



Gylden Magick

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May 2023

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.

Dear readers of **GYLDEN MAGICK**,

It's **May** (the **Flower Moon**) – I've been reflecting on the beauty of nature with all the flowers and blossom at this time. Beltaine was the beginning of summer for the Saxons – a time when sheep were moved to the upland pastures until the Feast of Winter in October.

The hours of daylight have been growing steadily. The power of the sun increases each day as the nights get shorter, until we reach the solstice/ Alban Hefin in June.

Dates for your diaries – not least **Thargelia** (ancient Greece) on 7 May.

Held on the island of Delos, this festival celebrated Apollo and Artemis. Other key dates include the **Festival of St Brendan the Navigator** on 16 May, **The Hammer of Thor** on 19-20 May, **Sacred Well Days** across Europe on 26-28 May and **Oak Apple Day** on 29 May. Oak Apple Day commemorates the return of King Charles II from exile in 1660, which is apposite in view of the coronation of King Charles III.

Our website has two collections of tales from the **Storyteller**, with another in the pipeline and we've added two collections of poetry from **Nicola Ison**.

One of the correspondence crystals for May is jade, as pictured above. If you do happen to have a jade elephant, remember it's lucky to turn its head towards the door.

The altar colours for this period around **Beltaine** are green, white and yellow. But no ads – after all, we're like a pagan public library and all the information is free.

We continue with our regular series about celestial forecasts, sacred art, folklore and magick. Our crystal expert, Charlie, turns her attention to kambaba jasper, as well as other pieces on environmental issues, such as floods, Earth Day and local nature reserves.

Thank you for all your feedback and many blessings.

Gylden Fellowship admins

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Contents: May 2023

Seasonal magick for Beltaine by Nic the Witch	Pages 3-4
Song of the witch by Nicola Ison	Page 5
Sacred art: Buddha's birthday, collated by Gylden Fellowship	Pages 6-8
Environment: Earth Day 2023 by Gylden Fellowship	Pages 9-11
Crystal clear: kambaba jasper and stromatolites by Charlie Foreverdark	Pages 12-13
Folklore: tales for spring evenings – The Winged Horse of Ash by the Storyteller	Page 14
Environment: flood risks by the Caltrop Consultancy	Pages 15-17
Environment: ocean alkalinity by Mark Sharpen	Page 18
Photos: local nature reserves by Sussex Wildlife Trust	Pages 19-20
Crowns by Gylden Fellowship	Pages 21-22
Shrooms by Erica Zann	Pages 23
Gylden contact info	Page 24



Seasonal magick for Beltaine

By Nic the Witch

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

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

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



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

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

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

Incense for Beltaine

As we're just at Beltaine (1 May 2023), 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, e.g. a cup or 1tsp.

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

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

Am Beannachadh Bealltain (The Beltane Blessing)

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

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

Poetry: Song of the Witch

By Nicola Ison

Running through grass and leaping aloft,
What could it be, but a hare?
Long back legs and smooth brown fur,
Mad jumping here and there.
But some hares are not so mad,
And this one has an air,
Of acting almost deliberately,
Seeming randomness everywhere.

A closer look reveals the truth,
This hare's eyes are blue,
Every other natural trait,
But the eyes, they give a clue.
This isn't a hare in any sense,
A witch transformed – it's true,
Keeping special vigilance,
O'er problems old and new.

If livestock ails or crops die down,
If a family is always at strife,
A normal, pleasant front is kept -
A household on a knife.
A witch can see, via the hare,
To find pressure that is so rife,
And try to heal the fissures,
Restoring peace to normal life.



Gylden
Magick
May 2023

Sacred art: Buddha's birthday: 26 May 2023

Collated by Gylden Fellowship









Earth Day 2023

By Gylden Fellowship

Earth Day is one of those regular events, supported by many pagans, particularly those in the USA. It occurred this year just before Beltaine, on 22 April and 2023 marks the 53rd anniversary of Earth Day; it's a chance for us all to promote our principles of environmental protection and recognition of Gaia.

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

The main theme for Earth Day 2023 (earthday.org) was (and is) **Invest In Our Planet**. From their website, it's a case of "All TOGETHER now! This is the moment to change it all — the business climate, the political climate, and how we take action on climate. Now is the time for the unstoppable courage to **preserve and protect our health, our families, our livelihoods... together, we must Invest In Our Planet**. Because a **green** future is a **prosperous** future. **We need to act (boldly), innovate (broadly), and implement (equitably)**. It's going to take all of us. **All in**. Businesses, governments, and citizens — everyone accounted for, and everyone accountable. **A partnership for the planet**.

And while there is still time to solve the climate crisis, time to choose BOTH a prosperous and sustainable future, and time to restore nature and build a healthy planet for our children and their children, **time is short.**



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

OK then, first, EDN has promoted the idea of Earth Week and expanded the number of events - it's not impossible to express your views online and support climate action causes. Climate action includes such diverse causes as anti-fracking, safe water, defence of the rainforests, stop drilling for fossil fuels, etc. Everyone can do something and here are some suggestions.

- Add your voice to these global demands for action with #EarthDay2023.
- Join in on social media for action on earthday.org and on @earthdaynetwork - every hour, on the hour, we'll have a new, powerful way for you to demand action and drive change.
- Demand change with civic action — call your local councillors or tweet your MPs. There are so many ways to tell your leaders that human and planetary health must be the top political priority.
- Send a message to the government and get registered, educated and ready to vote in the next set of local, regional and national elections.
- Throughout April and May, earthday.org will have ways to get involved in local, state and national politics in the USA as the Vote Earth campaign is launched.

The first Earth Day seized the power of education through campus-wide teach-ins that sparked conversation, engaged local communities and informed change. Now, as Earth Day 2023 goes digital, the EDN is bringing 12 teach-ins to a global scale. Some of the world's most inspiring musicians, artists, scientists and spiritual leaders will use digital teach-ins to share their experience, expertise and lessons to a global audience across the 24 hours of the Earthrise initiative.

There's so much you can do to help protect and restore our planet, from joining a small clean-up of plastic pollution or litter on your daily walk to hosting an online event in your own community! The EDN created a citizen science platform to unite people on a global scale and encourage participation...to collect relevant and accurate data on the environment. This environmental platform has been called **Earth Challenge** and seeks to bring people together, when many are isolated across the world. Through the Earth Challenge app, anyone with a smartphone can contribute to a global database of information on air quality and plastic pollution (for example).

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

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

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



!

Crystal clear: kambaba jasper and stromatolites

By Charlie Foreverdark

Kambaba jasper is a unique and beautiful green volcanic stone; more specifically, it is an extrusive igneous rock. Found in Madagascar, in the Bongolava region, it is the dark coloured, irregularly shaped orbicular patterning which causes it to closely resemble some types of stromatolite fossils. Based on appearance, this inaccurate assumption was simply repeated over and over until it was eventually assumed to be correct. This has led to many people selling Kambaba jasper making wildly inaccurate and speculative claims about the stone, namely claiming that it is billions of years old and that the green colouration is due to the fossilised blue/green algae content. (conveniently and completely disregarding the fact that the colour of a fossil rarely bears any resemblance to the original colour of the organism...chlorophyll simply isn't that resilient!).

Incorrect mineral names are passed along from miner to buyer to wholesaler all the time, and there is so much in the way of incorrect information floating about online that it can be difficult to sort the fact from the fiction. In addition to Kambaba jasper, this stone is also sold under the names crocodile rock, galaxy jasper, amphibianite, camo stone and eldarite amongst others including green stromatolite fossil stone, which is a real misnomer.



Despite being erroneously sold as a fossil, Kambaba jasper is actually a volcanic rock (rhyolite) and is not of organic origin. The EPI Institute in Germany has studied Kambaba jasper extensively using x-ray diffraction and found that it consists of the minerals, quartz, pyroxene, albite and feldspar. The characteristic black rounded orbicular patterns within the Kambaba consist of radiating needles of amphibole group minerals – riebeckite to pargasite in specific composition. Amphibole minerals form in igneous (volcanic) rocks, and not in the sedimentary ones where fossils are found. None of the identified Kambaba samples were found to be organic or sedimentary – as one would rightfully expect a genuine stromatolite to be.

It is interesting to note that deposits of a stone with this particular mineralogical make-up were also discovered in Mexico. However, the colours and patterning are reversed and it is known by the trade name, Nebula Stone. Some of the misinformation may well have originated from the discoverers of Nebula Stone, who did not want to acknowledge that a material (which they had believed to be single source) had been discovered somewhere other than Mexico. From a mineralogical perspective, Kambaba jasper and Nebula stone are so similar that their trade names can be accepted as equivalent synonyms. Also, though examples of both can look very similar in appearance to stromatolite fossils, they are no such thing. One mineralogist and author, Marco Campos Venuti, who studied geological evaluation in Madagascar (where Kambaba jasper originates) explained that there is a source of oncolite stromatolite from the KABAMBA area in Uganda (read it carefully, it's not a spelling mistake!) and that the similarity of the words "Kabamba" and "Kambaba" has likely been a contributory factor in the confusion. So whilst you could purchase a stromatolite fossil from Kabamba in the Uganda, it is not the case that Kambaba jasper from Madagascar is such a material.

To add a further confusion factor into the mix, orbicular Ocean Jasper, discovered in the remote Madagascan village of Kabamby is sometimes named and sold as kambamby jasper in addition to its more common moniker Ocean Jasper. Kabamby/Ocean Jasper is a spherulitic chalcedony, and forms in an entirely different way, so from a geological perspective it's a different stone to Kambaba jasper - and neither are stromatolites!

Stromatolites are microbial reefs created by ancient cyanobacteria, and their fascinating fossils are the oldest traces of living primeval microorganisms on Earth. When you stare into the swirling orbicular patterns of a genuine stromatolite, you are glimpsing the very origins of life on planet Earth! Mineralogically speaking, stromatolites consist of interlaced clumps of organic matter, including fossilised algae, from at least 3 billion years ago! From a numeracy perspective: If you were to count to a million, at a consistent rate of one number per second, with no breaks at all, it would take 11 days, 13 hours, 46 minutes, and 40 seconds to reach a million. If you were to count to a billion at this same consistent rate, you'd be counting for a little over 31 and a half years!!!

Stromatolites are one of the earliest records of life on Earth. One of the specific fossilised inclusions within stromatolite fossils is cyanobacteria, which is believed to have helped create the first oxygen atmosphere here on Earth, many moons ago. Cyanobacteria is a prokaryote; a single cell organism lacking a distinct membrane-bound nucleus. It is prokaryotes that maintain the homeostasis of our planet, rendering the biosphere habitable for all other life. It's a pretty big deal! Oxygen is a metabolic by-product of cyanobacteria, so this organism literally paved the way for aerobic life to emerge and diversify.

It is quite something to be able to hold in our hands a tangible form of the primordial ooze that nurtured our atmosphere and ultimately advanced the creation of all living things! A small piece of stromatolite encodes biological activity that spans the first 7/8th of the Earth's history and the role that ancient microorganisms played in evolution.

The name for the layered structures formed by cyanobacterial growth are oncoids, and these join together to form spherical oncolites, and columnar stromatolites. The oncoids often form around a central nucleus, such as a fragment of shell, and eventually a structure of calcium carbonate is deposited by encrusting microbes. The intricate patterns and structures that we observe in these ancient fossils are a reflection of a complex consortium of microbial species with differing motility and diverse metabolic needs, all competing for resources. Essentially, stromatolite fossils are biogenically produced structures formed by colonies of photosynthesising cyanobacteria from a VERY VERY long time ago. You can see and feel the differing textures within the fossilised ancient organic material, and it is really quite obviously different to Kambaba jasper.



Tales for spring evenings: The Winged Horse of Ash

By the Storyteller

OK, here's a fairy-cum-folk tale from this part of the world. **Editor's note:** two collections of the Storyteller's tales, *Winter Chills* and *Tales of Wonder and Magick* have been published on the **Gylden Fellowship** website and are free to download.

There was a miserable old man in Ash called Matthew Trigg, miserable since his wife died and he didn't talk to anyone, but many villagers still remembered the couple as happy and generous to all. Unfortunately, some of the children teased him or tried to take his walking stick.

One day, Matthew went missing. He always went for a walk at dusk, but no-one saw him the next day and his house was empty. After a search by the villagers, he was not in or around the village, but his walking stick was found lying inside a faery ring of toadstools in the woods. He'd been taken by the faery folk and the whole village was upset.

There was a wise woman in the village and she was able to show (by magick) where Matthew had been taken as a punishment for breaking the faery ring: he was being made to dance until he died, at the other end of the county. To save Matthew from the faery folk, the wise woman asked the children of the village to bring something important to each of them – toys, books, knives, etc. All went into her cauldron and she clicked her fingers - everything caught fire. She mixed the ashes with oils and spices to form a paste.

Then, she asked a local farmer to lend her his old farm horse, Dobbin. When the horse arrived, she asked it to find Matthew and return him to the village. She rubbed the paste onto his back and a pair of wings appeared! Dobbin flew to the other end of the county, only to find Matthew still trying to dance, surrounded by a ring of tiny fae. The horse flew down and hovered just long enough for Matthew to climb on his back and they headed back home.

As they approached Ash, Dobbin was flying so fast that he hit the church spire and bent it. Matthew was safely back home and he spent the rest of his days talking about his rescue. Dobbin's wings disappeared, but the church spire remained bent out of shape until the middle of Queen Victoria's reign when the village decided to have it repaired.



Environment: flood risks

By the Caltrop Consultancy

Many people and their businesses suffered severe losses in recent years because of flooding, which was (to a large extent) not anticipated by the government and those affected. One fact that is almost always true is that while many people and businesses have planned for fire and have fire safety or evacuation procedures, it is rare for them to have a flood plan. This is surprising, because the damage that can be inflicted by flooding can be just as extensive as fire, particularly to paper resources, furnishings, carpets and electrical systems.

Any business or household (or local council) will have a security risk assessment, which includes the threat identification, crisis management and business continuity planning - it should also include a vulnerability study. This element should examine the areas in which the area is open to particular threats. Floods, fire, explosion, major accident, etc: all of these risks should be anticipated and a crisis response plan established. In the case of flooding, there will be the problem of rescue, salvage and restoration of damaged equipment.



So, where should one start with the vulnerability study for flooding? If the organisation owns or occupies property next to a river, watercourse or a ditch, that person or company is the riparian owner of the water in question. This is the case, even though it may not be shown on the property's title deeds. The point to emphasise here is that the riparian owner is responsible for the maintenance of all watercourses, whether they are open or in pipes, unless there is a written agreement that the local authority has assumed the responsibility.

Poor maintenance of a watercourse, which results in unnecessary flooding, may have implications for the insurance cover.

It should be noted that flooding need not be restricted to inland sources - rivers or springs; severe storms can increase the risks of coastal flooding too. If a site is open to the risk of flooding (coastal or inland), the vulnerability study should take into account such factors as:

- identifying the possible protection against floods
- assessing the integrity of these protective measures
- setting up a database to include the assessment results
- examining the extent of previous flooding in the area
- consulting local authorities in respect of water level or shoreline management plans.

Much of the serious flooding during 2022-2023 affected property which had been built before modern planning controls and had been located near to vulnerable areas, eg close to rural watercourses. The riparian owner should be aware of several measures that may be taken to reduce the risk of flooding, such as:

- the watercourse should be allowed to flow unobstructed, eg no pollution or diversion
- there is no common law duty to enlarge a watercourse and, therefore, some small floods will be inevitable over the land, perhaps from blockages further down the watercourse
- the bed and banks of the watercourse should be kept free of any material that could cause an obstruction
- material waste from the site should not be dumped into the watercourse; this is a legal duty in respect of pollution, but natural waste from landscape management should not end up in the watercourse, eg branches or grass cuttings, as such matter may block culverts
- if the property is vulnerable to floods, an adequate supply of sandbags should be maintained on the premises; the local authority will not supply sandbags except in an emergency and, even then, the first priority is to help residents who are in immediate danger of flooding.



The Environment Agency has estimated that some five million people live in flood risk areas. The property, land and other assets in these areas are valued at over £500 billion and, during the last 10 years, 36 people have died from floods in England and Wales. Moreover, the Association of British Insurers has produced research that

concludes that over one million properties are at risk from inland flooding in the United Kingdom. The total insured value of property at risk is estimated at well over £35 billion. Of the at-risk areas, London has the highest exposure of 70,000-100,000 properties at risk. The main insurance points can be set out thus:

- self-employed and small businesses working from home should check that household contents policies cover all relevant IT equipment under the value of £10,000
- residential properties
- commercial tenants in rented or serviced offices should be covered under the landlord's building policy
- management consultants or managing agents may need to take out sole insurance cover for the properties in their portfolios.

The main Government source of advice is the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). DEFRA is responsible for flood defence and coastal erosion, instructing the Environment Agency to provide general supervision over matters relating to flood defence. The Environment Agency takes responsibility for the main rivers, but not ordinary watercourses. It manages the National Flood Warning Service, which issues warnings of floods from the main rivers, namely:

- flood watch: a general alert in response to poor weather conditions
- flood warning: a general alert in response to rising levels in main rivers
- severe flood warning: a specific alert for those living near main rivers.

The Environment Agency incorporates the old Rivers Authority in its structure and it should be noted that local authorities take no responsibility over the maintenance of watercourses except where they are the riparian owners. However, local councils do have the power to carry out emergency work on watercourses to prevent flooding, if funds are available; it is more common for councils to inspect the watercourses that have been prone to flood in the past and to offer advice to the riparian owner.

The county councils are responsible for the maintenance of the public highways, which means keeping them clear of floodwater, but it is the riparian owners who are responsible for the maintenance of the gulleys, ditches and pipes for the drainage of excess water.

The water utility companies are responsible for floods emanating from sewers and should be consulted as part of the contingency plan.

Further help can be had from support units from the Environment Agency, the National Flood Warning Centre, and Floodline.

Flooding can have a huge effect on business premises, storage facilities, plant, machinery and personal safety. The Government has charged local authorities with the responsibility for ensuring that flood defences are adequately funded and the Environment Agency has distributed digital flood plain maps to local authorities.

Environment: ocean alkalinity

By Mark Sharpen

OK then, something a little different this month. You may know magnesium hydroxide better as the staple ingredient of the chemist's favourite, Milk of Magnesia. What you may not know is that a Canadian company is about to dump 300 tonnes of it into the sea just off St Ives in Cornwall. During late 2022, Planetary Technologies received regulatory permission to add this amount of magnesium hydroxide ($Mg(OH)_2$), found naturally as the mineral brucite, to the existing wastewater flow in Hayle..

There's a public protest by [Keep our Sea Chemical Free - Save St Ives Bay](#), against what many see as untested technology that could have detrimental effects on the area and its fauna and flora. The group said its members are passionate about protecting the local environment and helping to reach net zero, but not at the expense of the precious marine ecosystem. To be fair, there's been no environmental impact assessment - no understanding of what effect it will have on the local maritime ecosystem and marine life. The protest group questions the efficacy of this practice as a way of achieving net zero and the local council in St Ives voted unanimously against the proposed scheme in April 2023.

The CEO of the company claims to have familial ties with Cornwall and draws attention to the effects of climate change on the Cornish seas and coastline. He compares the dumping of carbon dioxide over the last two centuries with the increasing acidity and heating of the oceans. When carbon dioxide seeps into the water, it turns into carbonic acid, which has a deep impact on shellfish and marine ecosystems.

So, which view is correct? There has been a general environmental assessment by Planetary into the technology on a global scale, dating from 11 January 2022. Seawater chemistry and the MRV (monitoring, reporting and verification) of magnesium hydroxide was examined in the light of adding alkalinity against acidification. Its conclusion was that MRV for ocean alkalinity enhancement is a developing field, requiring loads of 3D ocean modelling tools, calibrated using site-specific survey and sampling programmes. It should be noted that the company are supporting a parallel research programme at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia which will assess the efficacy, impacts and benefits of adding hydroxide to seawater, including how it affects selected marine biology – coastal phytoplankton and oyster larvae will be assessed in the lab as well as in field trials in the Bedford Basin and in a commercial oyster hatchery.

I have to confess a little cynicism here though – almost always, I follow the money with any new stuff. The detailed assessment has a more than a few pages devoted to commercial exploitation of the OAE trials. The general idea is that, following the trials in Nova Scotia and Cornwall, the company will focus on licensing its negative emissions hydrogen technology to a variety of industries in the latter half of this decade, with nuclear power plants and wastewater treatment plants being specifically identified as potential hosts. Discussions with EDF and South West Water during Phase 1 have confirmed that deployment of the technology aligns with the innovation plans in these industries. Extra commercial applications exist in mineral leaching and Planetary Technologies has made a deal with a nickel mining company that employs a similar process, where the technology can reduce the overall carbon intensity of the mining operation. Conclusion? Caveat emptor!!

Environment: local nature reserves

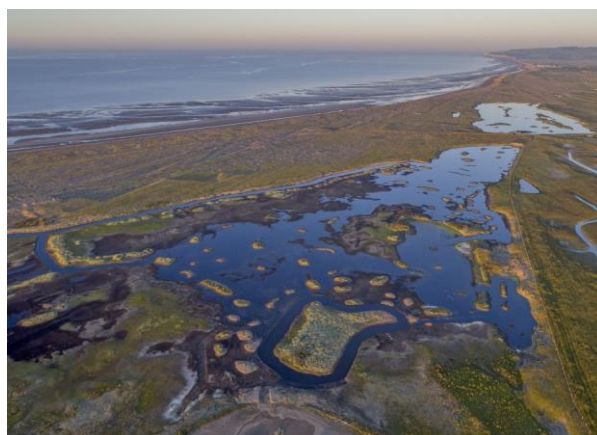
By Sussex Wildlife Trust



Graffham Common



Burton Pond



Rye Harbour (Stuart Conway)



Ebernoe Common (Mark Monk-Terry)



Malling Down

Crowns

By Gylden Fellowship

This article looks at crowns, which seems apposite in view of the Coronation of Charles III. Let's start with **St Edward's Crown**, which is the one that was used by HM Queen Elizabeth II at her coronation in 1953.



It was originally made for the coronation of the Charles II in 1661 and was stored safely in the Tower of London, although St Edward's Crown was been removed from the Tower of London to allow for modification work to begin ahead of the Coronation. Key facts about St Edward's Crown include:

- The solid gold frame weighs 2.23kg (nearly 5lbs) and is adorned with rubies, amethysts, sapphires, garnets, topazes and tourmalines
- It has a velvet cap with an ermine band.
- St Edward's Crown was last used for crowning Elizabeth II in 1953
- This lost medieval crown was said to have belonged to the 11th century royal saint, King Edward the Confessor, the last Anglo-Saxon king of England.
- The crown was commissioned from the Royal Goldsmith, Robert Vyner, in 1661.
- St Edward's Crown was made for the coronation of Charles II to replace the medieval crown melted down by parliamentarians in 1649, after the execution of King Charles I. Although it is not an exact replica of

the medieval design, it follows the original in having four crosses-pattée, four fleurs-de-lis, and two arches.

Right then, if that's the crown for Charles III, what is an equivalent for pagans? Well, it's quite common for candle-crowns to be made or hoicked out of storage for Yule and Imbolg. These have several names, such as the **Crown of Lights or a Lucia Crown**. Candle-crowns have their origins in the late Medieval period. At least one Byzantine emperor is said to have worn one during audiences as a way of impressing visitors.

The crown of lights is referenced in early modern (1500s-1600s) Germany as the Christkindl. The crown was worn by the Protestant Reformers eager to dethrone the gift-giving St. Nicholas from his 6 December feast and the hearts of children, replacing him with a Christ Child figure who brought gifts on Christmas Eve. (The custom of Yule gifts goes back no further than this.) In folklore, the Christkindl became a fairy-like character, generally personified in real life by a young girl. Early illustrations often show her dressed in white, wearing a crown of candles, distributing gifts to children.

This would appear to have been the origin of the Swedish Santa Lucia festival on 13 December (interestingly, the Old Calendar date of the winter solstice). The custom of the Lucy Bride as a young woman in white with a crown of lights would seem to have entered Sweden some time during the end of the 18th century. The custom spread slowly; until the late 1800s, the tradition was associated exclusively with the upper classes, namely those most open to German influence--in western Sweden. It became common throughout the country in the early 20th century, due largely to media influence. It is via the Swedish custom that the candle-crown became entangled with modern pagans. Margaret Murray's 1931 *God of the Witches* includes a picture of a **Modern Lucia-Queen in Sweden**.

However, crowns were common in pre-Christian cultures, particularly in relation to **druid crowns**. Recently published material from the Celtic settlement at Roseldorf, situated on the Sandberg in the western Weinviertel in Lower Austria, has furnished a wealth of new archaeological material pertaining to the Iron Age inhabitants of this area in particular, and pan-Celtic cult/religious practices in general.

Excavations at Roseldorf, the largest Celtic La Tène settlement in Austria, uncovered a Celtic settlement of supra-regional economic and cultural importance, as attested to by the discovery of coins of the Vindelici Manching type and Buschl-quinars from Lower Bavaria, as well as coinage produced by Gaulish and Balkan Celtic tribes. Further, many small zoomorphic figurines from Roseldorf have parallels especially in the northeast, in the Celtic settlements at Nowa Cerekwia in Poland and Nĕmčice in Moravia. Perhaps the most interesting artefact to come from the site is an iron druid's crown discovered in the first large sanctuary at Roseldorf. The crown was **ritually killed** before deposition, namely deliberately bent/deformed, according to Celtic religious ritual.

The Roseldorf Druid Crown corresponds to Parfitt's type I, with an encircling headband and two bands crossed at the apex. The best example of such a crown was discovered in the burial of a Celtic warrior-priest at Mill Hill Cemetery in Deal in Kent. Dating to the early 2nd century BC, the Deal Crown was found on the head of a warrior buried with his sword and shield and consisted of two sheets of bronze, decorated in La Tène style, held together with rivets. The metal was worn directly on the head (not padded or strengthened with leather); when discovered, impressions of human hair remained in the corrosion on the inner surface.

Shrooms

By Erica Zann

Hi, welcome to a series of witterings from an elderly resident of a small English village, festooned with bunting and fake crowns at the moment. Not that I'm against the pomp and regalia of the coronation, but I do wonder whether it's really worth some £250m of public money. That's just me reflecting on the lack of funds in other public services, having used the NHS often in the past month or so. Don't expect this decrepit crone to swear allegiance to any monarch – I swear my commitment to Gaia each day and that does just fine.

Atm, I'm sitting in my rocking chair with a cup of tea – the window is ajar and I'm listening to the birdsong outside. Wood pigeons build their nests in the oak trees by my windows. It's all very peaceful for now, although we have a fair on the green and I'll hear that very clearly this evening. On the other hand, travelling fairs are traditional parts of village life and I wander over sometimes, if only for the smell of fresh doughnuts and to watch the waltzer or ferris wheel.

That's the thing about memories. I remember the old money so well and my family laughs at me when I say that something costs 10 shillings. That's 50p nowadays and it doesn't seem to buy very much. When I was young, my parents used to give me a half-crown per week for pocket money (two shillings and sixpence). I'd walk to the local corner-shop for a comic, some fizz and sweets. And I'd go back later to get the money for returning my empty bottle of fizz. All those long-ago coins that I'd use, namely florins, tanners, sixpences, threepenny bits, pennies, all relegated to my memory. It's a bit scandalous when you consider the price of coffee now.

I do enjoy a coffee and biscuits at the local Methodist church though. Nice coffee, nice biscuits and the pleasure of meeting friends. At first, I was a bit nervous about going along in case anyone asked about my faith. Several years on and many Interfaith events later, I've been so pleased to chat to Christians while they know about my beliefs. When we first set up Gylden Fellowship, we were welcomed into Surrey Faith Links as part of Guildford Diocese as the go-to pagan group.

It's still quite cold outside, but there are signs of spring, not least in the bright blue of the alkanet, which is everywhere. And when I slow down a bit, I realise that new pillar boxes will need to be dedicated to Charles III or CR. My village has many pillar boxes for ER and some for GR and even a replica of the old green box for VR. And that reminds me of a friend here who brought her coronation mugs to show me the other day. Nothing unusual in that, you may say. My late mother had a brochure of the last coronation in 1953 from the procession in London. However, these mugs were from 1937, which was the coronation of George VI.

Anyway, wishing you all a happy Beltaine season.

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