

Gylden Magick

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June 2025

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.

Dear readers of **GYLDEN MAGICK**,

This solstice is the **Strawberry Moon** – and this issue of the magazine is a little different with a new ancient crystals series. The altar colours are bright yellow and dark green.

The solstice, **Alban Hefin**, is on 21 June and Midsummer's Day falls on 24 June.

As a druid, I say Alban Hefin, but most pagans would describe this date as the **Summer Solstice or as Litha**. We'll feature an in-depth look at this festival on our website, a little nearer to 21 June, but we've put in a few blessings here too.

Other notable dates for diaries in June are Mother Shipton's Day on 2 June, World Environment Day on 5 June, World Oceans Day on 8 June and 11 June for the next full moon. Don't forget 25 June for the next new moon.

But no ads – after all, we're like a pagan public library and all the information is free.

We continue with our regular series about celestial forecasts, steam engine pollution, trees, Potosi silver, dandelions and magick for Litha. Our crystal expert, Charlie, turns her attention to the Mohs scale and moissanite, Mark looks at time travel and we include info from the Wildlife Trusts on lynxes.

In past years, we would be frantic with preparations for various fayres or events, but not so in 2025. We enjoyed the Wandering Witches' Fayre in April and look forward to more festivals, camps, fayres and markets in the summer.

Thank you for all your feedback and many blessings.

Gylden Fellowship admins

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

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BANX



[&]quot;THERE'S TALK OF EXCOMMUNICATING HIM"

Pagan history: Mary Bateman

By Nic the Witch

Here's another person who was tried and executed in the 1800s on charges of witchcraft and murder. Mary Bateman (born as Mary Harker in 1768) became notorious as an English criminal, known as the **Yorkshire Witch**. Most of the details of Mary Bateman's life are known from *The Extraordinary Life and Character of Mary Bateman*, published soon after her trial and death. She was born in Asenby in the North Riding of Yorkshire, as the daughter of a farmer. She learned to read and write and, from age 13, worked as a servant girl in Thirsk (about halfway between York and Middlesbrough).

A BBC programme about Mary Bateman, featuring a modern-day descendant of hers (Tracy Whitaker), showed Bateman's skull being laser-scanned to demonstrate how her face may well have appeared. It was first shown on 12 April 2001, entitled *The People Detective* – 1. *Witch* and presented by historian and curator, Daru Rooke.

Mary moved to York aged 20 and worked as a dressmaker. However, she fled to Leeds the next year after being involved in a burglary. During the next four years she worked as a maker of gowns and robes; she also began to build a reputation as a fortune-teller and wise woman. In 1792, she married John Bateman, who was a wheelwright. During the next few years, she undertook several robberies and was caught several times, escaping prison by bribing those who witnessed her activities. In 1796, John Bateman joined the Army and Mary accompanied him away from Leeds. Within a year, they had returned to Leeds. Amongst other crimes, she is reported to have once roamed the streets of Leeds after a major fire begging for money and goods for victims, but instead retained the charitable gifts for herself. According to author, *Summer Stevens*, she also worked as an abortionist.

In 1806, Mary Bateman joined the followers of the prophetess, Joanna Southcott (*we'll feature her next time*) and attended Southcottian meetings. As part of a Southcottian sect, Mary created the hoax known as *The Prophet Hen of Leeds*, in which eggs laid by a hen were purported to have written on them *Christ is coming* (a message believed to precede Judgment Day). Three of these eggs were displayed by Bateman and members of the public were charged a penny to see them. When the hen was taken away from her, it laid no more prophetic eggs. It was later found that she had written on the eggs using ink and reinserted them into the hen's ovaries.



In the same year, Bateman was approached by William and Rebecca Perigo. Rebecca was suffering from chest pains and Mary diagnosed that she had been put under a spell. However, over the next several months, Mary began feeding them pudding which was laced with poison. Not surprisingly, Rebecca's condition worsened and she finally died in 1808. In October 1808, William Perigo accused Mary Bateman of poisoning his wife, as well as

defrauding money from them for the two years preceding to pay for charms and cures. Although Bateman proclaimed her innocence, a search of her home turned up poison as well as many personal belongings of her victims including the Perigo couple.

Mary Bateman's trial took place in York in March 1809. According to *The Criminal Chronology of York Castle* by William Knipe, which was written in 1867, the trial lasted 11 hours, though the jury took only a few moments to find her guilty of the charges of fraud and the murder of Rebecca Perigo. The book also claims that immediately following the sentence of death from the judge, Bateman said that she was 22-weeks pregnant and, thus, avoided hanging. The judge subsequently requested that the sheriff gather a panel of matrons to assess Bateman's claim. Twelve married women were sworn into the jury and conducted a physical examination of Bateman, concluding that she was not pregnant. William Knipe's account suggests Bateman had a daughter at home as well as an infant child in the prison with her. She reportedly mailed her wedding ring back to her husband to give to the daughter. Mary Bateman was hanged alongside two men on Monday 20 March 1809.

After her execution, her body was transferred to Leeds General Infirmary, which publicly displayed her body, charging 3d per visitor. Her body was dissected by over three days. On day one, medical students paid to view the corpse. On the second day, "about 100 tickets were available to gentlemen [professional Leeds men] who paid five guineas", and on day three, women could buy a day ticket to attend lectures on the body. Strips of her skin were cured into leather and sold as magic charms to ward off evil spirits. The tip of her tongue was collected by the governor of Ripon Prison. Two books from the library of Mexborough House were covered in her skin, but the books went missing in the mid-nineteenth century.

Bateman's death caused a sensation at the time and details were eagerly consumed by the public through books and articles. A popular account, *The Extraordinary Life and Character of Mary Bateman* was published, which was already in its 12th edition two years after her execution. The episode of the prophetic eggs was described in a book by Charles Mackay. Mary Bateman's skeleton was on display to the public at the Thackray Medical Museum in Leeds until 2015, when it was moved to Leeds University.



Gylden

Magick June 2025

Distortion Festival: Copenhagen 4-8 June

Collated by Gylden Fellowship





















Crystals: Hard as diamonds?

By Charlie Foreverdark and Gylden Fellowship

When is a diamond not a diamond? This is not an excuse to look at cubic zirconia, but there is a new trend in jewellery that appeals to both men and women: the increasing use of **moissanite**. A moissanite is not a diamond, but is grown in a laboratory - moissanites are visually similar to diamonds, but compositionally they're quite different.

Diamonds are composed of carbon and moissanites are composed of silicon carbide. Moissanite is the second hardest material on earth (second only to diamond), ranking at a **9.25** on the Mohs scale of hardness (*see below*), which is higher than white sapphire or any other gemstone. Moissanite is known for its unique brilliance and fire (rainbow-like flashes of colour), which are different from the sparkle of a diamond.

Made from silicon carbide, moissanite is a lab-created gem that is often used as a diamond alternative because of its durability, sparkling appearance and affordable price tag. Moissanite is among the most ethical, sustainable engagement ring choices out there. This is because moissanite is a man-made stone. So, no mining is needed to give you a perfectly brilliant moissanite.



The **Mohs hardness scale** represents one of the most practical and enduring tools in mineralogy and geology, providing a straightforward method for determining a mineral's resistance to scratching or abrasion. Developed in 1812 by German mineralogist, Friedrich Mohs, this qualitative ordinal scale ranges from 1 (represented by soft talc) to 10 (represented by diamond, the hardest natural substance). The genius of this system lies in its simplicity: it operates on the fundamental principle that a harder mineral will scratch a softer one, but not vice versa, allowing geologists and gemmologists to quickly assess and classify minerals in both laboratory and field settings.

While the Mohs scale is invaluable for mineral identification, it's important to understand its limitations. The scale measures only resistance to scratching, not a mineral's overall durability or toughness against impacts. This distinction is crucial, because some minerals with high Mohs hardness can be quite brittle and break easily when struck, while softer minerals might better withstand impacts without fracturing. The scale is also not linear; the difference in absolute hardness between consecutive numbers varies significantly so that the gap between corundum (9) to diamond (10) represents a much greater increase in actual hardness than the difference between talc (1) and gypsum (2). Despite these limitations, the scale's practical utility has ensured its continued relevance in mineralogy, gemmology and materials science for over 200 years.

10	Diamond
9	Corundum
8	Topaz
7	Quartz
6	Feldspar
5	Apatite
4	Fluorite
3	Calcite
2	Gypsum
1	Talc
	/1

Here is a list of common minerals ranked by their Mohs hardness.

Basically, the Mohs hardness is a measure of the resistance of a smooth surface to scratching or abrasion. The Mohs hardness of a mineral is determined by observing whether its surface is scratched by a substance of known or defined hardness.

To give numerical values to this physical property, minerals are ranked along the Mohs scale, which is composed of 10 minerals that have been given arbitrary hardness values. The minerals contained in the scale are shown in the Table; also shown are other materials that approximate the hardness of some of the minerals. As is indicated by the ranking in the scale, if a mineral is scratched by feldspar, but not by apatite, its Mohs hardness is between 5 and 6. In the determination procedure, it is necessary to be certain that a scratch is actually made and not just a chalk mark that will rub off. If the species being tested is fine-grained, friable or powdery, the test may only loosen grains without testing individual mineral surfaces; thus, certain textures may hinder or prevent a true hardness determination. For this reason the Mohs test, while greatly aiding the identification of minerals in the field, is not suitable for accurately gauging the hardness of industrial materials such as steel or china.

Another disadvantage of the Mohs scale is that it is not linear; that is, each increment of one in the scale does not indicate a proportional increase in hardness. For instance, the progression from calcite to fluorite (from 3 to 4 on the Mohs scale) reflects an increase in hardness of approximately 25%, but the progression from corundum to diamond, on the other hand (9 to 10 on the Mohs scale), reflects a hardness increase of more than 300%.



Celestial notes

By Joanna Bristow-Watkins, Harmony Healing

June heralds the arrival of British summertime in all its paradoxical glory, with radiant blooms, hopeful picnics and the inevitable tug-of-war between sunscreen and umbrellas. Roses reach their fragrant crescendo, weaving perfume into lengthening dusks as we approach the **Summer Solstice** on the 21 June, the longest day and a celebration of light. Hedgerows and gardens burst with vibrant colour, while summer berries ripen under temperamental skies. Curiously, **elderflowers**, often considered a May bloom, grace us in profusion as June unfolds. The name, **June**, may derive from **Juno**, Roman goddess of marriage and protector of women. The Anglo-Saxons called it sera monath (the dry month) though our contemporary climate might beg to differ!

This month offers a rich tapestry of celestial and cultural observances:

World Environment Day (5th)

World Ocean Day (8th) invite us to reflect on our role as stewards of Earth's beauty

Difference in the second secon

Our **Online Full Moon Meditation** takes place on **Tuesday 10th**, providing a serene space for reflection and alignment

And on **Sunday 29th**, we return to nature with a restorative **Forest Bathing session in Surrey**, welcoming the midsummer energy in a peaceful woodland embrace

Advance Notice: Sculpture and Soul Festival & Looking ahead to July, we're thrilled to be part of the Sculpture and Soul Festival, a soulful gathering nestled amidst art and nature. With talks, healing workshops and immersive experiences, it promises to be a magical celebration of creativity and consciousness. From Roman and Egyptian observances to Chinese seasonal transitions and the joy of strawberries with elderflower cordial, June is a dance between tradition and transformation – a time to pause, appreciate, and reconnect with the rhythms of nature and soul.







Thursday 5 June is <u>World Environment Day</u>, which has been celebrated annually since 1974. Over the years, the day has focused on such issues as acid rain, oceans, water, and green cities. World Environment Day is also encouraging individuals into doing something personally to take care of the Earth. It doesn't matter whether the effort is on a local level or whether it is a group effort nationally or even globally; everyone is free to choose. World Environment Day has an annual theme, which focuses attention on a pressing environmental concern. The Republic of Korea will be the proud host of **World Environment Day 2025**, shining a spotlight on the urgent need to eliminate plastic pollution across the globe. Tackling this pressing issue is vital to advancing the **Sustainable Development Goals** – from climate action and responsible consumption to safeguarding our oceans, restoring ecosystems, and protecting biodiversity for future generations.

Sunday 8 June is World Ocean Day. Observed annually since 2016, **World Ocean Day** brings people together across the globe in a shared commitment to protect and restore our blue planet. Powered by the World Ocean Day Youth Advisory Council, this global movement collaborates with young change-makers and organisational leaders in over 140 countries, driving collective action for ocean conservation.

The mission is clear: on **8 June**, people everywhere are encouraged to celebrate and take meaningful steps towards safeguarding our ocean, a vital force that connects us all. Whether with family, your local community, or workplace, join millions worldwide in shaping a more sustainable future. Together, we **can and will** protect and revive our ocean. Be part of this inspiring global effort in June and keep the momentum going all year round!

Tuesday 10 June, 7.30-9.30pm UK Time (GMT+1 which is also UT+1) is our Meditation. 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 (£1 admin fee added for PayPal, concessions to RSE/VF0A graduates), book at the <u>Harmony Shop</u>.

This activity serves as a good taster of Joanna's work in general and the virtual format of our Zoom based programme. And, most importantly, it's a step towards making a difference to the global predicament. To find out how working on your own spiritual consciousness can help humanity and the planet by raising the overall human consciousness levels, see Joanna's <u>You Tube explanation</u>.



Wednesday 11 June is Full Moon @ 08:43 UK time; it is the Strawberry Moon. It's also known as the Lotus Moon, Oak Moon, Cold Moon or Long Night's Moon. *Between Full Moon and the next New Moon is considered as a good time energetically for detoxing the body. For instructions on how to conduct an appropriate ritual, see <u>Angela McGerr's Full Moon Meditation with Gabriel</u> (from Angela McGerr's book A Harmony of Angels, we have a few unused signed editions available from the <u>Harmony Shop</u>).*

Monday 16 June is the Egyptian festival, known as Leyleten-Nuktah, the Night of the Tear Drop. A

miraculous tear-drop fell as Aset (Isis) began the mourning of her brother/husband Asar (Osirus). It was believed to fall into the Nile causing it to rise and bring new life to the land. Sources vary as to whether this is 14/16/17 or 18 June; the date is actually the 11th day of the Ancient Egyptian month of **Ba-oo-neh**, so the confusion arises when trying to covert this to our Gregorian calendar.

Friday 20 June is the Egyptian Festival of the Burning of the Lamps, which was held at Sais (source **Bibliotheca Alexandrina, p31**, also available via **Academia.edu**, date from Moonwise Calendar). This is the third great festival in Sais to Aset (Isis). In an under-chapel beneath the temple, lamps were carried in procession around the coffin of Asar (Osiris). It was by the power of light, symbolising the life-giving power of the Moon, that Aset rekindled life in her dead husband. The exact date is actually the 13th day of the Ancient Egyptian month of **Epeiph**, so confusion arises when trying to covert this to our Gregorian calendar and some sources give variations especially 21 June.



Saturday 21 June at 03:42 UK is the Pagan Celebration of the Solstice, the moment when the sun enters Cancer. In the Northern Hemisphere, this is viewed as the triumph of light, the ecstatic culmination of the sun, yet the start of growing darkness. Old traditions included:

Making bonfires on hilltops Singing, drinking, laughing and a time of merry-making. Processions with torches and lanterns Rolling wheels downhill to mark the start of the sun's descent Blessing cakes and wine Waiting for the dawn and greeting the sun when it rises Sleeping by a spring Rolling naked in the dew of the summer sunrise (more info at <u>timeanddate.com</u>).

Tuesday 24 June is also Midsummers Eve and was considered magical in Cornwall and Ireland, when there was feasting, fires, songs, and dances. Bonfires were kindled on high hills to commemorate the high point of the year. Traditionally, the veil is thin between the dimensions housing the living and the dead at this time.

Tuesday 24 June is also the Roman Festival of Fors Fortuna. Forsis (note the name is very similar to Isis) was an ancient Roman goddess of prosperity, good luck and divine blessings. Her name means *She Who Brings*, from the Latin verb, *fero*, synonymous with abundance and success. This seems to have merged with Fortuna, probably originally a goddess of fertility, into the Goddess called Fors Fortuna, who was acknowledged as sometimes being fickle or wanton and representing Fortune as Goddess of luck or chance. She was especially worshipped by slaves and commoners, as the Goddess who could bring about rags-to-riches transformations; with at least two dedicated temples in Rome being founded by former slaves in gratitude for their changed luck.

Wednesday 25 June @ 11:31 is the Oak Solstice New Moon.

The <u>New Moon Abundance Ritual</u> 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 <u>Facebook Page</u> or <u>You Tube Page</u>. New Moon is a good time to work on your Vision Board for the rest of 2025.



Friday 27 June is predicted as the peak of the Bootids Meteor Shower; if they are visible at all this year. Although they are not active every year, they can occur any time between 22 June-2 July. In 2025, the best displays might be after dusk on 27 June as the shower is expected to reach peak activity at around 22: oo UK time on 27 June. The New Moon on 25 June, means there could be minimal light pollution so it could be a reasonable year for viewing, weather permitting. More info at <u>in-the-sky.org</u>, including a map of the radiant point, which is circumpolar (it is always above the horizon and the shower will be active throughout the night).

Sunday 29 June, 11am-2pm, our public Forest Bathing session in the grounds of Harry Edward's Foundation, £39.77. Immerse yourself in the healing elements of nature and connect deeply with all your senses. Spend three hours in the woods mindfully connecting to your surroundings and living fully in the present moment, guided in simple sensory exercises: smell the flowers, stroke the bark, listen to the birds. The session culminates with a treelaxation, our unique nature meditation under the canopy of trees.

It is a deeply relaxing and rejuvenating experience, and which, despite the title forest bathing, does not involve any swimming! Join with your friends, family or colleagues and enjoy the glorious grounds together. 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 3-hour session will take place in all weathers except very high winds or electrical storms. Book via <u>Harmony Healing shop</u>.

Tuesday 30 June is Asteroid Day. <u>Asteroid Day</u> was co-founded in 2014, by Dr. Brian May, astrophysicist and lead guitarist of QUEEN, together with Rusty Schweickart, Apollo 9 Astronaut, Danica Remy, President of B612 Foundation and filmmaker Grig Richters. Asteroid Day events take place annually on 30 June to mark the anniversary of the Tunguska impact in 1908. Its purpose is to expand the understanding of asteroids and to ensure that any asteroids which might ever have a direct impact on our planet are carefully monitored.

Nature: trees and solar eclipses

By Jack Knudson

Whenever a solar eclipse occurs, life seems to stand still for a brief moment. Humans watch the sky, animals display eccentric behaviours, but what about plants? It turns out that plant life has its own patented way of dealing with this astronomical event. A new study from Australia's Southern Cross University has shown that trees react to solar eclipses and even anticipate them hours in advance, synchronising their bioelectrical signals in preparation.

The study, published by the Royal Society of Open Science, details this hidden power that comes ingrained in the biological code of trees. The results reveal the amazing collective potential of trees, deepening our understanding of plants and their complex identity. The influence of solar eclipses on organisms has mostly focused on animals rather than plants. Scientists took advantage of the 2017 and 2024 total solar eclipses to refresh their understanding of animal reactions to a darkening sky and cooling temperatures. During these events, they found that many animals tended to coordinate their actions, whether huddling together or moving as a group. Research has suggested that these actions may represent evolutionary functions to minimise danger from environmental changes.

Plants haven't received the same attention as animals during solar eclipses, but the new study has proven that they are just as capable of coordinated behaviour. In the study, researchers focused on the *electrome* of trees — this network encompasses the bioelectrical signals they generate to communicate and coordinate responses to environmental changes. The electrome is the total electrical signals and activities within a living organism, from the cellular level to the organismal level that plays a crucial role in various functions, including development and healing.

To see the electrome in action, the researchers measured bioelectrical signals in spruce trees located in the Dolomites during a partial solar eclipse. They accomplished this by setting up a system of sensors that could continuously collect data from the trees during the event. The data revealed that trees' signals became more synchronised before and during the solar eclipse. Hours before the eclipse, the trees were able to anticipate the astronomical event and change their bioelectrical behaviour to gear up for impending effects like drops in sap flow. This was most prominent in older trees, which may have gained such impressive anticipatory abilities by growing accustomed to eclipse patterns over their long lifespans. After the older trees braced themselves for the eclipse, the rest of the trees followed suit, demonstrating an intertwined connection shared by the whole forest.

Researchers aren't certain about the specific cues that caused the trees to anticipate the solar eclipse. It's possible, however, that the trees' behaviour may be a result of gravitational forces induced by the positioning of the moon and sun in the sky. The revelation that trees can band together to prepare for eclipses reflects how plant life is more than meets the eye. Additional details on the powers of plants (especially their capacity to anticipate and adapt to environmental changes) have yet to be uncovered, which is why researchers are stressing the importance of preserving trees.

Looking towards Litha

By Nic the Witch

The name for the Summer Solstice in Druidry is **Alban Hefin**, which means *The Light of the Shore*, but here, we're going to stick with the more common pagan name of Litha, which also means a ray of light. Litha is the height of summer, the longest day and the shortest night of the earth's solar year. At this time, we celebrate the completion of the cycle that began at the winter solstice. *Solstice* means *the standing of the sun* and we can connect to the great turning point in the earth's annual cycle to stop, be still and reflect on our progress since Yule. It is a time to count our blessings, celebrate our achievements and pass on the spirit of goodwill to all we encounter.

From now until Yule, everything will be drawing in and we can use this time to develop ourselves during the time of darkness. Past summer solstices meant that people stayed up all night to greet the dawn and many stone circles in the northern hemisphere have been aligned to the solstice sunrise. Actually, if I cast my mind back to **Litha 2015**, this is how I described the event in another online site.

"OK, I know that it's common for many pagans in my part of the UK (South) to rush off to Avebury Stone Circle or Stonehenge to celebrate Litha, but I'd like to share an alternative. I go to a local moot, which has no more than 5-6 people at best and none of us wanted to join the cast of thousands in Wiltshire.

So, we did what many small settlements might have done thousands of years ago: we used a local field, miles from anywhere (with the owner's permission) and used a portable fire pit to set up an all-night blaze. We had drums, guitars, food, mead and beer and held a short Litha ritual + prayers to the Goddess + all-night vigil, before greeting the dawn. Everyone joined in, there was much fellowship and I felt that this was the right way: a solitary or smallgroup act of worship, rather than the media circus that surrounds mass solstice celebrations. After all, if you visit Stonehenge now, you'll be able to buy more fuel or a cup of tea at the Solstice service station nearby."

Now is the time to express our own growth through art, dance, stories, poetry and songs, remembering ancestral wisdom and preparing for future changes. This is also a time for grounding yourself and placing your spirit in alignment with the energy of Gaia. Be open to inner wishes, beliefs and feelings and follow your heart. Here are some ideas for celebrating Litha, whilst at home, in a moot or in a family.

- Going out for as a family group (or with a friend) for a walk and a picnic.
- > Accentuating kindness: make someone happy and try to be kind to strangers.
- Doing some performance activities, perhaps singing or storytelling or dancing to music
- Drying herbs and storing them in jars...l've been using up my stocks to make massage oils and herbal teabags.
- Making a local map of trees in your area.
- Writing down lists of wildflowers you've seen on your walks.
- > Listing the animals and birds that visit your garden, such as owls, bats, hedgehogs, etc.
- Taking a day out to do a solitary vision quest take water to drink, fruits or basic foods to eat and seek solitude to evaluate your pathway.

On the subject of <u>kindness</u>, here's a little spell to send to anyone you know who is ill or depressed atm. Without mentioning any names, I run this spell (or a variation of it) every night for a close friend who needs my healing energies. Normally, I focus on that person beforehand and hold a piece of rough amethyst or citrine crystal.

I see you with my mind, And keep you in my heart – Healing circles of magick, From me to you depart. This energy it soothes, And eases all your pain – Bringing only blessed relief, And freedom from stress again. So, mote it be – from me to you <Name> forever.

Also, on the topic of kindness, here's a timely message from the Pagan Federation: Statement of Support for Trans People from the Pagan Federation (April 2025)

In light of the recent ruling by the UK Supreme Court, which defines "woman" solely in terms of biological sex, the Pagan Federation stands firmly and unequivocally in support of all trans people.

We know that this decision is already causing deep hurt and concern within our community, and we want to be absolutely clear: **trans women are women, trans men are men and all non-binary genders are valid**. This is not up for debate within the Pagan Federation.

Our values as a faith-based, inclusive organisation are rooted in respect for the divine in all its forms, and we honour the lived truths of all people. Gender is sacred, fluid, and deeply personal. The gods and spirits we work with teach us that transformation, identity, and embodiment are all part of the spiritual path. We recognise and celebrate the journeys of trans people as just as valid, meaningful, and worthy as any other.

The Pagan Federation exists to provide spiritual community, support, and advocacy. That means standing up in moments like these to say: **you are welcome here, you are valued, and you are safe with us**. We will continue to create and hold space for trans people in our spaces and our leadership — not in spite of our faith, but because of it.

To all our trans members and friends: we see you, we honour you and we will always fight for your rights, your dignity, and your place in our communities.

Blessings and solidarity, Sarah Kerr Pagan Federation President



Sunset prayer for Litha

The longest day is over, As the sun sinks slowly away. At dawn, we greeted and honoured you, Celebrating your light over the land. You make crops grow and bloom, And your heat warms the earth -You are the bringer of life for us all. Now the darkness starts once again, A minute more of night each day, Until we celebrate your rebirth at Yule. Radiant Aine*, we ask for your blessings At your festival of Midsummer -Help us to experience true joy and divinity. May the goddess of love and light, Bring us the sun's power during every day and, Throughout the remainder of our lives. So, mote it be.

* Aine = Aw-neh

You could also make some **incense** for Litha; I've detailed an example below.

2 parts sandalwood
1 part mugwort
1 part chamomile
1 part gardenia flowers
a few drops rose, lavender or yarrow essential oil.

Time travel

By Mark Sharpen

OK then, in films, **time travellers** typically step inside a machine and disappear. They then reappear instantaneously among cowboys, knights or dinosaurs. What these films show is basically teleportation in time rather than time travel. In fact, the laws of physics might allow chronological hopping, in a manner of speaking. Time travel to the near future is easy: you're doing it right now at a rate of one second per second and physicists say that rate can change. According to Einstein's theory of relativity, time's flow depends on how fast you're moving.

The quicker you travel, the slower seconds pass. And according to Einstein, gravity also affects clocks: the more forceful the gravity nearby, the slower time goes. According to **David Goldberg**, a cosmologist at Drexel University a cosmologist at Drexel University, "*Near massive bodies, perhaps near the surface of neutron stars or even at the surface of the Earth, although it's a tiny effect - time runs slower than it does far away. If a person were to hang out near the edge of a black hole, where gravity is prodigious, only a few hours might pass for them while 1000 years went by for someone on Earth. If the person who was near the black hole returned to this planet, they would have effectively travelled to the future. That is a real effect. That is completely uncontroversial."*

As usual, I'm referring to the quantum aspect here. Einstein described a macro theory of relativity that covers gravity and the movement of spatial objects. Quantum physics covers micro particles and their properties. Both schools of thought work well on their own, but the point where they overlap remains in flux. For example, does gravity also apply in quantum mechanics, to explain the movement of particles?

Our lives are built around time. We plan for the future, in light of what we know about the past. We hold people morally accountable for their past actions. We believe ourselves to be entities that can *do things*, because we can plan to act in a way that will bring about changes in the future. But what's the point of acting to bring about a change in the future when, in a very real sense, there is no future to act for? A discovery that time does not exist would seem to bring the entire world to a grinding halt, but there is a scientific get-out. The get-out is the principle of *causation*: the sense in which one thing can bring about another. It is possible that while time does not exist within a quantum universe, such as ours, causation is the mainspring and we can continue to live, knowing that past actions cause us to plan for the future.

Going backward in time is more problematic. Scientists have come up with a few ways it might be possible, and they have been aware of time travel paradoxes in general relativity for decades. **Fabio Costa**, a physicist at the Nordic Institute for Theoretical Physics, notes that an early solution with time travel began with a scenario written in the 1920s. That idea involved massive long cylinders that spun fast in the manner of straw rolled between your palms and that twisted space-time along with it. The understanding that this object could act as a time machine allowing one to travel to the past only happened in the 1970s, a few decades after scientists had discovered a phenomenon called closed time-like curves.

According to Costa, "A closed time-like curve describes the trajectory of a hypothetical observer that, while always travelling forward in time from their own perspective, at some point finds themselves at the same place and time where they started, creating a loop. This is possible in a region of space-time that, warped by gravity, loops into itself".

Science began to take time travel seriously in the 1980s. In 1990, for instance, Russian physicist **Igor Novikov** and American physicist **Kip Thorne** collaborated on a research paper about closed time-like curves: they started to study not only how one could try to build a time machine but also how it would work. Also, they investigated the paradoxes of time travel. What if, for instance, you threw a billiard ball into a time machine and it travelled to the past and then collided with its past self in a way that meant its present self could never enter the time machine?

Most time travel models need negative mass and negative energy, as Einstein's theory proved that mass and energy are the same. In theory, at least, just as an electric charge can be positive or negative, so can mass, though no one's ever found an example of negative mass. Why does time travel depend on such exotic matter? In many cases, it is needed to hold open a wormhole in space-time predicted by general relativity that connects one point in the cosmos to another. Without negative mass, gravity would cause this tunnel to collapse.

Other researchers have created models of time travel that involve a wormhole, or a tunnel in space-time from one point in the cosmos to another. Back to David Goldberg, "Imagine accelerating one end of the wormhole to near the speed of light and then sending it back to where it came from. Those two sides are no longer synced - one is in the past and one is in the future. Walk between them and you're travelling in time".

You could accomplish something similar by moving one end of the wormhole near a big gravitational field, such as a black hole while keeping the other end near a smaller gravitational force. In that way, time would slow down on the big gravity side, essentially allowing a particle or some other chunk of mass to reside in the past, relative to the other side of the wormhole. However, making a wormhole requires negative mass and energy, as a wormhole created from normal mass would collapse because of gravity.

And maybe the problem is not just that we don't know how to make time travel machines but also that it's not possible to do so except on microscopic scales: a belief held by the late physicist, **Stephen Hawking**. He proposed the chronology protection conjecture: The universe doesn't allow time travel, because it doesn't allow alterations to the past. "It seems there is a chronology protection agency, which prevents the appearance of closed time-like curves and so makes the universe safe for historians," Hawking wrote in 1992, Physical Review D.

Part of his reasoning involved the paradoxes time travel would create situation with a billiard ball and its more famous counterpart, the grandfather paradox: if you go back in time and kill your grandfather before he has children, you can't be born, and therefore you can't travel in time and, therefore, you couldn't have killed your grandfather. Those complications are what interests Massachusetts Institute of Technology philosopher, **Agustin Rayo**, because the paradoxes don't just call causation and chronology into question. He says, "Paradoxes make free will seem suspect. If physics says you can go back in time, then why can't you kill your grandfather? What stops you? Are you not free?"

Rayo suspects that time travel is consistent with free will, though: "What's past is past. So if, in fact, my grandfather survived long enough to have children, travelling back in time isn't going to change that. Why will I fail if I try? I don't know because I don't have enough information about the past. What I do know is that I'll fail somehow". If you went to kill your grandfather, in other words, you'd perhaps slip on a banana en route or miss the bus.

Nature: The Missing Lynx Project By the Wildlife Trusts



The Missing Lynx Project is a new partnership between Northumberland Wildlife Trust, The Lifescape Project and The Wildlife Trusts. It is hosting a touring exhibition in Northumberland, the edge of Cumbria and the border of southern Scotland. The exhibition provides people with the opportunity to find out about this missing mammal, which used to live in Britain, but disappeared in medieval times following woodland habitat loss. The Missing Lynx Project is a partnership project investigating the possibility of reintroducing lynx to England. We are currently exploring the ecological, practical and social feasibility of reintroducing lynxes. This is basically asking three key questions.

- Is there an area in England where lynxes could live?
- How could we go about bringing lynxes back?
- > And would local people accept lynxes back in the landscape?

To answer this last question, The Missing Lynx Project is hosting an exhibition which will tour around areas in which lynxes could potentially live and local towns. The exhibition will open a conversation and find out what local people think about lynxes and whether this missing species could be brought back. The Missing Lynx Project partnership would support a reintroduction to England if there is both an area in Britain where lynxes can live and if local people are accepting of the animal back in the landscape.

The Eurasian Lynxes are native to Britain and lived here for thousands of years until they disappeared in medieval times when their woodland habitat was largely chopped down. Lynxes were a critical part of our ecosystems. As top carnivores, they hunted deer and, sometimes, foxes. This helped regulate prey populations and had trickle-down benefits for other wildlife. Lynxes could also provide social benefits for people and local communities, such as wildlife watching experiences and nature tourism. Such benefits have already been seen in other countries where lynxes have been reintroduced.

Lynx reintroductions have been taking place across Europe over the last few decades. We are learning from these successful projects and working with European experts to assess whether it would be possible to have a lynx reintroduction in England. The first step was to use scientific evidence to examine whether there was anywhere in Britain where lynxes could live.

Our research found that if lynxes were to be released in Northumberland, they could grow into a healthy population covering north-west Northumberland, the edge of Cumbria and the bordering areas of southern Scotland. This area has the extensive forest habitats that lynxes need. A reintroduction would not be possible in other areas of England and Wales. The project is listening to what people think about the idea of bringing lynxes back.

There are four species of lynx in the world. North America has the bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) and the Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). Europe has the Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*), found only in Spain and Portugal, and the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), which is found across Europe and Asia. The Eurasian lynx once lived in the UK. They are elusive cats, living in woodlands where they hunt for roe deer in the twilight of dusk and dawn or the dark of night. The lynx is one of two cat species native to Britain. The other is the wildcat (*Felis silvestris*), which is now only found in Scotland.

Eurasian lynxes are woodland animals. Across Europe, they can be found in deciduous, coniferous and mixed forests. They like areas with lots of *understory plants* (the layer of vegetation between the forest floor and the canopy). This layer includes shrubs, saplings and other plants that grow beneath the taller trees, which provide places to hide from people and cover for hunting their preferred prey of roe deer. Lynxes are top carnivores, hunting for roe deer or other hoofed mammals, like chamois, red deer and mouflon. They will also sometimes feed on smaller prey, such as rodents, hares, foxes and birds.

In reintroduced lynx populations in Europe, ungulates such as roe deer make up 72-100% of a lynx's diet. Each lynx kills a large prey (like a deer) about once a week, which is around 50 deer per year. Lynxes are most active at night or at dusk and dawn. This is when they hunt, typically ambushing their prey from the ground. The lynx will hide behind plants or other cover until their prey is just a few metres away, then pounce and deliver a fatal bite to the neck. Lynxes won't eat a whole deer at once. After feeding, they bury their prey beneath a layer of leaves to hide it from scavengers, such as foxes. They'll return to feed on it over several days.

For most of the year, adult lynxes are solitary animals. They live on their own within a specific home range, which can start from 80km², depending on environmental factors. Like other cats, they stake out their territory and communicate with neighbours by scent marking. But during the mating season, between February and mid-April, males and females come together to mate. Females are pregnant for two months, usually giving birth to a litter of kittens in late May or June. A litter tends to be 1-4 kittens, but on average they give birth to two.

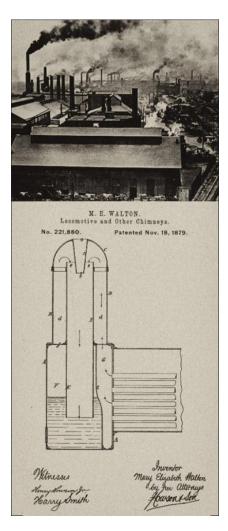
The male plays no part in the parental care, but kittens stay with their mother until they're around 10 months old, when they're classed as juveniles. They'll then leave to search for their own territory. Typically, only half of the kittens from a litter will survive their first year. Those that do survive generally breed for the first time from two years old and can live to be around 12-13 years old.

Top carnivores, like lynxes, play an important role within their habitat. Their actions have impacts on many other species. Some impacts are direct, such as reducing the populations of the animals they hunt. Others are indirect, such as providing food for scavengers like beetles and birds, which feed on the remains of a lynx's prey. There can be more complex, cascading effects too. Deer are important in the environment as they feed on plants and trees. However, when there are too many deer, plants and trees can struggle to grow. As deer are the main prey of lynxes, these top carnivores can help control deer populations, allowing forests to regrow.

Mary Walton

By Mark Sharpen

I've been thinking about trains recently. It's the 200th anniversary in September 2025 of the first public passenger train, pulled by Stephenson's *Active* (later renamed *Locomotion*), which ran from Darlington to Stockton, carrying 450 persons at 15 miles (24 km) per hour. Less well-known perhaps is the name of Mary Elizabeth Walton. She was a practical and creative nineteenth-century boarding house owner, who was used to solving mechanical problems. So, when the noise and smoke of the elevated railway next to her building became intolerable, she set out to reinvent the era's train technology — and succeeded, even where Thomas Edison himself had failed. Walton was a pioneer in an era when the engineering discipline of industrial pollution control didn't exist. This is her patent for removing particulates from smoke stack emissions.



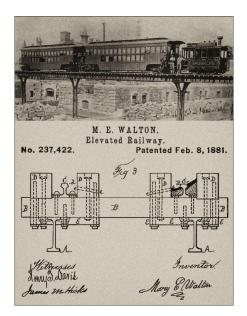
After the Civil War, America's Industrial Revolution resulted in workers moving from rural farms to factory jobs that were springing up in cities like New York, where they were soon joined by millions of European immigrants arriving in search of a new life. Problem was that factory jobs came with a noxious price: the workers couldn't know what was in the air they breathed, New Yorkers could literally see and smell it as oil and kerosene refineries, coal yards, varnish and fertilizer plants, ammonia works and factory smokestacks sent dense clouds of smoke billowing over Manhattan's downtown.

Also contributing to the urban din and air pollution of 19th century New York was the city's solution to getting all those new workers to and from those new jobs: a system of elevated trains (*els*) that clanged, puffed and belched smoke along 9 miles of track that ran down most major streets of the city.

In 1879, Mary Elizabeth Walton owned a boarding house at 12th Street and 6th Avenue, smack up against the city's new Gilbert Elevated Railway. When it came to the constant roar of the els' steam engines, the smoke that belched from its stacks to leave a layer of soot on every surface, the sound of its screeching brakes and the vibrations that shook adjoining buildings, Mary Walton began to think seriously about ways to rid her neighbourhood of its airborne and noise pollution.

She began by designing a device that forced smoke from locomotive, factory and residential chimneys through water tanks that dissolved and held the pollutants in suspension before discharging them into the city's sewer system. In November 1879, she was awarded U.S. Patent #221,880. Travelling to England to promote her invention, British officials hailed her device as one of the greatest inventions of the age. Perhaps not surprising, considering Charles Dickens' 1852 description of the London fogs and "streets full of dense brown smoke". However, this invention did little to reduce the noise of the els.

The city called upon some of America's finest machinists and inventors, including Thomas Edison, to find a solution. Edison spent six months looking for a way to deaden the noise of the elevated rails to no avail. It would take a woman who lived along the tracks to come up with a workable solution – step forward Mary Walton. Thomas Edison worked for six months on a project that failed to find a viable way to muffle the sound of steel wheels on elevated train tracks. Mary Walton succeeded in that same quest by discovering that the tracks amplified the noise of the train, because of the plain wooden supports they ran through, was granted a patent and then licensed the rights to the New York Metro rail system.



Her Manhattan basement soon became the site of a model railroad she built to experiment with different noisereduction systems. As a result, she embedded her model rails in a wooden box-like structure that was first painted with tar to weatherproof it, then lined with cotton and filled with sand. Just as her patent for locomotive and other chimneys used water to absorb smoke and noxious fumes, she found that sand best absorbed the vibration and sound from nearby rails. She sold the rights to New York City's Metropolitan Railroad; before long, Walton's anti-noise pollution system had become a staple of other elevated rail companies. While the benefit to Manhattanites and their quality of life was considerable. Mary Elizabeth Walton was hailed as a hero.

Royal Swan Upping: Monday 14 July-Friday 18 July

Swan Upping is an annual ceremony in England in which mute swans on the River Thames are rounded up, caught, ringed and then released. The ceremony dates back to the 12th century.





Nature: dandelions

By Gylden Fellowship

Now, here's a fun fact – 27 April was **International Dandelion Day**, which was first created in 2020. It's always important to note that dandelions are not weeds; many pollinating insects feed on dandelions. And here's a seasonal recipe that includes dandelions. Beltaine marked the end of winter farming and heralded the start of summer, so that sheep or goats could be moved to upland pastures. Stocks of dried meat from the winter would have been low and May was a chance to use fresh vegetables, oatmeal or cheese. One of the correspondence foods for this period are edible flowers and here's a seasonal salad.

Ingredients

- Shredded lettuce
- Fresh berries, sliced
- Fresh tomatoes, peppers and cucumber
- ➢ Onion, sliced
- Bread roll
- 2tbsp fresh lemon juice (add at end)
- Mixed garden leaves or flowers, washed:

Borage Dandelions Lavender Plantains Chickweed Lemon verbena Calendula Rose petals Nasturtiums Daisies Chervil Sweet violets **Note:** try to remember to avoid any plants that have been treated with pesticides.

City plants cycle from eradication by concrete and asphalt to reconquer the nooks and cracks that subsequently form. A group of artists from Sweden likened cities to disturbed gardens - people and plants alike are gardeners of this dynamic landscape. The dandelion is a pioneer of this disturbed garden: the first to arrive with its windborne seeds and the best equipped to conquer the pavement with its long taproots. Once established, dandelions enable others to arrive by providing a buffet for insects in early spring. Quantitative surveys of over 2 million flowers to estimate the nectar and pollen resources offered by two exemplar commercial seed mixes (one annual, one perennial) and associated weeds grown as 300m² meadows across four UK cities, sampled at six time points between May and September 2013. This survey (published in 2016) revealed that in Edinburgh, Leeds, Bristol and Reading, dandelions were providing 90% of the nectar (carbohydrates) and 80% of the pollen (proteins) in the diets of pollinators. As a result, more than 200 species of insects are supported by dandelions. These are the necessary pollinators that allow other plant species to establish, such as clover, mallow, mustard and poppy.

History: Potosi silver

By Gylden Fellowship

"For the powerful emperor, for the wise king, this lofty mountain of silver could conquer the world" – this is the engraving on an ornate shield sent by Spain's King Felipe II in 1561 as a gift to the city of **Potosí**, in south Bolivia. King Felipe was aware of the vast riches hidden beneath this remote mountain in the Andes. The *conquistadors* may never have found El Dorado, but they did find a mound of silver so large, it turned an isolated Incan hamlet into the fourth largest city in the Christian world in just 70 years, fund the creation of the most advanced industrial complex of its era and define economic fortunes from China to western Europe. It was known as Cerro Rico de Potosí and was the largest silver mine in the world during the 1500s and 1600s.

In the early 1600s, 160,000 native Peruvians, slaves from Africa and Spanish settlers lived in Potosí to work the mines around the city. In the rush to exploit the silver, the first Spanish colonisers occupied the locals' homes, building makeshift accommodation that evolved into a chaotic mismatch of extravagant villas and modest huts, punctuated by gambling houses, theatres, workshops and churches.

High in the adjoining mountains, the city was surrounded by 22 dams powering 140 mills that ground the silver ore before it was moulded into bars and sent to the first Spanish colonial mint; the silver coins that resulted, helped make Spain the global superpower of the period. According to author, *Jack Weatherford*, professor of anthropology at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, "*Potosí was the first city of capitalism, for it supplied the primary ingredient of capitalism – money. Potosí made the money that irrevocably changed the economic complexion of the world"*.

The production of silver in the city exploded in the early 1570s after the discovery of a mercury amalgamation process to extract it from the mined ore, together with the imposition of a forced labour system known as the **mita**. Native Peruvians from hundreds of miles away were forced to travel to Potosí to labour in the mines, then given the back-breaking task of carrying the daily quota of 25 bags of silver ore, each weighing around 45kg, to the surface. Temperature and humidity differences between the depths of the mine and the surface meant pneumonia and respiratory infections were rife. The mita imposed by Viceroy Toledo was responsible for Potosi assuming a reputation as *the mountain that eats men*.



Alongside the mita, Toledo's other reforms were the first serious attempt to organise this boom city. Marshland was drained to open up more space for construction, dividing Potosí into a Spanish and a local district, and creating an intricate system of dykes and drains to fill five artificial lagoons that fed the mills – an extraordinary feat of hydro-engineering that guaranteed a steady supply of silver. The ore mined by the native workers and African slaves made many Spaniards exceedingly wealthy.

The city did not just prove fatal to the thousands who died in the mines. Despite Potosi's flamboyance, it was plagued by murderous disputes between warring Spanish miners, natural disasters and the perils of living at 4000m, where very little grows. The first Spanish boy to survive birth in Potosi was born in 1584, nearly 40 years after the city's foundation; in 1624, much of the city's native Peruvian sector was washed away as the San Salvador dam broke, killing around 200 and causing extensive destruction. New arrivals began to clash with the Basque ruling class who had come to dominate the city, causing vicious gang wars. Thousands died in the fighting, fuelled by gossip and rumours.

By the early 1620s, the El Dorado myth was beginning to fall apart, made worse by decaying infrastructure, falling yields and social tensions. Over the years, a large amount of silver ore had been mined, to the effect that the seams of good silver ore were exhausted. It is estimated that 60,000 tons of silver were mined over the years. The population of Potosi fell to 60,000 by the end of the 1600s. The silver coins from Potosi had powered China's Ming dynasty, but were the cause of inflation elsewhere, lowering the price of silver around the world and eroding profits from the silver mine.

However, silver from Potosi had changed the world forever, facilitating the exchange of slaves, fabrics, spices and other goods across the globe. Examples included funding the Spanish empire's wars with the British, Dutch, French and Ottomans. Potosi silver prompted King Philip IV of Spain to proclaim: "*In silver lies the security and strength of my monarchy*", but this assumption of unlimited wealth from the Americas proved ruinous, fuelling an unsustainable level of spending by the Spanish royal family. Potosí survived as a mining centre on a smaller scale until its liberation by Simón Bolívar in 1825, its former riches now existing only in legend and literature.

There are no reliable mortality statistics about the mining and associated processes, according to **Dr Ignacio Gonzalez Casasnovas**, an expert on the social history of Potosí, "*but we would estimate the toll to be much less than the 8 million deaths of which Galeano spoke*". Modern Potosí is a shell of its former self. The mountain still towers over the city, but it is crumbling inside, made unstable by the hundreds of miles of mine shafts constructed over the 500 years it has been exploited. It is now predominantly mined for zinc and tin, although children still look through the piles of ore for the silver that once made their city so wealthy. Many of the Bolivians who still work in the mines suffer from the same illnesses as those who died at the hands of the Spanish – their lungs turned black by the dust.



Seasonal events in June





Harry Edwards Foundation Burrows Lea, Hook Lane Shere, Near Guildford Surrey. GU5 9QQ

8 June 2024 | Forest Bathing + Mindfulness in Nature: £45.00

Forest Bathing + Mindfulness in Nature by Woodland Vale Retreats: 10am – 12.30pm

If you have any questions, please call 01483 205620 or email enquiries@burrowslea.org.uk

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