



Gylden Magick

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October 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, is growing too – our Alban Elfed sabbat blog reached over 2k 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.

In **September**, we introduced a system for people to pre-order selected natural healing items from our stand at MBS fayres. More info from our Facebook groups.

Our **Hunter's Moon** issue follows our anniversary edition last month. More people want to write for us and we're putting in new features or series – that's why this **GYLDEN MAGICK** has carried on with a 20-page format with ever more guidance on spiritual issues and magick. But no ads – after all, we're like a pagan public library and all the information is free.

Dates for your diaries – don't forget **13 October** for the **Hayling island Body, Mind & Spirit fayre** and **26 October** for the **Samhain Celebration 2019** at Stanley Halls, 12 South Norwood Hill, London SE25 6AB.

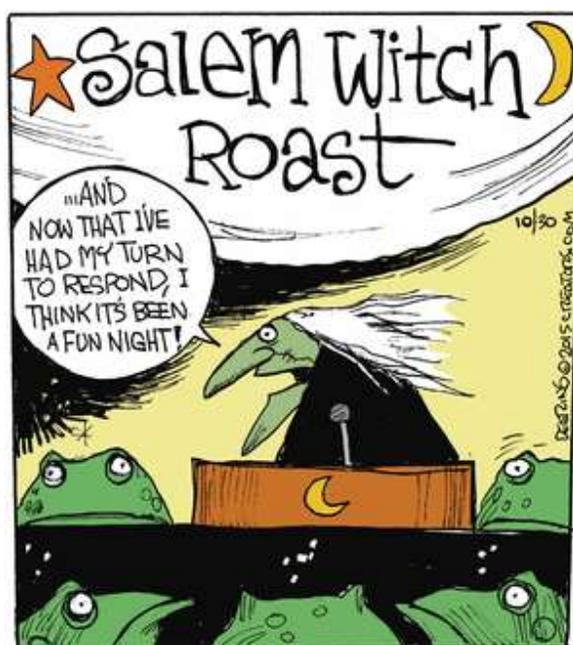
What else is there? Well, we have a piece on the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance, photos from the Seasons of Albion drumble, more first steps for new or young pagans, herbal healing, ghostly tales, an Alban Elfed ritual, two more art showcases and a preview of the Wandering Witches' Fayre in November. And some seasonal magick, as we look to Samhain.

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 October?

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Altar tools: produce

Produce, in this sense, refers to all the food, fruit or vegetables that might decorate your altar. Could be flowers or baked goodies as well. At this time of year, some **seasonal fruits or vegetables** might include:

- Apples, pears and berries
- Gourds, pumpkins or squashes.
- All sorts of nuts.
- Mushrooms.
- Tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, carrots and onions.

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.

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

Alban Elfed 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.



Crystals: green calcite

I do love working with calcite for healing, regardless of whether I'm using orange, black, green or gold. Calcite is a common form of calcium carbonate, found in many forms, eg chalk, marble, limestone and seashells. Its crystals are usually rhomboid in shape, though the rough form is normally better for healing.

A lot of coloured calcites come from Mexico and are usually acid-dipped to preserve their integrity – hence the smooth, waxy feel of the surface. The **healing uses** include the following.

- It stimulates stability and self-trust.
- I've used green calcite with people who've developed ligament strains or muscle weakness.
- Calcite is an aid to the healing and strengthening of bones and teeth.
- It strengthens cell walls to fight infection and can also support blood-clotting.

As a **magickal tool, green calcite** is good for these purposes.

- In general, green calcite helps with clearing and cleansing anything that is not wanted – it improves clarity of thought.
- It also supports development on a spiritual level.
- Green calcite is a stone of balance.
- On a chakral level, green calcite aligns with the heart and upper heart chakras. It is linked to the zodiacal sign of Cancer.

Trivial fact: optical calcite is a good example of double refraction. When light passes through the crystal, half of it passes straight through, while the other half is bent. As a result, calcite creates two images when an object or text is viewed through it. I have a gold calcite crystal ball to achieve trance for astral travel, using this optical effect and sunlight.



Herb of the month: hibiscus

Hibiscus is a common garden plant and has a wide variety of health benefits. This tea is rich in vitamin C, minerals, and antioxidants. It is a very popular medicinal drink and can be drunk either hot or cold – it is low in calories and caffeine-free. OK, so, we're really considering the [good things here that derive from hibiscus tea/ infusion](#).

- It reduces high blood pressure.
- It reduces high cholesterol and inflammatory problems.
- It relieves period pains or menstrual cramps – I suggest to users that they combine hibiscus with raspberry leaves for maximum benefits.
- It helps relieve problems in the digestive system.
- It boosts the immune system.
- Potentially, the anti-oxidant properties of hibiscus help treat diseases of the liver.
- It can speed up the metabolism aiding in healthy, gradual weight loss.
- Hibiscus is linked with better mental health.

A research study conducted on patients with **type 2 diabetes** suggests that consumption of hibiscus and sour tea lowers cholesterol, triglycerides, and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and increases (good) high-density lipoprotein cholesterol.

Hibiscus tea is also used as a **sports drink** in order to satiate thirst. For this purpose, hibiscus tea is typically consumed cold, as an iced tea. Many people include it in their diets, as hibiscus can cool down the body very fast.



Recipe: Autumn appetiser

Lots of references to autumn in this issue of **GYLDEN MAGICK** and there can be no better witness to autumn than the proliferation of mushrooms in our countryside. So, here's a quick snack for this time of year that should serve about five people (apologies for the imperial measurements).

The mushrooms used in this recipe need not be from a supermarket, but must be safe to eat. Within this country, we'd suggest using such varieties as ceps, chanterelles, horse mushrooms, chestnut mushrooms, hedgehog or chicken fungus or amethyst deceiver.

Ingredients

1. 1lb small mushrooms
2. 1tbsp chopped onion
3. 1tbsp chopped parsley
4. 2 tbsp olive oil
5. 2 lemons
6. 6 tbsp white wine
7. Salt & pepper.

Method

1. Put the olive oil in a pan and heat gently.
2. Wash the mushrooms and add to the pan.
3. Add the salt, pepper, onion, parsley, juice from the lemons and the white wine to the pan.
4. Cover and heat on a fast heat for 3-5 minutes.
5. Leave to cool for a short while.
6. Serve the mixture in its own juice, perhaps before a main meal.



Preview: Wandering Witches' Fayre

By Wandering Witches' Fayres

If you are looking for a unique, fun and fabulous day out, the wonderful, world-famous Wandering Witches' Art & Craft Fayre wanders into a southern corner of Hampshire in Spring and Autumn each year. These events bring wares of skilled artists and crafters, inspired by Nature and their spiritual paths, with live music from bands such as Pixiephonic or Corvus and delicious café treats from the Holistic Chi cauldron.

We began in Bedhampton, 6 years ago, wandered through Waterlooville for a couple of years and now have happily parked our brooms in Portchester at the lovely community centre there. Three generous rooms are filled with stalls bursting with beautiful art and crafts with outside stalls and demonstrators when the weather permits. Entry is free so visitors have a little more to treat themselves to the many temptations.

Some of the amazing artists have been with Wandering Witches' from the start and no events would be the same without them. At the same time, it is always good to have new people showing different work for visitors to enjoy so new stalls are hand-picked to add to the vibrant mix. Among the delights, stalls offer:

- Skilled jewellers.
- Original artwork.
- Herbal products and potions and foraged goodies.
 - Beautiful woodcrafts.
 - Delicate needle and felt crafts.
 - Natural candles and soaps.
 - Healing crystals.
 - Native American wares.
 - Fabulous handcrafted creatures.
- Luscious mead in collector's bottles.
 - Magick wands.
 - Stylish clothing.

Wandering Witches' Art & Craft Fayres have become "must-go" events and all are welcome to come along for a fun and enjoyable day out. Find us on Facebook to keep up to date with the latest news and details of who will be showing at each event.

See you next on Sunday 3rd November 2019.

Gylden
Magick
Oct. 2019

Seasons of Albion Moot - Autumn *drumble* 2019 (that's ramble + drumming + ritual blessings)





Spi-rituality: Mabon open ceremony

Ritual by Paul Oakwolf Coombes & report by Gylden Fellowship

In last month's *GYLDEN MAGICK*, we featured a druidic Lughnasadh ceremony ritual. This month, we're looking at sabbats again and Mabon/ Alban Elfed, in particular. Read on for an open ritual report.

On 22 September, [Basingstoke Pagan Circle](#) held its autumn equinox/ Mabon ritual in the War Memorial Park in Basingstoke. In the past, it must be said that I've attended some extremely cold and/or extremely wet ceremonies on hillsides or in yew groves. This day was both wet in the morning, but had dried a little by the mid-afternoon time of the ritual.



The open ceremony was written by Paul Oakwolf Coombes, leader of this group and Archdruid for Basingstoke. As the name suggests, this rite was designed for all types of pagans – there's a druidic structure, but the format is quite OK for heathens and witches too.

And, the use of a talking stick permits members to contribute poems, stories, songs, etc. Here is an extract from the ceremony.



Alban Elfed, also known as Harvest Home or Mabon, is when light and dark are equal before the the year sinks into darkness. This is the time when the ageing Goddess passes from mother to crone until she is reborn as a youthful maiden in the wheel of the year. At the autumn equinox, she represents wisdom, healing and rest.

At this time, when the final crops are harvested, we give thanks for the bountiful harvest of the fruits of the land, which have been ripening in the summer sun. We reflect on the life past and give positive thought to ideas and things that are to be in the future. We think about the dark days to come as the darkness overpowers the light.



High summer breathes her final, burning breath as father sun descends the western skies and gathering clouds, grey as death, blend into the haze that lies over all now. This Alban Elfed brings the promise of relief with showers soon and cool, clear breezes. I see the Elfed's presence drawing near. The reaping is finished, harvest is in, summer is finished and another cycle begins – the ground is deep with fallen leaves, acorns of the oak and nuts of the beech.



The group then performed the shared offerings and blessings of fresh bread and cider. And, since it was Mabon, there were lots of apples and pears to share among the members.

And then, as normal, the Druid Oath was spoken by all.

*We swear, by peace and love, to stand,
Heart to heart and hand in hand,
Mark, O spirit, and hear us now,
Confirming this, our sacred vow. Awen.*

Art showcase (1) by Clare Coombes (Coombes Crafts)



The electric eclectic

By Nick the Witch

Most people who know me, know that I hate labels – particularly putting people into little boxes. Quite often, one hears the words, *Well, I'm a third-level initiate from the Goddess Temple at Glastonbury, of course*, or some other such mystical place. As if that bestows a special kudos on the speaker. In reality, it means that the person has gone through several years of study in a particular Wiccan pathway, usually within a coven – and now wants everyone to know about it.

The eclectic path

OK, so what – most of the Wiccan pathways and rules were made up about 60 years ago by people who were influenced by Gerald Gardner and who then split off to follow their own interpretations. Even Wicca itself derives from a Saxon word, but never forget that most of the Saxons (in Britain anyway) had been converted to Christianity by about 700 CE. Hey, Nick, so which sort of pagan are you?

Well, I follow a Celtic path that combines both witch and druid, derived from my ancestors in Celtic Ireland – many aunts and second cousins still live on the west coast of Eire. So, my path is pre-Saxon from about 2000 years ago, i.e. community medicine with a little bit of druidry thrown in. Oh yes – and the Wiccan rede hadn't been invented then and neither had the threefold rule, but curses and hexes were common – as we know from the various curse tablets unearthed by archaeologists.

There weren't a lot of written records around at that time, but much of the healing lore from plants and nature survives to this day and has been handed down. If you want to follow this sort of path, one has to turn away from text books written by "respected" Wiccan initiates and feel your way via natural sources and spirit guidance. Feeling your way along a path that seems right to you is known as **eclecticism** and has been dissed in the past by people who should know better, but the watchword for this article is tolerance.

Pick-and-mix witchcraft

OK, it's not really called that, but it's as good a description for what works for you – it could be a piece of writing from Rae Beth, something from the ancient Egyptians, an affinity with the Norse deities and a liking for yoga or meditation. It's difficult to define personal spirituality, except that **nature** usually comes into it somewhere. And there's a desire to help people, i.e. compassion and a restlessness to find out more. Almost always, eclectic witches are those who never stop seeking for something that can't be specified, but they'll know it when they trip over it.

Another key point about eclectic witches is that they tend to absorb little snippets of wisdom from a range of sources. Many are solitary practitioners, but some come to moots to exchange views and learn more – it's that restlessness kicking in again! If someone finds wisdom from Rumi (for example), but also finds an outlet for his or her practice via the teachings of Edward Bach, that is his or her pathway. How you perceive the deities is a personal choice for your spiritual journey.

On the other hand, there have been some interesting (?), not to say grim, debates between people who follow Native American beliefs, because that is their lineage – and the growing industry for eclectic

witches who find an affinity with such religious practices. To which I must confess a little guilt, due to my set of Cherokee spirit oracle cards, but these were produced by a Cherokee author – does this make it OK then?

It is important to distinguish between the image and the belief. A serious eclectic pagan does the research to validate his or her beliefs. If you follow a Celtic path, it is only right to read about Celtic culture, understand something about everyday life in Celtic times and exchange knowledge with others on this subject. Three millennia ago, those pesky Celts didn't have job descriptions between druids and witches and so, it's back to feeling one's way. However, if your knowledge of the Celts is solely formed of imaginary stuff from films or novels, that's not reality and probably not a basis for a solid spiritual base.

That's one reason why my herbal medicines are stripped down to essentials with no extra chemicals. A linctus for coughs would have been made from natural fruits like strawberries or blackberries, water and honey. A salve would have been made from hedgerow plants, beeswax and oil. Nothing artificial here, which is why I'm writing this today and making some yarrow oil for the winter.

We do like labels, don't we? Much easier to dub someone as a Gardnerian, a druid, a shaman or one of the heathen kindreds. An eclectic is someone on the outside, doing his or her own thing, which is ill-defined. So, we'll just look the other way – right? Not in my world – sorry, but everyone's view is valid to me and interesting too. Nothing gets me up on my soapbox quicker than religious discrimination, whether it's inside paganism or between faiths.

Did you say discrimination? Well, yes, because any person has the right to choose their faith pathway under the [Equality Act 2010](#). And many people opt for a mix of magickal beliefs, which bring some sort of spiritual order and serenity to their lives – and who are we to doubt them? OK, enough of the rant – this started out as a discussion piece and turned into a bit of a polemic.

To finish then, the title of the electric eclectic was slightly whimsical on my part, but the trend today is for an increasing number of people to learn magick from all sorts of internet sources. They're not joining covens, not paying loads of shekels for some all-singing distance-learning course, but doing their own research online and joining groups on Facebook. And they're going along to pagan moots or festivals, which is never a terrible thing.



The Abbots Bromley Horn Dance

By Gylden Fellowship, with photos from Paul Pearson

What's a horn dance then? The pictures give a clue, but this is not just a variation on Morris dancing. Abbots Bromley is in Staffordshire and its horn dance is the oldest surviving custom in Britain. Every year, the dance starts at 08.30 hours on Wakes Monday (the Monday between 6-12 September – this year, it was **9 September 2019**).



Written records of the horn dance go back to 1642; it was banned by Oliver Cromwell, but revived during the Restoration, somewhere before 1686). The wooden deer heads were made during the 16th century, but the antlers are far older. Some of the antlers have been carbon dated to Saxon times, between 950-1050 CE. The antlers are reindeer antlers: 30 inches in width and 25lbs per pair – later horn dances elsewhere in Britain use fallow deer antlers. Not only that, but there is evidence that some of the reindeer antlers used are replacement antlers – so it is possible that the dance is older than the Saxons.

Certainly, the Abbots Bromley horn dance pre-dates 1066 and it is known that reindeer still lived in parts of Britain until 1000 CE at least. In 1125, a royal charter granted forest hunting rights to the village of Abbots Bromley (in the nearby Needwood Forest), including the right to chase and hunt deer. And, there are records of the Horn Dance performed at Barthelmy Fair in 1226.



Again, it should be noted that this is neither a Morris dance nor a mumming display, but it is likely that some of the characters were added over the centuries, perhaps as late as the 19th century. So, the main characters are the 6 horn dancers, each dressed in Tudor costume and holding a pair of antlers. Each set of antlers is attached to a wooden deer's head on a short pole (see above) and they are carried on the shoulders of the dancers. There are 3 sets of white antlers with brown tips and 3 sets of brown antlers with gold tips. Other characters include:

- a) Maid Marian, holding a wooden ladle
- b) The Hobby Hoss – a simple construction
- c) The Fool or Jester
- d) The Archer or Bowman
- e) 2 musicians: accordion and triangle.

At 08.00 or so, the dancers collect their costumes from the local church and make the first dance on the vicarage lawn. The 10 performers and 2 musicians go to a dance area in a single file procession and start with a simple country dance. The proper horn dance follows and I'll try to simplify the steps with the list below.

1. The dancers with white antlers face those with brown antlers.
2. The Fool faces Maid Marian.
3. The Hobby Hoss faces the Archer.
4. The dancers form alternate circles and lines.
5. The lines step forward and back several times, as the dancers swing their antlers and the music plays.
6. The dancers then cross over several times.
7. Then, they move to the next dance area.

The horn dance carries on for most of the day – in the streets, market-place and farmyards within several miles of Abbots Bromley –all around the parish. It was considered to be bad luck if the dancers missed a farm on their route. There is a dance area at Blithfield Hall, where the dancers can stop for lunch, before continuing in the afternoon, until they return their costumes to the church in the evening.



Tales for darker evenings: Odstock & Winchester

By the Storyteller

Shameless plug to start with – each year, the band, **Spriggan Mist**, does an autumn tour called **Ghostly Tales**. There are the usual great songs, wonderful dancers and a host of live storytelling too. This storyteller has contributed a few tales and will do so again later this month. Here's a couple of tales from past gigs, just right for this time of year – with the lights low and stormy nights outside – hehehe.

We'll start with a **gypsy curse** – in 1801, a young gypsy was accused of stealing a horse at Odstock, near Salisbury. In those days, such a crime was punishable by death and everyone knew it, but the gypsy's father (Joseph) took the blame so that his son would not be executed.

As expected, the local magistrates hanged Joseph for the crime and he was buried in Odstock Church cemetery, but he became a martyr among local gypsies and villagers for his act of sacrifice. Roses were planted on his grave and memorial celebrations were held by his grave to remember his selfless act.

The local authorities (clergy and magistrates) responded by locking the church doors and gates and uprooting the roses on Joseph's grave. In their response, the gypsies placed a curse on Odstock Church, so that anyone who locks the doors or gates is condemned to a premature death. Does it work? To date, two church wardens have ignored the curse, locked the doors and both died soon after – the rector then threw the key into the nearby River Ebble, where it remains.

Another well-known ghost is the **Grey Lady of the Eclipse Inn**. What happened is that there was a failed rebellion against the Crown in 1685 and Dame Alice Lisle was accused of harbouring fugitive cavaliers. She was tried and convicted by the Hanging Judge, George Jeffreys, and sentenced to be burned at the stake. Dame Alice was 71 years old and several Winchester clergymen appealed to the Crown for leniency on her behalf. King James II granted the appeal so that she would be beheaded instead!

So, Dame Alice spent her last nights in the Eclipse Inn, while a special scaffold was built right outside her window and, on 2 September 1685, the sentence was carried out. Since then, there have been many sightings of the Grey Lady as she walks along the corridor from the rooms to the window. Not only have witnesses seen her, but they've heard the rustle of her silk dress and the tapping of her heels. Her actual tomb is at the family estate in Ellingham, Hampshire, at St Mary and All Saints Church.



Art showcase (2) by Arietta Bryant



Seasonal magick for Samhain

By Gylden Fellowship

Although celebrating any of the sabbats in a group or open ritual can be inspiring and reaffirming, one of the attractions of worshipping as a solitary is that you can customise your ritual in your chosen setting. The article below gives some ways in which you can choose to decorate your place or altar, select a deity, use or edit a blessing and some magickal activities.

Samhain Blessings to one and all - may those who have gone before walk with me at this time and share their wisdom.

Interestingly, All Hallows Day was part of the pagan festival too and started at sunset on the evening of Samhain. The Roman Catholic Church used to celebrate All Saints' Day for saints and martyrs on 13 May, but the date was moved in the 8th century, to *coincide* with the pagan festival.

For the Celts, Samhain marked the end of the agricultural season (end of summer) and the beginning of winter: it was the time of year when the gates between this world and the next were open. It was a time both of communicating with the spirits (honouring the dead) and a time of divination or scrying, when the ancestors could be called upon for advice. The whole belief that underpins Samhain is death and transformation

Samhain was a key festival in Ireland, because of the widespread belief that all manner of supernatural beings roamed the land – not only the spirits of the dead, but also *færies*, goblins, etc. People did not tend to walk out at night on Samhain and it was also a time of peace – no fighting or violence was allowed.

In magickal terms, Samhain is the start of a new year and a time for releasing negative thoughts or closing matters or beginning new projects. Examples might include writing off a debt, closing an account or running an audit. It is the wisdom of the Crone that prevails at Samhain: asking for guidance, paying respects to departed ancestors and celebrating reincarnation.

First things first then – remembering what Samhain is all about, the altar should be one that honours the ancestors and it could include photos or mementoes of relatives or friends that have passed on. The list below gives an idea of the diversity of altar adornments.

1. Good **incense** for Samhain could be sandalwood, wormwood, sage, myrrh or patchouli.
2. Typical **crystals** might include onyx, jasper, obsidian, bloodstone or jet.
3. The **altar cloth colour** should be one of black, orange, red brown or gold.
4. You could have a **Samhain tree** (like a Yule tree), decorated with suitable coloured ribbons or baubles.
5. It's probably better to prepare some sort of **ritual foods** or feast in advance. If you have younger children in the house, the ritual area needs to be closed, but there is no harm in explaining the meaning of Samhain and offering up a family prayer for the ancestors.

There's loads of **food and drink** that can be used as part of a Samhain feast, including the following:

- a) Apples or apple dishes
- b) Nuts, which represent reincarnation
- c) Cider or mulled cider with spices or mulled wine
- d) Pumpkins or pumpkin bread or seeds
- e) Potatoes, turnips or corn

- f) Gingerbread
- g) This was a traditional meat festival, as many livestock would be slaughtered in late October and every part used to sustain a family through winter – even using the fat to make lamp oil or tallow. So, a good meat to use is pork.

A plate of food could be left outside the home for the souls of the dead; I can't do that myself due to foxes, mice, etc around our house, but placing a candle in the window or burying apples/ nuts in the soil are also expressions of respect for the dead. Thinking about it now, leaving a place setting for the spirits at your Samhain feast, shows appropriate respect to your ancestors too.

Much of the magick depends upon the type of pagan pathway followed...I might opt for Cernunnos or Brighid or the Morrighan as part of my magick, but other [deities](#) could include Hecate, Arianrhod, Bast, Hades, Persephone, Hel, Loki, Arawn or Anubis. This not an exhaustive list, but any deities that are believed to be part of death or the otherworld are welcome. Likewise, [animals](#) that are reputed to be linked with Samhain are stags, owls, bats, crows, cats and herons.

The [tools](#) needed for the ritual are the usual suspects: cauldron, black candles, broom, a crystal ball or tarot deck and, perhaps, a magic mirror.

As to [the ritual](#) itself, every pagan has his or her own way of calling in the Guardians and opening the portals. The key points involve honouring the dead, asking the ancestors for guidance (perhaps by tarot interpretation), divination or scrying or past life recall. Here are some magickal things that could be done:

- a) Candle magic
- b) Divination of any type
- c) Astral projection
- d) Mirror spells
- e) Casting protection for the family or home
- f) Contacting spirits of those who have passed on
- g) Creative visualisation
- h) Færy magic
- i) Past life regression
- j) Deep crystal meditation for remembrance.

Some pagans are strong on costumes and this is fine for ritual magic. Others tend towards craft skills, such as carving jack-o-lanterns, making masks, drying herbs, etc. Here is a [Samhain spell to remember a particular person](#) that you could use or adapt for purpose.

What you will need: a small candle (any colour or a tealight) and a picture/photo of the person whom you wish to remember.

- Carve or write the person's name on the candle.
- Set the candle alight.
- Visualise peace filling the spirit of the person in the picture/photo and a happy memory involving him/her and you.
- The spell is to summon one special ancestor in your memory. **Say these words:**
*Let this flame blaze through the night,
 Bringing both wisdom and caring insight,
 Let anger and hostility now depart,
 As peace and harmony fill my heart.
 At this special time and in my sacred space,
 I request my ancestor come to share this place.
 Let you be welcome, forever in my heart,
 Remaining here until I bid you depart.*
- Let the candle burn out and put the picture/photo away.

Foraging - mushrooms

By Waverley Healing Wheel

OK, let's start with what not to do and consider the beautiful, but deadly Amanita or Death Cap Mushroom. It has been responsible for a spate of deaths in the USA, particularly California, but the UK is not immune and a woman from Bridgwater (Somerset) died after cooking some from her garden in 2013. Here's a picture of what it looks like in the wild.



Most often it can be seen after heavy rain, in gardens or forests, but do not be tempted – it always causes violent nausea and vomiting – in most cases, liver failure follows and the US CDC has estimated that the Amanita mushroom is responsible for almost 90% of global mushroom deaths, as it grows on almost every continent. Another CDC report (from the 1990s) listed 9 Amanita poisonings and 2 deaths in a single week. At the time of writing (September 2019), there is no cure for such poison and so, we come to Terry Pratchett:

“All fungi are edible; some fungi are only edible once”.

The **Theft Act 1968** states that, in the case of mushrooms or plants growing wild on any land, you may take away foliage, fruit or parts of the plant without committing an offence, provided you are not taking them for commercial purposes. However, if you intend to sell the mushrooms or profit from them in another way, you are breaking the law by taking them without the owner's permission. Here's an example from 2002, when a lady called Mrs Tee-Hillman was arrested for picking chanterelle mushrooms in the New Forest.

The lady admitted that the mushrooms were for sale to restaurants and it seemed that the Forestry Commission would win the case. However, the judge threw it out of court, calling it a waste of public money. Mrs Tee-Hillman then took a civil suit against the Forestry Commission over her right to forage on common land and won herself a licence to pick mushrooms in the New Forest for life. The list below shows some of the key points if you want to go picking mushrooms.

- i. Gain permission from the landowner to pick mushrooms on his or her land.
- ii. With open-access land, run by a public landowner, check first for any local bye-laws on collecting forest plants, including fungi.
- iii. With effect from September 2016, the Forestry Commission has introduced a no-picking of fungi code in the New Forest, but this issue is still under negotiation.
- iv. Remember the laws on trespass when foraging, too, i.e. common land, a public right of way, etc are OK for access, but any other land may not be so.

- v. Try to follow the Country Code when picking mushrooms, i.e. minimising damage to surrounding foliage or plants.
- vi. Follow *the Wild Mushroom Pickers' Code of Conduct* too, which gives guidance on good practice.

In general, mushrooms and fungi are very difficult to identify. Unless you are 100% sure of the identity of a mushroom, do not eat it, which takes us back to the Amanita, which (apparently) tastes very good – before it kills you anyway. Do not forget that other types of the Amanita in the UK are the Fly Agaric and the Destroying Angel.

Any mushroom picker should learn about the safe fungi and what to do about collecting or touching fungi. If you start by finding a few safe species and researching them and just eating small amounts, you'll have a better chance of surviving for your next foray. For people who wish to learn more about fungi identification, my recommendation is a wonderful Facebook group that teaches about fungi photography, spore prints and environmentally-sensible foraging – [Mushroom foraging united kingdom](#). The list below is adapted from that group's guidelines for foragers.

- Only you are responsible for picking and eating wild mushrooms.
- Try to research all finds for yourself before eating.
- Do not rely on drawings in books.
- Be vigilant and never get complacent.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after picking any fungi.
- Check and re-check before eating wild mushrooms.
- Try to eat a little sample first and wait for a day for any ill-effects.
- When eating a wild mushroom, keep some back for analysis in case of mis-identification.

The list below covers some of the **safest wild mushrooms** for foraging.

- Giant puffballs
- Hedgehog fungus
- Beefsteak fungus
- Dryads saddle
- Wood ears
- Scarlet elf cups
- Cauliflower fungus
- Field blewits
- Oyster mushrooms
- Penny buns/ porcini/ ceps.



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