



Gylden Magick

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August 2021

PRACTICAL MAGICK & UNIVERSAL ENERGY FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

Editor's notes

by Gylden Fellowship

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

The **Gylden Community** is one of the most extensive pagan libraries in southern England. Its website, www.gyldenfellowship.co.uk, is growing too and we welcome new members constantly.

As with the August 2020 issue, **our focus for the summer is on the creative side** – with folktales, poetry, Lughnasadh notes and plenty of celestial events to look forward to. All of our contributors come from the Gylden area, providing a mix of poetry, wisdom and stories.

Past editions of **GYLDEN MAGICK** can be accessed on our website and on Facebook too. And a revamped format will come along in our **September 2021** issue, to include new series and authors.

Great news, by the way, about the court ruling on the Stonehenge tunnel and many congrats to all the campaigners who managed to defeat the Department of Transport. Lots of congrats too to the Pagan Federation, which has just celebrated its 50th anniversary.

One of the themes to be explored in our 4th year of publication will be evolutionary witchcraft. This is not paganism as such and the PF covers many pagan pathways. No, we'll look at community witchcraft in the context of today. Before the 15th

century, witches were revered members of their communities, known as cunning or wise folk. Is there any way that we can aspire to a similar status today? I think so, starting locally and leaving the national stuff for the likes of the PF.

Anything else? Oh yes, the title – we never forget that our faith is based upon Nature and that our strength comes from earth magick, regardless of the diversity of pagan pathways.

Many of our annual festivals are based upon the light, eg the solstices and the equinoxes, as significant to us today as to our ancestors.

For more info, why not join [Gylden River LRC](#) or [Gylden Fellowship](#) groups on Facebook today and catch up on our news for August?

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The Lion's Gate Portal


By Gylden Fellowship and Adam Lewis

The Liongate Portal is a gateway into both the heavens and higher realms of consciousness. It is activated every year around 8 August when the Sun, Sirius and the Earth are in a certain alignment. During this time, higher frequency energies from the star, Sirius, encompass Earth, in order to help advance the human race and raise the consciousness of the planet.


LION'S GATE PORTAL
 OPENING JULY 26TH - AUGUST 12TH



Sit in the sun and meditate each morning to absorb light codes.




Occurs when the Earth aligns with the star system Sirius



Peaks on August 8th

Journal prompt for each morning:
 "How am I different than I was yesterday?"



Be open to flashes of brilliance, intuition, and insight.

@SPIRITDAUGHTER

Gylden Magick indexes

Here we are then – **GYLDEN MAGICK** started in **September 2018**, as a magazine/ digest for the Gylden area – with a difference – more information-type articles and less of the news/ gossip (and no ads) that take up so much space in other publications. But, we (that's the admin team) want the magazine to evolve with new series and features, which is what you'll see from **September 2021**. As the covid-19 restrictions are eased and pagan events resume, we'll re-start our monthly calendars. However, the tables below provide a handy quick-reference to the monthly features – all the past issues of **GYLDEN MAGICK** can be found either on our website or Facebook group.

Gylden Magick	Monthly crystals	Monthly herbs	Monthly altar tools
September 2018	Aventurine	Yarrow	
October 2018	Black tourmaline	Mugwort	
November 2018	Sunstone	Nettles	
December 2018	Blue lace agate	Slippery elm	
January 2019	Celestite	Comfrey	Incense
February 2019	Red jasper	Roman chamomile	Athame
March 2019	Blue jade	Lavender	Chalice
April 2019	Malachite	Plantain herb	Cauldron
May 2019	Citrine	Cowslip	Pentacle
June 2019	Labradorite	Lemon balm	Statuettes and icons
July 2019	Amazonite	Mullein	Crystal balls
September 2019	Rainbow bismuth	Dill	Colours
October 2019	Green calcite	Hibiscus	Produce
November 2019	Topaz	Rosemary	Broom
December 2019	Selenite	Bayberry	Stang

Gylden Magick	Monthly spells	Meditations	Monthly recipes
September 2018	Peace & harmony		Mushroom soup
October 2018	Candle protection		Samhain muffins
November 2018	Improve a friendship		Tomato & chickpea soup
December 2018	A winter wish		Vegan Yule gravy
January 2019	Good fortune	Trees	Mushroom hot-pot
February 2019	Look for love	Fountain	Choco-chip biscuits
March 2019	Friendship on the rocks	Root chakra	Ostara cakes
April 2019	Charging a pendulum	Forest of the soul	Lavender drinks
May 2019	Daisy magick	Starseeds	Vegan Beltaine meal
June 2019	Lose that anger	A summer's walk	Litha beans & peppers
July 2019	Protective circles	On the beach	Vegan ice lollies
September 2019	Mabon magick		Orange rocks
October 2019	Samhain spells		Autumn mushrooms
November 2019	November magick		Winter stew
December 2019	Magick for Yule		Yule ginger biscuits

Gylden Magick	Monthly crystals	Monthly herbs	Sacred art
January 2020	Chrysoprase	Vervain	
February 2020	Fluorite	Violets	
March 2020	Jet	Japanese knotweed	
April 2020	Amethyst	Borage	
May 2020	Lapis lazuli	Alkanet	
June 2020	Onyx	Mint	
July 2020	Moonstone	Allium cepa	
September 2020	Larimar	Lemon verbena	
October 2020	Carnelian	Wormwood	
November 2020	Tiger's eye	Sage	
December 2020	Snowflake obsidian	Hyssop	
January 2021	Aquamarine	Juniper	
February 2021	Haematite	Chicory	Iran's Pink Mosque
March 2021	Beryl	Lady's mantle	Inuit art
April 2021	Garnet	Rose	The Book of Durrow
May 2021	Turquoise	Lovage	Ise Grand Shrine
June 2021	Amber	Aloe vera	Sumerian/Mesopotamian
July 2021	Sapphire	Cleavers	First Nation totem poles

Gylden Magick	Monthly spells	Animal guides	Monthly recipes
January 2020	Candle magick	Place of meeting	Finnan Haddie
February 2020	Imbolg magick	Wolf	Milk jelly
March 2020	Ostara magick	Owl	Victorian egg bites
April 2020	Beltaine magick	Dragonfly	Salmon
May 2020	Psychic protection	Bat	Cheese & mushrooms
June 2020	Litha magick	Crow	Orange salad
July 2020		Rabbit	Colcannon & onions
September 2020		Whale	Apple tart
October 2020	Samhain prayers	Frog	Samhain vegan soup
November 2020	Winter spell	Boar	Potato pasties
December 2020	Solstice blessing	Snake	Winter solstice soup
January 2021	Witch bottle	Salmon	Chocolate rocks
February 2021	Goddess prayers (Asia)	Puffin	Oimelc: custard cream
March 2021		Otter	Fish pie
April 2021	Beltaine blessing	Kingfisher	Seed cake
May 2021	Apple blossom	Grasshopper	Flower salad
June 2021	Spells for new homes	Snail	Savoury haricots
July 2021	A love enchantment	Bear	Haddock & shrimp jelly



Gylden
Magick
August 2021

Sacred art: Aldershot Buddhist Community Centre

Contact: <http://bccuk.org/contact>





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Celestial notes

By Joanna Bristow-Watkins, Harmony Healing

As mentioned before, we are very pleased to feature **Joanna Bristow-Watkins** as one of our regular contributors for **GYLDEN MAGICK** in 2021 and, here, we're including a few details about her expertise – many thanks to Rebecca Granshaw for suggesting Joanna. Joanna runs **Harmony Healing**, which may be accessed at www.harmonyhealing.co.uk. It should be noted that some of the training events are online at present – all details on Joanna's website.

Forest Bathing+ Sessions with Joanna & Katie: 3 hour **Forest Bathing+ Sessions** at Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary (Shere, Surrey) on **Sunday 15 August**, at Newlands Corner on **Sunday 8 August**, Cannon Hill Common, London SW20 on **Thursday 12 August**, Horsell Common, Woking on **Friday 13 August**.

Virtual Events: All you need to take part via Zoom is a computer with a webcam and microphone. It's very easy to download and use. If you do not have Zoom, visit <https://zoom.us/> and sign up for free.

Monthly Virtual Healing Circle & Unity Consciousness Meditations: I will be running my next virtual healing circle via Zoom on **Wednesday 23 July**, at 7.30-9.30pm (UK time = GMT). Participants all receive a deeply healing experience. Cost to participate is £22 by Paypal (£20 by online BACS payment) or half price to Violet Flame or RSE graduates. During these monthly sessions, 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. This activity serves as a good taster of my 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.

The RSE 1 module **Essene Angelology** runs on Tuesdays 10th & 17th August. Two other modules start 21st September. Anyone who has studied RSE with me in the past can have a special price to re-attend please contact me for details.

Other Harmony Healing Services

Harmony Healing activities are aimed at bringing harmony and wellbeing into your life. Currently, events are virtual, except for Forest Bathing+, hence distant readings and healings are proving popular and we have low cost **meditations** available as well as **distant 1-2-1 healings**. Remember that **Harmony Healing gift vouchers** are available for use against any of our services.



Joanna is a Reyad Sekh Em® Egyptian Alchemy Healer and Teaching Mentor. We also have **meditations** available and a number of virtual courses including **Reyad Sekh Em (RSE) Egyptian Alchemy Healing Level 1** (which is now fully available as interactive training modules) and a

[monthly virtual healing circle](#) - details on [Harmony Healing Virtual Events](#). Joanna also offers [distant intuitive readings \(past life and/or aura readings\)](#) and [distant 1-2-1 healings](#) and runs various [Meet-up groups in London and Surrey](#) and the [London & Surrey Alchemists Facebook Group](#) and posts regularly on [Instagram](#) and [Linked-In](#). [Harmony Healing Gift Vouchers](#) are available.

Sunday 1 August is the **Ancient Egyptian New Year**, traditionally marking the start of the Nile flood, started by the tears of Aset (Isis) over the death of Asar (Osiris). The exact correlation of the Egyptian New year to the modern calendar is disputed, but I favour the linking with the heliacal rising of Sirius (dawn visibility of Sirius) as this star, known to the Egyptians as Sopdet (pronounced Soppday) was closely associated with Aset.



In the Northern Hemisphere, **1 August** is also the pagan celebration of **Lunasa (also known as Lammás)**, the start of the harvest, season of pregnancy, ripening, transformation and peace. This marks the height of the northern summer, when the Earth is most alive.

Sunday 8 August @ 14:50 is Lunasa New Moon & Lion's Gate.

The **New Moon Abundance Ritual** should be carried out within 24 hours after the New Moon. It needs to be after the New Moon because the moon should be waxing (getting bigger again) to carry the manifestation energy. There are video instructions on my [Facebook Page](#) or [You Tube Page](#). New Moon is a good time to work on your Vision Board for the rest of 2021.

Sunday 8 August is The Lion's Gate. August 8 (8:8 in numerology) has always been experienced as the Lion's Gate doorway opening up a time portal to ancient Egyptian encodings, situated between the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid of Giza. It is said to be an energy doorway, which activates through the Solar Lion into the etheric and the Hall of Records (Akasha) and is said to be associated with the marriage of matter and antimatter, where polarities meet and merge. Encrypted at sacred sites all over the world, but headquartered at Giza Egypt, these long-established data programmes, communicate with our own inner crystalline codes held in our DNA. By tuning in and connecting with these encodings, we may be able to access a portal ancient truths and wisdoms resulting in an accelerated spiritual awakening.

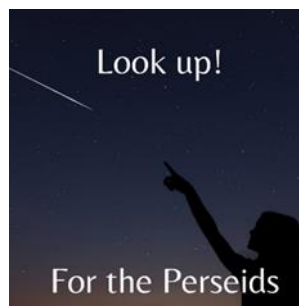
Sunday 8 August, 10.30-1.30pm, Forest Bathing+ with Katie Robinson at Newlands Corner, Guildford, £35 (+ Eventbrite fee = £38.32). *immerse yourself in the healing elements of nature and connect deeply with all your senses. Spend 3 hours in the stunning designated AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) with acres of ancient woods. Here we will mindfully connect to our surroundings and demonstrate how to live in the present moment, guided by Katie in simple sensory exercises and a treelaxation. A deeply relaxing and rejuvenating experience, and which, despite the title forest bathing, does not involve any swimming!*

Some of the scientifically proven benefits of spending time in woodland include reduced stress levels, stronger immune system response, and a stabilised cortisol cycle.

This is a 3-hour Forest Bathing+ session that will take place in all weathers except 30+mph winds or electrical storms.

Book at [Eventbrite](#). If the event is showing as full, email katie@harmonyinnature.uk to go on a waitlist.

Monday 9 August–Tuesday 17 August may be able to see some Perseid meteors. The Perseids is one of the best meteor showers to observe, producing up to 60 meteors per hour at their peak. The shower's peak usually occurs on August 13 (pre-dawn), this year it's worth checking in the early hours of the 9-12 August when there may be less light pollution following the New Moon on the 8 August. However, you may be able to see some meteors any time between 17 July and 24 August. The radiant point for this shower will be in the constellation of Perseus. Look to the northeast after midnight. For more, see diagram below and earthsky.org website, from where the image has been taken.



Tuesdays 10 & 17 August: Introduction to Essene Angelology, Harmony Healing Interactive online evening course, 7.15-9.30pm UK time (GMT+1), offering UK & USA friendly hours. Learn how to commune with the Weekday and Planetary Guardian Angels and invite them into your life on a daily basis. Even if you are already familiar with the angelic realm, discover how to strengthen your connection with channellings, affirmations, colours, crystals and planetary symbols. Connect with Melchisadec and Pistis Sophia, the Essene Guardians of our Planet Earth and the Constellations. Cost is £66 including a personal attunement into three of your Essene Guardian Angels plus 4½ hours of mentoring. This is a stand-alone unit, but also comprises ½ unit towards Reyad Sekh Em (RSE) Egyptian Alchemy Healing RSE Level 1. Held remotely on Zoom. See Harmony Healing Website for details of this specific module.

Wednesday 11 August & Thursday 12 August (see entry under 9th August). The radiant point for this shower will be in the constellation Perseus. Look to the northeast after midnight; with the quarter moon presiding - weather permitting - viewing could be reasonable. See earthsky.org website for more.

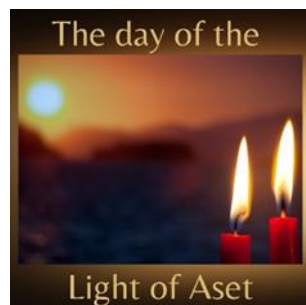
Thursday 12 August, 1.30-4pm, Forest Bathing+ with Joanna & Katie at our new London location (woohoo) in Cannon Hill Park, £35 (+ Paypal fee = £36.75). Immerse yourself in the healing elements of nature and connect deeply with all your senses. We will take you on a 2½ hour journey through the beautiful landscaped park, nestled in this little-known oasis of calm within Greater London. Through a selection of simple sensory activities, you will learn how to enhance your perceptions and slow down to focus on what could easily be missed. We end with a treelaxation. A deeply relaxing and rejuvenating experience, and which, despite the title forest bathing, does not involve any swimming! Some of the scientifically proven benefits of spending time in woodland include reduced stress levels, stronger immune system response, and a stabilised cortisol cycle. This session will take place in all weathers except 30+mph winds or electrical storms. Book via harmonyinnature.uk (booking link awaited) or our London Meetup.

Email katieandjo@harmonyinnature.uk to go on our forest bathing mailing list. **We have another 1½-hour taster session at 6-8pm in the evening.**

Thursday 12 August is the Day of the Light of Aset (Isis). On this day Aset (Isis) is celebrated with all forms of light including sun worship, during the day and candles at night. Interesting that it is very close to the date of the Roman Festival of Diana (varies 11-13 August though mostly shown as the 13), which no doubt was a development from the Egyptian Festival. Informative Egyptian laminated posters by Jacqui Taliesin El Masry (Alkhemi) are available from this site - see Harmony Shop.

Friday 13 August, in Roman tradition, is the Festival of Diana, being the date upon which King Servius Tullius dedicated her shrine on the Aventine Hill in Rome in the mid-sixth century BCE. Diana was the hunting goddess, associated with wild animals and woodlands. She later became a moon goddess, supplanting Luna; and the moon was an emblem of chastity. Oak groves were especially sacred to her. She was praised in poetry for her strength, athletic grace, purity, distinct beauty, and hunting skill. Despite her virginal status, Diana was also a Goddess of Fertility.

Thursday 12 August, 1.30-4pm, Forest Bathing+ with Joanna & Katie at our new Woking (GU21) location in Horsell Common, £30 (+ Paypal fee = £31.50). Immerse yourself in the healing elements of nature and connect deeply with all your senses. Spend 2½ hours in the woods mindfully connecting to nature through simple sensory exercises and a treelaxation. Join us at this mixed woodland and heath location, featuring many Scott's pines and silver birches. This historic common land was featured in HG Wells' best-selling novel. A deeply relaxing and rejuvenating experience, and which, despite the title forest bathing, does not involve any swimming! Some of the scientifically proven benefits of spending time in woodland include reduced stress levels, stronger immune system response, and a stabilised cortisol cycle. This session will take place in all weathers except 30+mph winds or electrical storms. Book via harmonyinnature.uk (booking link awaited) or our [Surrey Meetup](#). Email katieandjo@harmonyinnature.uk to go on our forest bathing mailing list.



Friday 13-Monday 16 August is Obon (also known as Bon); a Buddhist festival to honour dead loved ones. This custom has evolved into a family reunion holiday, during which people return to ancestral family locations and visit and tidy their ancestors' graves. On this day, the spirits of ancestors are believed to revisit the household altars. Celebrated through the lighting of bonfires, sacred meals, paper lanterns and dancing. See more at japan-guide.com.

Sunday 15 August, 11am-2pm, Forest Bathing+ in the grounds of Harry Edward's Healing Sanctuary, £35 (+ Eventbrite fee = £38.32). Immerse yourself in the healing elements of nature and connect deeply with all your senses. Spend 3 hours in the woods mindfully connecting to your surroundings and living fully in the present moment, guided by me in simple sensory exercises and a treelaxation. A deeply relaxing and rejuvenating experience, and which, despite the title forest bathing, does not involve any swimming! Some of the scientifically proven benefits of spending time in woodland include reduced stress levels, stronger immune system response, and a stabilised cortisol cycle. This is a 3-hour Forest Bathing+ session which will take place in all weathers except 30+mph winds or electrical storms. Book at [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com). If the event is showing as full, email me on jo@harmonyhealing.co.uk to go on a waitlist.

Wednesday 18 August is the Egyptian Feast of Wagy. Taking place seventeen days after the Egyptian celebrations of New Year's Day, there was the more sombre feast of Wagy, when families paid respect to their ancestors. They came to the tombs of the deceased, with offerings, performing rituals, specifically "fumigations" - producing fumes - smoke. The ceremonies were often followed by a funerary meal.

Thursday 19 August is the Festival of Tehuti (Thoth), marking the occasion on which Tehuti (Thoth) ordered the healing of the eye of Heru (Horus). An MP3 Meditation to visit the Akashic Records with Tehuti is available from the [MP3 Downloads & CDs](#) section of the [Harmony Shop](#). This is a meditation to visit your personal Akashic record (which the Egyptians believed were housed in the Halls of Amenti) to see if hidden blockages to

your spiritual growth and wellbeing may be revealed at this time. The Akashic records are said to contain and describe all knowledge of human experience as well as the history of the cosmos; so they could be described as the DNA of the Universe. This meditation was devised for 19 August or 19 September (both being Festivals of Tehuti) would add emphasis, but can be used anytime.

Saturday 21 August is the Roman Festival of Consualia, to honour Consus, the god of counsel, and the one who protects the harvest, which was in storage at the time of the festival. Mars, as a protector of the harvest, was also honoured on this day, as were the Lares, the household gods that individual families held sacred. During the celebration, horses, mules, and asses were exempted from all labour, and were led through the streets adorned with garlands and flowers. Chariot races were held this day in the Circus Maximus, which included an odd race in which chariots were pulled by mules.



Sunday 22 August @ 13:02 Hazel Sturgeon Moon, Blue Moon by old definition, Sun enters Virgo at 22:35). There's no Full Moon meditation this month. Between this date and the next New Moon is good time energetically for detoxing the body. Click here for Angela McGerr's [Full Moon Angelic Meditation](#) with Gabriel from her A Harmony of Angels Book. Angela's books have been long out of print, but we do have collectible and signed editions at the [Harmony Shop](#).

Sunday 22 August is Raksha Bandhan, the Hindu festival honouring the bond between brothers and sisters, celebrated on the day of the Full Moon in August. Brothers take vows to protect their sisters, whilst sisters pray for long lives for their brothers, sealed by tying threads around their right wrists.

Sunday 22 August is the Chinese Hungry Ghost Festival. This is the Buddhist Festival of All Souls or the Festival of Hungry Ghosts, when offerings are made until before the next New Moon (7 September) to spirits who have not yet found rest. The Hungry Ghost Festival, also known as the Zhongyuan Festival, takes place on the 15 day of the Ghost Month (which starts at a New moon), so it naturally coincides with a Full Moon.

Monday 30 August is the Summer Bank Holiday in the UK. In the United Kingdom, most workers have a day off work or school and the banks are closed. The Bank Holidays Act of 1871 introduced the August Bank Holiday to give bank clerks and shop people a day of relaxation not connected to holy days such as Christmas. This has morphed into a three-day weekend before the school summer holidays finish. If you have children, weather permitting (avoid woodland locations in heavy winds), it's a great day to take them out on a nature trail at a local park, beauty spot, National Trust or woodland location.

Acknowledgments

Celestial Forecast is compiled by Joanna Bristow-Watkins of Harmony Healing, the original is published at Joanna's [Monthly Celestial Forecasts](#). It is created using many sources but notably the [Moonwise Calendar](#) and Lia Leendertz's 2021 Almanac. Whilst considerable effort is made to ensure accuracy, this is not an exact science and sources are sometimes contradictory!

These monthly Celestial Forecasts (CF) are generally uploaded to the Harmony Healing website a fortnight ahead and can be accessed via the drop-down box on the right. They are sent out to the main mailing list and CF subscribers a few days before the month starts.

Poetry: Have You Ever Heard the Forest?

By Bernadette Flynn

Have you ever heard The Forest
take a breath before the storm;
just before the distant thunder
take a moment just to mourn?

Does it feel the mist descending,
or the lightning charge the sky?
Does it know that peace is ending,
maybe stop to wonder why.

Why the warmth has turned to coldness
and the sun has turned away,
why the white clouds now are sombre
in their dismal shrouds of grey?

Does it feel anticipation
for the light display to come,
for the orchestra of thunder
and the eager raindrops drum?

Does each tree spread out its branches;
imperfections scoured clean?
Have you witnessed how it dances
like a wild tempestuous dream?

Alice's Dream

By the Storyteller

Here is a rendition of an attributed tale from Guildford, namely the people are real, but their exploits have been enhanced.

If you stand on the Town Bridge in Guildford and look into the River Wey, you can spot the fish in there, eg roach or chub. This tale dates from the 16th century and concerns a big pike that lived in the Wey, but no-one could catch it.

Maurice Abbot and his wife, Alice, lived in Guildford. He was a cloth merchant and in 1562, Alice was pregnant with their second child. Money was tight, but one night, Alice had a dream – a voice told her that if she ate the big pike that lived in the Wey, her son would become a rich and powerful man. Alice awoke and told her husband about the dream.

Problem was that many experienced anglers had tried (and failed) to catch that pike; Maurice had tried himself when younger, but he agreed to try again. He and Alice went down to the Wey several times and once they even saw the pike – Maurice tried to grab it with his bare hands, but only managed to fall in the water. People laughed, but Alice's dream had become common knowledge and Maurice had more business, with each new customer asking about the pike.

Local anglers also tried to catch the pike, but with no success and Alice was desperate – her baby was due soon. So, she went down to the Wey herself with a leather bucket on a piece of rope. She put the bucket in the water, waited for a minute or so and the pike swam into the bucket. Alice hauled pike and bucket out of the water and everyone on the riverbank applauded.

That night, Maurice and Alice had pike for supper and, early next morning, Alice's baby son was born. He was christened George and many wealthy townspeople offered to be his godparents, because they had heard about the dream.

The same townspeople sponsored George's education and also that of the next two of Alice's sons. And the dream's prophecy was not wrong: George went on to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, another brother was the Bishop of Salisbury and the third brother became Mayor of London. Yet George never forgot his mother's dream and he set up Abbot's Hospital in Guildford to help the poor. Now, there is a statue of him at the top of the High Street, there is a George Abbot pub and his tomb is in Holy Trinity Church.

Lughnasadh notes

By Gylden Fellowship

Please note that a longer version of this text can be found on our website under [Sabbat info](#).

Lughnasadh/ Lammas/ Lúnasa is a Celtic fire festival, named for the Commemoration of Lugh in Irish Gaelic. As the Celtic day started with sunset, the celebration of Lughnasadh starts on the Saturday eve before Sunday 1 August 2021.

Lugh was a member of the Irish pantheon, the Tuatha De Danann. His father was Cian (son of Danu) and his foster-mother was Tailtiu. Lugh was linked to skills, crafts, arts and war - his name means "many skilled" or "the shining one" and he was thought to be a sun god, recognised generally by the Celts, rather than located in a specific region. The Gaulish Lugos is connected to the Irish Lugh, who is sometimes linked with the Welsh hero, Lleu Llaw Gyffes.

Much of the early history of Ireland is recorded in the Book of Invasions, namely the times when Ireland was conquered by foreign enemies. This record says that Lugh came to be associated with grain in Celtic legends after he held a harvest fair in honour of his foster mother. So, Lugh is symbolised by corn, grains, bread and other harvest fruits. In Irish Gaelic, the word for August is lúnasa and this festival was called Lughnasadh.

Later, Christians renamed the festival as Lammas, derived from the Old English (Anglo-Saxon) word of hlaef-mass. This refers to the loaf mass, when the first loaf of bread from the new harvest is consecrated – in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, Lammas was described as the Feast of the First Fruits. Julius Caesar listed the popular deities of the Gauls and referred to them by what he saw as a corresponding Roman name. Thus, references made to Lugh (or Lugos) were attributed to the Roman god, Mercury. The central city for the worship of Mercury was Lugundum, which later became Lyon in France. Mercury's festival on 1 August was chosen as the day of the Feast of Augustus, by Caesar's successor, Octavian Augustus Caesar, and it became the most important holiday in Gaul. However, 1 August tied in with the first grain harvest in most rural societies in Europe.

In real terms, Lughnasadh shows the beginning of the descent of the sun into winter darkness, but it's also about celebrating the first harvest of the year. Much of the harvest is collected and stored and winter is not far away. So, both the Celts and the Saxons cut the grain for bread, but also stored some away as seeds for the next crop in the following spring.

This is Lughnasadh – a time to give thanks for the first harvest and to reflect upon our blessings. Are there any ways in which we can improve our lives and can we learn from our surroundings? In the days ahead, take a walk and look for evidence of the ripening harvest – in fields of grain, in orchards and in the hedges.



The Singleton Serpent

By the Storyteller

Singleton is a small village on the road between Midhurst and Chichester in West Sussex. It is a very pretty village, well-known for its manor house at West Dean and the Downland Museum. But if we go back to the 15th century, Singleton was well-known for a very different reason – and that reason was the **Singleton Serpent**.

The Serpent in question lived in a cave on the Downs just above the village and it would come out whenever it was hungry to feast on local livestock, eat the deer in Downley Deer Park and, sometimes, catch the unwary traveller. Yet it was not a fire-breathing dragon and nor was it a poisonous wyrm, but much, much worse, because it was a basilisk. A basilisk is able to kill its prey by paralysing it with a gorgon-like stare so that it cannot escape.

By 1450, the situation was awful. The Earls of Arundel owned the deer park and the Serpent had eaten many of the deer and the villagers were in mortal terror after both sheep and their shepherds had been eaten too. It fell to Sir Guy of Arundel to try and slay the Serpent, but how could he do this without the monster staring at him?

Finally, he came up with a plan. He polished a large piece of metal until it seemed like a mirror and he held it like a shield when he rode to the Serpent's lair. He then left his horse at a safe distance and walked quietly towards the cave and propped up the mirror near the front. Then he hid to one side and shouted so that the Serpent awoke and saw the mirror.

The Serpent was not killed by the reflection of its own stare (like Medusa), but it thought there was another such monster right in front of the cave and tried to fight its own reflection. By doing so, it was distracted for long enough for Sir Guy to leap forward and plunge his spear into the Serpent's belly. The Serpent was killed, but it is true that the event is remembered in Singleton with the road leading past the cave being named Knights Hill.

As for Sir Guy, he went on to fight many beasts around the county until he met his end in 1490 during the big fight with the fierce dragon of Arundel, but that is another story!



Poetry: Endless Drought

By Mike Flynn

Getting hotter every day,
the earth is scorched.
Plants wilt in the midday sun;
gasping for water that refuses to fall.

The earth cracks open wide;
fissures forming in the parched ground.
Animals search desperately,
prior watering holes; barren and dry.

Weeks march on and not a drop;
each day hotter than the last.
Clouds form in the sky, full of promise;
only to burn off in the harsh sun.

The air grows warm and thick;
pressure building, all moisture burnt away.
It's hard to sleep at night;
with evening's cool embrace withheld.

You desperately hope for rain;
for the sky to open, showering the earth.
No longer hated, you welcome it;
treasure it for its cool promise.

Barren days pass mercilessly;
the occasional breeze your only reprieve.

Diligently you water the plants;
desperately striving to save their lives.

Finally, it breaks.
Clouds bursting in a glorious shower.
The downpour, warm and cool as it hits your skin.
The release of pressure, gratifying, as the air softens.

You drink each moment in,
watching the deluge in rapt delight.
Racing down the street; bathing the earth.
A healing balm, it soothes the land.

The earth sighs, plants rejoicing;
quenching their thirst, they eagerly drink.
The air grows cooler, the wind flowing free;
throwing open the windows, you invite it in.

In blessed relief, you sigh, contented;
you savour the days to follow.
Cool and calm;
you breathe it in.

Soon, the cycle will begin once more;
slowly building with each passing day.
But these moments of cool reprieve
give you strength for the warmer days to come.
For now, the endless drought is defeated.



Environment: National Marine info

By Sussex Wildlife Trust

National Marine Week runs from Saturday 24 July to Sunday 8 August. During this time, we celebrate all things marine across Sussex. Make sure to follow us on social media for updates from our Marine Team, including Marine Week films, wildlife sightings and Instagram take-overs. We are running two special webinars for Marine Week, these are free events but registration is essential





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