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WITCH Magazine

Dearest Witches,

Bright white flowers have appeared on the blackthorn and hawthorn is unfurling its first delicate, young leaves. The bare branches of the winter forest are dressing themselves in verdant greens and the air is scented with blossom. Spring energy is stirring at last.

Across the country, communities are gathering to celebrate this first of the fire festivals, adorning themselves with flowers, greenery and ribbons.

Beltane offers us the perfect boost of energy for trying new things, pushing our practice and committing to radical self love. In this issue, Richard Hick offers the continuation of his in-depth exploration of working with the runes and Eva Greenslade shares her work with the sacred drum.

Enjoy inspiring articles on foraging, using Vision Boards as magickal tools and wilding your witchcraft as you delve into issue 42!

Helen JR Bruce - Editor

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CJ the Kitchen Witch

I am passionate and dedicated to inspire womyn to connect their mind, body and soul with the magikal potential of Keto & Wild Inspired Living.
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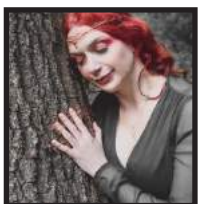
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Oak is a professional Storyteller who is passionate about all things Folklore. Living in Sussex, she loves nothing more than roaming the South Downs seeing signs of magic. Running her folkloric witch Instagram is her favourite pastime, plus a ritual or three.
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Amanda describes herself as a World Weaver having always travelled between worlds and communicated with the beings that reside there side a young age. She organises the Festival for Pagans and Witches with six other witches twice a year where she brings her channelled guided meditations to the attendees, helping them connect with the subtle realms. For more information go to Elementalapothecary.co.uk.



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Eva Greenslade is a Shamanic Practitioner, Drum Maker, Celebrant, Doula, Tutor of Celtic Shamanic Healing Practices, and author of *Pregnancy by the Moon*.

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Richard C Hick

Rich is a successful business consultant working throughout engineering and manufacturing, a father and a veteran endurance athlete. Spiritually, he is wholly diverse and acceptant of truth wherever it may come, an eternal student, eclectic witch, freemason, and hermetic, drawing from a rich web of traditions to form his daily practice. He lives with his wife in beautiful and ancient Derbyshire, with his dogs, cats and rabbits.



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Simon is a sovereign druid based in Cork, Ireland. Interests include: Irish Folklore, mythology, fly fishing and photography.

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Scott Irvine

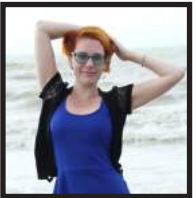
Scott Irvine is a Druid in a witches hat, a pagan who reveres Mother Earth and all life that resides on her. He sees the spiritual realm as real and as important as the material world.

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Kia ora, I am Rachael Treymane, a seasoned magical practitioner with 29 years of exploration and education. As the esteemed leader of the Coven of the Sacred Stars, I guide and nurture a community bound by the shared reverence for the magical arts that acknowledge our connection with "as above, so below". [Facebook.com/sacredstarscoven](https://www.facebook.com/sacredstarscoven)

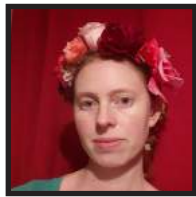


Faith Barnes

I have over 20 years experience as a practicing witch and I'm very passionate about sharing my knowledge and ideas on the craft. As with everything spiritual and part of the craft, everyone is always learning, I am too!

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Beverley White

I'm Beverley, I have been practicing witchcraft for over 20 years, my path is celtic and green witchcraft, I live in Sheffield south yorkshire. I currently work for a company that makes eco friendly bags and giftware and I am working on a book about Green witchcraft in the city environment.



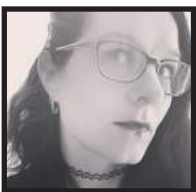
TudorBeth

Tudorbeth is a hereditary practitioner of the witchcraft, with many recipes, traditions, and knowledge stemming from her father. Tudorbeth has written about witchcraft for over 30 years and has written for many publications. She has written over 50 books on the Craft and her most recent is the series, The Hedgewitch's Little Library published by Llewellyn. The latest is The Hedgewitch's Little Book of Crystal Spells and is out this summer. Her website is <https://HouseofBeith.com>



Fauna Raine

Fauna Raine is a professional reader & healer specializing in Tarot, Palmistry & Crystal Healing and offers private sittings, workshops and mentoring. Fauna also attends many Pagan and Holistic festivals and events throughout the year. You can find more of her work on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Faunaraine or contact her through email Faunaraine@gmail.com



Steffie de Vaan

Steffie de Vaan (she/her) is a Dutch intuitive witch. She loves cheap and easy witchcraft without cultural appropriation. Follow her on instagram as [muse_of_midnight](https://www.instagram.com/muse_of_midnight).



The Old Crone

After almost 60 years reading cards, starting when I was a child, and showing others how to interpret them, I still enjoy reading for anyone who wishes it. I follow the wheel of the year and the phases of the moon, grow my own herbs and wand woods as well as following pagan ways and assisting others to find their own special spiritual pathway. theoldcrone5@gmail.com



Suzi Gallagher

Suzi is a magical practitioner from Aotearoa New Zealand. She has several years of experience being quite eclectic in her practice. Poetry has always been a close friend of hers, something she uses to help her dance in her own shadows and explore. She is currently working on publishing a collection of her poetry, you can keep an eye on her work here: <https://www.instagram.com/newdawnholistics>



Melanie Webb

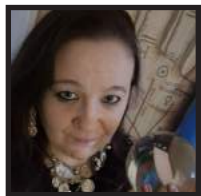
Melanie Webb is a writer and lover of all things nature-based and magical. She lives in the Wiltshire countryside with her wife, her black Lab, Winnie and her rabbit, Arthur.



Julie Aspinall

I have been a witch as long as I can remember. I am eclectic with a strong traditional witchcraft background. I founded the coven of Gaia and The festival for pagans and witches. My aim is to help people starting on their paths.

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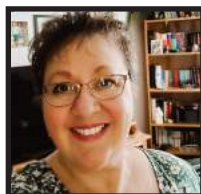
Pheobe Petulengro

Romani Reader, Pheobe Petulengro, niece of famous tea leaf reader, Lavinia Woods & daughter of trance medium & witch Dee Lee. Online readings, Phone readings & events. Tarot, Palmistry, Tea leaf reading, Crystal ball, Past life readings & Psychic readings. Romani-Petulengro.com



Jeff Turner

I am from a small village on the North East coast of England called Whitburn and I have recently retired which now affords plenty of time to indulge myself. Spending time outdoors and stepping off the concrete is a fundamental part of my wellbeing, Pagan beliefs and my connection to Gaia. I am an amateur naturalist and committed conservationist and am rarely seen without my binoculars constantly on the lookout for birds and wildlife.



JE Marriott

J.E. Marriott is a British author living in Canada with her husband, two demon cats and has a penchant for tea. She has been Pagan most of her life and attends a Druid ADF Grove. She writes paranormal mysteries, supernatural thrillers and magically enchanted tales for all.

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Auset Gypsy

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Hannah Lyons - Front cover art

Hannah Lyons (Studio Lyonesse) is an illustrator based in Cornwall. With a deep appreciation for the power of storytelling, Hannah weaves narratives through her practice, drawing inspiration from folklore, history and nature.

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Claire Valentine - Back cover art

I help people to transform into a more magical version of themselves through a mysterious sculpture or a mystical scenscape. I am a scientist and a Pagan and my art is about magical transformation of the mind. I know how powerful our minds can be and how we think influences how we experience our lives. Facebook.com/ClaireValentineArt



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Humans and the World of Fairy

Stories of fairies and their world can be found across the last thousand years in Ireland, the UK, and France, often centered on a human's interaction with a specific fairy or group of fairies. Some stories expand beyond this to also include human interaction with the world that these beings come from, whether that interaction is voluntary or not. The world of Fairy is always, explicitly or implicitly, the backdrop to fairy stories, the place from which these beings come and to which they can return – sometimes with a human in tow. To understand fairies then we must understand their world and how human interactions with it affect us.

Today when we talk about fairies we often focus primarily on the individual beings, the ones who people might have encounters with in the human world or who populate the stories and folk tales that people share. But ultimately we can't separate these beings from their world, something that is reflected by the homonyms – fairy and Fairy – that we use for each, and by the history of the terms themselves. Before we had the word fairy, meaning the individual being, we had the word Fairy meaning the world, a place of enchantment and magic which existed near to but separate from the human world. This place later lent its name to anything with a similar nature, anything that was enchanting and magical, and eventually came to be used to describe the beings believed to live in that world. The word for the place came first, and our understanding of the beings reflected our understanding of the place; this is true in Irish as well where the word *sidhe* meant (and still means) Otherworldly mounds or hills and was connected to the beings, the *aos sidhe* [people of the *sidhe*] who were believed to live there. It is impossible to truly separate the two from each other, the world and the beings who exist in it.

The oldest Irish language story we have that features the Good Folk dates to the 9th century in writing and at least a few hundred years further back based on the language used. Beveridge, author of *Children Into*

Swans, even speculated that the story might go as far back as the 5th century CE. While it doesn't describe the land of Fairy in detail, or in fact at all, the place is a key aspect of the story. A fairy woman comes from magical islands which have '*sidhe mór*' [large fairy hills] to Ireland in order to woo and win a human prince and bring him back with her. She does this, and after sailing off in a boat into the west the two are never seen on earth again. This is a common theme we find across the following centuries into today, that the fairies can and will lure people away – if not outright steal them – to add those humans to the population of Fairy. Why they do this we don't know for certain, but that they do it is established across a range of stories.

The idea of humans taken into Fairy is a common one across cultures, but it is only one way that a human might find themselves in that world. There are also stories of people who wander accidentally out of the human world and find themselves not only encountering fairy beings but also realizing that they are well and truly not on earth anymore. In Welsh myth the human Pwyll followed his hounds chasing a deer through mist and into the world of Annwn, while in Irish myth the high king Conn had a somewhat similar experience when he and his men were encompassed in mist and taken into the Otherworld. Finally there are some stories of people who made their own way into Fairy, sometimes by following specific methods and other times by more literally following the fairy host itself. In the ballad of Childe Rowland the protagonist enters Fairy by walking three times counterclockwise around a church, for example, while in *Sir Orfeo* the king follows a group of fairies back to their home. In the *Adventures of Nera*, and Irish myth, Nera enters the Otherworld by joining a fairy procession as it goes into a *sidhe*.

Those who find themselves in Fairy, willingly or not, find a place that is in some ways like the human world and in other ways very different. Stories describe forests and fields, castles and towns, rivers and wells, all of which are much like their earthly equivalents. And yet Fairy is also a deeply foreign place. It is said in various sources that there is no sun nor moon there, and that the lighting seems to come from an unknown, diffuse source. The ballad of Thomas the Rhymer claims that all blood shed on earth flow in the rivers and streams of Fairy, and in a similar vein sir Orfeo described both living fairy beings and a wide range of dead humans (each still bearing the marks of their death) in the castle of the fairy king. Some Irish myths talk of monstrous animals that exist in the Otherworld and wreak havoc on earth, but other Irish myths talk of Fairy as a place of peace that is free from violence or sickness. The picture that forms as we look across all of these sources is a place of contradictions, where life and death exist side by side, and where the impossible is possible. It is a place that is full of and in many ways defined by magic.

As wonderful as the land of Fairy can be it not without its dangers, particularly for humans. It can be overtly dangerous of course, and we certainly

have stories of humans killed there, but its risks can also be more subtle and more insidious. Those who enter may not be able to leave again, and those who are taken may end up spending eternity longing for the world they lost. And yet those who go to Fairy and come back may also pine away with longing for that world, as its beauty sinks into their souls and calls them to return. It is a place that leaves its mark on those who encounter it, and all who experience it are changed by it.

Fairy and fairies captivate human imaginations and, perhaps, more literally captivate humans. It is a place that tempts us with our greatest desires, that dances through our dreams, but which also traps us and holds us in its timelessness until all we knew or loved in life has been washed away. Despite that danger and despite that temptation, it is a world that remains embedded in our collective subconscious, a place that is equal parts paradise and prison but which is intertwined within our souls. No matter how our world evolves, Fairy stays with it, tethered to it and to us.

Morgan Daimler

A Gothic Witch's Oracle

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Vision Boards as Magickal Tools

Vision boards are focal items that carry a particular set of intentions, with the goal of bringing about certain qualities, traits, experiences, and manifestations into one's life. For some people, these boards are more like "affirmation boards," containing positive written messages. For others, they're more like pieces of art like a collage. Others prefer to simply focus on symbols, while others prefer to create a piece that combines these approaches. With daily focus, vision boards are believed to help the mind and spirit align to the energies and intentions at hand, thereby shaping one's own life experience. Vision boards and affirmation boards have been amplified by New Age schools of thought, but they can easily be applied to self-transformative practices of Witchcraft.

Choosing to Begin Crafting

During my beautiful and scary visit to northern India a few years back, I had the pleasure of hand-delivering a copy of my latest book, *The Everyday Empath*, to my beloved friend Vishnu. As a fellow empath, he was thrilled to receive a copy of the book, and also asked if the book contained information about creating vision boards.

"Indeed it does!" I proclaimed.

My dear friend explained that he had become familiarized with Vision Boards due in part to the New Age work of Louise Hay, whose teachings promoted affirmations, visualization, and metaphysical healing techniques related to the Law of Attraction.

"So, what does your vision board look like?" he asked.

"Ummm... I haven't really made one yet..."

"But Raven! Here we are, you and I, discussing our life's goals, but you haven't made a vision board to focus on daily? Let's work on this!"

What can I say? He was right! Shortly after returning to the States, I went to a local Dollar Store for a big piece of cardstock. With art supplies and magickal trinkets handy, and a dedicated sacred space in which to work, I started crafting the first pieces of a magickal vision board. I know all too well how easy it is, in the midst of life's hectic flow, to put off "little" things like this, but the fact of the matter is that intentional art is an act of magick, and magick itself is art. Vision boards need not be restricted to any kind of fluffy metaphysical feel-better practice, but can become an empowering spell that can be as deep as the heart of a Witch.



Choosing Proper Colors & Symbols

To begin with, decide whether you'd like to create the board on paper, on a tack-board, or even virtually. Plan the size of your board accordingly. Beware that sometimes the board will have a mind of its own, because you are tapping into the unconscious, so new things are likely to enter your mind once you start working on it more diligently. When putting thought into the construction of your vision board, consider how many photos, phrases, symbols, and other items you wish to include.

You may wish to draw common symbols on your vision board – as long as they are aligned to your intentions – such as pentagrams, hexagrams, dollar signs, hearts, flowers, smiley faces, or anything meaningful to you personally. You may also wish to include sigils on your vision board. These are self-crafted symbols, using a particular method, representing specific manifestations in an abstract form. Occultist Austin Osman Spare originally popularized the use of sigils in magickal work, and the practice of sigilry has expanded in recent years. Magickal folk of all varieties utilize sigils in modern times, either standalone or in conjunction with other forms of spellcraft or ceremonial workings. For those readers who are more Witchily-inclined, I can't more highly recommend the book *Sigil Witchery* by Laura Tempest Zakroff (see Sources & Further Reading at the end of this article).

Maybe your board will focus on various manifestations, which is common, or maybe it will be in regard to one goal in particular, thereby becoming a spell for a particular solitary purpose. Although this article focuses on vision boards that are more "life general," individual spells can be created either as vision boards or as part of a spell's creation.

When considering the colors you use in the vision board, including its base material (paper, wood, dry-erase board, etc.) and the color of markers and decorations used, it's wise to bring to mind some of the common metaphysical color associations (red for love, blue for insight, green for healing, black/white for all-purpose... you know the drill!). If you study or practice eastern mysticism, you may also wish to consider color esoteric alignments related to the seven chakra centers on the human body, as imparted in ancient Vedic and Yogic texts.

Choosing the Right Words

I'm a big fan of a beautiful and simple book called *The Golden Key to Happiness* by Japanese Shinto author Masami Saionji. Something that especially stood out to me in this book was her emphasis on the power of words. In one part of the text, she discusses that the words we say or think over and over on repeat actually creates a sort of self-hypnosis. This self-induced hypnotic state can be challenging to break when we become accustomed to thinking in certain patterns, and expecting certain results in our lives. Saionji also emphasizes that the thoughts of the past create the thoughts of the present, and the thoughts of the present create our future experience. Although it's easier said than done, we do have the power to control our thoughts and realize when the mind is playing tricks or is conditioned to a particular modus operandi.

When choosing words for your vision board, you may be inspired to simply incorporate a scattering of words of power. Little affirmations such as "loved," "abundant," and "happy" can really go a long way. If you speak various languages, try incorporating a bit of each. Unleash those creative juices!

Be certain that your board doesn't make use of negative statements. Don't begin things with "I am not," "I do not," or "I will not," for example. Regardless of positive intentions, a negative statement tunes our psyche to a negative energy, which is associated with loss, have-nots, and ideas of imperfection. Instead, we are focusing on bringing out that which we desire to access and amplify in our lives. The words "Not sad and not poor" have a totally different energy, psychologically and magically, than "happy and abundant."



We are each the center of our own universes, by default, so remember to make the board about yourself. Use yourself as the subject. (Trust me, it's not selfish; it's necessary!) While it would be wise to say something like, "I am a positive influence on friends and family," it would not be wise to place that power onto others with statements like, "My friends and family respect me." Can you feel the difference between the two statements? It's also essential to limit statements to present-moment action or being. Instead of "I will achieve my goals," you'll want to write, "I am achieving my goals." This is still a true statement because you are intentionally choosing to activate this statement, and it becomes truer every day. The goal isn't to fool yourself (because your higher self knows better), but to amplify positive things you're already working on.

The concept of vision boards is becoming widespread due to its creative power and stories of success. My brilliant cousin Tracy is a businesswoman who works within numerous professional spheres, yet keeps spiritually connected and mindful despite a hefty workload. One of the companies she operates is LyfeSpark (.com), where users can create virtual vision boards, meet realistic life goals, and receive direct personal support.

When consulting Tracy about my vision board, she gave a memorable tip about affirmations. She advised me not to use phrases like, "I am working my hardest to be better" or, "I am striving to do my best." Instead, replace words of struggle/toil with more optimistic terms that imply an ease of natural order. In this case, something like, "I am evolving toward self-actualization" would be more fitting. This sort of terminological optimism is also good advice for how we communicate every day!

Equally important to writing "affirmative affirmations" is that your words must be believable. What I mean is, if you write, "My life is happy and joyful" on your vision board, part of your unconscious mind might give a negative internal response, such as, "That's bullshit and you know it."

Words carry incredible power. The knowledge of the mind's interplay with a magickal affirmation can allow you to more carefully select the words you utilize. Following this example, it may be better to write something like, "I create happiness and joy in my life every day." So, write things that you know are true, and qualities you are intending to strengthen.

Writing "I am safe" could be a good idea because you know it's true even if your anxiety or stress tries to convince you otherwise. (However, if you're genuinely not safe physically or emotionally, then it's time to make serious life changes, possibly with the help of legal and/or psychotherapeutic professionals.)

Here are some ideas for phrases that you might feel drawn to write, with examples of alternate affirmations that carry a more positive tone:

I will always be happy - I am creating happiness.

I release the past - I create a positive future.

I work diligently against stress - I choose peace.

I'm not depressed or anxious - I have control over my emotions.

I am going to travel soon - I look forward to seeing the world.

Everyone respects me - I have self-respect.

I am wealthy and rich - I am actively creating financial stability.

I refuse to be single anymore - I am openly attracting my soul mate.

I am powerful and influential - I am becoming more self-confident every day.

I have strong magickal powers - I am a child of the gods.

There's nothing I can't do - I am achieving my goals.

I free myself of disease - I create health and healing.

I banish fake friends and toxic people - I choose to surround myself with good people.

My life is free from struggle - My life is abundant and joyful.

I wish for health, happiness, wisdom, and love - I attract health, happiness, wisdom, and love.

I am not sad - Happiness is my natural state.

The Universe will meet all my needs - All of my needs are becoming met.

Choosing Imagery & Visuals

Here's where things become a bit tricky, and where we must use our intuitive powers – and our knowledge of both magick and psychology – to determine which kinds of imagery to use on our boards, if any.

It's standard in New Age thought to create vision boards that are heavy image-based collages, kind of like a real-life Pinterest. The idea is to cut and paste inspirational images from magazines, or print photos from online, and affix them to our board as items of focus. Commonly you'll see people using photos of happy people, scenic landscapes, ideal body types, fancy cars, and whatnot. But, like I said, this is where things get tricky in a magickal sense.

If we are cutting-and-pasting photos of other people's happiness, is that really inspiring our own... or could it create jealousy and a feeling of "lack" instead? On a metaphysical level, is having the image of two smiling people in love inspiring us to manifest the same, or is it sending energy to the people in the photo? This is what I tend to believe, which is why my own vision board displays a very limited amount of actual images (all of which are drawings), and no magazine cutouts.

For this reason, I feel that sketching and drawing images on a vision board is miles more effective. This way, the image of people, places, fat stacks of cash, or whatnot, actually comes from the mind and hand of the practitioner themselves. This seems far more magickal than latching onto external images of the goals we are achieving.

Additionally, for people like us who are more esoterically minded, actual photos/clippings of gods, deities, and symbols could be much more relevant and spiritually connecting. Gods and angels, for example, do not exist in the human dimension. This is why connecting to their images on a vision board can be safe and encouraging due to their divine energetic embodiments. This can also strengthen a person's devotion to their patron and/or matron god(s). Like everything, it's up to the practitioner's intuition and creative spark!

Choosing Herbs, Stones & Spell Components

If you have a little collection of "small powerful stuff" you've found in nature or which has been gifted to you, this could be an ideal opportunity to utilize these items. It's easy to accumulate little stones, charms, berries, and other special items because Witches and mystics know a powerful item when they see it. Rather than letting these things accumulate in a pouch, drawer, or box – or even scattered about your altar – consider affixing some of them to your magickal vision board.

A few items that I may suggest affixing to your board, if you get the calling to do so, include feathers, leaves, flower petals, powdered incense, found objects, small gemstones, metal charms, incense resins (dragon's blood, copal, frankincense, etc.), and raw herbs. Be sure to consider the metaphysical property of any item you affix to your spell.

An easy way to seal items to your board is to use a hot glue gun, although any reliable "fixing" method will do. When you affix the object, incorporate your own affirmation or spoken spell. Make it an intentional act. Magick follows intention. Most importantly, know that you are performing important esoteric work to help improve your life. Improving your life, by extension, helps improve the life of everyone you touch.



Choosing Ritual Timing & Procedure

It's essential to be in a positive, encouraging state of mind when creating or ritually empowering a vision board, or any creative act of manifestation magick, for that matter. We get out what we put in. While it's advisable to mystically surrender to the gods (etc.) during times of high stress, positive manifestation work needs to be performed when we ourselves can lend that vibrational boost to the working at hand.

You may wish to consider the sun or moon's zodiac placement (and to be mindful of any retrogrades) when crafting your board. Daily planetary rulerships may also be taken into consideration:

Sunday ~ Sun
Monday ~ Moon
Tuesday ~ Mars
Wednesday ~ Mercury
Thursday ~ Jupiter
Friday ~ Venus
Saturday ~ Saturn

After you have finalized your board precisely as you'd like it, and after you have performed your own personal magick to enchant the piece as a living spell, consider where to place the board. Personally, I do not like to show the board to other people, in order to "keep it secret, keep it safe," by not dispersing the energy to others. I chose to staple my big board on the ceiling right above my bed so that it is the very first thing I focus on upon rising for the day. I have found this method to be profoundly effective.

However you choose to craft the board, and wherever you choose to place it for daily reflection, follow your intuition and believe in yourself. You are the magick; you are the power. Happy crafting!

Raven Digitalis

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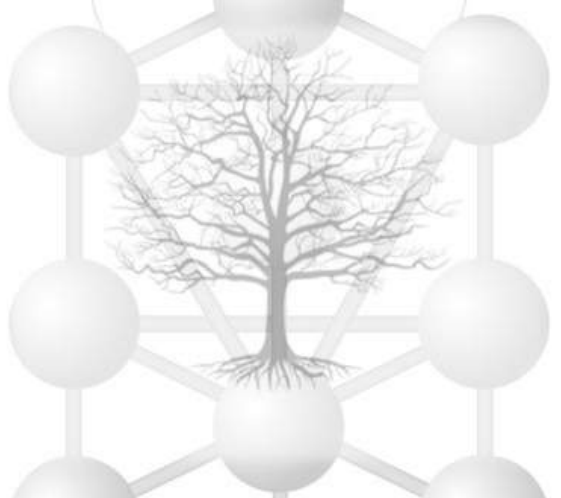
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Lia Art - Pan '2023'



In this drawing I have reimagined the Greek God Pan as an exotic female Goddess. Pan is a wild God of nature, celebrated as a symbol of personal and spiritual freedom. Such freedoms have traditionally been denied to women, who must passively accept their heavily regulated and domesticated fate. I was inspired by the paintings of surrealist artist Leonora Carrington whose work is renowned for exploring many esoteric themes. Carrington had a keen interest in the practice of witchcraft and closely identified with the figure of the witch as a symbol of female empowerment. The horns depicted in the work reference the painting 'And then we saw the Daughter of the Minotaur', painted by Carrington as a direct subversion of the work of Picasso, who used symbol of the horned Minotaur as a metaphor for his male virility. The model featured in my artwork is Myrna Loy, an actress typecast in the 1920's as a vamp because of her perceived exotic looks. In a patriarchal society she represented freedoms that only dangerous wild women are allowed to process. www.instagram.com/liartattack



Foraging at Beltane

Wild foraging is one of most rewarding ways to provide yourself with amazing and magikal ingredients too nourish and nurture your mind, body and soul. Not only does it connect you the land in which you dwell it allows yourself the opportunity to create some delicious dishes with ingredients provided directly from Mother Nature.

My top three foraging plants/weeds to pick are Nettle, Cleavers and Wild Garlic. These three plants work well together in soups, omelettes, casseroles and the ever favourite Wild Garlic pesto. The list is endless in the creations you can make, you are only limited by your imagination. Here are some wonderful ways to ensure you have something wild everyday:

Nettle Tonic - Pour boiling water over a handful of Nettle and or Dead Nettle leaves-seal in a mason jar over night and strain.

Nettle contains up to 25% protein and contains Vitamins A and C, iron, potassium, calcium copper and magnesium.

Nettle Chips - Toss young nettle leaves in coconut oil and add preferred seasoning, Bake 120-130C until crisp for up to 30mins, turn half way.

Cleavers Tonic - Cover a handful of chopped/broken plant with cold water in a jug and allow to infuse over night. Cleavers contains Vitamin C and Silica and improves the bodies ability to eliminate waste and promotes lymphatic drainage of toxins.

Wild Garlic Pesto - Blend leaves and flowers with Nettle (blanched) with walnuts, parmesan and lemon juice to taste. Perfect for freezing or adding to a soup.

Wild Garlic Salt - Blend wild garlic and sea salt and place an extra handful of unblended sea salt together on a baking tray. Allow to dry out in a 125C oven for an hour.

CJ the Kitchen Witch



A DOSE OF FOLKLORE

WITH OAK CANESSA-POLLARD



BELTANE FOLKLORE: RIDDING CATTLE OF EVIL

As Beltane draws us into its fertile folds, with warm promises of the coming sun and growth of flowers, crops and livestock, we become more aware of the rituals and folk medicine used by people of the past.

Perhaps for many of us, at the time of this ancient fire festival, we imagine or even re-enact the driving of cattle between two bonfires to cleanse them of evil, illness and fleas that may have settled over them in the gloom of winter. But for many people today, and many more people of the past, the health of their cattle and other livestock meant the difference between poverty and affluence, hunger and health, or even life and death.

Due to this, much advice was sought from cunning women in rural communities. Evidence of this can be found in remnants of old farming manuals and cattle husbandry books as far back as the 1600s, with margins filled with recipes and charms (Sussex Archaeological society 1895).

Some charms survived better than others, and the belief in their power was undisputed to the point that farmers forgot what the charm was supposed to do, but religiously kept it up for fear of what may happen if they did not.

One such practice was that of lucky stones. Hag stones (those with a natural hole through them) were hung in stables and cow sheds to ward off evil (synonymous with illness), but Lucky Stones were different. These stones were found, or blessed, by the farmer or cunning woman, then perforated and hung around the cow's neck with string. This was firmly believed the stave off illness, and ensure the income and health of the whole family, as evil would not enter the beast with such a stone.

After the stone fell off it became common practice to pierce the ear of the cow and tie the string, that had once suspended the Lucky Stone, through the hole and around the ear. The string was then knotted, which was considered an additional protection against evil entering the cattle.

So as the days warm, and the cattle grow fat on the fruitful crops and grass, be sure to keep your eye out, for in some rural communities this practice is still continued, and with the light of the Beltane Fires, may the smoke cleanse all livestock of their ailments and plague brought on by this lingering evil!

Oak Canessa-Pollard



Wilding Witchcraft

From the moment I wake up in the morning, I am surrounded by the buzz of my young family, social media pings, coffee and general life admin. I wouldn't change it for the world of course, but there is also something instinctively inside me that calls for that other thing: The Wild. This special, sacred thing that lies just beyond the cusp of our waking reach, this concept that tends to elude us as we are sucked up in a garden of concrete or even if we are surrounded by countryside, the digital world behind a screen tends to hold more allure on an ordinary day.

It's still there though, The Wild. It's always been there but sometimes we only catch glimpses like the roots of a tree breaking through the tarmac, the tufts of grass creeping through the cracks in the pavement or the caw of an inconsiderate crow making us miss the last line of that YouTube video. It calls out, it beckons us and those of us who are sensitive can't help but respond. But how? How can we even put into words that longing? It's something like a ripple in our hearts, a frisson through our limbs that draws us mysteriously away from the jobs we can't quite let go of. But connection is hard, we have responsibilities, we are shamelessly distracted by the many other things on the list and because sometimes it's just plain hard to see past the end of your own nose. Even for the most dedicated of Witches, The Wild can seem a long way away sometimes.

With intention and a little effort we can fill that empty space that sits beside our daily lives. With Beltane approaching, gradually tempting us with warmth and sunshine after a cold, wet start to the year (certainly here in the South East of England) there is never a better time to make that shift and add something new to the daily routine, even if only to shake it up and make us notice The Wild where she is right now. Below are three ideas to get you started, you can practice them just the once, you can practice them every day, but the idea is that they simply slot in amongst all the other tasks and open the door, even if only for a moment, and allow us to embrace The Wild.

Wild Yoga

I always advocate Yoga as a beautiful addition to any form of Witchcraft but you don't have to be a seasoned Yogi, or even like physical exercise, to add a simple breathing technique to your day. It's best if you are somewhere peaceful and in an ideal world are in eyesight of a natural space, but imagination will suffice. Simply place your hands in the prayer position (or as us yogi's say: Anjali Mudra) over your heart centre. Take a moment to set the intention to connect to the natural world in whatever way that resonates with you. This might be connecting to a deity associated with The Wild such as Pan or Artemis, imagining a great tree in front of you or just noticing the energy of the ground beneath your feet

Press your thumbs together and apply a gentle pressure to your heart centre, this activates the Anahata (or heart) Chakra and creates a wonderfully comforting feeling in the body. Spend a moment here trying to feel the natural world, send your mind out and just notice what is happening in the air around you or in the earth beneath you. Feel the plants growing, the water running, wind rushing. Stay here for as long as you can hold that concentration, once you notice it has wandered (don't worry if this is a few seconds or a few minutes) come back to the now and thank The Wild for letting you in.



Wild Tarot

I call this a 'Tarot' section but really this can be done with most forms of divination from Oracles to Runes and you can do this as a daily spread or something a bit more ad-hoc when the need for connection arises. This is a very simple three-card spread. Shuffle up the cards or other tool you are using and set the intention to receive whatever message The Wild has for you. Take a deep breath and make a connection in your mind to the natural world, lay three cards face down in front of you.



Read left to right, the first card represents your place in The Wild. What is the role you play here? This will show what you do to contribute and the ways in which you fit in. The second card represents what actions you need to take. This card will reveal the things The Wild wants you to know about what you can actively do to strengthen your bond with her. The third and final card represents what is coming to you. This reveals the future of your connection and how it will shape things that are to come in your life.

Wild Energy

This is one of the simplest and quickest things you can do to check-in daily, it requires no tools (except the imagination), and the practice will pave the way to working with natural energy should you wish to take it further. You don't need to be attuned a healing modality such as Reiki to practice using the abundance of energy that is around you. However, this one will require you to either be outside or in auras-reach of something natural such as a crystal or houseplant Begin by coming to something that can anchor you to The Wild.

Position yourself near to your chosen object (or outside with the ground beneath you) in a way that

you can be comfortable. Close your eyes and take three deep breaths, focus on the breath until you start to feel calm and then gently begin to open your mind. Place your dominant hand on the object and the other on your heart centre. It may take some practice if this is your first time but feel the energy in your mind surrounding the object, feel the energy running up your hand and into your heart.

Set the intention to take in what will nourish you and then imagine all the stale energy that does not leave your body to be recycled by the earth. Take what you need from The Wild and when the time feels right imagine light energy coming from you to support the earth. You have created a loop, you give and you receive. Stay here as long as you feel you need before you disconnect and disband the cycle. Thank The Wild for working with you and wish it well.

The Wild is a vast and magical place but it's sometimes forgotten among the hustle and bustle of daily life. We all feel a strong connection to nature, that's why we are on this path after all, but it's easy to lose sight of it occasionally. I hope that these techniques will help you to reconnect and re-wild when you need to and allow the spirit of The Wild into that permanent space where she has always belonged.

Nell Shepherdson

SPOTLIGHT: CICADASEED



I'm Jen. An artist firstly but also a lover of motorbikes, travelling, good food, adventures and a lover of cultures from around the world.

I began creating jewellery back in 2018 but have long been making art in many forms through-out my life. I studied Creative Art at Bath Spa University where I learnt everything from drawing and sculpture to knitting and ceramics.

In-between my uni work, I created one-of-a-kind clothes from charity shop finds and up-cycled them into knitted crop tops and embroidered bolero jackets with curtain tassels and doilies. The clothes were very 'granny sheik' and actually sold quite well though a little funky market called St Nicks in Bristol.

Soon enough my love of the unconventional crept into my dress making. The urge to add moss, glue the seams with epoxy and paint the fabrics became too strong to ignore.

Towards the end of my degree I began exploring the art of mask making and wearable art. I began making larger-than-life heads for competitions and shows. I found a job with a theatre company working away in Germany and settled into becoming a props maker specialising in masks and puppets.

It was through theatre that I began making some of my favourite works, from clay sculpted bear heads, recreated into complex patterns and translated into foam structures for the stage. Large scale Dragons, cat skull masks and cat puppets.

During the 2020 pandemic, theatre sadly became an un-accessible job for me, but luckily, in 2018 I had spent some time working and travelling in India where I learnt the basic skills of silversmithing.

I had always loved the idea of silversmithing and had seen friends go through university courses, so I always thought it was out of reach for me unless I was willing to go back to Uni to study it. So to my amazement and complete joy, I could learn the basics sitting cross-legged in a tiny blue room in India, drinking chai and burning my fingers!





Today, I work as a full time jewellery artist. I create OOK pieces from recycled sterling silver, recycled gold and ethically obtained precious stones. Following my deep intrigue into culture, ancient history and folklore, I hope that my work feels as though they have just fallen out of the pages of an ancient storybook or could be sat upon the hand of a Queen in Medieval Britain.

Last year in May, I began making May Crown Rings from sterling silver, gold and precious stones, to celebrate the Beltane, the May King and Queen. The rings are a celebration of the coming season, as well as a manifestation of growth and renewal. Each ring has its own name, often after a poisonous plant, as a nod towards the poison rings Queens used to wear in the medieval ages.

The process of using fire, melting metals and ogling over ancient gemstones, has had me captivated for 5 years now and there is no signs of stopping. Over the years of teaching myself silversmithing I have experimented with a number of styles and ideas.

Finding your style as an artist, I think, is one of the most pressing, challenging and exciting journeys that we go on. I feel that, like the rest of life, finding my 'style' has meant journeying back into my childhood and past endeavours. Just like when I was younger, I found happiness and inspiration in being outside, roaming the countryside picking up stones and taking in the beauty of the natural world.

After spending four years living on the craggy shores of the West coast of Scotland and the West coast of Wales, my Deep Earth and Igneous ring collections have all been inspired by Geology from these areas.

These rings are made from forged plates of sterling silver, layered and hammered to create a strata-like pattern representing rock formations. I like to use rose-cut, precious gemstones for contrast between the organic looking, oxidised silver to marvel at what the earth is capable of making deep down in its crust.

One of my more recent collections is named 'The Storybook Collection', which came from my love of masks, puppet making and my love of folklore and childhood stories.



Please get in touch if you would like to have a unique piece of jewellery commissioned or perhaps there is a piece in my shop that you connect with. www.cicadaseed.com

DRAGON MAGIC

Beltane has long been my favourite Sabbat. As a small child, Beltane is the time of one of my earliest magical memories. My grandfather took me deep into the heady scented bluebell woods at sunrise and left me alone in a small clearing, a clearing where the air seemed to change as we walked into it. As the morning sun rose, as did the excitable air around me. First there were giggles, a slight tugging at my dress and then ripples in the flowers and tiny lights moving fast around me. What swiftly followed was the manifestation and appearance of so many woodland fae. From then my life changed as I accepted I was in this world but not of it.



At only three years old I had seen garden fae many times which bizarrely favoured the compost heap behind the onion patch but this was the first time I had seen them in the wild.. and so many of them... This was also my first meeting with Great God Pan and what I view as my formal introduction to my purpose and the world of elemental beings. An introduction and yet the first time I had ever felt calm and home. In this lifetime, I have agreed to help Pan with his work and one way of assisting is by being a communication channel between the subtle realms and our own. It's a task so few have had through time and one I am honoured to perform.

As we move into Beltane, a fire festival, one where we celebrate the world starting over with new fragrance and energies, we all feel the fae presence

increase around us. However, the one being that has been stepping forward with more prominence than ever over the last few years is the dragon.

I have worked with dragon energies in this life since I was thirteen; I feel I needed to be older as their energies are an intensity that no child could physically handle. They tend to sit outside Pans remit and work in their own colonies and courts, choosing to keep a greater distance from humans owing to the persecution they have suffered through history in the West especially. The dragons and I have had a beautiful relationship since Lemuria where I was a High Priestess in the temples there. We combined magic, working with crystal skulls and other pure magic to created powerful healing and knowledge, ready to release into the world at this time.

Since they left our dimension after so much slaying, much like all elemental beings, dragons shift their vibration and move between dimensions to be seen and unseen. They very much choose who sees them and will never appear unless invited.

Dragons recognise that there is so much low-density energy clinging on to the earths matrix and really want to help us with this so we can live in a higher vibration in oneness with them and the beings in the other worlds. Part of their power lies in the ability to transmute energies into the opposite of what it is. Indeed, they have helped me transmute grief, depression and guilt – all those emotions that only existed since Atlantis fell and serve us no purpose.

They are suspicious of witches. They tell me their experience with many witches is one where they feel used or 'owned'. Witches will try to summon them to help with magic or as a party trick rather than honouring them. They do want to work with witches but in an equal friendship and to help the earth as one force rather than for personal power gain.

To connect with them, firstly think about where your interest lies. Does it come from your heart? The fact you are reading this article rather than skipping through is probably a sign that you are indeed ready to make friends with the dragon realm and start a journey with them.

My first tip to connect with dragons would first be to think about the element you are most comfortable with as each dragon and sub realm is connected to those. For example, if you are a Water Witch then look towards the sea serpents – the most famous sea dragon being old Nessie in Loch Ness who baffled scientists for years. If you are unsure then that's ok too. The most popular exercise I help witches with is how to meet their guardian dragon – this starting point, done through guided meditation often opens doors softly and the more you do it, the more you and the dragons become familiar with you. I have this available on my Youtube channel.

Otherwise, simply go into nature, sit quietly, open your heart with pure intention and invite only dragons of the light to commune with you. It may not happen straight away but soon you will feel hot breath, something brushes past you or sniff you or simply just curl around you... Ask them how You can help Them in their mission and the rest will develop naturally. The next few years will see an acceleration in witches and dragons coming together to help Gaia rebirth and to clean her skin. Increasing amounts of dragon initiates are waking up and asking me for help and the

dragon crystal skulls I source and code are becoming more active, calling their new guardians before I have even listed them for sale. Other High Priestesses like me around the world are rebirthing dragons from power points to clear stale energies and reactivate energy centres. It's an exciting time.

Once you connect with dragons, you will feel a huge shift in both your magic and energy. They are nothing to fear and everything to admire. I always tell people dragons are like giant Labradors – loyal, loving and protective. Beltane is a wonderful time to call out to them. Watch for their shapes in the fires you light and the clouds that pass in the sky. Listen to the beat of their wings in the breeze and the heat of their breath as they pass you by. Start to feel them this Beltane...seeing them will come.

Amanda McWhirter



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For more information on training contact
Eva

evabay@sacredmotherhoodjourneys.com

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E: eva.greenslade

FB: Eva Greenslade Earth Path Celebrant and Doula



The Sacred Drum

The drum is the oldest sound humans know. The sound of the drum is one those primal things that resonates deep within and touches a memory, an instinct, our soul. The rhythmic shamanic drum beat that deeply touches the subconscious part of our brain.

Hearing the drum beat, the simple two heart beats, touches a memory that takes us back to our time in the womb, when the one safe constant we knew was our mother's heartbeat. Her pulse was the first vibration we felt before we heard sound.

When a drum beat resonates through us it brings us back to safety and begins to slow our brain waves from beta (our everyday waking brain wave) to theta the brain wave causing us feel in a deep relaxed state. Drum can open the door to our shamanic consciousness. The drum connects us with the heart beat of mother earth.

Drum is feminine and represents the cycles of life within the hoop. The centre is hollow, contains space for the feeling, the energy to flow. The drum is like a conduit that supports your own connection to within, to your soul, and also to all that surrounds you, to other beings in soul-to-soul connection.

Shamanic drum beats

There are various shamanic drum beats, each can induce trance in their own way.

The trance beat. This builds from a slow heart beat to 220 beats per minute. The beat at this speed can induce altered states. This can be hard for some people experiencing to get into but when you are, it can change your brain waves.

The four beat, war beat. Accentuating the fourth beat. This induces adrenaline. But today it serves as a release type beat. It can also induce a trance type state.

The rhythmic heartbeat, a pulse. This brings us back to ourselves. It is grounding, it connects us with mother earth, and our within. It is calming, and reduces our brain waves.

Find the right beats that work for you.

The sound and feel of the drum have so many benefits.

-It slows our brain waves. It slows your brain waves to theta if we drum long enough.

-It takes us out of our head and into our heart!

-It relaxes us.

-It can stimulate the release of happy hormones, dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin.

-It regulates your heart and blood pressure.

-It is grounding when the beat is deep and rhythmic.

-It aids focus.

-Reduces anxiety and stress.

-It can help control chronic pain.



Drum is often known as the shaman's horse, because it aids our travel in the shamanic realms.

'Scientist believe that listening to monotonous drum beat facilitates the production of alpha and theta brains waves. Other Studies indicate that theta waves are connected to our creative and imaginary states of consciousness. It is believed drumming may allow shamans to align their brain waves to the earths own pulse'

-Soul Retrieval by Sandra Ingerman (page 28)



The five main brain waves

Gamma - Concentration

Beta - Anxiety dominant, active, external attention, relaxed

Alpha - Very relaxed, passive attention

Theta - Deeply relaxed, inward focused

Delta - Sleep

The use of drum in ritual is powerful, due to its effects on our brain and nervous system it can really support our transition into the betwixt and between, into the liminal with greater ease and depth. Drumming opens our heart, aiding our sense of connection, which is perfect when we are working in community spaces creating deeper connection to others, both seen and unseen.

“Tribal people all over the planet still rely upon the drum to connect the energy of each person participating in ritual, prayer, or ceremony.”

-Jamie Sams

A perfect example of the use of drum in a real-life rite of passage ceremony, is with birth. I am a doula and Shamanic practitioner; I often use the frame drum to support women in labour. I see labour as a ceremony, a rite of passage.

The theta brain wave the drum brings us to, is the same as that of a person in established labour, with the hormone oxytocin in full flow. Very often a labouring persons brain waves will slow to delta as they reach full dilation. They will then drift in and out of a deep sleep, as their body moves through the path

of birth. So, you see it's a cycle, we need the hormone for labour to progress well, to help the parent reach natural theta state we need to create the right environment too. The cocktail of hormones and brain waves that support the rite of passage or ceremony of birth is very much supported by shamanic drumming!

The drum can offer many roles in ceremony. It serves to support liminal space for ceremony and ritual, shifting our own consciousness into the realm of shamanic consciousness. Drum also serves to protect the sacred space for the ceremony. It is pretty hard to change the environment or cause an energy shift when a drum beat is playing, the drum holds the space (I know this well through supporting birth).

There is so much evidence world wide of the use of Shamanic Drum in ritual and ceremony throughout history. It was quite possibly our first instrument, and as I said before that first sound, we feel and hear in the womb, creating sacred, safe space.

If you are interested the use of shamanic drum in ceremony, I suggest connecting with your drum daily, and how its sound changes within different environments. The skin drums are affected by environment, including temperature and energetic atmospheres. Crafting and working with drums, has gifted me the some of the strongest connections with nature, and with my ancestors.

The drum holds liminal space, its heart beat holds the connection with all. It has held our ancestors' ceremonies through our rich tapestry of life on earth, and still hold us through ceremonies today.

If you would like to find out more about making drums, and working with drum, get in touch.

Eva Greenslade



Jesse Dickson - 'All's Fair'

My work leans into the darker side of nature, Creativity is air to me. It's how I breathe. ghost. A silent, haunted wisp of breath ...

storytelling, witchcraft and ancient legends. Without the ability to create, I am simply a voiceless and emotionless.

www.thewolfandthewildthings.co.uk @The_wolf_and_the_wild_things

RUNELORE III

When one considers the Common Germanic Futhark and its twenty-four runes, a scholar could be forgiven for believing the divinatory powers of those runes to be extremely limited. After all, twenty-four runes would surely equate to twenty-four meanings?

However, if you have followed this Runelore series so far, you will have already realised that the combinations of multiple runes, their position themselves, as well as in relation to each other, actually provides almost infinite possibilities. We must never lose sight of the most important lesson from the first article, which is that of the deep relationship which a rune master forms with their futhark. In time, it becomes unnecessary for a rune caster to consult books or articles. Rather, the caster immediately feels or senses what the runes are telling them, as they cast their eyes over them, with their context held firmly in mind.

Meditative techniques go hand in hand with rune casting, no less than they do with most other forms of divinatory work. Once the rune casting has been seen and held within mind, a deep trance can take the caster into inner realms where higher meanings or more pronounced omen can be learned.

If this remains a journey which you wish to undertake, then allow me to take your hand for a third time. Let us feel the wind in our hair once more as we drift across Midgaard and beyond to other realms.

Reversed Runes

In Runelore Part II in the Spring Equinox issue of the Witch magazine, we explored the meanings of runes depending on whether they were upturned or downturned. There are some casters who pay attention to the direction in which upturned runes land, considering a rune resting upside down, to hold the downturned meaning.

There is nothing wrong with adopting this practice if it resonates with you. However, a complication arises, simply because the direction of facing of a rune cannot be a binary outcome. A rune cannot simply be upright or reversed. They will often lie in between and, of course, whether a rune is upside down or not depends on there being a focal point, usually the position at which the caster sits or stands.

What is the meaning of a rune which is perfectly sideways? A rune lying upturned or downturned is a simple binary state and this, I find, removes what would otherwise bring unwanted ambiguity to an already complex matter.

Rune Position

To complete the exploration of a casting of multiple runes, we need to consider the way in which runes find themselves lying in relation to each other. We have previously discussed the interpretation of runic relationships and the way in which a single rune can take on slightly different meanings when considered alongside another. We can also consider the distance between different runes, dictating the closer or the more distant relationships. We can further consider whether one rune sits above, below or alongside its counterpart, being a matter given meaning depending on the context of the casting.



For example, here in this casting we have an upturned Wunjo sitting beside the Algiz rune. As you will read below, the upturned Wunjo is a very positive sign, likely referring to human connections, which will be fruitful. This is greatly enhanced by the Algiz rune which suggests that the benefits of such connections will be relevant to the higher self, even the divine and are likely, therefore, to have profound impact on the caster or the subject.

There is a downturned Sowulo rune which has rolled away and lies well outside of the casting board. This might indicate a hint or perhaps a distant pitfall. Perhaps a warning of following the wrong pathway at

some point in the future. However, depending on the meaning of the casting board, held in the mind of the caster, it may be that this rune is simply discounted altogether.



However, there is one more. The downturned Nauthiz rune refers to unnecessary struggles and the paralysis of fear. What this is likely to indicate is that there is enormous potential in a new or developing connection which is available, but that there is a danger of being constrained by your own fear or mistrust and that a huge opportunity might be missed.

Let us now pick up the thread from Runelore Part II and explore some more of the Common Germanic Futhark.

Gebo

This rune has its meaning based in the concept of exchange and its insights are in keeping with the Viking tradition of “a gift for a gift”, deeply seated within the sagas. Gebo, pronounced, “Ghay-boo”, with a soft G, can mean an exchange of physical gifts as much as spiritual or emotional ones. It governs, for example, the magic of sexual intercourse and the exchange of love and pleasure between partners. Equally, it can refer to material or even monetary exchanges in the form of trade.

However, the deeper wisdom lies in recognising that there is always a price for everything. Even taking of things by conquest weighs heavy burdens in the end. In divination and in the positive sense, Gebo tells us of generosity, honour, sacrifice and mutual exchange. However, it can also be downturned and in this sense, it represents an imbalance in such exchanges. Greed, dependence, over sacrifice and imbalance in relation-

ships can be what lies there.

Wunjo

The appearance of this rune, upturned, in a casting is an enormously positive thing. Wunjo is pronounced “Won-Joe” and is very much the rune of harmonising energy between human beings. It portends bliss, hope, and the prosperity which comes from fruitful connection and the absence of all ills.

Love is, of course, the strongest of these energies and Wunjo can indeed represent love between people. However, this rune is very much about human peace and harmony in a much broader sense. Of course, Wunjo can be downturned too and in that sense, it represents the illusion and manipulation of which all human beings are capable. This divination is a warning of potential deception, betrayal and ultimately anxiety and sorrow.

Hagalaz

This rune is pronounced “Hag-all-az” and has the immediate meaning of Hail. Naturally, hail is not a pleasant thing and no less potentially destructive than the flowing water, which it becomes once it melts. The rune represents destructive forces over which the individual has little control.

In divination, Hagalaz represents immediate crisis and pronounced change. However, this is not always a negative thing in the long-term sense and the most common suggestion from the appearance of the rune, upturned, is that the pathway ahead holds a storm to navigate before calmer seas are reached. A difficult time, may lead on to correction and inner harmony.

Downturned, the appearance of Hagalaz is unfortunately an entirely negative omen. It warns of crisis and loss, material or otherwise. There may be an association with lasting bitterness, blame or guilt lying in the past, which continues to poison the present and the future.

Nauthiz

Nauthiz is another rune which is quite harsh in nature, quite similar to Hagalaz. Pronounced, similarly to, “Not-this”, the rune upturned speaks to us of corresponding or balancing forces or cause and effect. Without darkness we cannot recognise light. Without resistance or conflict against opposing forces we cannot gain strength. This rune is about our recognition

of primal truth and most potently, speaks to us of life lessons, achievement gained through hard graft and personal development. As such, the overall meaning depends greatly on the runic relationships found within a wider casting.

Downturned, Nauthiz tends to refer more to unnecessary struggles. Constraints of freedoms and meaningless drudgery are highlighted as well as our being held back by worry or fear. Usually there are needs which we have which are still lying obscured and which are otherwise unfulfilled.

Isa

Isa is pronounced “Issa” and means “Ice” and usually sits within a rune casting as a warning.

Very much a rune of the self, the upturned meaning makes reference to self-control and stillness. As a particularly poignant example, in any spiritual journey, as our understanding grows, so too can our ego and whilst we all project this in our definition of ourselves, an unmastered ego, can inflame and become a deeply self-destructive energy. We are warned to remain conscious of the flow of our ego and ever prepared to focus on our ability to still our mind and thoughts, reflect and keep ourselves in balance.

Where Isa appears downturned, this tends to indicate selfish and ego-centric behaviours which usually serve to actually inhibit our growth and leave us frozen.

Jera

This rune is pronounced “Yehr-ah” and is the rune of harvests and cycles.

Most people who follow any pagan tradition, tend to be acutely aware of the wheel of the year, the ever turning cycle of the seasons as our planet revolves in its orbit around the sun, tilted, sometimes toward and sometimes away from that great source of energy, all relative to the earth’s hemispheres.

Upturned, this rune reminds us of the importance of our recognition of the cyclical nature of all things. It represents generally good things, such as the fruits of our labours, peace of mind, body and spirit and the benefits of our work with natural cycles. Downturned, there is a very stark difference, and this rune becomes particularly negative, representing a break or conflict with the natural order of things. This can only lead, sadly, to further conflict, misfortune, pointless pursuits

and diminishing.

Eihwaz

On immediate examination the Eihwaz rune, pronounced, “Yew-was”, means Yew, in the context of the tree. This is a sacred wood, timeless and eternal, standing steadfast and strong and yet flexible also, like the wood fashioned into a powerful longbow and the sacred weapon of the deity Ull. However, in popular mythology, the Yew can be of both help and hindrance.

More abstractly Eihwaz represents liminal borders between this world and the other, and between life and death. As such, whether this rune lies upturned or downturned has perhaps the most profound difference of all of those in the futhark.

Upturned, this rune refers to the awakening of hidden energies and our journey to enlightenment. It can also refer to powerful initiations and our ability to endure them. However, downturned, this can refer to flaws and confusion, or even death – although in the latter sense, not so much physical death, but the death of a part of you, perhaps leading to a reawakening.

Pertho

Pertho is pronounced very much as it is spelled in English and is a rune associated with the feminine. The appearance of the rune in a casting is usually a positive thing, since it often portends the birth of something. Attempts at its translation have also given credence to an association with feminine sexuality and even female genitalia. However, it is also a rune which is perhaps the most unknown of all of the futhark and its meaning is often debated.

Whether upturned or downturned, there is an air of mystery about this rune, and it may be necessary to peer beyond the immediate or obvious seeming meaning of a casting. Upturned, there is usually a prediction of good things and new things. However, downturned, there is a sense of delusion, illusion, obsessions and things which are not meant to be understood, at least for now.

Algiz

Conversely to the mystery of Pertho, the Algiz rune, pronounced “Al-jizz”, refers to higher powers or indeed the divine self. As such, where it appears alongside or close beside another rune, it sets the meaning of its associate at a more important level and not to be

considered in the profane or mundane sense.

Upturned, this suggests the higher planes, divine protections or spiritual growth toward the divine self. In its translations, there is a distinct reference to strong protection and wards, which, in the divinatory sense might depict a protector or warn of the need for one. Downturned it warns of situations where spiritual growth moves too quickly and a fall from grace rapidly follows.

Sowulo

The final rune which we shall explore a little in this article is that of Sowulo, pronounced “So-eelo” and which means Sun.

As the source of almost all of the light which we physically sense, the upturned Sowulo rune represents mastery, wholeness, fruitful goals and achievements. It provides great reassurance that we are pursuing the right pathway.

However, downturned, this rune represents darkness and warns of the opposite. You may be pursuing pathways and goals which are not right for you, and which

might be pointless or even harmful.

The Final Chapter

There remain eight more letters of the Common Germanic Futhark which we have yet to explore. In the final article, completing the Runelore series and appearing in the next issue, will see our journey through this ancient alphabet completed. However, for now, if you were new to this subject and have followed all of the Runelore article series so far, then your understanding will have grown considerably. It is, once again, time to digest, practice and reflect, as your relationship with your own runes develops and grows in strength.

May Thor grant you strength and courage on your way!

Richard C Hick

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The Festival of Summer and Irish Folk Beliefs

Bealtaine has always been my favourite part in the wheel of the year celebrations not just because I was born in the month of May but because there is so much going on. The trees are green, the bluebells are in full bloom throughout native woodland areas and nature magic is fully awake!

It's a time of celebration for everyone and signifies the end of the dark half of the year. The weather has usually picked up by May with the arrival of warmer temperatures and that is always a good thing.

Bealtaine in Ireland was always celebrated with great gaiety but also with great superstition. The faeries' malevolence was at its height. Dairy farmers would worry about the faeries' obsession with corrupting anything associated with dairy production. At milking time, the cow was blessed and a red rag or a garland of flowers was tied to its tail. A mountain ash branch was always thought to offer protection to cow's milk. Butter stealing and the inability to churn butter were feared. There was a procession around the farm on May Eve and holy water was sprinkled copiously.

It was believed that May was a liminal time when the presence of the other world was closer and magic was at it strongest from sunset on May Eve to dawn on May

Day. Flowers played a large role in the appeasing of the spirits and offered protection. Flowers like marsh marigolds, branches of gorse in full yellow flower were tied together and hung above doors.

It was also believed that bringing the white flowers of the hawthorn into your home brought bad luck. The May Bough was made from sycamore leaves and was the preferred Bough where I'm from in Cork, as it was thought to guard against bad luck. Another tradition in parts of Ireland to celebrate Bealtaine was the making of a May Baby or Babóg na Bealtaine, made from straw similar to the St Brigid's Day Brídeog. The May day custom was for a man and his wife dressed in straw costumes to dance around the doll while the music played with laughter and merriment amongst the crowd all while money was collected. I believe this was certainly a fertility ritual of sorts to seek the blessings of the May spirits.

In the UK they dance around May Poles but in Ireland the people would historically decorate chosen trees or bushes with ribbons, posies and colourful egg shells from easter and would dance around them in celebration.

Simon Toussifar

DRUID JOURNEY

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ANCIENT MAGIC

Magic, as we understand the term, first became a popular art in Mesopotamia nearly 6,000 years ago with the Sumerians followed by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Hittites and Persians. Sumer was conquered by Semitic speaking Akkadians in 2350 BCE, founding the administration capital at Babylon on the Euphrates River.

By 1810 BCE, the influence of powerful rich merchants had spread through Mesopotamia originating from the city-state of Assur on the west bank of the Tigris River. The Greeks called these merchants Assyrians who traded in grain, woven textiles, tin and precious metals, ruling Mesopotamia until the arrival of the Hittites in 1600 BCE. The Hittites settled in Anatolia, modern day Turkey, ruling Mesopotamia up to 1180 BCE. They were named from the Hebrew word 'Hitti', meaning the 'Children of Heth', a Canaanite King who ruled around 1800 BCE. They are understood to have migrated westwards from the Indian subcontinent, bringing Vedic philosophy with them, introducing an Indo-European language with the root words for mother, father, brother, sister, hero, grain, brew and bizarrely, werewolf.

The Greeks described the Hittites as a fierce warring tribal race who were among the first to manufacture iron tools and weapons. They were skilled farmers, road builders and inventors of fast two-wheeled battle chariots. During this time, a new form of magic performed by a priestly caste known as the 'magoi' emerged. The prophet Zarathustra developed this new magic when a revolutionary new way of thinking was revealed to him by an intelligence he called Lord Wisdom or Ahura Mazda, the one true God, a principle of pure focused consciousness. Lord Wisdom created the universe through emanations from which other forces and material manifestations were generated. This primal energy was in constant conflict with the dark destructive spirit known as Angra Mainya, the Devil, a demon serpent who was the epitome of ignorance, violence, destruction and everything negative in the world.

Emanating directly from Lord Wisdom are the seven orders of Archangels, first and the most important is the Holy Spirit who is connected to both Lord Wisdom and humanity. Next came the messengers who we understand as gods and goddesses who can be both

angelic and demonic. Lastly are the guardian angels, assigned to each one of us.

The essence of the Zarathustrian magic is to have consciousness and communication with our guardian angel. Once a link is formed and made permanent, we become magicians, witches etc., a wise person and one of power.



A system of spiritual and intellectual enlightenment was taught to initiates called the 'Great Fellowship', and written down around 1,000 years later during the Persian era (600–330 BCE) as a new religion, Zoroastrianism, that still exists today. Zarathustrian magic was a combination of spiritual wisdom and the method by which things are revealed and made to happen, a process known as the 'Great Mystery'. The philosophy of the 'Great Fellowship' dealt with moral and scientific principles interacting with one another, increasing individual and collective perfection of being and to be a co-creator with Lord Wisdom. The magic is the applied method of ritual and cosmology – the origin and nature of the universe. One of the main aspects of Zarathustrian magic is the mastery of ceremony techniques based on the many levels of meaning and symbolism. It is the technical understanding of how rituals work by means of channelling forces, mainly the elements of Fire and Water, the interacting of the original world before order prevailed.

Zarathustra was aware of the ritualistic nature and use of words to move the forces of reality. He composed many mantras to invoke the heavenly forces and understood how certain sounds in a certain combination can have certain effects. Mantra is the fuel of the ritual and the medium by which a message is carried from the magician to the deities in the spiritual realm. Ceremonial magic included the arrangement of symbolic objects in the ritual space. They act as a metaphorical understanding between the magician and the deities they wished to connect with. This connection occurs on two levels, one to the celestial and symbolic realm and the other to the terrestrial and natural realm.

The small effects produced in the ritual space begins a process of transformation in the spirit world, its power depending on how accurately and strongly they are channelled. Astrology was included into the act of ritual to view past events, forecast the seasons, and predict the future and other cosmic phenomena that could affect Mesopotamia. The celestial movements determine the historic order of events on the esoteric level. Zarathustra saw the vault of heaven as a dark crystalline rock and the stars as light portals originating in the realm of the gods, revealing an eternal message to humanity from Ahura Mazda. One of the most fundamental practices of the Zarathustrian priests was

silent meditation, seen as the best means of acquiring cosmic knowledge and spiritual insight.

The Hittites were conquered by the Greeks in 1180 BCE with its capital city Troy razed to the ground after the Trojan prince Paris stole away Helen from King Menelaus. A resurgent Babylon regained what they had lost to the Assyrians when the capital city Nineveh was defeated in 612 BCE only to fall to the nomadic Persian warriors in 559 BCE under the command Cyrus the Great. The priests of Zarathustra wrote down his interpretation of the will of Ahura Mazda, passing from generation to generation by word of mouth for the past 1,000 odd years. They founded the Zoroastrian religion who had been waiting for the return of a coming saviour, the messiah who they saw as King Cyrus, as did the Jews who he liberated from slavery in 538 BCE.

Under the command of Xerxes I, Persia attempted to conquer Greece but was beaten back twice before being defeated by King Leonidas and 300 Spartans in 480 BCE heralding in Athens Golden Age and the beginning of modern history.

Scott Irvine



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Am I on Track?

Am I on the Right track with my Witchcraft Practice?

Every other week I get a message from someone who has recently started out on their Witchcraft journey and wants to know if they are on the right track or not. It has happened so often that I now accept that this is a common concern among practitioners, so I thought I would talk about it a little bit here as I do not see a lot of people writing about this, so I hope I can fill a gap in our information sharing.

The first thing that should be said is probably the obvious – there is no one way of doing Witchcraft or magical workings (unless, of course, you belong to a religion or traditional practice – full respect to you). So it can be hard to know if you are on the right track or not for new comers – but basically this is between you and your own moral compass. Do you have a good knowledge and relationship with your moral compass? This is an important step people often overlook.

No one is going to come and grade or rate you, no one is going to give you marks or a certificate, so how do you truly know if you are on the right track or not?

Some people might say that it doesn't matter, that practice is enough, and trying to measure your practice is a waste of energy. I am fully going to challenge that and not just because of the numerous messages I get about the topic. Here is why – we are a social species and get all of our information through our senses from our environment and each other, that's just a fact. It is normal and often necessary to get feedback from other people, and I personally think it is smart to ask experts, especially if you desire to be one too!

With that being said we are often without that sort of information or feedback from experts, and many of us are hesitant to even reach out and ask. Why? For some reason or another we have this strange perception that being spiritual means knowing all of the answers already, or that "the answer lies within". Well, that's a cool story...but sometimes that is untrue, and other times that message is completely irresponsible. Unfortunately we live in a culture of toxic individualism that completely undermines our natural state of interdependence.

Do you want to know where to start in your practice? I

will always say the same thing:

- Grounding
- Protection
- Cleansing
- Banishing
- Attraction
- Shadow work (but this is only to be practiced by adults with executive function and who are mentally well).

Read up about these beginner practices and explore how other people do it – what has gone well for them and what could have gone better? Researching will allow you to measure what is right for you and what isn't. When you are ready to start putting methods into practice choose a couple of different approaches and see how they feel to you – really lean into it. Check out your ancestry and try some of their methods too as many people report feeling stronger within this approach.

It is important to note that not every magical practice will feel natural straight away, so do not use this as the means to measure if you are on the right track or not. Just like anything else in life some things take effort. I know in our spiritual circles people will tell you that if it is right for you then it will just flow, but in my experience I have had to work for most things to be good at it, and my spiritual practice is no different. Sure, some things will flow and come naturally to you, but others will require some dedication and work.

Once you have started your practice and want to know if you are on the right track or not you can do a simple self-reflection to assess. This will take some quiet time, journaling, and possible meditation. What you want to do is measure the practice by asking yourself the following questions:

- What is the practice? Explain in detail what you do and what its purpose is.
- What are my thoughts about the practice? Explain any thoughts that come up.
- What are my feelings about the practice? Explain any feelings that come up.
- Knowing how I think and feel about the practice, do I believe I am on the right track or not and why?

Rachael Treymane



WITCH

Magazine



PRIDE EDITION

Submissions are open now for this special, one off print edition of Witch Magazine. Contact us via submissions@witchzine.co.uk.

We welcome submissions by LGBTQ+ authors and artists on the following topics: witchcraft, paganism, ceremony, sacred art, personal spiritual journeys, spellwork, recipes, tarot, crystals, healing, shamanism, poetry, folklore and deity work. Please include 'pride edition' in your subject line. **DEADLINE: Monday 20th May**

Flower Moon Magic

The flower moon occurs in the season of Beltane. Flowers and herbs are flourishing, and so can you!

Why is it called the Flower Moon?

The simple answer is that it's when the flowers start to bloom, the sun is coming out (hopefully!) and spring is finally here! This moon is full of revitalising energy, hope and a time to replenish your own life.

When is the Full Flower Moon?

May 23rd 2024. 9.53am GMT. The full moon lasts over three days. Plenty of time to get your witchy on!



Three Joyous Flower Moon Rituals

Blooming and Becoming Spell

Unleash your inner spring goddess, or god, with this becoming spell. Our feet are our roots, just like the flowers, this spell releases the old and nourishes your spirit to bloom into who you're meant to be!

You Will Need:

Bowl (to soak your feet in)

Flowers!

Yellow Tulips - Yellow for renewal, and tulips for prosperity, hope and self-love.

Daisies and Daffodils- New beginnings, hope for the future and purity.

Bluebells - Luck and moving through obstacles to rise up.

Lavender - Rebirth, luck, tranquillity and happiness.

Warm water (this can be flower moon water, left out the night before under the full moon)

Soft Towel and Comfy socks!

Find a time where you can fully relax and feel your power. Fill a bowl with warm water, add in the flower moon water, if you have gathered some, to add that extra connection. Focus on who you want to become, and what will help you reach that spiritual level. Place in the water the flower heads you have collected and gently slide your feet in.

As they soak, embrace that warm cosy feeling, melting away anything you wish to let go of. Visualise it coming from the top of your head, all the way down and out through the tips of your toes. With the flowers attracting your worries, and say;

“I rise again, through magick and friend,
Drain away the yester ways,
Ignite the passion, and find my glow,
By flowers and moon, as I bloom,
Sprouting up to where I'm meant to go”.

When ready, dry your feet, moisturise, and put on your favourite socks or slippers. And don't forget the aftercare! Feet up and enjoy a comfy relaxing rest, to ponder and enhance the outcomes of the spell.

Clearing Out the Thorns and Thistles

Time to tend those weeds! Put back that spring in your step by cleaning out the old! We do spring cleaning for a reason; to move forward with a fresh start. Use this spring cleanse to head forward with lighter minds and clear energy.

You Will Need:

A rose complete with stem and thorns (or as many as you need)

Tweezers

A bowl for your altar

Flower moon water

Flowers: Dandelion leaf- Purification and defeating negativity. Hyacinth - Awakening of life and the promise of fresh starts. Bluebell - Overcoming inner challenges.

Oils: Lavender

Black Pepper: Inner Strength and to banish negative energy

Protective Gloves and glasses

An area with grass (garden or park)



Wearing your protective gear, take the rose with thorns and pluck off each thorn with tweezers. Think about each thing you wish to get rid of whilst doing this act. This is about slowly taking time to pick off each thorn. Not angrily pulling them off. But accepting what it is you are cleaning out and getting rid for good!

Some thorns might need a little wiggle and jiggle to remove. Others can easily be plucked off. But that's life when having a clean out!

Warning - Safety first, rose thorns are sharp. I recommend you wear protective glasses and gloves at all times when handling them.

Once off, pour the flower moon water into your altar bowl. Add in a few drops of lavender oil, your flowers and pop in the thorns too. Sprinkle on top the black pepper and say;

“On the flower moon I call, to release these thorns from what they stall,
Away with the associations and gone from their grasp,
Start anew, this will be true,
By my power and from the moon,
This energy will be free, bringing in the new!”

Then give it a good stir! You can leave this bowl on your altar overnight, or under the flower moon light to add an extra kick to this spell.

Now the fun part, throw that rubbish onto the grass! That's right, take a big old swing and go for it! Use some force to push away all those thorns and thistles! Make way for the new! You can also repeat the incantation whilst doing this.

The grass will help neutralise and break down the negative energy. Grass also represents new life, fresh energy, positivity and joy!

Giggles and Fun

This spell is to be shared with family and friends, as it's all about celebrating life with some laughter and fun!

If you have children you may have heard of a birthday cake smash when they turn one. But why restrict all the fun to babies, adults can do this too!



You will need:

A layered Cake

Cake decorating items - whipped cream, food colouring, icing, sprinkles. To decorate the cake with lots of colour, cream or frosting! The more fun or outrageous the better!

A plastic table cloth for the floor

A small plastic flower

Clean clothes

wipes

Camera to take a group photo for your memory box!

This isn't about recreating the perfect photoshoot , it's about sharing messy food for fun with your people and springing up again from winter by a joyous act!

Decorate the cake together and prep your area. You can even add edible flowers for that flower moon touch! Before you dig in, literally, take a moment to say;

“Bounce once for joy,
Bounce twice and shout ahoy!,
This flower moon magick is for all to enjoy,
With friends and fun, it's time to destroy,
With giggles and laughs, time to end the
past,
Let's get messy fast!”

And with that, you all dive in! Who's going to be the muckiest? And who's going to end up the most colourful?

Enjoy the flower moon!

Faith Barnes

TENDING THE POISON GARDEN

The year wheel turns, and bounty comes. The thought seeds that we sowed back in the winter while spring was still just a hopeful dream are not only sprouted but abeginning to grow, full of vim and vigour, soon to blossom and hopefully bear fruit. At least that is the idea. But many people I know have already seen their plans for this year delayed or worse, come to a screeching halt, at the mercy of forces out of our control, finances, mercury retrogrades and the weather among them.

As I type this the rain is flooding my vegetable patch and the wind is determined to uproot my apple trees. I'd say life is giving us lemons but unless the weather changes, it will be more like soggy rhubarb. Oh well, pass the custard. Resorting to plan b and going with the flow are sometimes the only option, not something that comes naturally to us Aries types, our unofficial motto being 'close the door I'm coming through.' Our negative and dare I say it toxic aspects often fuel the fire that we need to survive and indeed succeed, even if we do like to make life difficult for ourselves in the process.

So, what grows well in the shadows, thrives against the odds and Is a little bit toxic, (okay maybe very toxic.)



A poison garden (well contained and well away from the veg patch) must include a favourite bloom for many a May Queen and bride, Lily of the valley. Blessed with a beautiful scent and enough cardiac glycosides to kill a man, what's not to like? Lily of the valley or to give it its botanical name *Convallaria Majalis*, (the crude translation being that which belongs to May) is also sometimes called May bells as its said that fairies use them to make music. While it is toxic and dangerous if used incorrectly it's also a wonderful little plant if given a little room and little respect.

Containing cardiac glycosides means of course it can used medicinally for a range of heart conditions including Arrhythmia, but it has also been used to treat epilepsy, burns, UTI's and was even used in WW1 to combat the effects of gas poisoning. What a helpful little plant! But that's not all, this is a plant of hope, happiness and luck. May 1st in France is known as La fete du Muguet or lily of the valley day after king Charles the ninth of France in 1561 received a gift of them for luck and prosperity for the coming year. Enthralled by the pretty sweet-smelling flowers he offered a sprig of the blossoms to every lady at court which became an annual tradition.

This little plant with a big history is also mentioned fifteen times in the bible and also appears in Greek literature and mythos, it carpeted the woods of Apollo protecting the feet of his muses. Now associated with fairies, who not only play it's little bells for their music but use the stems as ladders and the fallen blooms as cups, it has deep connection to other worlds and when grown near the home it brings not only the afore mentioned happiness, luck and prosperity but protection from evil spirits and curses.

There is one more little trick this little bloom has up its bell-shaped sleeve. The blossoms can be added to your bath water to lift the spirits and strengthen your connection to the spiritual planes, something a lot of us could do with right now. Just don't drink your bath water!

Beverley white



Twelve Magical Ways to Celebrate Hexennacht

’Twas the night before Beltane!

Hexennacht or Witches’ Night happens every 30th April and the celebrations continue into 1st May, which is May Day and Beltane. However, Hexennacht is also called Walpurgis night, the feast of Saint Walpurga. Yet this particular night was celebrated long before Christianity and is often referred to as the Spring Halloween. And just like Halloween it is full of fun and partying. So, dress up and embrace your inner witch.

Hexennacht is a German term but its origins are actually Celtic and even today, there are parts of Britain that still celebrate it but it is now more common in Scandinavia. Our Nordic cousins really embrace it more than any other country and to them it is not only called Witches’ Night but Walpurgis Night. It is named after an 8th Century nun from Wessex, Walpurga. However, it really has nothing to do with the Saint and is a Spring festival often called and viewed as a springtime Halloween for Scandinavia.

Witches’ Night occurs the night before Beltane, one of the most powerful festivals of the witches’ year. It is the fire festival and a time when the Goddess has returned completely. Bonfires are lit and great rejoicing occurs as we welcome the Goddess of the Spring and Summer back into the world.

We sing and dance to ensure a good harvest and we also embrace the powerful energies that surround us this night. It is often called the Fertility Spring Festival and for good reason with many couples getting married this time of year. A remnant of this can be seen in the Morris Men and May Poles we see the next day, May Day. Just as with Halloween as the

Goddess begins to retreat from the earth and the harvest and bounty disappear, Witches’ Night welcomes the Goddess back with open arms and gifts of love, light, laughter.

Here are Twelve ways to celebrate Witches’ Night:

1 Light red, and yellow candles and open the windows to let the Spring in. Many people still follow the old ways by opening up the front door at midnight and walking through the house with fresh sprigs of foliage and then going out the back door. You are chasing the winter away through the house and allowing the spring in.

2 Decorate the front with fresh sprigs of foliage or spring flowers that are now in full bloom. But never cut white lilac as this belongs to the Goddess and you are likely to bring bad luck for the rest of the year.



3 Plant sunflowers on this night. Sunflowers are the embodiment of summer and warmer days so plant as many sunflower seeds as possible. Then give the plants as gifts to friends if you have too many.

4 Create your own ritual on Witches' Night and praise the Goddess. Welcome her in to your garden and life by thanking her for all the good and wonderful things she has brought to life in the garden.

5 Read poetry aloud or cast a poetic spell. It might sound strange but poems resonate energy and we need to harness that energy to bring about the powerful change that is Spring. We want to give nature a helping hand. So read or quote your favourite poem, even better if it is about nature.

6 Dance. One of the ways to connect to your inner witch is to dance. So, put on your favourite music, turn it up and just go wild round the house or garden dancing.

7 Light a bonfire. If you can light a bonfire. In Scandinavia, bonfires are lit and parties are held on this night, to chase away evil. Many people make noises too and there are trick and treats antics with people wearing

masks and costumes too.

8 Walpurgis Night is traditionally regarded as one of the most powerful times of the year for ghosts, demons and all manner of scary beings. So, make the most of this night and go on a ghost hunt.

9 You could also try your hand at scrying, seeing the future by looking into the flames of a burning candle and watching what images form in your mind's eye.

10 Have a midnight picnic. Many people have a party and enjoy being outdoors on this night. They drink sparkling wine and embrace the cool spring night air and raise their glass to the Goddess. So, grab the Prosecco and embrace the night.

11 In Lincolnshire, we hang cowslips on doors and windows to ward off evil.

12 Create a floral display in your house and really let the spring time in with flowers and plants that are now in full bloom. So, have a vase of tulips, hyacinth and irises in the house.

TudorBeth

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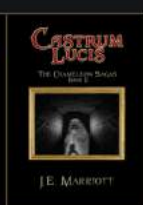
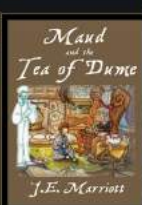
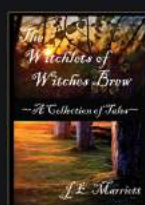
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Monique Bouman - 'Revitalize'

I am an intuitive and visual artist who lives and works in the Netherlands. My heart lies in spiritual places , everything botanic and the Victorians. I start each new work with a fresh look, like flowers opening and showing us the fresh new earth in all their colours and vitality. www.facebook.com/p/Kieks-Art-World



TAROT FOR TAURUS SEASON



During this time of year, we find ourselves surrounded by nature in bloom, the returning warmth of the sun, longer days and active minds. The seeds we were busy sowing earlier in the year are starting to sprout and we find ourselves looking ahead. We are full of growth and expectation as Gaia is at her most active and nature is growing to full potential. She inspires us to bring forward our own potential and inspiration, to indulge in our passions and set intentions at the Spring Equinox, Beltane.

You may find yourself deep in thought and raring to go at this time. Taurus season encourages us to be ambitious with our goals, resilient in our core and helps us to remain focused on what it is we wish to achieve. An earthly sign, Taurus energy can help us to remain grounded and calm, focusing on what is important in the grand scheme of things. You can absolutely indulge in the finer things in life without feeling guilty about it. But how can Tarot help us to be consistent with these attributes?

When looking at the astrological correspondences of Tarot, we can see that as the Wheel of the year turns, there are aligning Tarot cards for each Decan in the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The corresponding Tarot card for Beltane, is the Six of Pentacles (1st May – 10th May)

The Six of Pentacles reminds us to help others where we can during this time, or even to accept the help we may need. Perhaps in the past we have been a little too proud or stubborn to admit that we too, may need support. But regardless of our own situations or struggles, we can make fair judgements and sound decisions. The Six of Pentacles gives us the courage to push forward with our goals at this time, knowing that we will be successful, thus enabling us to further share our wealth and knowledge with those around us.

Another corresponding Tarot card for Taurus season, is The Hierophant. This card may represent our spiritual focus with our goals and intentions. At this time, you may find yourself focusing more on your spiritual journey, with a thirst for learning, enlightenment, and ritual. Just like a Taurean, the Hierophant can be independent and clearly focused. You may find yourself trusting your own knowledge and guidance while seeking a deeper, more traditional form of practise or ritual during the Beltane celebration.

When read together, these two cards indicate a positive period full of success moving forward which sees you investing in your own inner passions and curiosity, thus enabling you to help, support and guide others on their path later on. You may give freely to others in the security that you can trust your own intuition, knowing that those around you are loyal and genuine, while still maintaining your own resources and enjoying yourself while doing so. Now is the time to fall in love with the life you are building, encouraging others to do the same. “When the student is ready, the teacher always makes an appearance. The universe will offer help to those who ask to be guided.”

Beltane is a fire festival, so when we look at these energies in alignment with fire, this shows that the intentions we may be setting, come from a place of passion and desire, allowing us to embrace our creativity and indulge in what brings us joy, comfort, inspiration and growth.

What intentions are you setting for mid-Spring?
What gifts will you offer to the world around you?
You are worthy and deserving of all that you desire!
May the fire inside you burn so brightly that it touches everyone around you!

Fauna Raine

Creating Your Own Beltane Altar

Beltane celebrates sunshine, abundance, and fertility. The name comes from the Irish “Bealtaine” which translates roughly to “bright fire,” and bonfires and candle magic are a staple at Beltane. It’s also a time when spirits—especially the fae—are very present in our world, making it a great time for offerings. Though as a note on the fae in particular: make sure you know what you’re doing, and who you’re dealing with, before you invite them into your life.

When to Create a Beltane Altar

Beltane is a time of eagerness and new beginnings. This is the one altar that you’re better off setting up a day early than a day late. The evening of April 30th, or morning of May 1st is the perfect time.

How to Create a Beltane Altar

Pick a spot, and begin to build your altar. Fill this sacred space with symbols of everything you love about Beltane.



Fire. Choose an altar cloth that symbolises fire to you. It might be a deep and bright red, woven in shades of orange, or even be decorated with little candles. Imbue this cloth with the passion of fire so everything you place on it will be magnified. Add candles to enhance the effect, being mindful of candle safety.

Ribbons. Ribbons are used for both Maypole and handfasting rituals. Get several ribbons, or strips of cloth, in bright colours such as orange, yellow, pink, and blue. Braid them together while imbuing the braid with a sense of fertility and abundance. Take a leap of faith in the universe, and do not specify what kind of fertility you seek.

A Sun Bouquet. The sun deserves a place on your Beltane altar, and you can invite it through a bouquet of yellow flowers such as daffodils, dandelions, marigolds and of course sun flowers. Leave the bouquet on your altar for a few days, making sure to remove it before it wilts. If your flowers are not treated with pesticides, you can then leave it in a sun-filled field as an offering. Otherwise, discard in the trash where pollinators won’t reach it.

Fertility tokens. Unlike our ribbons, we will imbue these with a specific purpose. Gather fertility tokens such as acorns, seeds, a chalice and sword for a traditional altar, or pleasure items if you work with sex magic. Imbue each with a specific purpose, such as creative fertility or monetary abundance. Don’t over-ask.

Offerings. Leave a cup of coffee for your ancestors, a poem for the fairies, or offerings for whatever other spirits you want to honour and invite into your home. A prayer is also a great offering. May Day is traditionally when Catholics celebrate the Virgin Mary, so now is the perfect time to invite her if you work with Christian saints.

Cards. The Wands suit represents the passion of Beltane, and Pentacles the abundance. Make sure to check individual card meanings before you place any on your altar. The High Priestess, The Empress, The Sun, The World all embody fertility and abundance. The Lovers card is perfect if you’re seeking a union. You can also add a painted or printed icon of an Earth Goddess, the Green Man, any fertility deity, or the Virgin Mary.

Your personal altar favourites. What calls to YOU in an altar? Add anything that you associate with Beltane and that makes you happy.

Steffie de Vaan

Wise Words

from the Old Crone



As I write this I find myself twixt Ostara and Beltane, noting the longer day and glorying in the lighter evenings. I have been quite unwell lately with a very nasty chest infection which was not going away as quickly as I wanted. Even after steroids, anti-bios and all my herbal tisanes, nothing was as helpful as they usually are. It has given me time to be bored with reading and doing crosswords but it has also given me a lot of time to think.

As I have been recovering, I have felt my ancient self, rising up again from the slumbers of winter and unwellness, awakening as the flowers are blooming and colouring our lives once again. I have been able to look back on my pagan self and where it all came from. I found myself asking...

Who am I?

What am I?

Am I Pagan or am I Christian?

What are my true beliefs and why do I believe them? Am I just manipulating things to suit myself? This is a debate I have so often had with myself and with other people and that question is rising up in me again.

Am I Pagan or am I Christian? Am I, as I was brought up, a Catholic, or am I, as is my choice, a Witch? Can I be both? Well the answer, albeit in my opinion, has to be both YES and a little bit NO depending on your beliefs. With me, whilst it has to be a yes, I feel that I am a little bit Buddhist, I dislike killing anything, and a little bit Hindu, quite a bit of Hippy and may other beliefs too.

What makes me Christian? What makes me a Witch?

Well in fact, what makes me a Person? Can I be a Mother and not mother my children? Some women give birth but do not become mothers. Some men sire children but do not become Fathers. Many people do

not give birth or sire birth but have become parents become parents by adoption. Does that make them any less a parent or does it make them more of a parent? Only you can decide on your own opinions here.

I am known by many names. Nita, Mum, The Mothership, Nanna, The Old Crone, Mrs S., that volunteer, Neil's wife, The Mother in Law, and a few names I can't repeat in polite circles! If I can be known by as many names surely I can also be known by many beliefs. So what am I?

I am a mother, a granny, a daughter, a niece, an aunty, a great aunt, a godmother, a cousin, a sister, a friend, a confident, a player, a volunteer, a card reader, a grower of herbs, a High Priestess. Gosh so many things, and more, and I am still just an ORDINARY PERSON, but I am indeed all these things.

I think the truth of the matter is that we are all an amalgamation of experiences and knowledge often instilled in us as children, then tempered by our experiences as we grow.

I was brought up a very staunch Roman Catholic and regular church goer. Both parents, all my grandparents and as far as I know all my great-grandparents were Roman Catholic. I was sent to a Catholic convent school and my brother to a Jesuit school. I attended a catholic sixth form as well and then catholic Teacher Training college and even my first teaching post was in a catholic school. I had been almost force fed as a child as to what to believe, told how to behave, told my religion, told my belief, told my way of life. Even as Girl Guide I was told to smile through any adversity, Be Prepared and always, always think of others. Luckily my parents were tolerant people as to how I grew and what I believed.

All these things have had a stark effect on my life. Some stay with me and some have gone by the board. I'm not a religious person, as I feel that religion is so often based on guilt, but I am a very spiritual person. I do try to be the very best person I can be. Oh my goodness how I fail at that too. Yes, I fail, lots and lots, all the time, but I do try.

Thinking about my religious background, I do still believe that the Ten Commandments, set out, supposedly, so many years ago, are a very good Blue Print for life and encourage each person to try to be the best person they can. Let's just look at some of these a little more closely.

OK so some are especially written for the Christian/Catholic church but the rest are great rules to try to follow.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother

Always a good thing to do even if they have a different set of rules. Still give them credit for being your parents and doing their best for you. Not just thy Father and Mother but all people and rules which there for your guidance and safety and the safety of others.

Thou shalt not kill

What gives any one person the right to remove the life of another person? I dislike killing anything at all no matter how small (except flies. I am human).

Thou shalt not commit adultery

Once a solemn vow is made, surely it is being a good and spiritual person to keep that vow. Hurting someone you have given a solemn promise to cannot be a good thing. Doesn't always apply I know.

Thou shalt not steal

Absolutely. Not even if you are an entitled person who just wants whatever another person has.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

OK social media trolling comes to mind here.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods

No indeed, Better to be grateful for what you have. You do not know how another person has been able to achieve more than you perceive you have or even less than you. Also don't brag about your own possessions.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife

Or husband in fact. (I do make a personal exception here for Harrison Ford.)

Interestingly these rules or commands have changed over the 2,000+ years they were written and the meanings have changed slightly along with the cultures of the times. Although it was written that Thou shalt not commit adultery, it was accepted at the time they were written, that a man could legally, within his marriage, commit adultery but only with an unmarried woman or with a slave. (Hmmm) Even though this was the case then, as in other commandments, I do feel that the sentiments behind the rules and commandments are real and still very viable.

So am I Pagan? Have I changed to the DARK SIDE? What dark side I hear you ask? Well, no of course not. I am still me and the me that began life so many years ago.



I began my pagan journey, albeit I was not aware of it at the time, reading cards at the age of ten and nobody, really, honestly, nobody, ever stopped me or told me card reading and divination was wrong or I was wrong or evil. I used to read cards as a side show at (catholic) Girl Guide Fetes and also in school. Yes really. I know it was in fun and I only charged a small amount and all monies went to the fete but still, I was actually encouraged to do it.

The first time someone told me that they felt it was wrong it was in my adult life and both people were Church of England and new to religion of any kind. Both people had come to embrace Jesus and God in adulthood. Both people were vehement that what I was doing was the devils seed and I would burn in hell. Well...at least I'll be warm and with my mates.

What does that tell me? I know what I think but I will leave you to make up your own mind. I don't like to judge others as nobody really knows the whole story do they?

So yes, I am still part Christian/Catholic and also a Witch, a caster of magical circles, healer and jolly good egg.

When someone new realises that I embrace my Pagan side they either take a step away, or ask questions. I answer with other questions to them.

I ask... When you hear the word WITCH what image do you get in your mind? A pointed hat and cloak? Bats flying around? A black cat stalking in the background? A bubbling cauldron? All the things that witches are portrayed as in any media. Let's see...

A pointed hat and cloak? I have worn both when dressing up and anyway a traditional beautiful Welsh Costume utilises a pointed brimmed hat.

Bats flying around? We regularly had visitors in the shape of pipistrelles in the Lawsonia trees and

brown bats too.

A Black Cat stalking around? I did have a beautiful black cat and a ginger one and a white one and a tabby and others and they were all magical.

A bubbling cauldron? I call it a saucepan. I like to cook.

What some people don't see when they hear the word Witch is... healer, herbalist, friend, confident, helper.

I am all of the above. I still uphold my catholic beliefs of being a good person and helping others, donating to charities, volunteering and assisting the less fortunate, where I can. I love to visit churches and graveyards as they are often beautiful, sacred places, so are stone circles and holy wells and hills, beaches and forests. I embrace them all.

In all this I am still me. Catholic by birth, Pagan by choice. I must say I have yest to be struck down by lightening but I guess there is still time.

The Old Crone

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PAT O'KEEFE, M.Sc., CH, RM

Pat Bussard O'Keefe is a descendant of the mystics of the mountains in the U.S., Appalachian granny women, also known as granny witches. She is the author and photographer of eight books, the most recent of which is the Amazon best-seller *Appalachian Granny Witch Magick*. Her photographs and/or stories have appeared in magazines as diverse as *Ghost Voices*, *Witchology*, *Haunted After Dark*, *The Literary Hatchet*, *Haunted Times*, *The Morbid Curious*, and many more. She is part of a trio, *3 Appalachian Witches*, which includes the exceptionally talented Misty Conner and Ashley Conner. These conjurers travel the country conducting seances, gallery readings, energy healing sessions, classes, and workshops on a number of spiritual and paranormal topics. They were recently featured in the documentary *Season of the Witch* and are currently working on their own documentary about Appalachian Granny Women titled, *There's Magick in Them Mountains*. You can find out more about Pat's work at: www.patokeefephoto.com, www.pat-okeefe.com, and on Facebook @ Pat Bussard O'Keefe and 3 Appalachian Witches.

Fire Magick

A feeling in my gut
Glow like the embers.
My hips begin to sway
As the moonlight cascades
Over my pale flesh.
My heartbeat matches the drum's
As I become one with the elements.
The fire ignites
Flames force themselves into the sky
Rising from the pit in front of me
And the core of my being.
We dance together
The flames and I
Mimicking each other.
Our bodies free to express
Our eyes flickering in playfulness
Our roars echoing into the shadows
As we shed our skin like snakes.
We transform with our own magic
Etching our beauty into the night sky.
You grow with a fury so powerful
And so do I.

Suzi Gallagher

May's Eve

A flame of light, Goddess bright,
Transforming life within, without.
Sacred fire, glowing white
Renews the land and fields about.

The Fires of Bel, illuminate
The Springtime sky bejewelled above,
And mortal feet beat rhythms late
To night time Nature's heart of love.

Hawthorne boughs bedeck the hearth
And lovers meet along the way,
The Triple Goddess walks the path
Where blossom marks the eve of May.

Melanie Webb

For Beltane

In the realm of Beltane's embrace,
Where nature dances and love finds its place.
The earth awakens with vibrant hue,
As the sun's warm rays kiss morning dew.

The air is filled with a sweet perfume,
As flowers bloom and birds resume.
The rhythm of life beats strong and true,
In this sacred time, where dreams come through.

Couples hand in hand, they leap and twirl,
Celebrating love, in this magical swirl.
Fire burns bright, illuminating the night,
As wishes are whispered under moonlight.

The ancient spirits, they gather near,
To bless the land and bring us cheer.
May Beltane's fire ignite our desires,
And fill our hearts with passion's fires.

So let us revel in this sacred rite,
Embracing joy and love's delight.
For Beltane's blessings are here to stay,
As we welcome the season of growth and play.

Julie Aspinall

Beltaine Blessings

'Beltaine Blessings to one and all,
On this day, the God on bended Knee does fall,
To worship his Goddess and bestow the five fold kiss,
Tonight is the night couple's find their bliss.
To kiss thy feet, thy knee, thy womb, thy breast, thy lips
Together they celebrate in joy and pleasure until dark-
ness falls and light slips
As one they teach us love has no beginning and no
end,
So dance, be merry and allow their blessings to de-
scend
Blessed Beltaine!'

Pheobe Petulengro

The Queen of the May

Oh pretty maid place your hand on my sleeve,
walk out with me now on this fine May Day eve.
This garland a gift I've made for your hair,
a token of love for a maiden so fair.

My love I accept but where do you take me,
my hand it is yours I shall never forsake thee.

To a grove in the woods beneath the olde mossy oak,
to meet with a Druid clad in a white cloak.
A crowd it has gathered to hear my troth,
witches and wizards and some fine fae folk.

Our hands will be fastened as we drink to the toast,
the words we exchange are unknown to most,
we speak in a tongue long lost to this land
driven out by bigots with swords in their hands.

For we are the offspring of those never found,
too long we've been silent too long underground.
Two torches we'll light then bring both into one,
the bonfire now blazes our celebrations begun.

We will dance through the flames no shoes on our feet
for Beltane is here it's our merry meet.
The sabbat goes on right through till the dawn,
we can watch the sunrise we can feel the sun warm.

Then we'll walk through the meadow soaked in morning dew,
and roll around naked anointed renewed.
Our god and the Goddess their union now made,
as we skip into summer no longer afraid.

The craft still within us the craft ever strong,
bringing bright Blessings and doing no wrong.

Jeff Turner

An Extract from *Birch the Selfish Witch*

Over the next few days, Birch finished sewing her own dress for the Imbolc procession and went to practice the ritual with the other children of the village at Elder Daisy's house. Elder Daisy, the Mistress of Women's Mysteries, looked like the most lovable Grandmother you could imagine. She was small and round, with one of those faces that never stopped smiling, she always made everyone feel happy and relaxed and, because of this, many came to her for advice. She also had a very gentle and soft voice that helped others to be calm around her. She had shoulder-length thick hair, which was wavy and completely silver. Birch thought it floated around her head as if she was underwater.

Elder Daisy was always very kind to the children, making them feel special and loved. Secretly, Birch wished she could live with her, but she had never told anyone this. At least she asked Birch what she'd been doing and how school was every time she saw her. Birch felt wanted and important around Elder Daisy. It was towards the end of the ritual practice when Birch felt reluctant to go home, she wished she could stay in Elder Daisy's lovely little cottage forever and sighed deeply as she slowly pulled on her winter boots while the other children left. Hazel had already been picked up by her elder brother, Drake, who had offered to take Birch home, but she'd said no, claiming she wanted to talk to Elder Daisy.

Birch sat back down by the fire in the living room to tie her laces and watched Elder Daisy see the rest of the children out. She was soon back and settling herself in her big soft chair, offering Birch more hot chocolate.

"You seem like you could use this today and I guess you're not in a hurry," she said.

"Thank you." Birch reached out for the mug and snuggled back into the chair holding the warm cup against her tummy looking into the flames of the fire.

"How is your Mum?" Elder Daisy asked.

"Big."

"It must be nearly time for the baby."

"Hmmm." Birch took a sip of the steaming hot chocolate and continued to look into the flames, hoping Elder Daisy would change the subject.

"Tell me, dear, what's troubling you?"

"Nothing." Birch hunched down into the chair more.

"Obviously something is, do you want to talk about it?" Elder Daisy reached over and placed her warm hand on top of Birch's. "I may be able to help." She said.

Birch looked at Elder Daisy's kind face and decided not to tell her how she felt about the baby. She knew no one would understand and just think she was mean. She quickly changed the subject, returning it to the upcoming celebration of Imbolc and finished her hot chocolate before miserably making her way back home in the cold night air.

Fleur, Birch's mum, was sitting on the sofa as usual, in her dressing gown and PJ's, with her feet up. She was reading a book when Birch arrived home from the practice.

"Everything alright, dear?" Fleur said as Birch took off her coat and hung it on a peg near the front door.

"Hmmm..."

*"Rock should be back soon, he just popped next door. Apparently, they've found some baby stuff in their attic and they want us to have it. Isn't that kind of them?" Mum smiled up at Birch.

"Uh-huh..." Birch said as she headed towards the stairs as quickly as she could.

"Birch? Come and sit with me for a moment, please."

Birch sighed quietly to herself and returned to the living room where she stood impatiently at the end of the sofa by her mum's feet.

"Sit down a moment, love."

"I have homework to do," Birch said without moving.

"This won't take long. Please." Mum said as she slowly managed to sit up on the sofa, placing her book on the side table next to the lamp.

Birch threw herself down on a nearby chair, not wanting to be there at all. She absentmindedly played with the charm bracelet on her wrist. - *to be continued in the Midsummer Magazine*

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EARTH HAGIOGRAPHY

BY SFARDA L. GÜL



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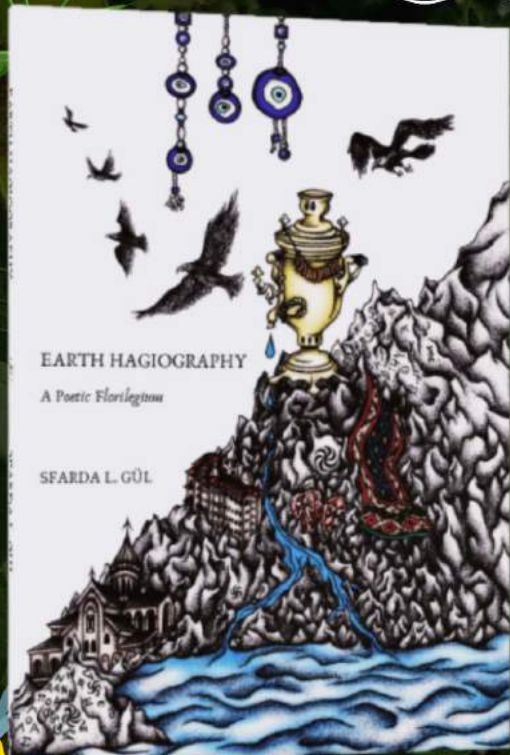
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What We're Reading



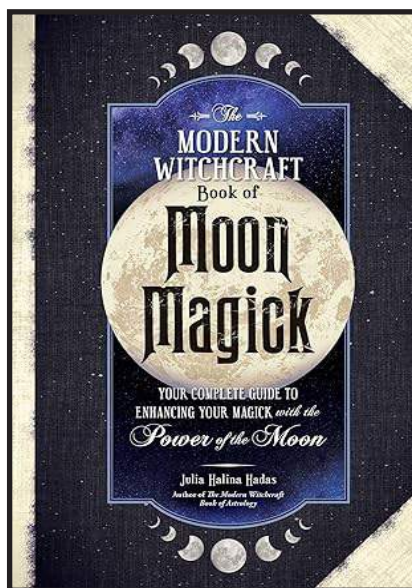
The Ice Maiden by Lucy English

This book offers a blend of reality and magic which I adore. Lucy English is an established author and prize winning spoken word poet, so it's no surprise that this book flows deliciously between modern and ancient times. The story follows two women, a Bronze Age princess and Claire Perry, a museum education officer.

While working on cataloguing artefacts Claire finds herself inextricably drawn to the preserved remains of the princess and a communication begins between them. Claire feels sure she is being asked to do something - something impossible.

Two women. Two lives. Two journeys and a mysterious mirror. A fast paced story, with fascinating details about ancient life, which is hard to put down!

-Reviewed by Helen JR Bruce

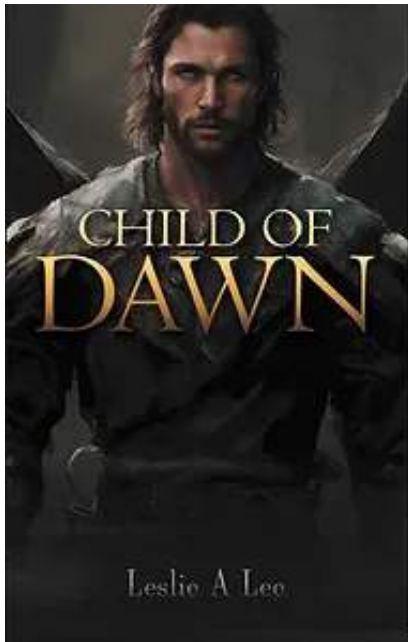


The Modern Witchcraft Book of Moon Magic by Julia Halina Hadas

I love a book which I can dip into when I'm in need of inspiration, and this book offers just that! Not only is it beautifully presented and finished, but it is absolutely packed with easy to follow spells and rituals. Topics include moon phase magick, seasonal moon spellcasting and moon sign magic.

This book offers support and guidance to those new to working with the moon in witchcraft, but it also feels like a powerful ally for the busy, experienced witch. The language is friendly and accessible and offers tips on how to adapt your magic to any phase of the moon. Your bookshelf will thank you for adding a copy of this to it!

- Reviewed by Helen JR Bruce



Child of Dawn by Leslie A Lee

In the Vale, Elves and Vampires have been vying for superiority for thousands of years. Interaction of any kind is forbidden between the species and romance is outlawed. Despite this, Dagsbrún and Anda find themselves thrown together by the words of a prophecy and discover that they must overcome their differences in order to save the Vale and everyone in it.

Journeying together, Anda must learn to control her elven magic, and Dagsbrún must face his own fear that he is a monster. This tale is the perfect escape for fans of fantasy romance and I was pleased to be transported away from my laptop and into a world of hunger and magic.

-Reviewed by Helen JR Bruce

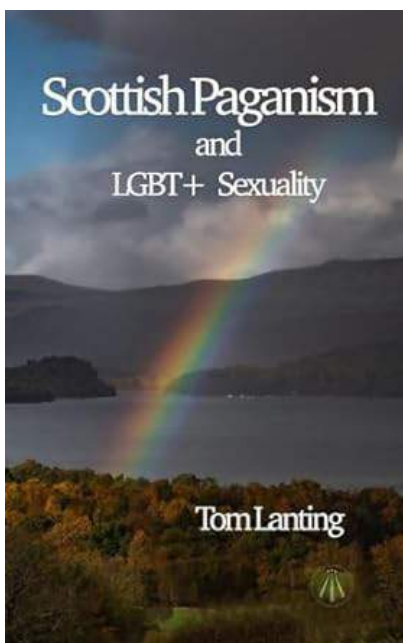


Madame Voodoo by A. W. Jackson

This bold debut novel takes the reader on a wild adventure through New York, as the main character Nkechi tries to balance her blossoming ability as a voodoo witch and the more mundane challenge of starting college alone, after the death of her mother.

Aimed at a YA audience, but suitable for adults who enjoy fast-paced fantasy, this book is brimming with magic, in a modern, real world setting. I loved the diversity of the characters, and found myself rooting for the young witch Kosum.

-Reviewed by Helen JR Bruce



Scottish Paganism and LGBT+ Sexuality by Tom Lanting

Tom Lantings book is an excellent read for those who identify as LGBT+, allies and newcomers alike. Insightful and well researched, you could have a life time of experience or be new and looking for guidance - you will find something of use in reading this book.

I believe it to be an important read in an ever evolving society to help understand ourselves and the wonderful thing that is human diversity, in both areas of spirituality and sexuality.

-Reviewed by Bekki Milner

TAROT MUSINGS WITH AUSET GYPSY



In the vibrant tapestry of Wiccan & Modern Pagan celebrations, Beltane stands as a beacon of fertility, passion, and union. As the earth awakens from its slumber and bursts forth with life, today's witches draw inspiration from ancient traditions, infusing their practices with the symbolism of the tarot. Among the cards that resonate deeply with the spirit of Beltane are the Empress, the Emperor, and the Lovers, each offering insights into the energies that abound during this sacred time.



The Empress card, with her lush surroundings and nurturing presence, mirrors the abundant fertility of Beltane. Representing the fertile earth and the nurturing aspects of femininity, the Empress embodies the essence of springtime renewal and growth. In Beltane rituals, modern witches invoke the energy of the Empress to cultivate creativity, abundance, and sensuality. Through dance, song, and offerings to the earth, practitioners honor the bountiful blessings of the season, channeling the Empress's nurturing energy to manifest their desires and intentions.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Emperor card embodies the masculine principle of structure, stability, and authority. As Beltane heralds the union of the divine feminine and masculine energies, the Emperor card reminds modern witches of the importance of balance and harmony. During Beltane celebrations, rituals often pay homage to the sacred union of the God and Goddess, symbolizing the harmonious interplay of opposing forces. By invoking the energy of the Emperor, practitioners seek to harness the power of discipline and order, grounding their intentions and directing their creative energies with purpose and clarity.



Central to the festivities of Beltane is the celebration of love and union, making the Lovers card a fitting symbol for this joyous occasion. Representing the harmonious union of complimenting opposites and the power of choice, the Lovers card speaks to the deep connections forged between individuals during Beltane rituals. Modern practicing witches invoke the energy of the Lovers to deepen their relationships, both with themselves and with others, fostering intimacy, passion, and mutual respect. Through handfasting ceremonies and rituals of commitment, practitioners honor the bonds of love and friendship that sustain them throughout the wheel of the year.

As modern witches weave together the threads of ancient tradition and contemporary spirituality, the tarot serves as a powerful tool for introspection, guidance, and empowerment.

Reminding us of the continuous cycle of life through the lens of the Empress, the Emperor, and the Lovers cards. Beltane emerges as a time of profound transformation and growth, where the forces of creation and destruction dance in perfect harmony. By embracing the

wisdom of the tarot, modern witches find inspiration and guidance as they navigate the ever-changing cycles of life, love, and magic.

James Jacob Pierri aka AusetGypsy



SCOTT IRVINE a druid in a witches hat



Philosopher, photographer & earth worker



Wilding Wellness

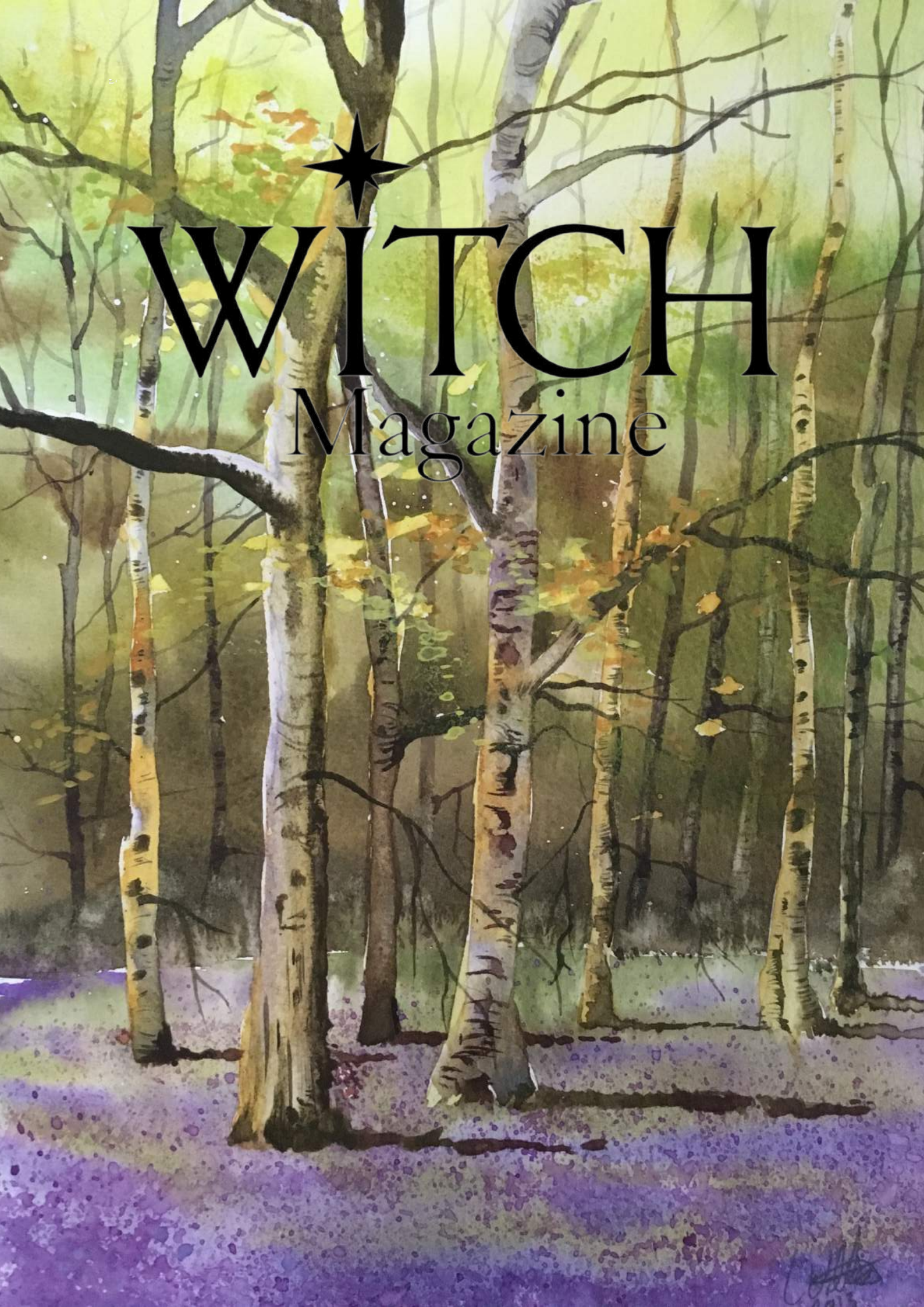
Yoga, Tarot, Reiki

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