line-up consists of **Captain of the Lost Waves**, **Spriggan Mist** and **Damh the Bard**. The music doesn't stop, even then, with an after-party (from 10.30pm) at the Acoustic Couch, featuring **Victor and the Bully**.

On the second day of the market, there's an afternoon hafla, hosted by the dancing group, Jadoo Tribal, where belly dancers from all over the UK will fill the event with music and colour. **The Enchanted Market donates all the profits from this event to charity**. The Enchanted Market 2020 will be donating profits to the charity, **Thames Hospice**.

To visit the Enchanted Market and see all the evening performances, costs **£15** per adult ticket. To visit the market, go to any talks and listen to the day-time live music, costs **just £2** per person per day.



The Enchanted Market

Charity Fund Raiser
In aid of
Thames hospice

**15th-16th
Feb 2020**
Opens 10am

**Garth Hill College
Bracknell RG42 2AD**

150 Stalls
Live music
Healers, Readers
& Workshops
Steampunk Alley
Belly Dance Hafla
Bar and Café

£2 Day ticket
£15 Entry to both days
evening show inc.
Pre and after parties

For tickets & information go to
www.theenchantedmarket.com
Facebook @theenchantedmarketbracknell



Love at first sight

By the Storyteller

This tale seemed apposite in the light of Valentine's Day – all the methods and choices described are traditional to Sussex – and the love spoons are also common in Wales.

There was once a young princess who could not make up her mind about anything. Her nickname around the palace (but never to her face) was "All-of-a-dither". Many young men had come to her father, the king of that country, to ask for her hand in marriage, but she simply could not choose between them.

So, the king decided to ask his advisers and magicians for help, but they could only suggest local customs and love potions. It was not good enough and the princess, Juliarah, still dithered over all her different suitors.

It was coming up to Valentine's Day and the king saw his chance to persuade Princess Juliarah to pick a husband. Many of the rustic folk used traditional ways to choose husbands, eg all the names of a girl's suitors were written on pieces of paper and put in a clay bowl; the girl would then pick out a name at random. Other young folk carved wooden love spoons, decorated with hearts, to be given as gifts to their lovers.

The problem was that the princess could not pick a suitable method for choosing her husband and neither could the king. What could they do? Luckily, there was a cunning man who had the reputation of solving all types of problems, both medical and matters of the heart. He had no real name, but he was very popular in all the settlements thereabouts.

The king sent for the cunning man, who came to the palace at once. He was asked for his advice. The cunning man looked at the king and said, "Sire – this matter is simple. We need to take our guidance from the birds of the air, because another name for Valentine's Day is the Birds' Wedding Day. What your princess must do is to look to the sky on Valentine's Day and the first bird she sees overhead will show her future husband: a robin means she'll marry a sailor, a sparrow means she'll marry a commoner and a goldfinch means that she'll marry a rich man."

The king wondered at this, but his daughter agreed, and they waited for Valentine's Day. The big day dawned and Princess Juliarah looked to the sky and the first bird she saw was an owl. She ran inside to tell her father, who sent for the cunning man. When asked what the owl meant, the reply was this: "Sire, the owl is always seen as a sign of wisdom and long life – your daughter should seek someone who can give good advice and make decisions." The king laughed and so did his daughter – the princess decided to marry the cunning man immediately and the wedding was arranged.



Seasonal magick for Imbolg

By Rose Egan and Nick the Witch

Imbolg (Candlemas in the Christian tradition) falls under the February Storm Moon, a time of true hardship for many people. The Christian church celebrates 3 things at Candlemas at the beginning of February. These are the purification of the Virgin Mary (40 days after the birth of Jesus), the presentation of the child Jesus and his first entry into the temple. More information can be found Luke 2:22-32. It is his presentation as 'The Light' that gives the festival the name, **Candlemas**. One of the main observances is the blessing of candles and Christians would bring beeswax candles to their local church to be blessed by the priest.

Candles you have made yourself will have much more power than those bought in a shop. This is because you have put your intention into the candle. Beeswax candles are very easy to make, just take a sheet of beeswax, put a wick along the side that will be the centre and roll into a candle. I like beeswax, because bees have been regarded as messengers from the deities as far back as 5000 BCE in Ancient Egypt. It was believed that candles made from their wax formed a link between us and the heavens. Closer to home, in Celtic mythology, honeybees were regarded as messengers between our world and the spirit realm.

Candles have always been used at rites of passage and the Christian church gives a candle at a christening and there are ceremonies for marriage and divorce using candles. Candles used to be placed around a coffin at the end of life. Equally, at a handfasting or a naming ceremony, a candle is given to the participants.

Yet we are aware that the first buds have appeared on the trees and spring bulbs are starting to grow. Now is the time to express our own growth through art, craft, poetry and songs, remembering ancestral wisdom and preparing for future changes. This is also a time for healing, for reclaiming what has been lost and working with our intuition. Be open to inner wishes, beliefs and feelings and communicate with others. Follow what feels right to you. Imbolg is the stirring of the life force from within to outside via the power of fire to transform.

A Celtic celebration at Imbolg was not a massive community fire like those at Beltane or Samhain. As Brigid looked after homes, each home would have its own fire, burning through the night. If the home was built of wood or thatch, some would prefer that candles were lit in each living area. Here are some ideas for celebrating Imbolg in your own homes.

- Making a Brigid doll (brideog) out of straw, flowers or shells.
- Cleansing the home for spring.
- Lighting a white or green candle, if you don't have an open fire.
- Making a Brigid cross or a straw cradle or bed, the leaba Brid.
- Good time of the year for scrying or divination.
- Placing snowdrops or swan feathers on your altar.

Incense for Imbolg

As we're just past Imbolg (1 February 2020), perhaps it would be a nice idea to have some Imbolg incense, regardless of whether it's just for you or for a small group ritual. You can make your own quite easily, using a blend of herbs, flowers, wood bark, resins and berries. The first step is to gather your ingredients, together with jars, lids, mortar, pestle, mixing and measuring spoons. Any guide to incense lists the parts and a part is simply 1 unit of measurement, eg a cup or 1tsp.

Start with the essential oils or resins, mashing them up with the mortar and pestle. Or, you could use a blender or coffee grinder. Then add berries, flowers, dry herbs last. The Imbolg incense could consist of:

- 2 parts cedar or sandalwood
- 2 parts frankincense
- 1 part pine resin
- 1 part dragon's blood
- 1 part orange peel
- 0.5 part lily or snowdrop petals
- 1 part spice, eg cinnamon or nutmeg.

If you want to add ritual to your incense, focus on your intent, eg anything you would like to achieve in 2020. State your intent out loud as you blend the herbs to charge up your incense and again as it burns.

Valentine's magick

Apples have long been used for divination and love magick. The blossoms were included in love sachets and used to scent candles to attract love. To ensure happiness in your relationship, cut an apple in half and share it with your loved one. The spell below uses apple seeds to bring love into your life.

You will need: a piece of rose quartz, a red rose, a red apple, a green and a pink candle. Pick a time when you know you will not be disturbed. While getting all the things you need, think of the love you would like to invite into your life.

- ✚ Light the candles and place the rose in front of the burning candles.
- ✚ Hold the rose quartz in your hand and, as you stare into the candle flames, repeat the invocation below:

*"Loving Goddess, I invoke thee,
To grant me here my desire,
I ask for love eternal and true,
Sealed with candle-fire.
May the fragrance of the rose,
Carry my wish afar,
And bring me only my true love,
To last for evermore.
So mote it be."*

- ✚ All thanks to the Goddess and leave the candles to burn out.
- ✚ Eat the apple and save the seeds.
- ✚ Place the rose, the apple seeds, and the rose quartz on a window ledge where they will attract the magick of the moon. Next day, as soon as you wake up, plant the apple seeds in a pot of soil.
- ✚ Look after your seeds in a caring way and, as the seedlings begin to grow, love will come into your life.
- ✚ Keep the roses and, when they wilt, dry the petals, keeping them in a special place (with your rose quartz) to remind you of the spell.

Spi-rituality at Imbolg

By the Basingstoke Pagan Circle

In last month's *GYLDEN MAGICK*, we described a Yule ritual and, this month, we're looking at sabbats again and Imbolg, in particular. Read on for an open ceremony report.

On 2 February, the **Basingstoke Pagan Circle** held its Imbolg ritual in the War Memorial Park in Basingstoke. Despite some windy weather earlier in the day, the time of the ritual was dry, cold and clear. Imbolg is the first festival of spring and this day was also marked as dedicated to the goddess, Brighid – a good day for the renewal of life after winter.

The ceremony was written by **Archdruid Paul Oakwolf Coombes**, leader of this group, inclusive for all pathways. This group always includes an extra opportunity for members to contribute poems, stories, songs, etc via the passing-round of a talking stick. It is worth noting that if you wish to attend a group ritual, please use the group's Facebook site in advance, to notify the organisers of your intention. Here is an extract from the ceremony.

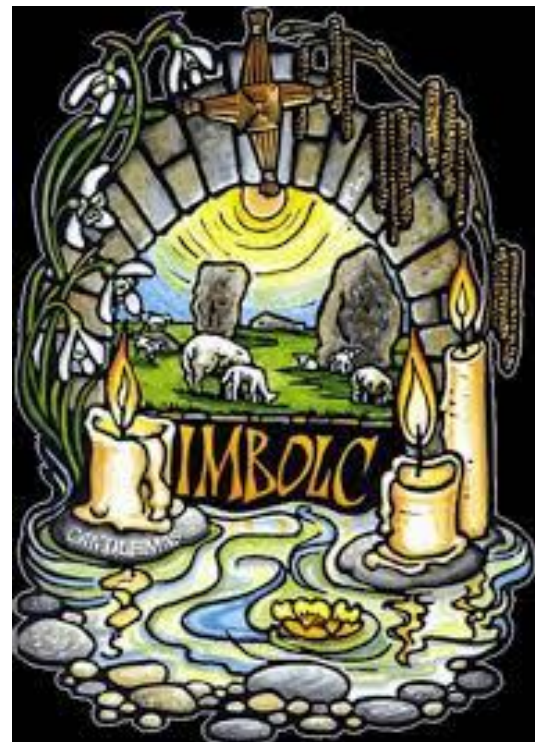
"Imbolc is traditionally the great festival and honouring of the bride or Brighid, goddess of healing, poetry, of fire, the sun and of the heart – she brings fertility to the land and its people.

It is time to let go of the past and look to the future, clearing out the old, making both outer and inner space for new beginnings. Clear your minds and hearts to allow inspiration to enter for the new cycle"

"Imbolc in the Celtic seasonal calendar marks the beginning of spring and the stirring of new life. It is the quickening of the year, all is expectant and only just visible, if at all, like the gentle curve of a just-showing mother, patiently awaiting the arrival of her child.

It is the promise of renewal of hidden potential, of earth awakening and life-force stirring. We see signs of new life bursting from the earth, the first snowdrops and crocuses in bloom, buds on the trees and the green shoots from the bulbs piercing the frosted earth: here is hope. We welcome the growth of the returning light and witness life's insatiable attitude for rebirth."

The altar included many small candles and blessings followed by toffee-flavoured mead and seedy, brown bread.



The group performed the **Druid Oath** (see below), alongside Awen chants.

*"We swear, by peace and love, to stand,
Heart to heart and hand in hand,
Mark, O spirit, and hear us now,
Confirming this, our sacred vow.*

Awen".

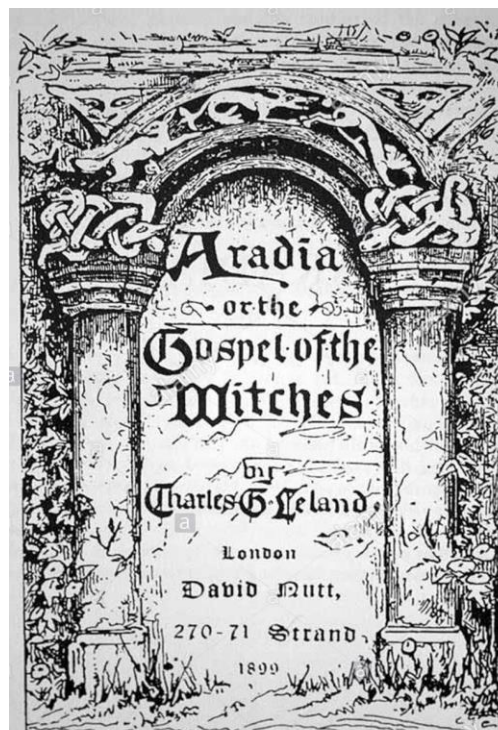
Wiccan roots

By Gylden Fellowship

Welcome to our new series on Wiccan pioneers. The first problem was deciding where to start, because Wicca did not originate with Gerald Gardner – he was influenced by occult practitioners, like Aleister Crowley, and writers, like Margaret Murray (we'll come to them soon). But, in terms of the Wiccan timeline, we decided to start with Aradia and the Stregherian tradition. Or, to put it another way, here's an intro to the legacy of Charles Godfrey Leland.

Charles Leland (1824-1903) was an American folklorist, who explored the Italian hills, collecting stories about local witchcraft – his theory was that there was a pre-Christian magickal tradition in Italy. Archæological evidence from Larzac in France bears out the theory of Gallic witchcraft groups before the Romans, but whether such groups existed in Italy is not yet proven. At one point, according to Leland's claims, he met a woman named Maddalena during 1886-97, who provided him with a manuscript about Italian witchcraft in 1897 and then left the scene.

Leland took this manuscript and produced a book in 1899, *Aradia: Gospel of the Witches*, which he claimed was evidence of a secret and sacred text of a hidden Italian goddess-based tradition of witchcraft. As he said in the book's introduction, *"In the cities are women who prepare strange amulets, over which they mutter spells, all known in the old Roman time, and who can astonish even the learned by their legends of Latin gods, mingled with lore which may be found in Cato or Theocritus...I do not know definitely whether my informant derived a part of these traditions from written sources or oral narration, but believe it was chiefly the latter."*



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In addition to *Aradia*, which remains his best-known work, Leland also collected many pieces of traveller folklore in Europe and published several books and scholarly articles. Of note, while a student at Princeton University, he wrote a poem entitled *Educatio Diaboli*: How the Devil Came to Princeton, which was never formally published.

Many followers of the Stregherian tradition in Italian witchcraft believe in the actual historical person of Aradia, also known as the Holy Strega. She is thought to have been born in 1313 in Volterra in Northern Italy and lived in the mid-1300s – in 1508 CE, the Italian Inquisitor, Bernardo Rategno, referred to a "rapid expansion" of the witch groups some 150 years earlier.

Leland's account of Aradia includes a Tuscan legend about her gathering a small band of followers and travelling the land, teaching about the Old Religion, about the fae and about the worship of Diana. Aradia spoke of an Age of Reason that would come, and which would replace the Age of the Son. When she passed over, Aradia requested that a meal be held in her honour and that she be remembered by future generations. In 1962, T.C. Lethbridge (former Director for Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology) published a book, *Witches*, which also refers to Aradia in several chapters.

This Stregherian tradition of a female messiah, a commemorative meal and a coming Age of Reason may well have laid the foundation for the legends surrounding Aradia. It is commensurate with other philosophical movements in Italy in the early Middle Ages. For example, in the late 12th century, Joachim de Flora (the Abbot of Corazzo) wrote a prophetic text on the Age of Reason. His writings had a major influence on religious thought during the remainder of the Middle Ages. He passed his writings on to the Holy See in 1200 for approval. Concerning the Age of Reason to come, Joachim wrote:

"The Old Testament period was under the direct influence of God the Father. With the advent of Christ came the age of God the Son. The time was now ripe for the reign of God the Holy Ghost. A new era was being introduced, a culmination; in the new day, man would not have to rely on faith for everything would be founded on knowledge and reason."

Today, Italian witchcraft or Stregheria is often referred to as The Old Religion (*La Vecchia Religione*). Although *Aradia* is regarded as a distorted Christian image of witchcraft of this period, there are several points of interest. In Leland's book, the witches worship a goddess and a god, meet for full moon rituals and celebrate with singing, dancing and making love. Their celebration also includes a feast containing cakes and wine. In 1609, Francesco Guazzo (an Italian witch-hunter) published several woodcuts in his book, *Compendium Maleficarum*. One of these Italian woodcuts depicts witches gathered inside a circle drawn upon the ground. He also states that witches work with spirits of earth, air, fire and water. In 1954, Gerald Gardner describes English witchcraft as in a very similar way and this is one reason why our Wiccan roots series starts with Leland.

For those wishing to find more info on Italian witchcraft, as this piece is just an overview of Leland, I'd suggest www.stregheria.com.



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