



highlandwildlifephotography.co.uk

Gylden Magick

Find us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gyldenpaganfellowship/>

April 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 reached 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, albeit less so, at the moment in the light of the COVID-19 travel restrictions. So,

this time, we're very grateful to our friends for contributing their poetry and artwork too.

Our **Pink Moon** issue continues with the 20-page format with ever more guidance on spiritual issues and magick. This edition has a definite emphasis on spring - the altar colours for this period are yellow, pink and lavender. But no ads – after all, we're like a pagan public library and all the information is free.

Dates for your diaries – not least **Hanamatsuri** (the Buddha's birthday) on 8 April and **Earth Day 2020** on 22 April. And we look forward to **Beltaine** (at the end of the month).

What else is there? Well, we continue our new series about animal spirit guides with the

dragonfly, a dragon tale for 23 April, artwork, lots of poetry, Beltaine magick, the Wessex Culture in Britain, some guidance on healthy teas and infusions against infection, a self-help meditation for spring, a look at the festival of Norouz, more details on Earth Day, herbal healing with borage and our crystal of the month is amethyst.

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 stories, reports, updates or briefings for April?

Contents: April 2020

Monthly features

Pages 3-4

Animal spirit guides (new series) — Dragonfly

Crystals — Amethyst

Herbal healing — Borage

Kitchen witchcraft – Salmon

Spi-rituality – Norouz and Alban Eilir by Gylden Fellowship

Page 5

Photos: Artwork (1) - by Fay Brotherhood Art and Music

Page 6

Ancient peoples: Wessex Culture by Gylden Fellowship

Page 7

Poetry – Spring by Tara Bernadette Egan

Page 8

Environment: Earth Day by Gylden Fellowship

Pages 9-10

Self-help (1): Herbal teas and infusions by Nick the Witch

Pages 11-12

Self-help (2): Meditation – a springtime walk in the woods

Page 13

Poetry by Beth Amos

Pages 14-15

Folklore: The Linton Wurm by the Storyteller

Page 16

Beltaine magick by Nick the Witch

Pages 17-18

Photos: Artwork (2) - by Fay Brotherhood Art and Music

Page 19

Gylden contact info

Page 20



Animal spirit guides: dragonfly

Not all animal spirit guides take the form of primary mammals like wolves, lynxes, bears or birds, eg crows. It is common to have a reptile guide or an insect one. Last month, we considered the owl as a spirit guide – now we think about dragonflies. In the first part of this series, we looked at the *Place of Meeting*. So, you've crossed into the Otherworld and a spirit comes to you in the form of a dragonfly – what does it symbolise?



OK then, dragonflies are creatures of colour and light – you don't tend to see them by night. In general, such a spirit indicates change or transformation. Many people experience happiness when they see dragonflies in nature – the sparkling colours that shimmer in sunshine are a joyous sight.

Having a dragonfly as your guide is all about changing yourself and evolving into a higher being, using all your abilities to the max. In one sense, the dragonfly spirit guide is a symbol of ascension – yours.

As a dragonfly changes colour during its life, so you are urged to change your inner being. Try to explore this lifetime as much as possible and encourage those around you to do likewise. Be creative and live your life with a lightness of spirit.

A dragonfly is connected with dream states and, again, is a symbol that we should follow our dreams. The dimensions of the universe can be seen, reflected in the dragonfly's wings. With such a spirit guide, you won't be travelling at the heights of an eagle or an owl, but working in a micro-world where you can appreciate the colours and creatures in far greater depth – worlds within worlds, really.

Crystals: amethyst

Amethyst is one of my favourite serenity stones - a staple in my healing work, alongside snow quartz and blue lace agate. The best stones come from Brazil, South Korea, the USA and Canada.

Amethyst is a type of quartz (silicon dioxide), coloured purple from its iron content and other trace elements. As a decoration, amethyst was used in Ancient Egypt and, for protection, in the Middle Ages.

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

- It is a brilliant protective stone, particularly against psychic attacks, strengthening one's spiritual defences.
- Amethyst is good for headaches and stress. I have a charm that uses amethyst to ward off bad dreams and keep a piece on the bedside cabinet.
- Further, it's good for meditation and mental health issues involving anger management.
- Amethyst is effective with the throat chakra and can be used to cleanse one's aura.
- It helps anybody suffering from anxiety or depression by relieving emotional pain, trauma or psychological stress.
- It is a safe stone to use in crystal essences, using the direct method.
- It's a good crystal for the immune system by cleansing.
- Amethyst is good when worn as jewellery, eg in a pendant, but single point crystals are great for drawing energy in particular directions. Don't forget that amethyst can fade in direct sunlight.
- It's not often recognised, but amethyst is a calming stone for those recovering from addiction of any sort. Suffice to say, I have personal experience of this and have used amethyst as a balancing crystal for many years.



Herb of the month: borage

Borage (*Borago officinalis*) is a plant with blue flowers that grows wild in many places. It was first introduced to Britain by the Romans and is useful both in healing and cooking – the leaves, flowers and stalks are all edible. I might suggest that one could add borage leaves to a salad or soup or as an alternative to cucumber.

On the [healing side](#), borage seeds, leaves and flowers are all good as remedies for various ailments, including the following.

- Oil from the seeds is good as a dressing for skin problems, such as eczema, dermatitis and rheumatoid arthritis. It often turns up in commercial skin care products.
- Borage oil is also used in capsule form to combat IBS or stomach cramps
- A borage salve or lotion or cream can treat inflammations, gum disease and swellings.
- The flowers and leaves can be made into an infusion for colds.
- We have a raspberry syrup that will destroy a sore throat or cough (listed on our website) – making a borage flower syrup will have a similar effect.
- A tincture of borage is helpful against stress.

Borage oil is sometimes added to infant formula to provide the fatty acids needed to promote development of pre-term infants. **Please avoid borage if you are pregnant.**

Borage can be used for certain hormonal problems, eg adrenal insufficiency, where the herb helps to cleanse the blood, act as a diuretic, increase sweating and act as a sedative.

Please avoid using a borage treatment for prolonged periods, say, over 3 weeks.



Recipe: salmon

OK then, we've picked a salmon recipe, because salmon is a correspondence food for April and, here we are, in the period between Alban Eilir and Beltaine. The recipe allows for some borage too, as that's our herb for this month.

I'm not sure quite how long this one takes, but I'd guess that it's no longer than 40 minutes and serves about 6-8 people.

Ingredients

- A 6kg (= 13lbs) piece of skinless salmon fillet
- 1tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 orange, sliced thinly
- 1 lemon, sliced thinly
- 10 sprigs of fresh thyme or rosemary
- Lots (!) of fresh borage leaves.

Method

1. Heat oven to 190°C.
2. Put the salmon on foil or a baking sheet.
3. Sprinkle the salmon with the oil and add some salt and pepper.
4. Add the lemon and orange slices and thyme or rosemary sprigs on top.
5. Roast the salmon thoroughly = about 25 minutes.
6. Carefully move the roast salmon, herbs and citrus to a plate.
7. Add the borage leaves on top and around it.
8. **Suggestion:** serve with rice or couscous.



Spi-rituality: Norouz and Alban Eilir

By Gylden Fellowship

Norouz (also spelled as *Nowruz*, *Noruz* or *Norooz*) means “*New Day*”. It refers to the **Persian/ Iranian New Year**, which has been celebrated for over 3000 years on the **first day of spring** – which we identify as Alban Eilir or Ostara, on the spring equinox at or near the 20-21 March. Norouz is the first day of the Iranian calendar and is now seen as a secular event, rather than a purely religious one.

However, the festival is thought to be linked to Zoroastrianism, but it is celebrated in many countries by something like 200 million people each year, mainly across central and western Asia. The tradition of Norouz includes a spring cleaning of the house and the purchase of new clothing for family members. On the evening of the last Wednesday before Norouz, there’s a pre-ritual called **Chaharshanbeh Soori**, which involves athletic people jumping over bonfires to say farewell to the darkness of winter and to welcome springtime light.

On the equinox itself, there’s a family gathering around a **Haft Sin (or Haft Seen) table** and the older folk give presents to the younger people at the time of the equinox. The Haft Sin table represents 7 symbolic items, all starting with the letter “S” in the Farsi language...these items are listed below.

- Fresh wheat or lentils, representing rebirth (Sabzeh)
- A wheat pudding, representing prosperity (Samanu or Samanak)
- Sumac spice, representing dawn (Somagh)
- Dried fruit from an oleaster tree, representing love (Senjed)
- Garlic, representing good health or medicine (Seer)
- Apples, representing health and beauty (Seeb)
- Vinegar, representing age and wisdom (Serkeh).

The Haft Sin table may include other symbolic items for the Norouz celebration, such as the following.

- Coins, representing wealth (Sekeh)
- Hyacinth flowers or tulips for their fragrance (Sonbol)
- A painted egg for each member of the family, representing fertility
- A mirror or a candle, representing light
- A bowl of water, representing life
- A book of poems or scripture.

On the 13th day after Norouz, many Iranians go on picnics – this day is called **Sizdeh Bedar** and people cast away the wheat or lentils into flowing water. They may also tie knots in the plants before throwing them into the water, as a hope of finding a marriage partner.

Perhaps, it’s worth reflecting that many of the Norouz traditions bear a resemblance to those values that we celebrate for Alban Eilir or Ostara, eg the symbols for light, fertility, rebirth and love. We may decorate our home altars with eggs, flowers, candles, mirrors and seasonal produce too – certainly, I have candles, produce and a fertility symbol or two on my home altar at this time and, I’m guessing, many of you do the same.



Gylden
Magick
April 2020

Fay Brotherhood Art and Music (1)

Contact: www.faybrotherhood.co.uk



Ancient peoples: Wessex Culture

By Gylden Fellowship

In the *November 2019* issue of **GYLDEN MAGICK**, we began a new series looking at various aspects of ancient peoples and our first stop on this journey was Silbury Hill. This time, we're back in Britain and not so far from Silbury, but we're in the early Bronze Age and looking at Wessex Culture...a social system that was mainly confined to an area of central southern England. It was first identified in the 1930s by archaeologists investigating burial customs and barrows.

To put the Wessex Culture into a more precise timeline, we're looking at post-Neolithic times – let's say from 2000 BCE onwards. Or, to put it another way, the Wessex Culture society would have supervised the second or third phases of building Stonehenge.

In respect of burial practices, there are a hundred graves around Wiltshire that contain valuable objects in the grave, made from precious metals, eg gold and bronze. Some of these burials were just that, but later ones were cremations and the grave adornments.

This Wessex Culture indicates that there was trade with Europe at this time and that Wessex society was organised into rich and poor people. Some of the items in the graves came from sources across Europe, eg gold (France), beads (Greece), amber (Baltic) and jewels (Germany).

A lot of such information was gleaned from major finds, including the Bush Barrow, dated at 1900-1700 BCE, at Normanton Down near Stonehenge. The skeleton was an adult male and he was buried with a large piece of gold, a gold belt, three bronze daggers, a bronze axe, gold pins and bronze rivets.

Another key find was the burial site of the Amesbury Archer – also, from this period of history. His burial site included many arrowheads, copper knives, five funeral jars and tools to suggest that he was a metal-worker of some type. It is not known whether he was a pilgrim to Stonehenge or a trader in metals, but it is likely that he was a traveller to Britain, bringing the copper and the gold for the tools to be crafted over here.



The funeral pottery is important, though, because it was termed Beaker and the Bell Beaker period was that which immediately preceded Wessex Culture. The people who used bell-shaped drinking jars came from Europe and they integrated with the indigenous farmers of Neolithic Britain.

Many bell-jars have been found in tombs that pre-date Wessex Culture and it is thought that it was these people who built both the henge monument at Avebury (not the stone circle though – this was constructed in the 1930s) and Silbury Hill.

So, what caused the end of the Wessex Culture? It's hard to identify a single reason, but there was a gradual increase in mixed farming, a decline in elaborate burials and less trade with Europe in bronze or gold. There were newer home industries in weaving or the use of iron for tools or weapons and the development of new forts – we'll deal with hill forts in future issues of **GYLDEN MAGICK**, although there was a piece on Cissbury in our July 2019 edition and we'll be looking at Danebury another time.

So, if we look at the period that was pre-Roman (from 1500 BCE onwards), there were less barrows or stone circles, but much more Celtic field arrangements for farming – sheep, cattle, wheat and barley. Intensive farming was the key with more small settlements being fortified. The Bronze Age was winding down and the Iron Age starting up – much of the iron was already here and the European trade declined, until the advent of the Romans much later on.

Poetry (1): Spring ©

©Tara Bernadette Egan

Spring has sprung
There is work to be done
The garden has to be tended
Can't be left
To its own devices
To run wild.

The garden has to be tamed
Plants catalogued and named
Shrubs snipped
Buds nipped
Hedges trimmed

There's grass to be mown
Seeds to be sown
Beds to turn
Tools to clean
Blades to sharpen.

The robin will perch
Watch as you work
Dart in for the meals
You reveal
The gardeners' friend
Keen eyed, agile and fast

Edge the lawn straight
Don't leave planting too late
Check all the glass
In the greenhouse

Birds sat in trees
Saying , Hey, look at me
I know where the best sticks are
We'll build a nest
You know it makes sense
Raise a family together

Spring has sprung
There's work to be done
To make for a beautiful summer
Of salads, iced teas
Barbeques and ice cream
Before all the hard work of Autumn

Earth Day 2020

By Gylden Fellowship

Earth Day is one of those regular events, supported by many pagans, particularly those in the USA. It occurs this year just before Beltaine, on 22 April and 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day; it is a chance for us all to promote our principles of environmental protection and recognition of Gaia.

What is Earth Day?

The first Earth Day on 22 April 1970 is widely credited with launching the modern environmental movement. In the USA, many environmental laws were passed soon afterwards, dealing with such issues as clean air, clean water and endangered species. Today, the Earth Day Network (EDN) works with over 75,000 partners in 190 countries to broaden, diversify and mobilise the environmental movement. More than 1 billion people now participate in Earth Day activities each year, making it the largest public event in the world.

The main theme for Earth Day 2020 is action on climate change and an initiative called **Earthrise**, which will ask citizens to commit to fighting climate crisis towards a zero-carbon future. At the end of 2020, signatory nations will be expected to increase their national commitments to the Paris Agreement 2015 on climate change.

On 22 April, the Earthrise initiative intends to mobilise a global, digital effort to give a platform to diverse voices and demand bold action for both people and planet. Over 24 hours, the Earthrise initiative will fill the digital landscape with global conversations, calls to action, performances, video teach-ins and much more.

In addition, the EDN's **Canopy Project** incorporates the protection of the environment by planting trees to help communities around the world to improve local economies. Trees reverse the impact of land degradation and provide food, energy and income, helping communities to achieve long-term economic and environmental sustainability. Trees also filter the air and help stave off the effects of climate change. The EDN aims to plant 7.8 billion trees over the coming year – one tree for every person on Earth.



What can I do on Earth Day 2020?

OK then, first, it's unlikely that anyone can attend a mass gathering in person by that date, but it's not impossible to express your views online and support climate action causes. Climate action includes such diverse causes as anti-fracking, safe water, defence of the rainforests, stop drilling for fossil fuels, etc. Everyone can do something on 22 April and here are some suggestions.

- Add your voice to these global demands for action with #EarthDay2020 and #EARTHRISE.
- Join in on social media for 24 hours of action on earthday.org and on @earthdaynetwork - every hour, on the hour, we'll have a new, powerful way for you to demand action and drive change.
- Demand change with civic action — call your local councillors or tweet your MPs. There are so many ways to tell your leaders that human and planetary health must be the top political priority.
- Send a message to the government on 22 April and get registered, educated and ready to vote in the next set of local, regional and national elections.
- Throughout April, earthday.org will have ways to get involved in local, state and national politics in the USA as the Vote Earth campaign is launched.

The first Earth Day seized the power of education through campus-wide teach-ins that sparked conversation, engaged local communities and informed change. Now, as Earth Day 2020 goes digital, the EDN is bringing 12 teach-ins to a global scale. Some of the world's most inspiring musicians, artists, scientists and spiritual leaders will use digital teach-ins to share their experience, expertise and lessons to a global audience across the 24 hours of the Earthrise initiative.

There's so much you can do to help protect and restore our planet, from joining a small clean-up of plastic pollution or litter on your daily walk to hosting an online event in your own community!

The EDN has created a citizen science platform to unite people on a global scale and encourage participation...to collect relevant and accurate data on the environment. This environmental platform has been called **Earth Challenge** and seeks to bring people together, when many are isolated across the world. Through the Earth Challenge app, anyone with a smartphone can contribute to a global database of information on air quality and plastic pollution (for example).

This data will improve the EDN's response to a changing planet and guide future environmental policies. In future months, the platform will continue to expand to include data on other environmental issues, eg water quality, insect populations, climate change and food security.

So, it is worth remembering that protection of the environment is often high on the list of priorities of pagans, whether they live in the USA, in the UK or anywhere else. The Pagan Federation (PF) lists love for, and kinship with, nature as a staple of pagan practice, i.e. reverence for the life force and its ever-renewing cycles of life and death. In fact, it's probably worth quoting the PF on this one:

"The first principle of the Pagan Federation emphasises the importance of love and respect for nature in paganism. It recognises that human beings are part of nature and that our lives are intimately interwoven with the web of life and death".



Self-help (1): Herbal teas and infusions

By Nick the Witch

The following text is not designed to cure Covid-19, far from it, because no herbal remedy can do so. However, the following suggestions are things that anyone can make to destroy a sore throat or cough and to strengthen their immune systems – at present, I have one jar of lemon balm and dried orange pieces for herbal tea and another jar of yarrow and peppermint for the same purpose. Both are home-mixed and both are great for boosting your energy in times of depression and stress. At the moment, I'm also drinking a lot of blueberry tea. It's all about healing yourself from the inside.

Elsewhere on the **Gylden Fellowship** website (www.gyldenfellowship.co.uk), is an anti-cough **syrup** that contains a mix of fresh berries and citrus fruit, sweetened with honey. I tend to use either fresh raspberries or blackberries – but do feel free to experiment, though, perhaps with lemon balm. Basically, any syrup is an infusion with more sugar added – either caster or honey. With standard linctus costing about £8 in the chemist, this mix is a bit cheaper and has more vitamin C.



If you add water to the syrup, it makes an effective cordial too...my advice is to drink such syrups slightly heated. Other healthy syrups include:

- Echinacea and thyme syrup as a booster to your immune system.
- Elderberry or elderflower syrup as a tonic in colder months.
- Sweet violet and ginger syrup as an anti-inflammatory in spring, when violets are fresh.
- Mullein and aniseed syrup as a linctus against winter coughs.
- Rosehip syrup, which is a traditional anti-inflammatory and is chock-full of vitamins.
- Rose petal syrup, for a stress-buster and if you can't face de-hairing the rosehips.

Definitions

Many people think that **infusions** are the same as **teas**. This is not quite true, although boiling water is required and the flowers or green parts of the herb. A basic **infusion** involves a dried herb or herbs – about 1-2 teaspoons – with about six fluid ounces of boiling water. Put the herbs in a cup, pour over the boiling water and leave to infuse for 10 minutes. Then strain the infusion before drinking it.

With **teas**, you just put the herbs or fruits into a teapot, pour over boiling water and strain after a few moments. Or, this witch cheated a bit by ordering loads of teabags online – then you can make up your own stock of favourite teas well in advance. And we'll come to some suggestions for flavours in a little while.

Incidentally, a **decoction** involves the bark or woody parts of a plant – eg 15g of the plants and 750ml of cold water – use a saucepan and pour the cold water over the plant/ herbs. Cover the mix and bring to the boil, then simmer for about 20 minutes and strain the decoction. It is best to split the mixture into 3-4 amounts.

Suggestions for teas and infusions

So, what are some good examples of such mixtures? It is always necessary to check specific dosages before using some herbs and also which herbs to avoid if you're pregnant. Some suggestions for fighting common complaints are:

- Chrysanthemum and elderflower tea – chrysanthemum tea is good for boosting your immune system anyway – if you go out to eat in a Chinese restaurant, either jasmine or chrysanthemum tea are healthy alternatives to normal Chinese tea.
- Mullein and marshmallow as an expectorant.
- Peppermint and calendula – both good flavours to de-stress the mind, although I prefer yarrow and peppermint or combinations with lemon balm or chamomile.
- Nettle and cleavers – you don't have to add cleavers, as nettle tea is really good to de-tox your system anyway.
- Hawthorn flowers and lavender are good for cardiac complaints and you could add rosebuds or jasmine to the mix as well. Traditionally, such a combination is supposed to heal a broken heart.

For those among you who are new-ish to herbal teas, I'd suggest either that you mix black ordinary tea or Chinese loose tea with some dried herbs and add a little honey or a slice of lemon. Here's my suggestions for **starter herbal teas**.

- Chamomile
- Peppermint
- Lemon verbena or lemon balm
- Sage
- Lavender
- Primrose or violet
- Limeflower
- Geranium
- Bergamot
- Fennel
- Hibiscus.



Self-help (2): Meditation: a springtime walk in woodland

By Nick the Witch

Wherever you are, take a few seconds to get as comfortable as possible and start with some long deep breaths. Close your eyes and focus on the breathing until you feel ready to start your walk.

- It's a lovely sunny day and you've reached the very edge of a forest with fields behind you.
- There's a path that leads into the wood, not muddy, but earthen and a few stones.
- Take a moment to notice the dappled sunlight coming through the woodland canopy and see the bright green of new leaves on trees and bushes.
- Listen to the birdsong in the trees and the gentle rustle of a breeze on leaves.
- After a few minutes, the fields are behind you and the path continues past silver birches, beeches, oaks and hornbeams.
- You notice the darker copses of holly and some forest flowers too – yellow primroses, purple sweet violets and white daisies.
- Your path has led you to a pond with clear green-blue water and you notice the way that the sunlight sparkles on the ripples.
- There are some reeds off to your left - you can see a few ducks and some iridescent dragonflies. You feel the sun on your face and you can hear the buzzing of insects in the reeds.
- The path stops with some large flat rocks that overhang the pond in the sunshine – you sit down and consider the peaceful scene around you: trees behind, reeds and pond in front and more trees beyond the water...the birds still sing and you can faintly hear frogs croaking in the reeds.
- As you sit in peace on the sun-lit rocks, your friend comes to join you – this is a person that you know well and love as a friend. You and your friend talk and laugh as spiritual companions within timeless moments.
- When you feel ready, re-trace your steps to the path - both you and your friend leave the wood, perhaps for a cup of tea.



Poetry (2)

By Beth Amos

Shifting Sun

When Summer Sun is at her peak,
resplendently she shines,
encouraging a bounty's fruit
to ripen on the vines.

In Autumn, she's a gentler queen,
who keeps the snow at bay,
and rises later every morn,
to tighten up the day.

When Winter comes, she rests a while,
but still keeps careful view,
on snow drifts, frost, and icicles,
to know when snow is due.

When thaw is here and Spring arrives,
she takes a gentle hand,
and lends her warmth unto the earth,
to wake the slumbering land.

Onward, she toils from year to year;
no payment as her due,
retreating when there's cloudy skies,
and beaming when they're blue.



What Better Place to Ruminatē?

For now – I think I'll stop right here,
 Beneath these leafy boughs,
 Lie back against this rough warm trunk,
 And watch the grazing cows.
 The sun plays – dappled – pleasingly,
 Across the tender grass.
 The sound – as bees hum – soothes my soul,
 As diligent they pass.
 A gentle breeze ruffles my hair,
 The sunlight warms my skin.
 What better place to ruminatē,
 About the joys of Spring?
 The way the world has woken up,
 Since Winter's bitter chill,
 Receded back to northern climes,
 Relinquishing its will.
 Soft beds of grass – now green and lush,
 And daisy-laden wave.
 The warm Spring sun makes all about,
 Feel fortified and brave.
 Dew-decked in all their finery,
 The daffodils display,
 A pomp and presence more in tune,
 With June's floral array.
 The recent buds have opened up,
 To greet the world anew,
 And here I sit – in calm repose
 Embraced by boundless hue.

As A Tree

When earthly life is at a close,
 With no more need of shoes or clothes,
 I think I'd like to live once more:
 A tree on some far-distant shore.
 To feel my roots in rich, brown earth,
 And count my age by just my girth.
 To reach my branches t'ward the sky,
 Close to the clouds – where eagles cry.
 I'd make, for creatures great and small,
 A sheltered place for one and all.
 Beneath my canopy – in shade,
 I'd craft for them a grassy glade.
 When breeze blows in from off the sea,
 Its whisper softly telling me,
 Of raindrops in its blustery wake,
 In eager yearning, I would wait.
 And when the storm breaks overhead,
 My creatures, safely in their beds,
 I'll face its tempest, standing tall,
 Rejoicing as the raindrops fall.
 The feeling, as warm soil starts to cool,
 And nutrients begin to pool,
 Is second, only, to the one,
 When storm retreats, revealing sun.
 Yes, as a tree, I'd watch the world,
 And celebrate each bud, unfurled.
 I'd witness every new soul born,
 Worship the moon and greet each dawn.



The Linton wyrm

By the Storyteller

As St George's Day comes up later this month, here's a dragon tale. The Saxons believed in wyrms (large, poisonous serpentine creatures) and I leave it to you to make up your own mind as to the truth of this tale.

This dragon story hales from the English/Scottish borders, between Jedburgh and Linton Hill and occurred during the 12th century, sometime around 1160.

*The monster lived in a hollow on the northeast side of Linton Hill, a spot still known as the **Worm's Den**. It emerged from its lair at dusk or dawn to ravage the countryside, eating crops, livestock and people, but was invincible against all the weapons used by the local villagers. The surrounding area was completely ruined by the wyrm's hunger.*

A local lord, John de Somerville, came to the nearby village of Jedburgh and heard the terrible tales of the wyrm. Observing the beast himself, he saw that the creature would open its mouth wide to swallow anything in its path, but when faced with something too large to eat would remain stationary - with its mouth open.

Here was an opportunity for John. So, he went to a local blacksmith and had him forge a special weapon. It was an iron-covered spear with a wheel at its tip in which a warrior could fix a hunk of burning peat, tar and brimstone. Sir John practised riding his horse with the burning spear, to accustom his horse to the fire, smoke and extra weight.

He and his servant approached the wyrm's lair at dawn. He knew that by sitting on his horse, he would prove too large for the creature to swallow. So, as if he was at a tournament, he attacked the wyrm, plunging his burning spear-wheel into the monster's gaping mouth and down its throat, mortally wounding it.

*The writhing death throes of the Linton Wurm were said to be responsible for the unusual appearance of the hills in that area, an area that came to be known as **Wormington**. The wyrm retreated to its lair to die, its thrashing tail bringing down the mountain and burying it forever.*

The legend states that John's heroism was remembered by a carved stone at Linton Church. He was made Royal Falconer, knighted and made First Baron of Linton. The crest of the Somerville family afterwards was a wyvern (a type of heraldic dragon) perched on a wheel. If you visit Linton Church nowadays, the carved stone showing the battle has been placed above the entry porch to the church.



Seasonal magick for Beltaine

By Nick the Witch

This is a Celtic fire festival, celebrated this year on 1 May, which is symbolic of the start of summer. It is known as Beltaine, but also as Calen Mai or Bealtaine. For the Saxons, Beltaine was the time to move the sheep to the upland pastures. The Calen Mai is a Welsh term that refers to the calends of May, traditionally marked by the flowering of hawthorn blossoms. In Ireland, the fires of Tara were the first ones lit every year at Beltaine and all other fires were lit with a flame from Tara.

The festival of Beltaine has a tradition of maypoles, dances, bonfires and offerings to the gods. In rural areas, cattle were driven through the smoke of the balefires, blessed with health and fertility for the coming year. For many Celts in England and Wales, Beltaine was a time of handfasting for the god, Cernunnos, and his bride, Ceridwyn (or Cernunnos and Brighid in Ireland). While the Irish-Gaelic word for May is Bealtaine, the literal translation is *bright or brilliant fire*, derived from the bonfires lit in honour of Bel, the god of light, fire, and healing.

Some Wiccan pathways support a symbolic battle between the May Queen and the Queen of Winter at Beltaine. Other pagans include maypoles, decorated with green and yellow ribbons, in their Beltaine rituals and they dance around the pole in ever-complex patterns. Other pagan practices at Beltaine include spring flower magick, planting of seeds, færy magick and spirit communication. As at Samhain, Beltaine is seen as a time when the veil between worlds is thinner and you could plant a tree or shrub as remembrance for an ancestor.



Here are some ideas for **celebrating Beltaine**, either at home or in an online group.

- Build a sacred fire outside, eg in a fire pit.
- Chant or sing Beltaine songs.
- Make a spring crown of flowers.
- Make a basket of spring flowers.
- Weave or braid natural plants like willow, long grass or ivy into pentacles.
- Contact spirits of those who have passed over.
- Creative visualisation of your soul and its dreams, blooming like colourful flowers.

We have come together this day as our ancestors did before us, to celebrate the festival of Beltaine, to welcome in the summer and to ask that it be once again a fruitful time in which to grow our harvest for the year. For the Saxons, this was the Feast of Summer when flocks were moved to the upland pastures and people made ready for the growth of crops. April was a time of fertility for new life in the earth and its people. For many Celts in England and Wales, Beltaine was a time of handfasting for Cernunnos and Ceridwen.

Incense for Beltaine

As we're just approaching Beltaine (1 May 2020), perhaps it would be a nice idea to have some altar 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, fruit, resins, etc. 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 fruit, flowers, dry herbs last. Traditional incense for Beltaine includes:

- Jasmine
- Patchouli
- Frankincense
- Rose
- Peach
- Vanilla
- Ylang ylang

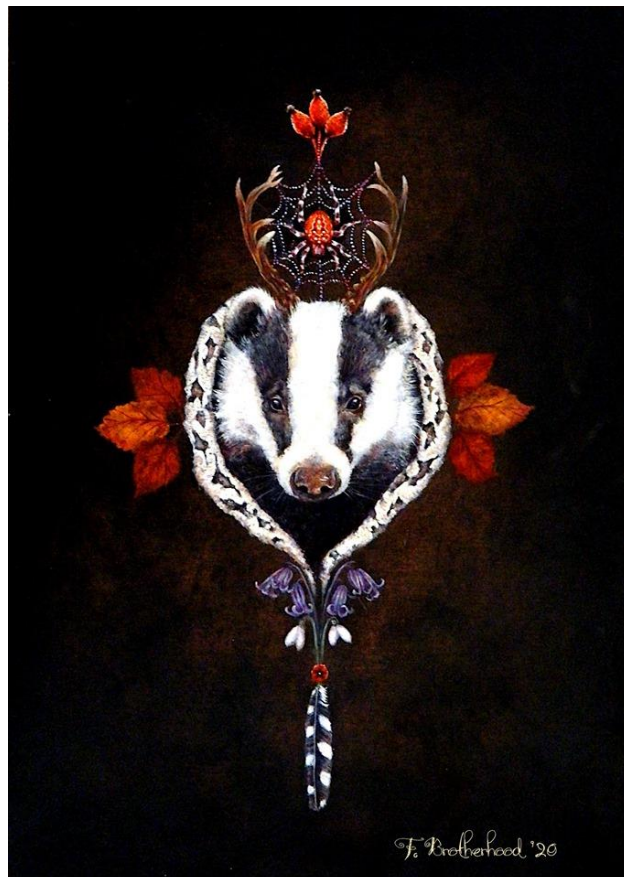
Am Beannachadh Bealltain (The Beltane Blessing)

*Bless, O threefold true and bountiful,
Myself, my spouse, my children.
Bless everything within my dwelling and in my possession,
Bless the kine and crops, the flocks and corn,
From Samhain Eve to Beltane Eve,
With goodly progress and gentle blessing,
From sea to sea, and every river mouth,
From wave to wave, and base of waterfall.*

*Be the Maiden, Mother, and Crone,
Taking possession of all to me belonging.
Be the Horned God, the Wild Spirit of the Forest,
Protecting me in truth and honour.
Satisfy my soul and shield my loved ones,
Blessing everything and everyone,
All my land and my surroundings.
Great gods who create and bring life to all,
I ask for your blessings on this day of fire.*

Fay Brotherhood Art and Music (2)

Contact: www.faybrotherhood.co.uk



For past issues of Gylden Magick magazine, please contact us:

Our Twitter and email addresses: @GyldenFellowship

Our website: www.gyldenfellowship.co.uk

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gyldenpaganfellowship/>

