

Foraging for magickal stones ©

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This article looks at foraging or seeking magickal stones from within the natural environment of the UK. There's nothing wrong with buying rough or tumbled crystals at a fayre or MBS event, but it's worth asking whether such crystals have clean energy, as opposed to using sage smudges, moonlight or running water to cleanse the crystals.

I remember writing a rather longer text on the subject of Fair Trade crystals in 2017 – that's in the *Newlands* archive on Pagans of the Gylden River website. In that article, I mentioned that it may be easier (and cheaper) to collect your own stones rather than simply buying stuff from crystal traders. At least, you can then be sure about the origin of the stones and it's your energy inside them.

Rough stones

OK, you're not going to be finding gemstones or polished semi-precious crystals just lying around, but there's also a lot that can be obtained by foraging in the same way, as some of us forage for herbal materials. Here's a list of some common crystals that can be found around our country.

- Sea glass – Durham coast, Brighton, Lyme Regis and Cornwall
- Opal – Northern Ireland
- Agate – beaches along the Yorkshire coast
- Jasper – Scotland (red and yellow jasper)
- Amethyst - Scotland
- Smoky quartz – Scotland
- White quartz – Northern Ireland
- Aquamarine – Northern Ireland
- Hæmatite – Northern Ireland
- Calcite – Northern Ireland
- Jet – used to be very common around Whitby
- Amber – was common in the Isle of Wight and Suffolk coast
- Topaz – Cornwall and Devon
- Tourmaline – Cornwall and Devon
- Fluorite – Cornwall and Devon
- Blue John fluorite - Derbyshire
- A few gemstones, eg diamonds, sapphires and beryls – these are isolated finds from Scottish and Northern Irish sources
- UK beach stones (from many sources) tend to include quartz, chalk, slate and fossils.

Apart from stones, both Cornwall and Devon used to be major centres for mining tin, silver and copper in pre-Roman times. Before the Saxon Shore, as it was known, was occupied by the Saxons – much of the

Sussex and Kent area was mined for flints and one can still find flint arrow heads today. Gold can still be found in Northern Ireland and Wales. If one visits an area that is known for commercial pearl industry, it's still possible to find a pearl from oysters in the wild, but this is rare.

Hag stones, etc

So, what's a hag stone then? Well, it's a stone with a natural hole in it, caused by water attrition over the years or erosion from an adjacent stone or even from the movement of small animals through the stone. Hag stones are also known as:

- Witch stones
- Adder stones
- Serpent eggs
- Druid's glass (thought to give protection from eye diseases).

Foraging for hag stones can be more rewarding from UK beaches than for semi-precious stones. The most common hag stones are made of softer rock like limestone or chalk, although erosion may result in flint hag stones too. There are many magickal uses for hag stones, from healing to divination – the list below gives an idea of the range.

1. Hag stones are like amulets to ward off evil charms or nightmares.
2. A hag stone allows one to see the færy folk.
3. Linked to this, a hag stone protects against færy glamour.
4. Druids used hag stones for divination.
5. Witches used hag stones for focus and concentration.
6. Hag stones were also used as protection against witchcraft or demons, eg on boats, on necklaces or around the house.
7. Wearing a hag stone necklace is said to prevent dis-ease.
8. It is claimed that rubbing a bruise or wound with a hag stone will aid in the healing process.
9. Using the hole in the hag stone as the point of focus, is an aid to meditation.

Incidentally, hag stones aside, I tend to use the beaches in the UK as great places to forage for **shells**. I've been crystal healing for years now, but sometimes the appeal of a shell resonates with a patient more than the standard crystal remedy. I'm not really sure why this is so, except that a shell is linked to the ocean's vibrations, has had an organic creature living inside and uses the endless spiral to help healing.