



# Gylden Magick

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## Dec. 2019

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](http://www.gyldenfellowship.co.uk), is growing too – our Yule sabbat blog is projected to reach over 4000 people and we welcome new members constantly.

On Facebook, the **Gylden River LRC** (Learning Resources Centre) is a social learning hub with optional study units in key areas of magick.

**Gylden Fellowship** continues as a pagan support mechanism, i.e. visiting groups, Interfaith work, fayres, calendars, helping our moot friends with rituals or meetings, etc.

We look forward to 2020 with real excitement. This issue continues with some new authors and the January 2020 edition will be packed full of new series for you.

Our **Oak Moon** issue continues with the 20-page format with ever more guidance on spiritual issues and magick – this month has a definite emphasis on peaceful magick in the run-up to Yule. But no ads – after all, we're like a pagan public library and all the information is free.

Dates for your diaries – not least the **Spiritual crafts Christmas market** in Farlington on 14 December and also the **Winchester Cathedral Christmas markets** until 22 December. If you're in Winchester, don't forget to check out the **Eclipse Inn**, where the ghost of the Grey Lady walks!

**What else is there?** Well, we have a piece on Unite Nepal, photos from the Interfaith service in Guildford, a review of Witchfest 2019, first steps for new or young pagans on keeping their cool, herbal healing, peaceful communications, folklore, the Danube Valley people and Yuletide magick. Also, we have a profile of the dynamo that is Holistic Chi.

Anything else? Oh yes, the title – we never forget that our faith is based upon Nature and that our strength comes from earth magick. Many of our sabbats are based upon the light, eg solstices and equinoxes, as vital to us now as to our ancestors.

For more info, why not join [Gylden River LRC](#) or [Gylden Fellowship](#) groups on Facebook today and see our calendar, updates or briefings for December?

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## Altar tools: stangs

OK, so what is a stang? It is not the same as a staff, which may be decorated with crystals, animal carvings or wooden symbols and used to cast a circle in the absence of a broom.

A stang is a type of staff that is usually forked, about six feet long and owes its origin to the wooden pitchfork. The name comes from a Norse word, *stong*, and the Middle English, *stange*, meaning *pole*. Many stangs are made from the **following woods**: oak (to symbolise Herne), ash (to symbolise the cycle of birth, death and rebirth), yew (to symbolise immortality) or blackthorn (to symbolise ill-fortune or death, perhaps in a dark magick rite).



Sometimes the forks are capped with metal, for strength during rituals. The staff part of the stang is shod with iron too, so that the stang is preserved when placed in the earth for a ritual. And this is one of the main purposes – for **the stang to act as an altar during outside ceremonies**. For example, the following may be placed on a stang during a ritual: the mask of a totem animal, the skull of an animal, a carving of Cernunnos, ribbons, flowers or candles. The actual decorations depend upon the sabbat:

- Samhain – yew leaves or berries.
- Yule – red ribbons, ivy and/ or holly leaves or berries.
- Imbolc – snowdrops.
- Ostara – daffodils or primroses.
- Beltane – yellow ribbons, hawthorn blossom & twigs.
- Litha – oak leaves.
- Lughnasadh – corn ears and poppies.
- Mabon – forest fruits, pine cones or acorns.

## Crystals: selenite

This stone received its name from the Greek goddess of the moon, Selene, because it appears to reflect light. In fact, selenite is hydrous calcium sulphate, part of the family of gypsum crystals. More commonly, selenite can be recognised by its columns or wand forms.

A key point to note here is **not to cleanse selenite in water**, as it will dissolve., just as it will in the rain. So, cleansing a selenite crystal is best done under the light of the full moon, although some people believe that the crystal is full of divine light and is self-cleansing.

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

- It rejects any negative energies.
- Selenite causes peace and serenity and is very good for meditation.
- It is particularly good when used with the third eye or crown chakras – for grounding, clearing energy blockages, aligning chakras and promoting truth.
- It helps with spinal problems and arthritis.
- Selenite is good for communicating with angels.
- Similarly, selenite is known for helping with advice or messages from spirit guides. It connects people to their highest level of consciousness where they are most open to symbolic messaging.
- It helps to balance your emotions.
- It can also cleanse other crystals, eg by placing them in a selenite dish overnight.
- As a calming crystal, selenite helps with insight, decision-making and ending confusion.



## Herb of the month: bayberry

Bayberry is a [correspondence plant for December](#). It falls under the bayberry family of shrubs (*Myricaceae*) and one good example is candleberry (*M. pennsylvanica*). If you boil these grey waxy berries, you will obtain the wax for making bayberry candles.

Healers use the berries or bark of the root to make medicines, but the leaves have a bitter taste. Here are some of the ailments that can be treated with bayberry.

- Head colds and flu
- Sore throats
- Stomach issues, eg colitis, nausea or diarrhoea
- Circulatory blockages
- Frequent or heavy periods
- Fever (leaves and stems)
- Intestinal worms (leaves)
- Wounds (roots used as a poultice or ointment)

It is not recommended to use bayberry if you are pregnant or lactating. Other uses have been reported, but anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activities have been demonstrated in only one small clinical trial and animal data. Some protective effects on the liver were seen in one small study. Likewise, reduction of blood clot formation has been described, but not validated.

However, bayberry is best known for its berries, from which a wax is derived to make fragrant bayberry candles and the dried root bark often is used as a dyeing/tanning agent.



## Recipe: Yule ginger biscuits

I'm not sure that ginger biscuits are a correspondence item for any month, but they are yummy – not too many though for those on a low-sugar regime. Some ingredients could be replaced by vegetarian or vegan alternatives.

This month's recipe comes from [1908](#) and was designed for those occasions in a household when the local Baptist minister came to visit. In many villages, though, there would be visits from missionaries and the whole community would turn out to hear their stories, with tea and cakes afterwards. My guess is that this recipe makes **about 15-16 biscuits**.

### Ingredients

1. 225g plain flour
2. 1 level tsp ground ginger
3. 75g caster sugar
4. 100g butter, cut into small pieces
5. 1 egg yolk
6. 1 tbsp milk
7. Pinch of salt
8. Extra caster sugar (as required).

### Method

1. Sift the flour, ginger and salt into a mixing bowl.
2. Add the caster sugar and the butter and rub it all together until the mix seems like bread crumbs.
3. Add the egg yolk and the milk and stir the mixture into a firm dough – knead the dough until smooth.
4. Roll the dough onto a lightly floured surface until it's 0.5cm thick.
5. If you have festive biscuit cutters, cut as many shapes as possible or just cut small oblongs.
6. Place on a greased baking tray and cook for 7-9 minutes at a temperature of 180°C.
7. Allow to cool on a wire tray and dust with extra caster sugar if you wish.

# Peaceful Communications

By Vali Trinity

All through my life, the vision of world peace has been a fundamental foundation. At 20 years old, I began my spiritual journey at a Sufi summer camp in Chamonix in the Alps and was given the Sufi name of *Shanti* – this means *Peace*.

*"To become more aware of feelings and the ability to express these feelings is another key. Why is it people argue and disagree in life?"*

Mostly, I've lived a quiet life in the countryside, either in Ireland with horses for transport (instead of cars) or in Surrey. In Surrey, I've been growing organic vegetables and singing songs written to music heard *through the ethers*, then producing a CD, thanks to a dear friend who plays fabulous guitar just by ear and called it, **Celebrate This Life**.

I feel when we cultivate deep gratitude, this is also a key to peace within. Over the past 30 years, I've attended many workshops on a variety of self-development topics, both as a facilitator and as a participant.

I'm also accredited as a **Seed Planter of 1st Peace** by the Ehama Institute in New Mexico (for more info, contact [www.ehama.org](http://www.ehama.org)). I have attended further peace training courses, thus enhancing my skills and information - I feel honoured to share any of this with the intention to be of service. However, there are some keys to peaceful ways of communication.

There lived a man called [Marshall Rosenberg](#), whose work I admire, particularly on Non-Violent Communication (N.V.C.). He passed a few years ago, having written a great many books and, having met him twice at his London workshops, I found him to be a sincere, kind man. He learned, through his vast experience, often as a mediator, that we humans all have basic needs.

When these needs are not met, it is often the root of most arguments and disagreements. Also, many people have found that the ability to totally listen is a very important part of relating in a peaceful way.

So, we may begin by enquiring of ourselves, what does this phrase, **Peaceful Communications**, mean and how does this idea feel?

To become more aware of feelings and the ability to express these feelings is another key. Why is it people argue and disagree in life?

Then, to explore the degrees of listening and how we feel we are with that. Through specific exercises, we can begin to expand our attitudes about clear, compassionate communication and choose to learn more or not. There are **four main headings** recommended that we need to be aware of in respect of peaceful communications.

- Observations
- Feelings
- Needs
- Requests.

Other areas to focus on are:

- How much stress exists in our lives?
- How do we spend our time?
- Are the jobs we have really what we need to feel fulfilled?
- Are we spending quality time with the roots of peace which are in Nature?

We need to learn that we are **Human Beings, not doings**, so to just BE. And this is another key to peace of mind.

A good analogy I find, is to ensure we re-fill our various **Love Buckets**. This is to say that we all have areas of life we love to experience, from the simplest (eg a hot bath with oils and candlelight) to the more complex (eg riding a horse bareback on a sandy beach in the moonlight or hang gliding high above the world).

The final key to peaceful communications is that it's all about **Balance**.

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# Interfaith week environment service: 17 Nov. 2019

Photos by Kauthar Hashmi



# Unite Nepal

By Dawnie Tottle

**GYLDEN MAGICK** is very pleased to welcome Dawnie as one of our authors – here, she describes one of her experiences, working in Nepal during the latter part of 2019. OK, Dawnie – in your own words.

*Early tomorrow (19 November), we headed into the remoteness that is Lamjung - this is where we source our spikenard and wintergreen. The Universe has connected me to the very funny and yet very humble Lee William. His project, **Unite Nepal**, began by having a vision to support street children who lived on the rubbish tips in Kathmandu and to help them overcome the growing epidemic of glue sniffing.*

*After dedicating his life to his organisation, he is now permanently based in Pokhara (central Nepal), where he is supporting three families after saving the women from domestic violence and feeding 150+ children daily. In Lee's old life he was a professional sportsman and his love of sports has allowed many Nepalese children to become great sport persons themselves, as he coaches here.*

*I was very blessed to go to Unite Nepal's orphanage in **Lamjung** for a few days with him. There, I did art and yoga with the children at their school. This gave me a chance to experience the work that Unite Nepal does...I also lived on an organic farm, where the school is located and some of the children live with their house mother and teacher...to learn and pass on some of my knowledge of nature to the children.*

*Lee has used much of his own money to date and continues to do so, as he is building more residential round houses (costing \$4000 each), which fit in perfectly with the environment. The houses are eco-friendly, so more children can live and be cared for here, as the project expands. Not all of the children are orphans; some have run away because of the domestic violence in their home. Other children have to walk so far in the wilderness to get to school, that the residential accommodation will house them Monday to Friday, so that they can return home at weekends.*

*The children that live in remote areas do not have the Government funding for free school meals. They walk incredible distances to get to school. I know this as I have walked that journey to school with them. Some children will walk for two hours each way in all weathers for their education! Their school day is from 10am-4pm and they all do homework for one hour after school, no matter what their ages. Some parents can afford to feed their children, but they send them in with nothing, as not to embarrass the majority that can't afford to bring food.*

*With all of this, their resilient spirits are full of life - they are so bright and quick to learn anything you show them! I sang with them, danced with them, did yoga with them and a few breathing exercises, which they all knew - of course, they would - it's part of who they are! They were so aware of their surroundings, telling me all the names of the fruit trees on the organic farm speaking in really good English. We were so fortunate to visit them during their annual school picnic day and we walked a fair distance to the picnic area. We had to cross several rivers, which I managed to fall in there and back! There was not one word of complaint, about carrying the pots and pans and food there. We were welcomed by teachers with flowers and blessings. I'm sure that the mountains of Nepal will be echoing the sound of hands, fingers, knees and toes! Some of these children are sponsored - if you would like to sponsor a child or give a monthly donation to feed the children a basic dinner of rice and dal each day, please get in touch with me. I'm seeing so much negativity on Facebook at the moment, **let's do something positive in the world: it's in our power to do kind things. Let's walk the walk, not talk the talk.***

# Ancient peoples: Danube Valley Civilisation

By Gylden Fellowship

In the November 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 off to the **Danube Valley**. The people of the Danubian culture lived between 5500-3500 BCE and their script or alphabet is believed by some to be the oldest writing system in the world, predating Ancient Sumerian writing in Mesopotamia.

## What was the Danube Valley civilisation?

The Danube civilisation was one of the most influential and important cultures in south-eastern Europe, being among the first civilisations to develop copper tools, advanced architecture, including two-storey houses, design and production of furniture, and, most important, a writing system.

All of this occurred while most parts of Europe were in the Stone Age. The people of the Danube Valley were the first to develop skills like weaving, leather processing, clothes manufacturing and they invented the wheel.

So, **where exactly** are we referring to, when we say the Danube Valley? Granted that this ancient people aren't as famous as, say, Ancient Egypt, it was one of the oldest civilisations to exist in Europe, developing in the Balkans, i.e. all the land that stretches from Northern Greece to Slovakia (south to north) and Croatia to Romania (west to east).

## Did you say something about writing?

Absolutely - the most prominent feature of the Danube Valley civilisation is the controversial written language they developed. I've described it as controversial, because the archaeological world is split over whether the Danube Valley script is a written language or not.

Some would say that the script is just a set of geometric shapes, whilst others believe that this is the first writing system on the planet. The debate rages on, but if the

latter theory is right, the Danube Valley script is the oldest written language ever, predating the well-known Sumerian writings in Mesopotamia and the Dispilo Tablet, which dates back to 5360 BC.

According to **Harald Haarmann**, a German linguistic and cultural scientist, the Danube Valley script should be considered as the oldest writing in the world. The inscriptions in tablets found from the Danube Valley civilisation date back to at least 5500 BCE and the mysterious symbols that make up the written language are yet to be deciphered.

The symbols seen on numerous tablets from the Danube Valley civilisation are also called the **Vinca symbols** and are found across multiple archaeological sites across the Danube Valley areas.

The symbols have been found to be recorded on pottery, figurines and other clay artefacts. To date, researchers have found approximately 700 different characters in the Danube Valley script, a number similar to the characters used in Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. Here's a look at them in detail and you can decide for yourself.





## Poetry - At the Zoo

OK, time to come clean on this one. I wrote it as a birthday present some time ago for my friend, Tara, from the **Seasons of Albion moot** in Farnham. Her love of animals and efforts to protect them inspired my words and I discovered the original poem just the other day in the Gylden archive.

Here we all are – at the zoo,  
The big zoo in the big city;  
We came by fast car and faster train  
And walked the rest on foot.

Until we went through the gates,  
Big blue gates and masses of people –  
My brother and sister almost were lost,  
As the crowd wavered and fragmented.

Some went for elephants or camels,  
While others chose rhinos or reptiles,  
Mum, Dad and us – we couldn't choose,  
So, we started with the ice creams.

And now, we're looking at cages of foxes,  
Rabbits, weasels, mice and hedgehogs,  
Lots of animals that used to live wild,  
Around people's gardens – imagine that!

Our garden has flowers and lots of fences,  
But no animals, not even a bird and,  
Certainly, no foxes, rabbits or hedgehogs,  
Not even the occasional mouse.

Next, a large cage with nothing in it:  
Mum reads the sign to us – badgers;  
*"Badgers used to be wild and lived in Britain,  
Now only found in zoos due to hunting."*

We listen to Mum and wait for a badger,  
There's a rustle of sticks and it appears,  
Soft grey fur and black-and-white striped head,  
*"Why hunt Mr Badger?"* I ask Mum.

The sign doesn't tell me anything and,  
Mum and Dad don't know anything either,  
*"Why can't it visit our garden?"* I say –  
Too late, we're at the next cage.

## Having a stress-free Yule

By Nick the Witch

This piece is for young or newer pagans, but it's Yule soon and I thought we could spend some time looking at the witch's mindset. To be fair, much of the advice here complements the text later in this issue of **GYLDEN MAGICK**, on Yule magick. First though, have you ever noticed how much **anger** is around nowadays? It seems that instant rage is everywhere on the roads, in car parks, in supermarket aisles and in all sorts of queues. And I'm writing this in the wake of the Feast of Mammon, otherwise known as Black Friday. The reason is that we're all under so much stress, much of it self-inflicted (eg not enough time), that anger is the only outlet. But it's not a good outlet, because anger hurts all around us and only contributes to our own dis-ease.

However, let's start with a campaign that I noticed a year or so ago called **More Tea, Less Hate**. The idea was for people anywhere to arrange a tea party and celebrate diversity, eg among neighbours, at work or down your street or wherever. In particular, tea party organisers were urged to invite those of different cultures or nationalities: "to send a strong message to those that hoped to use the EU referendum to turn us against each other and show everyone that lives in the UK that they are welcome and wanted". Speaking as someone who drinks a LOT of tea and very little alcohol, I really grok the underlying message ("grok" comes from the novel, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, by Robert Heinlein).

### Daily routine

OK then, here we're thinking about how to keep your cool and minimise rage, particularly during Yule, whether it comes from a computer peripheral that breaks down or no spaces in the town car park to inconsiderate drivers. Common spells or charms can work via crystals or herbs and I'll come to these later, but the first thing to consider is daily practice: crucial to witches, particularly those who practise magick every day of the year. In truth, that's easy to do, because magick need not be just for big spells or sabbats, but also for kitchen witchcraft or herbal remedies or simply appreciating the handiwork of your deity in Nature.

For those of us who start each day anxious to get to work on time or have a multitude of chores to do at home, the following tasks **help to keep you grounded and in touch with the earth**.

1. To start each day: 15 minutes to set aside for stretching or a few gentle exercises, thinking about your blessings and sending good wishes to friends and family, record any dreams in a diary, face **east** and welcome the chance for new opportunities. If possible, make a positive pledge about the day to come or recite a blessing to your own deities (a common one that I use is shown at the end of this list).
2. During the day: keep reminding yourself of your positive pledge and try to achieve it, try and drink only water now and again as a detox and set aside 10-15 minutes for meditation, perhaps at lunch-time.
3. At the end of each day: face the **west** and give thanks for what the day has brought you, list good things in a diary and do what you can do ensure a restful sleep. My suggestion here is to drink a soothing tea that has lavender or valerian in it and say a night-time charm (as shown below).

#### Nick's morning blessing

*Brigid and Cernunnos, I greet you,  
Help me to understand your earth.  
Guide my feet as they tread your pathways,  
And keep me safely out of harm's way.  
My life is just part of your creation and,  
I ask you to not test me, but make my day a joy,  
And speak to me through my intuition.  
As above, so below, so mote it be.*

### Nick's evening blessing

You will need a crystal of serenity, eg amethyst or blue lace agate

*Stone of peaceful calming light,  
Shining in my mind so bright,  
I pass you all my dreams tonight.  
Dissolve the nightmares – the rest can stay,  
For me to sleep until next day,  
So mote it be and come what may.*

## Crystals against anger

So, which crystals would I recommend to stop your anger at the sharp end, eg when you've been overtaken by a crazy driver in a dangerous place, when someone shoves their trolley into you in the supermarket or when somebody has a go at you at your workplace? We've all been there and I must say that the experience of working at a public library enquiry desk or in a secondary school doesn't tend to show the best side of human nature.

This is where the witch's mindset comes in, because daily routines can help with self-control and the best way to deal with pushy drivers (for example) is to not panic, but to slow down to the speed limit and drive in line with the law. In my house, my family have dubbed this tactic as TMS (true meaning of slow) and any problems have been diverted to the car behind you. When the pushy driver finally passes you, give them a big smile and a little wave: works wonders on the roads around Haslemere!

I do carry crystals with me anyway, but if asked, I would choose one of amethyst, howlite or aventurine, on the grounds that all are stress-relievers and protect against anger. Amethyst brings peace, aventurine promotes wisdom and good decision-making, while howlite absorbs resentment. Or, you could trust to either orange calcite or citrine as both these stones promote happiness or joy and are essential antidotes to anger. And shells are good substitutes for crystals – there's the benefit of an oceanic calm and a memory of the animal that lived in the shell. A spell is not always forthcoming when anger threatens and a hex is probably an over-reaction for a minor irritation. I'd suggest take a step back, a deep breath and offer the offending somebody bright blessings.

## Anger relief after the event

Many herbal infusions can be used to soothe and calm the after-effects of anger or resentment and the list below gives a selection. Each plant can be used either fresh or dried and I find it is best to allow the plants to infuse for five minutes in a teapot/teahouse of boiled water before drinking.

- 16 lemon balm leaves (or 1 tbsp dried lemon balm) – **Gylden Fellowship** now offers lemon balm teabags as part of its natural healing service at fayres or talks.
- 2 rose heads or buds (2 tbsp dried rose petals).
- 1 tsp each of skullcap, orange flowers, St John's wort, betony and lemon balm.
- 1 tsp peppermint leaves, 1 tsp calendula flowers (marigold), 1 tsp spearmint leaves and 1 tsp field mint.
- 1 tsp each of hawthorn flowers, lavender, rosebuds, orange flowers and jasmine.
- 5 tbsp chamomile and 4 tbsp lavender.
- 2 tsp blackberry leaves, 1 tsp wild strawberry leaves, 1 tsp raspberry leaves and 1 tsp blackcurrant leaves.

It's quite OK to add a little honey or slice of lemon to an infusion for flavour if you want. Perhaps a chant is appropriate too, to dispel the negative feelings – here is a suggestion.

*Destructive anger, leave my face,  
Peace and calm can take its place,  
Fill my mind with serenity,  
With the natural flavour of this tea.*

You might also consider running **an anger relief bath** to soak away the fiery emotions. If its a spur-of-the-moment thing, I'd have to recommend lemon balm leaves, as many as you can find (or as oil) and use them. Again, **Gylden Fellowship** now offers lemon balm sachets for baths as part of its natural healing service at fayres or talks. Or, as an alternative, you could collect together the following:

- 2 tbsp of raspberry leaves
- 2 tbsp of violet leaves
- 2 tbsp of lavender
- 2 tbsp of powdered oatmeal.

Mix the ingredients and grind them to a rough powder in a pestle and mortar (or a blender). Put the powder in a muslin bag and let the warm water run through it and then add the bag to the bath water.

Here's another bath suggestion for easing away the stress, particularly at Yule. The winter solstice can be over-shadowed by other people celebrating Christmas and spending far too much time on food, drink, presents and material concerns. It is vital to de-stress yourself and eliminate any dis-ease from your system at Yule. As a detox and a way to regain a tranquil, inner spirit, try a ritual bath.

- Use whatever oils you find soothing, but possible examples are rosemary, orange, pine or patchouli.
- Light gold and green candles and soak yourself in the water, to refresh your weary holiday spirit.
- Meditate on your deity and his or her virtues of peace and clean purification – no clutter or stress.
- In your mind, step away from all those Christmas chores and consider what you want to achieve during the Yule period – write down these goals by candlelight after the bath. Yule is the rebirth of the light, so concentrate your thoughts on how to accomplish the goals – so mote it be.



# Review: Witchfest International 2019

By Jonathan Argento

It was great to be back at Fairfield Halls in Croydon, newly refurbished and the real home of Witchfest. I've been attending and enjoying this event for about 15 years, so it fair to say I'm a fan. Drawing a diverse audience, with a wide spectrum of speakers and musicians, the event proved that Witchfest, after a difficult couple of years, was back on top form. The traders' market with an eclectic selection of pagan-related merchandise was rammed with customers – always a healthy sign. Ticket sales were up on previous years, so congratulations to Merlyn and Cath and all the Witchfest team - the hard work paid off!

It's always illuminating talking to first-time visitors about the challenges of which talk or workshop to attend as there are so many that run concurrently. The multi-screens around the Halls made actually finding the correct venue for an event much easier this year! All those I spoke to enjoyed themselves and will be back. Witchfest had an amazing line-up of speakers, all experts in their own fields and too numerous to mention - you can find all the details at:

<https://witchfest.net/events/witchfest-international/>

One of my personal highlights was catching up with the charming **Maxine Sanders**, prior to her excellent Q&A session. Sadly, as I was exhibiting and speaking at the event, hers was the only talk I attended. Nevertheless, one of the great things about Witchfest is that everyone is under the same roof for the whole event, so catching up with friends and talking to speakers and musicians is straightforward. In previous years, I've conducted academic research interviews at the bar!

No Witchfest would be complete without the Christian protestors outside the venue and this year was no exception. As a former church minister, I'm still amazed by the level of vitriol we were subjected to in the name of an all-loving god. I suspect the culprit would have been removed, had he been outside a mosque or synagogue, but I'm pleased to say it was met with usual pagan indifference and good humour.

Witchfest provides 16 hours of talks and entertainment, so to gain full benefit, overnight accommodation is a must. Unfortunately, my hotel booking (I discovered) was for the previous Saturday. I missed the evening entertainment with its all-star line-up including Damh the Bard, The Mediaeval Baebes, The Fiascos and The Sensational Infernals - their first time at Witchfest, whose raw rockabilly energy really impressed me over the summer.

If you have not been to Witchfest before, do yourself a favour and visit next year!



# WITCHFEST

# Tales for darker evenings: Golden Dreams

## By the Storyteller

One of the **Spriggan Mist** songs that always goes down a storm at gigs is called *Turpin's Defiance* and this tale is also a true one about another notorious highwayman.

During the 1600s, travellers on the main roads were subject to robbery by highwaymen. One of the worst places was Bagshot Heath, near Camberley, on the Great West Road (A30, London-Exeter). Many travellers resorted to carrying small purses of a few gold coins to give to the robbers and hiding their main money away.

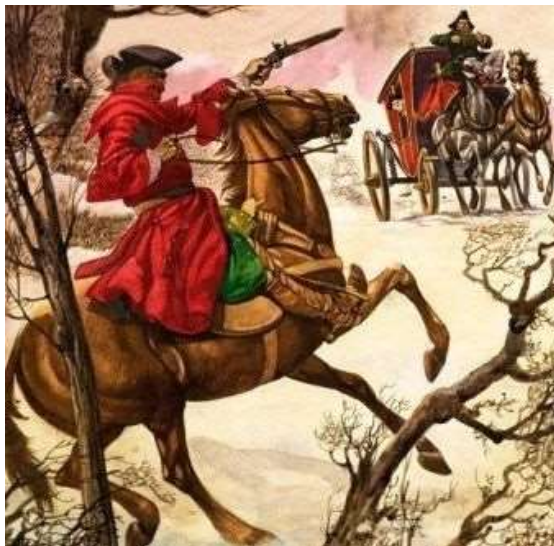
Several coaching inns could provide a traveller with a change of horses and an overnight stay and local people often went to the same inns. One of the Bagshot locals was a wealthy and successful farmer called **William Davis**. He had married an innkeeper's daughter, had 18 children, farmed a large estate and had a small business that sold corn in London. Locally, he was nicknamed the **Golden Farmer**, because he always paid his bills in gold coins.

What local people didn't know was that William Davis was also the most successful highwayman in the area and was the leader of a band of robbers. From the age of 22, he'd robbed his victims of money only (gold coins), as jewels were difficult to sell on. His turf was Bagshot to Salisbury and he was a master of disguise – on one occasion, his landlord had called for the annual rent, which Davis paid in gold coins, but the landlord was robbed on the way home by masked highwaymen who took all his gold coins and other rents!

William Davis ran this double life for over 40 years and was never caught until the age of 64 when he tried to carry out a series of robberies to pay for some large bills. The victim fought back and Davis was not as athletic at 64 as he had been at 22, but he did manage to escape to London.

Unfortunately, Davis was recognised whilst on the run and he killed someone while trying to escape and this time he was caught. He was sent to trial at Newgate for murder, but the link was made with his previous string of highway robberies and the master highwayman of Bagshot was sentenced to death. He was hanged in chains in London on **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 1689**, but his body was cut down and taken to Bagshot where it was tied up in a tarred canvas bag and left to rot on a gibbet.

***The local inn was renamed the Golden Farmer (first) and then the Jolly Farmer – today it is a shop – but there is a Gibbet Lane. If you stand there at dusk on a late December evening, you may hear the sound of a canvas bag creaking and smell the faint whiff of tar.***



# Seasonal magick for Yule

By Nick the Witch

Yule is Midwinter, the shortest day and longest night of the year. The time since Samhain has given us rest, reflection and the development of new ideas. At the winter solstice, the cycle of the waning sun stops and the days start to lengthen. An earlier piece in this **GYLDEN MAGICK** looked at stress-relief over Yule – now we're thinking about actual magick.

I was wondering about a spell for Yule, when I was tempted by some of the essential oils in-house, eg tangerine or frankincense. So, here's a few things you could do for Yule to make your place smell wonderful.

1. Take some large oranges and stud them with cloves – leave them around.
2. Slice some apples, pears or oranges into thin pieces and cook them in the oven on a low heat for most of the day until they are dried. Add the dried fruit to pine cones or yew branches for a table decoration.
3. For an instant good atmosphere, stew some plums or apples for tea with cloves or cinnamon.
4. The traditional Yule plants are bayberry, cinnamon, spruce, pine and frankincense.

## Incense

While we're thinking about Yule aromas and incense, it isn't that difficult to make your own incense for this season – here's one suggestion – mix the ingredients together and let them dry out.

- 1 part cinnamon
- 1 part bayberry
- 3 parts cedar
- 3 parts pine needles.

It is true that aromas can re-create the ambience of past Yuletides and any incense will help this process. You have to decide whether your incense will be loose ingredients for burning on a flame, incense sticks or cones. Any coniferous trees can contribute to a good incense via needles, resins, cones or bark. Do not forget to add a blessing as you mix the incense, just as you would when making herbal remedies or meals...it's the focus and intent that count, as with any magickal activity. So, here's another suggestion for a Yuletide incense.

- 2 parts juniper berries
- 2 parts mugwort
- 1 part cedar
- 1 part dried mistletoe
- 1 part dried pine needles (or pine resin)
- 1 part laurel leaves
- 1/2 part cinnamon
- 1/2 part rosemary.

Add your ingredients to your mixing bowl one at a time. Measure carefully and, if the leaves or blossoms need to be crushed, use your mortar and pestle to do so. As you blend the herbs together, state your intent. You may find it helpful to charge your incense with a blessing or incantation. Store your incense in a tightly sealed jar. Make sure you label it with its name and date. Use within three months, so that it remains charged and fresh.



Apart from incense, you could create a **Yuletide potpourri** in a decorative bowl or basket using these ingredients and a small teacup. Once in the bowl, mix the ingredients together gently and add a scent or oil, if required.

- A cup of dried orange peel
- 1/2 a cup of dried lemon zest
- 1/3 of a cup of whole cloves
- 4 cinnamon sticks, broken into smaller pieces
- A handful of pine needles
- A sprig or two of seasonal berries
- A pinch of allspice or ginger.

## Other Yule magick

A **Yule tree blessing** is an important task for this season. If you're thinking about altar or home decorations for Yule and a tree is in your mind, here is a blessing to use. Light some incense or scented candles, perhaps put on music or get a drink of herbal tea and make the whole thing into a mini-ritual. For the blessing, **you'll need a candle, some water, salt and incense** - as you say the blessing, sprinkle the salt around the tree in a circle (not on the tree, just around it), smudging with the incense, passing the candle over it and adding water to the pot at the bottom.

*By the powers of earth, I bless this tree - as it remains a symbol of life - stable and strong in my home throughout Yule.*

*By the powers of air, I bless this tree - as the cold winter winds blow away the burden of the old year and I welcome renewed energy into heart and home.*

*By the powers of fire, I bless this tree - as the warmth of the sun returns - bringing the end of dark days and life for next year.*

*By the powers of water, I bless this tree - so it may stay bright and green for longer and all can enjoy the harmony and peace of Yule.*



A **Yule log** can be decorated in-house by finding a log (about 15 inches long), tying cloth or paper ribbons on it and putting mistletoe, ivy, holly or yew under the ribbons. If you wish, the log can be decorated further by glueing on some seasonal berries or pine cones.

For **decorated fir cones or holly sprigs** that can hang on the Yule tree, take some pieces of holly or fir cones and add some glitter glue to them, to give sparkle and shine. If using holly, tie a few sprigs together using ribbon, making a loop at the top so you can hang it for decoration. If using fir cones, tie some string or ribbon around the base of each one, making a loop so you can hang the decoration. You can add some bells and pagan symbols to the ribbon tie too.

What would Yuletide be if there wasn't a spell to find lost presents or to wish for something magickal?

**Set-up:** Waxing moon, a small star charm, 12 small blue or white crystals, white or silver pouch and a slip of paper.

1. Put all the items on a moonlit window-sill for cleansing.
2. Write your wish on the paper and anchor it with the star charm.
3. Surround the wish/charm with crystals.
4. For next 11 nights, add 1 crystal per night to the pouch.
5. Each time you add a crystal, say:

*"Samhain has gone and Yule is near,  
With frost and ice and air so clear.  
Bring peaceful nights with shining stars,  
Grant my wish as winter's here.  
So mote it be."*

6. On the final night, put everything remaining into the pouch.
7. Carry the pouch with you.

**Note:** any crystals are OK – I keep a little bag of aquamarine, quartz shards, howlite, etc.

A Yuletide message from **Gylden Fellowship** – we wish all our readers a happy Yule and look forward to celebrating the Winter Solstice with some of them. However, we'd like to say special thanks to our **guest authors** in 2019.

John Rivers	Vali Trinity	Rebecca Granshaw	Maxine Cilia	Tracy Ferris	Basingstoke Pagan Circle
Wayne Davis	Paul Pearson	Chris Davenport	Sarah Tilsley	Kate May	Rowan & Thorn Druid Grove
Julia Pissano	Simon Hyde	Lisa Baskerville	Paula Restall	Mike Dennis	Andrea Legg-Smith
Sam O'Neil	Arietta Bryant	Avellina Balestri	Jonathan Lyceum	Argento	Barbara Collins
Ruth Wilkinson/ Violet Flame	Zen Holistics Group	Jane Davis	Anne Butler	Clare Coombes	
Andrew Merritt/ Spriggan Mist	Paul Oakwolf Coombes	Dawnie Tottle	Seasons of Albion Moot		

**And we look forward to welcoming a slew of new contributors from next month.**

# Profile: Holistic Chi

By Wayne and Jane Davis

In March of this year, we decided it was the right time to close Chi Coffee, as we had been running it since 2013. One of the main reasons for closing was to give ourselves more time for ourselves and to concentrate on the things we love to do. In closing Chi Coffee, it meant that we also had to move house, as we lived in the flat above the shop. Now, we live opposite a nature reserve and, following the closure, we took some time out for ourselves.

We decided that we needed to change the name of Chi Coffee for a number of reasons. Someone had opened another shop where we had been located, doing the same work and we wanted a new start. So that we could move on, we chose the name of **Holistic Chi**. We still provide outside catering to a small number of spiritual events, in and around Portsmouth; however, we mainly concentrate on our healing work.

**Wayne** is continuing his role as the lead member of the **Southampton Witches**, helping with the running of the group and putting on rituals at Matley Wood in the New Forest. He is now spending more of his time teaching and running workshops. At present, he is running two shamanic training groups as well as teaching reiki. He is also continuing with his healing work and now offering to travel to his clients' homes. Now that he has more time, he is getting more involved with protecting Mother Earth and all her creatures.

**Jane** is now working full-time, having taken some time out after closing Chi Coffee and she is still carrying out her healing work. Jane is a qualified aromatherapist, reiki master/teacher, angelic reiki master and lotus chakra teacher. She has started to teach reiki again and, like Wayne, is travelling to clients' homes to offer healings. Next year, Jane will once again be offering readings.

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# Environment: helping garden wildlife

By the Waverley Healing Wheel

As Wayne Davis mentioned in the Facebook group, *Hampshire Pagans for Environmental Change*, "This Xmas, ask for one present to be a gift to help Mother Nature. This could be in the form of bird feeders, seeds, food for all wildlife, gifts to animal rescue centres or donations to the hunt sabs that are protecting all wildlife from the hunts." The following text looks at different ways to encourage wildlife to use your garden and to increase biodiversity, regardless of the garden size.

1. Remember to plant flowers to provide pollen and nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects that perform the vital task of fertilisation – seed and fruit production would drop dramatically without them. Big flowers or those with double heads tend to contain little or no pollen or nectar.
2. Also, plant flowers that bloom for as long as possible, eg crocus, Michaelmas daisy or sedum.
3. Grow a range of trees, shrubs and climbers or a mixed hedge to provide food and shelter. Larger plants, particularly trees, support more wildlife. As well as providing food in the form of flowers, fruits and seeds, they provide cover and nesting sites for garden animals, from insects to larger species such as birds.
4. Smaller trees and shrubs are good for blossom and berries, eg rowan, crab apple, elder, blackthorn and hawthorn.
5. Fruit trees support a range of specialist native wildlife and can provide for them while also supplying you with a useful crop.

If your garden is too small for big trees, try to get some planted in the neighbourhood and protect those that are already there – large street trees provide a vital habitat for a range of wildlife that may visit nearby gardens while foraging. Your garden is just one of a network of food sources from an animal's point of view. One valuable attraction to a garden is to have a pond or some type of water. A shallow pond with no fish, but natural water plants is fine and, if possible, sloping sides.

On the **recycling side**, decayed wood is a habitat for stag beetles and their grubs and also provides hibernation sites. Any unstained or unpainted wood is suitable, although big, natural logs are best, ideally partly buried. Log piles can look quite architectural and rustic, though many people prefer to tuck them out of sight. And so, we come to compost, which helps all the plants and wildlife in the garden here are some advantages.

- Compost makes for healthy soil, which is good for everything living in it and growing on it.
- It's an excellent mulch, free and easy to produce.
- Unlike organic matter imported from elsewhere, it comes without packaging – avoid peat-based compost.
- Compost heaps shelter many small creatures, eg slow worms or grass snakes.

And now, for some final **wildlife welfare** tips, here's a few extra points.

1. Provide food and clean water all year for garden birds, ideally a mixture of peanuts, sunflower hearts, seeds, kitchen scraps and fat balls – feeding tables should not be accessible to predators.
2. Think about leaving part of your garden to become a meadow with piles of leaves and twiggy debris to give both food and habitat for many species. Piles of stones also make good habitat, particularly for hibernating reptiles and amphibians - at the back of borders or even behind the shed. Letting a few areas of lawn grow longer allows some shelter for wood mice, voles and shrews - and food for some butterfly caterpillars.
3. Avoid synthetic pesticides
4. Try to grow some wildflowers among the grasses.
5. Rock gardens and gravel beds are attractive to mason bees.
6. Might be a little early for this tip, but I went to the open day at Winkworth Arboretum earlier in 2019 and there was a company with alpacas. One of the products I bought was a bird-feeder, stuffed with alpaca fur that had been moulted. The point is that birds can use such offcuts to line their nests.

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

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