



# Gylden Magick

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## March 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](http://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, i.e. visiting groups, Interfaith work, fayres, calendars, helping our moot friends with rituals or meetings, etc.

Our **Worm 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 magick - 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 the **Hayling Island Spiritual Fayre** in Hayling Island on 21 March and, also, the **Godalming MBS Fayre** in Godalming on 29 March. And we look forward to **Alban Eiler** (Ostara), with plenty of rituals due to take place around the Gylden area.

**What else is there?** Well, we continue our new series about animal spirit guides with the owl, an ancient vampire tale, photos from the Enchanted Market (**many congrats to the organisers for**

**raising £7500 for the Thames Hospice**), Ostara magick, previews of the Hayling Island and Godalming fayres, the Vitlycke Carvings, guidance for new or young pagans on how to buy your gear, Christianity and the Zodiac, herbal healing with knotweed and our crystal of the month is jet. And, we have an esbat from Moon Rituals Portsmouth.

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 March?

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## Animal spirit guides: owl

The Cherokee tribe refer to the owl as the night eagle, on account of its night vision. Last month, we considered the wolf as a spirit guide – now we think about owls. In the first part of this series, we looked at the *Place of Meeting*. OK then, you've crossed into the Otherworld and a spirit comes to you in the form of an owl – what does an owl symbolise?



Owls tend to fall between two key beliefs, either portents of doom or wise advocates. Or, in a spiritual sense, owls signify intuition, psi abilities and enlightenment. Owls also symbolise the truth and truth-sharing. They have been linked with many deities in many cultures, including Blodeuwedd (Welsh Celtic), Athene/Minerva (Graeco-Roman), Lakshmi (Hindu), Lilith (Biblical) and Ragana (proto-Germanic/Baltic).

When an owl appears as a spirit (or in reality), it is a clue that something is coming which is likely to be a time of transformation. People who are empaths are likely to feel an affinity with owls, due to their enhanced perception and ability to see the truth in all situations.

One thing is certain – owls represent the feminine spirit and the power of women. For that reason, almost all the deities associated with owls are powerful women. If an owl appears as your spirit guide, it is because you are happy with that form and because you tend towards the inner visionary persona.

## Crystals: jet

Jet is one of those stones that features in my workshop on protection magick, alongside black tourmaline, celestite and obsidian. It's also one of those stones that can be foraged within the UK – the best jet used to come from the Whitby area. Jet is pure carbon and is a form of petrified wood, also known as lignite.

Jet is close to amber, as both minerals are types of fossil resin. Jet builds up an electrical charge when rubbed with a cloth. As a protection stone, jet was used in Ancient Egypt and, as an ornament, in the Bronze Age.

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

- It is a brilliant protective stone, particularly against curses, evil intent and hexes. In Roman times, jet was used as a protection against the evil eye.
- Jet helps against arthritis, joint stiffness and glandular problems.
- It is particularly good when used with the root chakra – for calm, peace and personal balance.
- Jet is good for grounding yourself and fighting phobias, mood swings or depression.
- Also, jet is good for fighting colds, bronchitis, flu and headaches.
- Cleanse jet with dry sea salt or with incense – do not use water or sunlight.
- Similarly, it works very well in drawing out the negative energies around your aura, acting as a purifier to dispel any unwanted energy. It allows positive energy to flow within.
- As such, jet can be used to purify other crystals by placing them in a dish together.
- Jet promotes your psychic links and spirit communication.
- It is best worn as some type of talisman or jewel, eg pendant, bracelet or necklace, set in silver.



## Herb of the month: knotweed

Late entrant this one, as there was an interesting discussion on Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum japonicum*) on Facebook recently. The debate rages on as to whether it's an invasive weed or a useful medicine or both – so, let's have a quick summary.

As with the sweet violet last month, the Japanese knotweed is edible and tastes a little like rhubarb – could be used in pies, jams or crumbles. In spring, young shoots can be cooked as an alternative to asparagus substitute. The seeds can be ground into a powder for flavouring.

Japanese knotweed leaves contain oxalic acid, which is not poisonous, but may neutralise other minerals in the body and cause a deficiency. It's best if people suffering from arthritis, kidney stones, or rheumatism avoid eating knotweed. This is true of rhubarb and sorrel too, if eaten extensively. If you cook knotweed leaves, the oxalic acid content is reduced.

Healers use the leaves or root to make medicines. Here are some of the ailments that can be treated with Japanese knotweed.

- It is used in the treatment of women's complaints, such as menstrual irregularities.
- Acute hepatitis, appendicitis or traumatic injuries (decoction).
- The leaves can be crushed and applied externally as a poultice to abscesses, cuts, etc.
- An infusion of the leaves is good against bronchitis, COPD and whooping cough.
- Boils and abscesses (decoction).
- Burns and scalds (decoction).
- As a mouthwash for gingivitis or excess plaque.

**Note:** some research has examined Japanese knotweed as a treatment for Lyme disease.



## Recipe: egg snacks

OK then, we're coming up to the feast of Ostara in mid-March and we thought that an egg-related recipe might be apposite – this one hails from Victorian times and is an early precursor to French toast.

### Ingredients

1. 6 slices of bread, each cut into quarters
2. 30zs breadcrumbs
3. 1 tsp chopped parsley
4. Salt & pepper
5. 1 egg
6. Milk
7. Optional: fried onions, tomatoes or mushrooms

### Method

1. Remove the crusts from the bread and then soak in milk.
2. In a different bowl, beat the egg and mix in the parsley, salt and pepper.
3. Dip the pieces of bread into the egg mixture and then roll in breadcrumbs.
4. Fry each piece in oil or fat.
5. Add fried onions, tomatoes or mushrooms as required.

**Note:** one could tweak this by using different types of milk or adding bacon or maple syrup – depending upon the meal.



## Preview: Spring Godalming MBS Fayre

We've encountered the organisation that is **Crystal Pyramid Therapies** several times before. This is the spring MBS event, set in leafy Godalming on [29 March 2020](#). from Barbara Collins & Crystal Pyramid Therapies. Free parking, entry fee of £3 or so, catering, lots of crystals, holistic healing, gong baths and mediumship. **Gylden Fellowship** does not have a natural healing stand here this time, but we'll be visiting on the day. So, let's listen to **Barbara** as she explains her craft.

As a practising therapist of reflexology, Reiki and crystal therapy, I would like to share a few of my insights into the use of crystals for holistic use and in our daily lives. All my clients know that crystals will form part of their treatments when they book appointments and, over the years, similar questions are asked frequently – eg which crystals are the most protective?



My answers vary greatly, depending on the specific needs of that person. For example, when someone is recovering from *personal trauma or injury (physical or psychological)*, I will often choose one of the following protective and nurturing stones that I know will gently bring their own Guides to their assistance.

- The clear energies in **apophyllite** connect directly to the spiritual realms, creating a pure light that will attract their angels and healing guides.
- **Selenite** is another gentle crystal, which will clear etheric blockages and is a very useful tool when

used as a wand in a healing environment for clearing stuck energies gently, but effectively.

- **Seraphinite** is another of my favourite stones to attract angelic connection for healing and regeneration.
- Much has been written of protection from darker earthbound energies and the popular stones, ie schorl (black tourmaline), labradorite, smoky quartz and obsidian need little explanation. All may be used in grids, worn/carried as talismen or placed around the home to deflect environmental stress, negative energies and for grounding. Ungrounded people are most likely to attract negativity, in my experience.
- Our connection to earth's energies is vital for maintaining a healthy outlook and creating positive energy. One of my favourites is **petrified wood** (aka fossilised or agatized wood) - this is the stone of beginnings and ancient knowledge reawakening one's inherent knowledge of nature and earthpower. It is not only useful for grounding one's energy on this earthly plane, but also supports our physical growth and gives us the patience to achieve life missions.
- Finally, I want to mention **chrysoprase** as this lovely stone connects us to all nature's beings especially the elementals. It is a heart-centred stone of the pure green ray, maintains the harmony between our fellow humans and also of our personal joy in all of nature's gifts.

The subtle energies that each stone/ crystal emits can only be used to the greater good of all from those emitting low energies (not negative energies) to the crystals that resonate at the highest spiritual level.

We all need the different energies of earth, fire, water and air – minerals and stones are the vehicles through which earth energy is balanced and distributed throughout the planet.

**[For more info on Crystal Pyramid Therapies, contact Barbara Collins at:](#)**  
**[www.crystalpyramidtherapies.co.uk](http://www.crystalpyramidtherapies.co.uk)**

Gylden  
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# The Enchanted Market: 15-16 February 2020

Photos by Andrew Merritt Photography Ltd





# Ancient peoples: The Vitlycke Carvings

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 off to Scandinavia or, to be more precise, **Tanum in Sweden**, where we're looking at the ancient Vitlycke rock carvings. Tanum has more than 400 carved surfaces of differing sizes, all of which derive from the European Bronze Age – about 3000 years ago, in 1800-400 BCE.

The Vitlycke rock carvings were investigated in detail between 1963-64, but previous extensive work was carried out, sketching and commenting, between 1881-1908. There is a book by Lauritz Baltzer (an artist) that included clear details of the carvings.

Many of the carvings are 6-8 inches in length, but the large historical images run to 22 feet high by 68 feet in length – one such contains about 400 figures.

## What do we mean by carvings?

Well, there's a mix of indentations, picture-records and historical images of Viking journeys or battles. There's also the religious aspect – the Bronze Age people depended upon farming and trade. There would have been rituals and ceremonies to call upon the gods for good weather, fertility and rich harvests. Some of the carvings would have added to such rituals as part of a ceremony, such as the carving of a bridal couple, where a Beltane-type ceremony would be carried out to ask for fertility.



Some of the round or cup-like **indentations** have been noted on a few stones, indicating that those stones had special significance and the order of the depressions was key, eg representing the sun, moon, stars, etc. In later years, local folk used these depressions as receptacles for food offerings to the fae, known as *faery-mills*.



There are 10 carvings that include **the sun**, including crosses within a circle, concentric circles and small discs with ray-patterns. It should be noted that sun worship was only important in a single part of the Bronze Age. Some carvings show **footprints**, both carved out and in outline. The interpretation of these feet indicate the presence of a deity, leaving footprints on rocks as symbols of protection.

## Did you say something about historical images?

Absolutely – some of the most prominent Vitlycke carvings involve **ships, animals and people**, in various tableaux to show events. There are some 90 carvings for ships, from small coracles to larger boats with keels, masts and crew (often with weapons).

Many of the people are holding tools of various types, from axes, bows or spears to ornaments like crowns or swords. The animals tend to be those that might be expected at that point in history – red deer, horses, dogs and oxen. Some of the carvings involve people and animals in various activities – a man using reins to ride a horse, a man using a harness on an ox, horses pulling ships and hunting scenes.

# Preview: Hayling Island Spiritual Fayre

By Paula Restall, Zen Holistics

Come and join me for my next body, mind and spirit fayre on **21 March 2020**...this will be the 7th year running and always my busiest and most popular fayre. There'll be lots of stalls, including the following.

- tarot readers
- healers
- fairies
- witchy therapists
- candles
- crystals
- many more, eg Sisters of the Mists and Essence of Avalon Apothecary.

The venue is **Hayling Island Community Centre, Hayling Park, Station Road, Hayling Island PO11 0HB.**

The fayre is from 11am-4pm and it's £2 admission (children free). Refreshments are courtesy of Wayne and Jane Davis and the raffle proceeds go to the British Heart Foundation. Also, there's free workshops and talks, including the following.

- ✚ 11am: Introduction to healing by Steve Mayger
- ✚ 12pm: Feminine power/magick by Phionna Hutton
- ✚ 1pm: Mediumship by Tracey Craig
- ✚ 2pm Protection magick by Nick O'Connor (Gylden Fellowship)
- ✚ 3pm doTerra oils by Tonya Hountingwolf.

OK then, **Gylden Fellowship** are doing **protection magick** as a talk and we're covering such subjects as:

- Protecting yourself during a spell or a ritual = how to cast a circle, proper grounding, smudging sticks and drawing down the moon.
- Protecting yourself or others against psychic attack = white light bubbles, family protection spell, banishing negativity, amulets, etc.
- Protecting your home = making a witch bottle, hearth blessings, etc.
- Protecting you at work = help against office politics and protecting your workspace.
- Q&A, including hexes and jinxes, rowan wands, doll magick and banishments.



## Buying your gear

By Nick the Witch

This is a topical subject at present, particularly for new pagans – what is the right price for your kit? Do you need a sword? Should I wear robes for sabbat ceremonies? Here's a true story – a few years back, I came across a vendor on meet-up who organised Wiccan groups, but who expected his followers to buy their stuff from him. He had a carpentry business in south London and sold 'hand-carved wands' for over £200 and stangs for £140. We'll come to such goods in a little while; suffice to say that the pagan industry is flourishing just now, and one should be careful at MBS fayres or online, not to be ripped off by unscrupulous traders.

It's like the Coven of Witches shop in Burley in the New Forest. Some of their stock is very good, but none of it is cheap and it would be fair to say (I think) that this is a place for witchcraft tourists. I went in some years ago and had a mooch around – the assistant at the counter offered to sell me a "power wand". This was a wand-shaped piece of resin with a large bit of coloured glass at the end that cost £90! I declined to buy the wand but went to the shop next door (an art gallery) that had a few rough crystals in a box at the back – and bought a fist-sized lump of orange calcite for £3. My advice is *caveat emptor* and be prepared to browse in charity shops or boot sales to find what you want.

## Dressing-up

Let's start with cloaks or robes.

1. If you're a twit (and there's no other word for such pagan snobs), go to Glastonbury and order a set of robes from any of the shops there in a variety of colours and materials. A set of made-to-measure, cotton velvet robes (fully-lined) is going to cost in the region of £300, not necessarily including the twiddly bits of clasps, special hoods, etc.
2. Or, if you're good at sewing, some of my friends have made their own – I'm told you can make a good cloak for nothing from an old duvet cover.
3. Or you get a cheaper deal from one of the many MBS or witchcraft fayres.
4. Or you can do what I did – I'm useless at sewing, but a friend offered to make a washable lined cloak and hood for me in my choice of colour. It cost £90 all in. Oh yes, it's brown as I feel better with earthen colours than in black.

Most of the time, I do wear a cloak for ceremonies, particularly at the various sabbats or moon rituals celebrated around the Gylden Community region. I have to say that a cloak goes over other clothing, which is useful when I've been to some VERY cold rituals, eg Yule or Imbolg or moon rituals down on the beach at Southsea. One tip that is useful (I think) is to have a main robe for most things, but also a lighter summer robe for Litha or Lughnasadh.

## Smudging

It is usual to find smudge sticks made of sage (white or common), rosemary or lavender. You can either buy a smudge stick at an MBS fayre (eg £2-£3) or opt to make your own stick(s). If you've got herbs growing in your garden or allotment, the latter option may be more attractive. To make your own smudge stick, you'll need:

- Scissors or secateurs.
- Cotton or hemp string or thread.
- Sage, lavender, rosemary, etc.

1. Cut the branches of the plant into 6-10 inch lengths; leave for a day.
2. Measure and cut a piece of thin string about 4-5 feet long.
3. Put several branches together so that the cut ends are all together, and the leafy ends are all together.
4. With the tips of the branches pointing down, begin wrapping the cord tightly around the base of your bundle, while firmly pressing the plant lengths together, working your way to the tip.

5. When you reach the tip of the branches, begin working your way back down toward the base, giving a criss-cross pattern.
6. Tie the two ends of the cord together at the base.
7. Trim the edges to make it look all nice and neat.
8. Put your smudge stick to hang up or dry in a basket for 4-7 days.
9. Once your smudge stick has dried completely, you can store it in a bag or box in the dark until it's time to use it, eg burning it in a spell or ritual simply by lighting one end.

## Altar tools

**Candles** are an essential part of any witch's box of magickal tools. Most spells are performed either in natural light or by candle-light. If neither is sufficient for a more detailed spell, perhaps an oil lamp is best, because electric light tends to have a negative effect on spells.

How much would you expect to pay for an **athame**? Cheap ones might start at about £10-£15, but a good athame averages about £40. A good boline, dagger or dirk might be a little cheaper at about £30. Traditional athames might involve any of the following but use your good sense to avoid over-priced items.

1. They are made of metal, eg iron, steel, copper or bronze.
2. Some are made of natural materials, like carved wood or deer antler.
3. They may have symbols, runes or sigils on the handle, guard or blade.
4. Sometimes the handle or sheath has a pentacle on it.
5. In the main, the handles are black.
6. Mostly, the blades are double-sided.
7. Handles may be made of metal, darkened bone or wrapped wire.

**Swords** come in all sizes and metals and it's difficult to estimate, but a good long sword or claymore might cost between £80-£140. My advice is not to buy a sword at first, simply because it's not needed. If you're part of a druid grove or high Wiccan group, rituals may demand the presence of a sword bearer.

**Chalices** present the same type of problem – they come in all shapes and sizes, from drinking horns to glazed ceramics and all can be used in magick. A rough rule-of-thumb puts a good chalice at £30-£40. Some chalices are made of silver or pewter and may cost more, but it is advisable to avoid resin goblets/ chalices. Resin corrodes over time with wine, which is not good if you're conducting a group ritual. Pewter and silver tarnish too and need to be checked regularly.

I use a ceramic goblet that has a traditional style, known as an Awen goblet. For those of you who've seen *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and remember the final scene, where both the hero and the villain have to choose a holy goblet, traditional magick and rituals do not necessarily need very ornate and expensive chalices to worship the deities. It is possible to make your own chalice or drinking horn (if you follow a Norse or Germanic tradition), but the key point is that it is your chalice, imbued with your intent that is important to your magick.

Commonly, a **pentacle** represents mystic knowledge, but it is also a tool of protection from those who would attack you. So, it might be a free-standing talisman or engraved/ painted onto a disc, but many pagans also have pentacles on rings, pendants, charms and bracelets too. You can **make a pentacle** out of anything, including material or sticks, but there are specific correspondences. Pentacles as pendants might be £10 or £15 as a silver ring.

1. A wooden pentacle shows the connection to Nature.
2. A silver pentacle is linked to lunar energy and enhances psychic work.
3. A golden pentacle is said to help energy and wisdom.

Many **crystal balls** are made of glass, but most are made of more opaque crystals, such as agate, feldspar or smoky quartz. After all, it is not the ball that produces the images – the crystal ball is a channel through which your third eye can be active for divination work. It can be tricky to find a clear crystal ball that works for you. I obtained one recently for a friend, which was quartz with citrine occlusions, but this can be rare. I use a gold calcite ball that is almost translucent, but I've never found a similar one since then. For a smaller crystal ball, I'd estimate £15-£20 with a plastic stand. A larger ball might cost in the region of £25-£60, depending upon quality.

Try to buy a **cauldron** that:

- Is either cast iron or a metal good for heating.
- Is easy to clean after use.
- Has a tight lid, good handle, three legs and a fire-proof base. Safety is vital if you're burning something – best to have a fire-proof site too.
- Is the right size for your lifestyle and your spells.
- Costs about £20-£25 (for decent quality).

Before we move into wands and crystals, what other things could you place on an altar? They don't have to be expensive, but seasonal stuff from nature and different coloured ribbons for the sabbats – all are good.

**Herbs or plants** might include cinnamon, bay leaf, cloves, ginger, rue, sage, pumpkin seeds, nettles or pine needles. As the Wheel of the Year turns with each season, you may wish to use different scents with the produce, eg baskets of pine cones with essential oils – good ones for autumn include cinnamon, pine, apple or sage. A pumpkin jack-o-lantern is not necessary for an altar but could be placed on a step outside the home at Samhain.

**Leaves or flowers** are worthy additions to autumnal or spring produce, if you can find a variety of shapes and colours – and the traditional fruits of the forest, such as beech nuts, conkers, pine cones at Yule, seeds, seed pods or acorns.

Alban Elfed (Mabon) is the feast of the second harvest and it may be that you want to have some sheaves or corn or corn bread on your altar. **Produce** also could include **drinks**, eg wine, grapes or vines or fruit juices or bottles of cider. In some areas, this time is the harvest of the fruits of the sea, including such produce as oysters or other shellfish.

**Statuettes, idols and icons** are also common and can be eclectic, according to the pathway of that pagan. To be fair, I keep a model of an eagle on my altar, but let's consider some other possibilities and the costs vary with the source – some may be free.

- Symbols to represent the five elements
- A statue of your god or goddess
- A picture of an angel
- A depiction of your spirit guide, if appropriate
- A picture or carving of the Green Man
- Some other representation of nature – feathers, shells, etc
- Amulets or talismans
- Table plaques.

## Crystals

One could write several books on this subject, so let's not do that. By and large, small tumbled stones are not brilliant sources of energy and there are good reasons. Oh yes, very few witches use gemstones for anything much – it's too expensive and the stones have been either dyed or processed. Many stones can be foraged for free in the UK, eg jet, quartz, tourmaline or agate. Rough stones offer much better energy than tumbled stones. In fact, tumbled stones are probably better used for aquarium decoration than magick! Tumbled stones cost anything from £2-£5. Rough ones can be slightly more, depending on size.

It's also worth asking about where a crystal comes from, because a stone that has been mined abroad, polished by child labour abroad and then processed or faceted (cut) to look nice in a laboratory (eg some crystals are grown in a lab from scratch) may not offer much to you. Apart from blood diamonds, FT considerations don't apply yet to gems, but it's still possible to ask about a stone's origin.

So, here you are at a psychic fair or in a crystal shop. There are trays and trays of stones. Some crystals can communicate with you – no joke – if you are naturally sensitive, you may receive some type of light or heat energy from a stone. That doesn't always happen but use your receptive hand to find out (that's your left hand if you're right-handed). If you're not allowed to handle the stones, walk away to another shop/stall.

Do not invest good money in crystal wands that are marketed at huge cost just because they have a few tumbled crystals attached or have a pointed crystal at the end. Crystal wands may be useful tools at some point on your pathway, but not at the start and you can make your own such wooden wand much cheaper! Crystal wands depend upon the quality of the stones. Rough estimates would suggest that the price range of a wooden wand with inlaid crystals runs from £60-£170. Any more than that is probably a con. If you're simply looking for a crystal that has been faceted into a wand shape, eg a 6-inch selenite or tourmaline wand, I suggest £10 is OK.

OK, here are some of the main types of crystal around.

1. Rough vs tumbled (see above).
2. Pointed and doubled-pointed: some crystals have natural points at either or both ends. If pointed away from you, energy can be drawn off and pointed towards you, draw energy in.
3. Cluster crystals can absorb energy in a room, eg I have a large celestite cluster in the lounge to help maximise the peaceful vibrations there.
4. Geodes are crystals that are hollow inside, which can hold energy.
5. Crystal balls, eggs or squares can radiate energy on several levels.
6. Occlusions give a cloudy appearance to stones, amplifying energies.

## Wands and things

Wands are free – that's not a joke. Forage in a local wood after windy weather and see what you can find and remember to thank the tree after. Then you can carve runes, add crystals, wrap it with wire and varnish it yourself. If you are not so skilled and wish to buy a wand, eg from a magickal fayre or shop or internet, current prices would suggest that a good wooden wand costs about £30-£40. A small artificial wand might set you back about £15.

Within my local area, Hindhead always had a reputation for good-quality besoms or brooms, from Saxon times onwards. And it is true that a good broom is a useful household item that can be decorated with ribbons, according to the season. Several friends like to have decorative brooms either at the entrances to their homes or hung on the walls. The best twigs for a broom are birch, tied together in a bundle, and the best (traditional) woods for the handle are willow, ash or hazel...a rough cost might be anywhere from £10-£15.

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**. And this depends on the buyer – a piece of wood for the shaft, perhaps some deer antlers that have been shed and a screw for fixing one to the other. A bought stang might be £30-£40.

# Christianity and the Zodiac

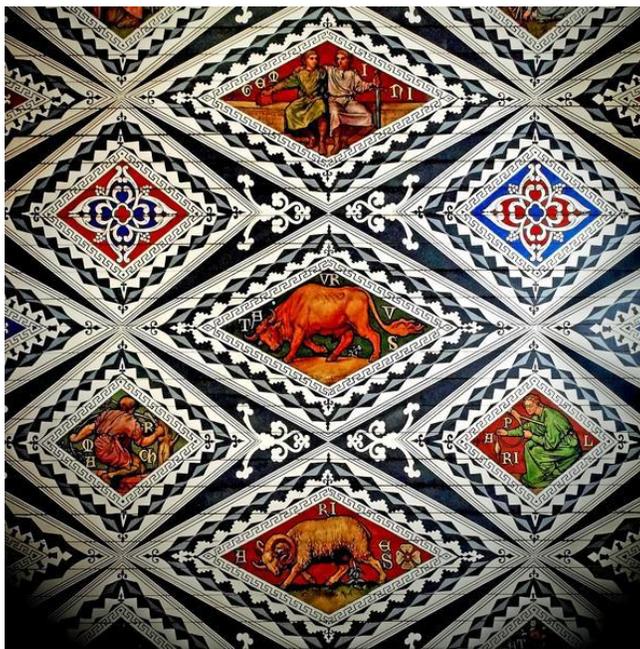
By Gylden Fellowship

Now, we've done it – mentioned Christianity in a pagan magazine and linked it with astrology! There is a method in our madness though when you consider Waltham Abbey in Essex. The **Abbey Church of Waltham Holy Cross and St Lawrence** itself is quite ancient, dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, although the current building dates from 1177. And if you visit the abbey, the main roof is decorated with the signs of the Zodiac. The present Abbey ceiling was painted in 1860, but the style was based on the 13<sup>th</sup> century design from the nave in Peterborough Cathedral.

There is a good reason for this style, but we need to go back several centuries and consider the attitude of the Christian Church in the Middle Ages, as opposed to the present Christian view of astrology.

## The Medieval Zodiac

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, most people believed that our planet was at the centre of the universe with planets and the sun revolving around us. The stars in the night sky formed pictures and the constellations had been named accordingly by Graeco-Roman and Middle Eastern cultures – to represent gods, goddesses, animals and legends. Early astronomers noted that 12 constellations seemed to form a band or zodiac around the sky and that the sunrise followed that band during the year, rising each month in different constellations in turn. This was the start of naming each zodiac sign as a symbol for that month, starting with the sign of Aries for the spring equinox.

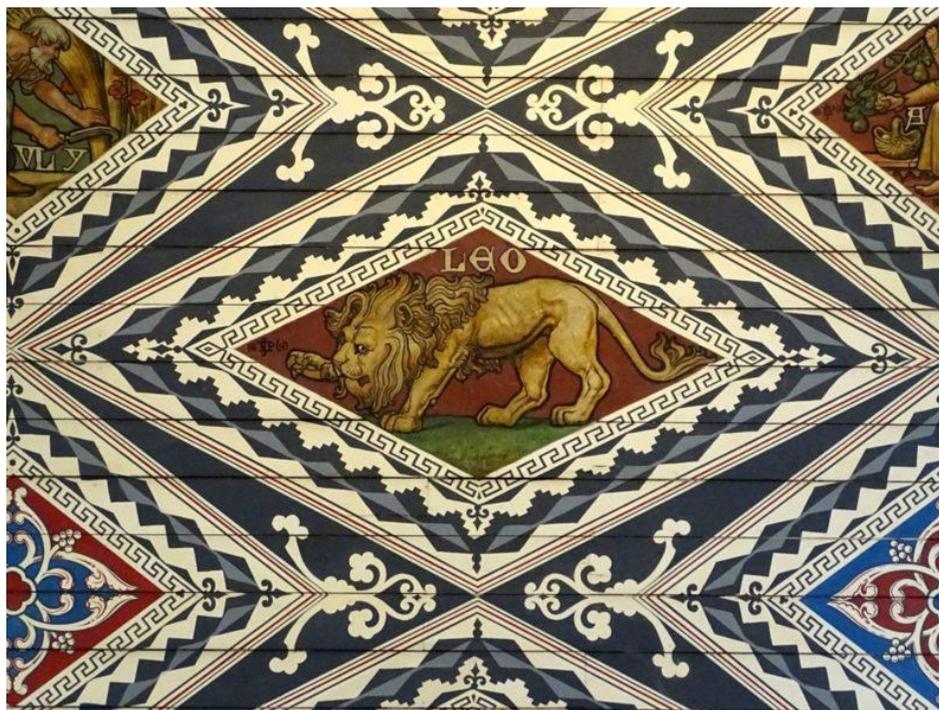


Most churchgoers at that time did not read Latin or Greek and the Christian Church tended to use images or symbols to guide its followers through the services. The Zodiac was a simple device to illustrate the round of the year and the Christian Church included tasks for each month, the cardinal elements and symbols for past and future.

## Symbolism of the Zodiac signs

OK then, let's consider each sign and its meaning within the Christian Church at that time.

1. **Aries (the Ram)** represents creation that is God himself. Associated tasks include pruning and cutting back of evil to create new life for the soul.
2. **Taurus (the Bull)** represents the creation of Heaven and Earth – for an agricultural congregation, both the ram and the bull show creative energies...the task is spinning, which shows the turn of the universe and is creative too.
3. **Gemini (the Twins)** symbolises Christ, emphasising the duality of his divinity and humanity. One twin is dressed in green for eternal life and the other in grey for death and rebirth. The task is the picking of flowers as symbolic of the Virgin and, also, the flowering of God's plan.
4. **Cancer (the Crab)** represents the creation of the moon and sea-life... the task is weeding of evil from our lives.
5. **Leo (the Lion)** represents the creation of the sun and life on land. The task for this time is harvesting/ cutting the corn, as a symbol of death and rebirth. It also symbolises gathering good seed to make the bread that is the body of Christ.
6. **Virgo (the Virgin)** is all about the creation of humanity. The Virgin is also the mother of Christ and she reminds us of his human life...that is why she is depicted holding the scales of justice, as a mediator between Christ and us. The task is harvesting the grapes to make the wine that is the blood of Christ.
7. **Libra (the Scales)** shows the choice of humanity, balanced between good and evil and able to choose. The piper in the picture shows our creativity.
8. **Scorpio (the Scorpion)** symbolises death and resurrection – in the Middle Ages, people believed that scorpions could choose to destroy themselves – the choice is between life and death. The associated task is drawing the wine, namely shedding Christ's blood to achieve redemption.
9. **Sagittarius (the Archer)** represents a person with his carnal and spiritual natures and the arrow is his control over which direction to take. The task of cutting wood is about death and rebirth.
10. **Capricorn (the Goat)** symbolises humanity weighed down by sin – the fish represents the redemption offered by Christ. The associated task of a man sitting by a fire shows the dead awaiting resurrection.
11. **Aquarius (the Water-Carrier)** symbolises rebirth to a new life via baptism and the washing away of sin. The task is ploughing the land, ready to receive the word of God.
12. **Pisces (the Fishes)** represents the birth of Christ and his dual natures...the way and the new life and the end of another year. The task is sowing new seeds to bring another harvest.



# The Revenant

By the Storyteller

***A revenant is a visible ghost or animated corpse, believed to have returned from the grave to terrify people. The word, revenant, is linked to the French verb, revenir, meaning "to come back". An English historian from 1190, William of Newburgh, wrote about several such cases and the following story is drawn from one of them.***

*It is set in Yorkshire and concerned a man with an evil reputation, Roger Bully, who fled from York after many crimes. He decided to live in Guiseley and get married, while on the run. But he became jealous of his wife and hid in the rafters of his bedroom, hoping to get evidence of her adultery. Unfortunately, he fell to the floor, inflicting a deadly wound and he died a few days later.*

*Roger received a Christian burial, despite his past crimes, but people began to see him rising from his grave at night and wandering around the town until sunrise. If anybody met him, they were attacked and slaughtered either by the corpse or by a pack of dogs that followed him. So many people took to staying in at night-time that, soon, no less than the Archbishop of York ordered that the monster had to be killed.*

*Several people and a priest took spades to the graveyard by day and began to dig at the grave of the monster. As they dug, they realised that the earth was quite loose and the corpse was lying out of its shroud. The original man had been wiry and thin, but this corpse was extremely swollen and suffused with blood, which gave the body a reddish look.*

*The diggers' anger overcame their fear and wonder. Two of them hit the corpse with their spades and a stream of blood flowed out of the body, so much so that it resembled a doctor's leech. Then, dragging the body beyond the village, the group constructed a funeral pyre. There was just one last thing to do before burning the corpse to ashes and this was done under the supervision of the priest – the body was torn open by the diggers' spades, its heart was dragged out and crushed underfoot.*



# Seasonal magick for Ostara

By Nick the Witch

Alban Eilir (meaning *the light of the earth*) is known by several other names, such as Ostara, the Festival of the Trees, the Rite of Eostre, Eostar or Earrach, depending upon which path or culture you follow. No, that wasn't earache! Earrach is the Irish-Gaelic word for Spring; so, an t-earrach means the season of Spring. But most people refer to this festival as the spring equinox and, this year, it falls **on Friday, 20 March**.

At Ostara, day and night are equal across the world. As we look around, all of nature is growing after the winter sleep: buds are on the trees, seeds start to germinate and spring flowers appear, eg daffodils, grape hyacinths and bluebells. Both plants and animals can sense the return of life to the soil as the power of the sun increases each day and the nights get shorter.

Many pagan groups across the Gylden area have Ostara ceremonies arranged – please see our March 2020 calendar on our Facebook groups – this should list most of the rituals.

In Saxon times, the Earth goddess, Eostre, was honoured at this time for new life and growth. Apart from the end of Winter, Alban Eilir celebrates balance and fertility, both new life and rebirth, symbolised by the egg and by the hares that look for mates at this time of year. Yet we are aware that the first buds have appeared on the trees and spring bulbs are starting to grow.

Now is the time to express our own growth through art, craft, poetry and songs, remembering ancestral wisdom and preparing for future changes. This is also a time for healing, for reclaiming what has been lost and working with our intuition. Be open to inner wishes, beliefs and feelings and communicate with others. Follow what feels right to you.

Here are some ideas for celebrating Ostara, either at home or in a moot.

- Springtime wand-making.
- Going out for a group or moot walk to see the new spring energy.
- Planting out new herbs.
- Making a well dressing.
- Making a spring picture of natural materials.
- Baking bread or cakes for Ostara.
- Hard-boil some eggs and paint them in bright colours.
- Take the painted eggs and create an egg tree.
- Raise some money for a local rabbit rescue charity.

## Incense for Ostara

As we're just approaching Ostara (20 March 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.

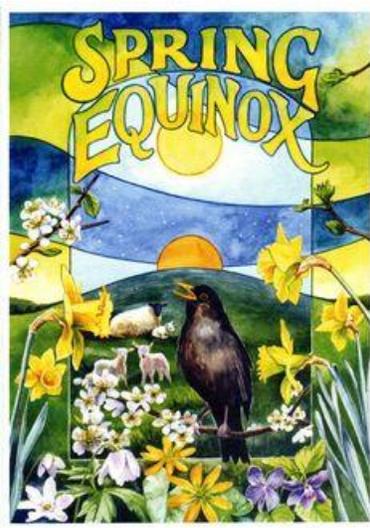
Start with the essential oils or resins, mashing them up with the mortar and pestle. Or, you could use a blender or coffee grinder. Then add fruit, flowers, dry herbs last. The Ostara incense could consist of:

- 1 teaspoon sandalwood to awaken your spirit
- 1 part vervain for cleansing your chakras
- 1/2 teaspoon rose petals for love
- 1/2 teaspoon orange peel for abundance
- 1/2 teaspoon marigold (calendula) for inner harmony
- 1/2 teaspoon milk thistle for protection.

Add all the ingredients into the mortar or a mixing bowl. As you add the herbs and flowers, consider their uses and focus on the blend of attributes. Blend and decant into the jars.

## Ostara prayer

So, here we are, gathered in a moot,  
Giving our praise – that is the truth.  
Last week was Ostara and it's the day  
To put the clocks forward – it'll soon be May.  
But first it's the god and the goddess who reign –  
As young lovers, handfast the twain.  
Keridwen is here, Queen of the Spring,  
Giving fertility to every living thing.  
And Cernunnos too, with antlers and horn,  
Showing his power with every new dawn.  
Fertile gods, you bring the seeds,  
Of light and life for all our needs.  
Blessed be.



# Spi-rituality: full moon ritual

By Moon Rituals Portsmouth

In last month's *GYLDEN MAGICK*, we described an Imbolg ritual from Basingstoke Pagan Circle. This month, we're looking at a recent esbat ceremony.



On 8 February, members of **Moon Rituals Portsmouth** held a full moon ritual on Eastney Beach in Southsea. Despite some windy weather earlier in the day, the moonrise was dry, cold and clear. As ever, the ritual started with calling the quarters, the sky, the earth and all animals thereon. And a Goddess chant was performed by the group:

**"Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali – Inanna"**  
(repeated several times)

The ceremony was written by **Adam Lewis**, leader of this group, inclusive for all pathways. This group always includes an extra opportunity for members to contribute poems, stories, songs, etc towards the end of the ceremony. It is worth noting that if you wish to attend a moon ritual, please use the group's Facebook site in advance, to notify the organisers of your intention. Here is a **Welcome Flare** from the ceremony.

*"Healing thought set in flight,  
Bring wellness blessings here tonight.  
Send healing light from the moon above,  
To those in need with all our love.  
For those in need of psychic care,  
We also send a welcome flare.  
For those that live in stress and fear,  
To come and join our circle here.  
We offer respite, healing, hope and cheer,  
For those seeking release from psychic prison, we wish  
you free."*

Adam then recounted the parable of the **Taoist Farmer**:

*There was once a Taoist farmer. One day, the farmer's only horse broke out of its corral and ran away. The farmer's neighbours, all hearing of the horse's escape, came to the farmer's house to view the empty corral. As they all stood there, they said "what bad luck" – the farmer replied "maybe".*

*About a week later, the horse returned, bringing with it a whole herd of wild horses, which the farmer and his son quickly put in the corral. The neighbours came to see for themselves – a corral now full of horses and they said, "what good luck" – the farmer replied "maybe".*

*Soon after, the farmer's only son had an accident and broke his leg. The farmer's neighbours, all hearing of the accident came to the farmer's house and said "what bad luck" – the farmer replied "maybe".*

*At the same time in China, there was a conflict between two rival warlords. The warlord of the Taoist farmer's village was involved in this war and he sent a captain to the village to conscript more troops. The captain came to the Taoist farmer's home but found the son with fever and a broken leg – he left the son at home and took others from the village. The neighbours said, "what good luck" – the farmer replied "maybe".*

The group members offered blessings and a spell was performed to draw down the moon's energy. Full details are on the group's Facebook site.

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

Our Twitter and email addresses: @GyldenFellowship

Our website: [www.gyldenfellowship.co.uk](http://www.gyldenfellowship.co.uk)

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

