



WITCH

Lughnasadh



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WITCH
Magazine

Lughnasadh Blessings!

Welcome the first harvest!

We are at the height of abundance, a time to celebrate life and prepare for the darker months ahead.

I have always felt August was the start of Autumn - small changes in the air, the fields and flowers.

Where as the solstices celebrate the height of the seasons (summer and winter respectively)

I find there's a lot of magic held in these in between spaces - the true magic is in the turn, nature gives and receives the signs of the changing season, and its a wonder to watch!

Be blessed,



Bekki
Editor

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WITCH

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Isabella Day

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Helen J.R. Bruce

A Visit to the
**Museum of Witchcraft
and Magic**
in Boscastle

For years I had been wanting to make the pilgrimage to this small Cornish village and visit the world renowned museum of Witchcraft and Magic. Having moved between a number of previous locations, including the Isle of Wight and Windsor, the extensive collection of artefacts relating to folk magic, superstition and and cunning craft has been settled in Boscastle since 1960 . Originally founded by Cecil Williamson, the museum is now curated by Simon Costin and supported by the charity organisation 'Friends of the Museum of Witchcraft'.

Having at last scheduled our visit, we were warmly welcomed for our slot and took the time to wander around the two floors of exhibitions, which include pieces relating to the practices of Wicca, Freemasonry, alchemy and ceremonial magic. There is also a loving recreation of the cottage of a rural 'cunning woman' where a recorded voice shares traditional cures and advice on finding a sweetheart. It was refreshing to encounter the folk beliefs of our ancestors framed as alive, historically important and relevant to modern visitors today. There are far too many fascinating items to discuss any amount of them in detail here, but I'm pleased to share just a few highlights.

TRIALS AND PERSECUTION

It has been promising to hear of a recent movement to posthumously pardon innocent men and women who were condemned to death for 'witchcraft'. We are lucky to live in a country here in the UK where some progress has been made towards greater tolerance of pagan religions, but it remains important to remember a heritage of persecution and suffering. Many of the so called 'confessions' were obtained through torture, taken from individuals of unsound mind or from people who believed that their punishment was the only thing that could protect those close to them. There are plaques with names of numerous victims on display at the museum, but here are just a few examples:

'Joan Walliford and Elizabeth Harris confessed that the Devil came to them in the form of a little dog and a hedgehog. They used his power to cast spells on their enemies. Faversham, 1645. Elizabeth was hanged.'

'Elizabeth Bennet confessed to having a black dog and a lion as her familiar spirits and murdering four people. Hanged, Chelmsford, 1582.'

'Ursula Kemp accused of having familiar spirits and murmuring curses which caused death. Known as a midwife and a wise woman. Hanged, Chelmsford, 1582.'

WITCH BOTTLES

A fascinating collection of witch bottles can be found exhibited in the museum. Some have been made with the intention of protection, whilst others have been made with more harmful aims. Protective witch bottles were, and still are, created in order to defend a person and their property by countering and sending back negative magic. Ingredients include: rusty nails, pins or razor blades and the maker's own urine in order to magically link the bottle to them, which is then sealed with wax. An example of a potential 'curse bottle' on display was found in a bombed-out house in Plymouth and contained pins, hair, nail clippings, bird bones and a red coral hand wrapped in dry hide. Cecil Williamson notes that it was likely to be a piece of retribution magic against an employer by an aggrieved employee or apprentice, and that it was filled and concealed somewhere between 1895 and 1912.



SELLING THE WIND

The practice of 'selling the wind' involves a witch capturing the wind within knots in a length of rope. In the past, coastal witches would sell these magical ropes to sailors, who would then untie a knot each time more wind was required to fill their sails. This practice was possibly still in use until recently, as the museum retains a photograph of Graham King, then Director of the museum, selling the wind to the Skipper of the sailing boat 'Salus' in 1998. For this piece of sea witchcraft the rope was knotted three times, with a gull feather tied into each knot, and hung on the mast stay of the ship.

CURSES

Amongst the many artefacts, there were a number that were likely to have been used to deliver curses. One of the most striking was the dessicated heart of a dog, stuck all over with pins. The explanatory label, written by Cecil Williamson, states that 'the custom is to secrete these hearts near to the person one wants to harm. This heart was found

in a flowerbed by the front door'. This is the extent of information available with the specimen, although the choice of a dogs heart for this curse may have been related to the closeness of dogs to humans as 'man's best friend' and could even have been a farm dog belonging to the intended victim. Alternatively, the magical associations of dogs as soul guides and liminal creatures with links to the Otherworld (as in the case of the church Grim and canine foundation sacrifices) could have been seen as giving potency to the act as the 'dead guardian' is certainly a clear message, even without the pins.

Tickets for the museum can be pre-booked online or purchased on the day (dependant on availability) between 12midday and 2pm at reception.

www.museumofwitchcraftandmagic.co.uk





Finding Britain's Lost Gods

Professor Ronald Hutton



Every Midsummer's Eve (23 June) a chain of bonfires flames on hills the length of Cornwall. These are remnants of a custom of sacred fires kindled on that date that was formerly observed not only all across the British Isles but across Europe, from Norway to Italy and Ireland to Russia. They are recorded from the beginning of history and are a vivid example of the many links that still connect the modern world with that of the religions which were observed before the coming of Christianity.

Who were the first deities in Britain? Why did they include water goddesses like Sulis or a horned god of war like Belatucadros? And how did they give way to the deities who arrived with the Roman legions, such as Mercury and Mithras, or Venus and Isis? What of the Anglo-Saxon and then the Viking divinities? How long did pagan religions persist

alongside upstart Christianity? Where did 'witchcraft' originate? What evidence is there that medieval and early modern Christians salted their religion with pagan beliefs, keeping faith with the old ways?

This year I will be giving a series of free public lectures at Gresham College on Finding Britain's Lost Gods, looking at the latest research on Britain's rich pagan heritage. There's been a lot said about our 'pagan' heritage based on, quite often, evidence as flimsy as a silk scarf, and speculation from the nineteenth-century greats like J G Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, to much more modern works such as the poet William Anderson's *Green Man*. But what is fact and what is fiction? In this series, I will examine the written and artefact evidence for paganism's history in Britain, starting with prehistoric worship.

If you are going to talk about pagan prehistoric religion, you may as well start with Stonehenge. There are no texts about Britain's worship for this period, around 2600 years BCE, but scholars have tried to interpret the evidence for it from the material remains. The problem is



that these equally support very different reconstructions, and I intend to show what these are and were, and whether the difference in opinion over them could be a strength rather than a weakness.

I will then look at the religion of the Iron Age and the significance of the bog body known as Lindow Man- thought by many to be a victim of human sacrifice, who suffered a horrific triple death. But was Lindow Man really a sacrifice rather than simply an executed criminal or a victim of a robbery? The story of sacrifice is a beguiling one, but it is true?



The first written sources about Britain's lost gods appear in the Roman era. They were undoubtedly transformed by the Roman invasion. The Romans developed the cults of native deities such as Sulis and Belatucadros, and imported their own official divinities like Jupiter and Mars, and mystery religions such as those of Mithras and Isis. The evidence for these changes can be seen in inscriptions, statues and



figurines, carvings and all the impediments of ritual, as well as the testimony of hundreds of burials.

When the Western Roman Empire crumbled, the Anglo-Saxon peoples who occupied Britain brought their own paganism with them. This was Germanic, with a pantheon of deities that included Woden, Thunor, Tiw and Frig. Its temples were wooden structures that leave scant traces in the landscape, but you can find evidence for their beliefs in cemeteries like Sutton Hoo. I will look at this, and at literature such as *Beowulf* and the history written by the Christian scholar Bede, to try to paint a picture of Anglo-Saxon spiritual life.

Our next lost Gods arrived with the Vikings in the ninth and tenth centuries. Odin, Thor, Tyr, Loki and Freya left their trace on the British landscape, in the form of scenes from their mythology carved on stone slabs, and Viking paganism has a further considerable legacy of

material evidence in richly furnished graves, especially on the Isle of Man. The evidence here, again, has been often read to indicate the practice of human sacrifice, but how sound are these conclusions?

Many scholars once interpreted the poetry and stories of medieval Wales, filled with magic and gathered in manuscripts such as the *Red Book of Hergest* and the *Book of Taliesin*, as telling stories about pagan gods and goddesses - but is this compelling idea mere conjecture? And did paganism really survive all through the Middle Ages, or did it die out earlier? As a syncretic religion Christianity may have absorbed many folk rites, but did paganism itself really persist? Was witchcraft one manifestation of this, or did the old and new religions have a relationship?

There are many deep questions to ask about the place of paganism and our lost gods in Britain's story. Many can now be answered, but for others experts can only provide the evidence - which is now more plentiful than ever before - and invite the public to make up their own minds. What do you think?

More about Professor Ronald Hutton

Professor Hutton is senior Professor of History at the University of Bristol, and has served as a Trustee of English Heritage and as Chair of the Blue Plaques Panel and been appointed to the board of the Witchcraft and Human Rights Information Network which advises the United Nations on this issue. A resolution against witch-hunting, across the world, drafted by this board, was passed by the UN Human Rights Committee in 2021. He is also an expert witness on the nature of modern Paganism in criminal trials, and has been an adviser to educational authorities and the police.



More about the Finding Britain's Lost Gods lecture series:

You can sign up to watch this series of free lectures online or in person, starting on 21st September with Gods of Pre-historic Britain.

You can sign up now via Gresham's website

www.gresham.ac.uk/watch-now/series/lost-gods or via shortlink gres.hm/lost-gods



Gods of Prehistoric Britain

Professor Ronald Hutton

Wed, 21 Sep 2022

Religion Archaeology History
Prehistory



Paganism in Roman Britain

Professor Ronald Hutton

Wed, 07 Dec 2022

Religion Ancient UK
Archaeology History



Anglo-Saxon Pagan Gods

Professor Ronald Hutton

Wed, 01 Feb 2023

Ancient Literature UK
History



Viking Pagan Gods in Britain

Professor Ronald Hutton

Wed, 08 Mar 2023

Religion Medieval UK
Europe History



Finding Lost Gods in Wales

Professor Ronald Hutton

Wed, 26 Apr 2023

Medieval Religion History



How Pagan Was Medieval Britain?

Professor Ronald Hutton

Wed, 07 Jun 2023

Religion Medieval History

The Witchcrafter's Tarot Deck Reviews

Tarot Del Toro: A tarot deck inspired by Guillermo Del Toro.

Overview:

To say I was excited when I discovered Tarot Del Toro is an understatement. Spanish illustrator Tomas Hijo has done a magnificent job incorporating imagery from Del Toro's most iconic works into the tarot deck. These works include *The Shape of Water*, *Crimson Peak*, and (my personal favourite) *Pan's Labyrinth*. Released in 2020, with input from Guillermo Del Toro himself, these whimsical cards are a must for any tarot collector, or movie fan alike.

Pro's:

The giftbox is a work of art. Made from the same matte cardstock as the cards, it's a pleasure to hold in your hands. The symbolism used within the major arcana is breathtaking, with subtle hints and clues to the archetypes woven into the detailed illustrations. The back design is dark but eye-catching. My clients are drawn to the deck almost instantly, and they have become a firm favourite to use in readings. The guidebook is also generous, with nuances to the meanings that tie in perfectly with the imagery of deck itself.





Con's:

Of all the tarot decks in my collection, these are by far the most difficult to shuffle, a fact that has been noted by my clients repeatedly. The card stock is of excellent quality it must be said, but they are so rigid and thick that it's impossible to even attempt a riffle shuffle. The minor arcana are very simple, meaning that it would be difficult for a tarot beginner to gain any real insight from them without looking at the guidebook. For an experienced reader though, this wouldn't be a problem. The minor arcana hold a perfect cadence with the major arcana, with the colours feeling both crisp and slightly ominous.

Tarot Del Toro is a wonderfully unique deck to work with, I would highly recommend these to any reader looking to add a bit of magick to their collection.



4.5 out of 5 stars

Available from £17.99-£25.99 from online retailers.

Which Witch School is right for you?

Carrie Anderson



The end of summer also marks the beginning of a new school year. I love taking online courses. I enjoy taking notes and matching the color of my pens with highlighters. I looked up online Witchcraft schools, did some research and I've tried out a handful to offer some guidance in case you're thinking of going back to school this fall. Witch School, that is, of course!

I have tried out a range of Witch schools from free ones, low monthly rates, yearly membership, and lifetime memberships. Schools that offer lessons online, or only in email, or a blend of both. Witch schools that offer just barebones instruction all the way to those schools that really dive deep into the subject and offer priestess training.

The reason I looked into Witch schools was because I find that the internet offers so much information that it can be overwhelming. I often find myself looking up one topic, and, two hours later, I have researched ten more subjects. What if you're new to the craft and just want to understand the foundational aspects? Or, what if you are a seasoned Witch but want a few refreshers? Then there are options out there. The most important lesson that I learned was to not sign up for the first, or even, second school that you find online. Look at several and compare what they offer you.

The first step is to really ask yourself what you are looking for in an online Witchcraft school. Are you interested in learning of a specific path, an eclectic blend, American Folk Magic, Druidry, or Wicca just to name a few. This is really an important step because I have found many

schools use the term, “Witchcraft” to be synonymous with Wicca. So, if you are looking for a more traditional path then make sure that the school offers all of what its name implies. Make sure to open your scope up to include Druidry and Folk Magic. There is some crossover in content in some schools that teach from a Pagan viewpoint, while others specifically focus on one path.



How structured of a learning environment do you want? I found some schools with such a rigid structure that I couldn't even get past the pre-learning modules. It just wasn't worth my time to be told how to write a paper or to learn how to cite references. I wanted to study witchcraft not go back to high school. Other schools offered a very relaxed and informal environment where you could select any of the courses and begin learning. So you could basically create your own learning path. I really like to have a basic foundation of knowledge upon which I can then add areas of interest, but, for me, it's essential that I be allowed to choose the classes I want to take.

Upon signing up for certain schools, all of the courses and classes are immediately accessible. While others limit the amount of courses you can take to one at a time, or, keep courses closed until you have completed prerequisites.

Find out how the school is structured. Is there just one single person running the entire program? Is there a board of elders? Or is there a group of High Priests and Priestesses that teach and grade your work? This does matter especially if you want to know about the background of those that might be instructing you.

Check out the learning format. What's your learning style? Schools offer a wide range of different modalities in the presentation of materials. Is the school on a site like Teachable? Is it an older website that's reminiscent of Angelfire? When was the site last updated? Is the content sent to you through emails, PDF's, or links to Youtube? Is all of the content accessible in an online learning platform? If so, is it one that you can easily navigate? Does the school offer an app?

Look at what constitutes a lesson or course. I have tried out schools that sent incredibly informative PDF's, pages of content, extra resources with links to Youtube or online articles. On the other hand, I tried out one school that did not offer any lesson per se. Instead, it was more of an outline. Such as, under Sabbats, you would be directed to go online, find out all you could about Sabbats and then write a report. That's a very self-directed way of learning. That might be a good fit for you if you are looking for a more parsed down structure and are motivated to do all the research on your own.

How big is the school? How small is the school? I took a class where I was the only student. I've taken classes that were like Freshman Biology, hundreds of students. Will the number of students affect the turnaround time for your assignments? How about a sense of community? Are there on-line meetings, rituals, or chats? Does the school have clubs or activities online that you can participate in? Are there Facebook groups or Discord rooms? Do you want to connect to other students or do you prefer to work alone?

For the schools that are primarily lessons sent by PDF you might want to inquire how often lessons are sent. Do you finish a lesson and then they send a new one? Or is it limited to so many lessons per month? Are you sending back homework by email? For schools with an online learning platform, how will you submit your work? Is there an online journal that you need to keep up to date?

Speaking of homework, let's discuss your expectations of being graded for being a witch. I'm a solitary witch who just likes information. I much prefer the online Witch schools that let me learn at my own pace and then do not give out graded assignments. Now, I don't mind having graded assignments, however, is there a certain amount of fluidity and flexibility? I love being given constructive feedback. Too rigid expectations stifle my creativity and do not inspire me to continue.

Do you plan on being a diligent student and working every single day? Or, will you have long absences that simply can't be avoided? Double check the school's attendance policy. Some will remove you after a time if you haven't been active (I believe this is more for the free Witch Schools so that they can have active students and keep their database clean). I had one school that had lifetime membership and had no expectations of when work should be completed. If it took years and years, then that was fine.

Is the total cost up front or will you also have to buy tools, herbs, crystals and other Witchy gear? I had multiple courses where I didn't need the items but I just needed to visualize them and research them. Are there books that you will need to purchase?

One thing I learned while looking into online Witchcraft Schools is that there is a huge variety. There really isn't one school that is kind of like another school. They are all unique. You will probably find one that meets all of your needs, but it might take some searching before you find the right one.

In my quest to learn about online Witchcraft schools, I had positive and negative experiences. The reason I am not giving any names of the schools is because I don't want to influence your decision. I want you to use your judgment based on what you want out of the school. There are so many varieties of online Witch Schools. If this is an area you are interested in then start Googling them and compare and contrast them until you get that little "This is the right one!" vibe.





The Power of Abundance

Fairy Bec

WHAT IS ABUNDANCE?

In basic terms, it means plenty, more than enough, lots of.

People often think of abundance as material prosperity and wealth, the Queen in her castle surrounded by richness. Abundance can be many things though. You may be a fantastic gardener and be surrounded by an abundance of natural colours, you may be in a loving family environment abundant with respect and care. Whatever the abundance in your life, when we feel the power of abundance, we usually feel fulfilled and satisfied.

Often, the reality is that we feel an area of our lives is lacking for some reason. By focusing on how we can bring abundance into that area, we may be able to feel more fulfilled.

Hopefully in this article, there will be some sparks that help you feel more focused on becoming more abundant in areas that you feel you are lacking.

The Wheel of the Year

Energetically, this is an excellent time of year to reflect on the abundance within your life.

When we think about the abundance around us right now, we may focus on nature and reflect on the fields, the hedgerows and the little animal families that are springing up all around us. It can make us feel full and satisfied, especially when the sun is also shining.

With abundance comes harvest and Farmers follow the wheel of the year or their Almanac which is essentially the same. There are three main harvest points in the year:-

1) The first harvest of the year is Lammas/Lughnasadh and this is the corn harvest. The colours of gold and green are particularly potent at this time of year. It is a good time to take stock of your finances and see where you are at. The hedonism of the summertime can get you get carried away if you are feeling abundant with cash, especially if you are on holiday.

2) The second harvest of the year is Mabon and this is the fruits and nuts harvest. Mabon is the Autumn Equinox and it brings the Earth into balance with 12 hours of day and 12 hours of night. To me, the fruits and nuts symbolize security, grounding and the relationships with those we care about most. This is a great time to understand what it is that you need from a friend, partner, or family member as you are about to embark on the winter months which can be more stressful and less exciting.



3) The third harvest of the year is Samhain/Halloween and this is what could be called the blood harvest. It is at this point that 'stock' is taken regarding what we have and how we are going to make it last. One of the origins of Halloween was that any abundance of grain was handed out to the poor otherwise it would have just gone to waste. Soul Cakes were also often made to ensure that food was not wasted. The poor could go and knock on the houses of the rich and collect their soul cakes. A tradition that has now become Americanised into Trick or Treating.

CRYSTALS FOR ABUNDANCE

Citrine:- A crystal to bring job but also one to attract money. Pop a piece in your purse and you will always have something in it.

Pyrite:- Another crystal that is great for money and prosperity. Focus on the shiny qualities that sparkle and bring warmth.

Amazonite:- This crystal helps restore energy and empower you. In order for like to attract like, we need lots of positive energy.

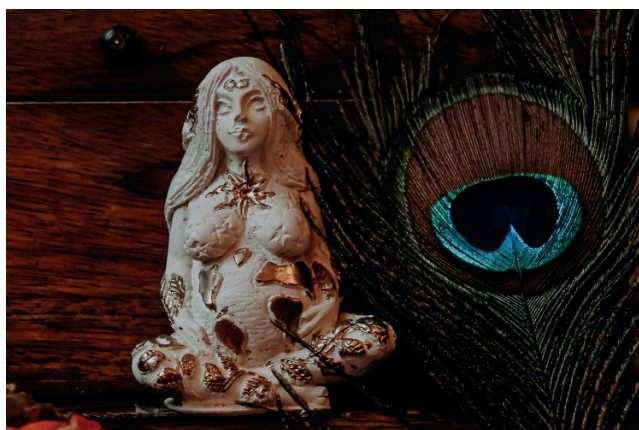
Green Aventurine:- This is one that speaks to the heart and about what you truly want out of life. It can help build confidence to achieve that too.

Tiger's Eye:- is excellent for transforming dreams into reality. It also supports grounding and protection so you feel more of a sense of freedom to take a few risks and achieve those dreams.

Malachite:- This crystal helps with risk taking as well as responsibility. When we want things to change, we need to take bigger steps but when we take bigger steps, we must accept responsibility for wherever that takes us.

Copper:- Really grounds you to the Earth at the same time and helping to you open your body and flood in energy.

CREATING ABUNDANCE ALTARS



To bring abundance into your home you can make an altar using things that symbolize fullness. For example, a pregnant Gaia figure, A pinecone, A cup that is filled to the brim with something e.g. stones.

In an office, put the crystals in the southeast corner or the upper left-hand side as you go in the door to bring prosperity in abundance.

Charge the crystals and other altar items under a full moon as the fullness symbolizes abundance.

This leads me on to colours. The crystals above are greens and golds. Look at a base of green and gold and then add whatever is relevant to the thing you are trying to grow more abundance of. If we want to bring more love into our lives then we can add Rose Quartz or similar to our green crystals.

I always ensure to give thanks too. When you sit with your altar and meditate on what you wish to grow within your life, say a little "Thanks" from the heart afterwards.

Fairy Bec
www.rubek.co.uk



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<http://mysteryschoolofthegoddess.net/2021/08/15/the-lunar-temple-monthly-moon-membership-with-michelle-boxley/>



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Artist Feature:

Charlotte Thomson-Morley



Charlotte Thomson-Morley (she/her) is a Nottinghamshire (UK) based fine artist and illustrator creating bookcovers and feminist art of fat bodies on themes of folklore and witchcraft.

Charlotte has been creating and selling art for 20 years and lives and works next to a woodland on the borders of Nottinghamshire. She shares her art space with her husband and young son, two cats and more books than comfortably fit in a small house.





LAMMAS · LUGHNASADH

THEMES

I discovered Witchcraft as a teen through my lifelong love of history, mythology, folklore and fairytales and these themes are prevalent in my art. I've been hugely influenced by Neolithic Goddess statues and figurines like the Venus of Willendorf when depicting figures in my art. It's important to me to show sacred figures and mythological creatures in a way that isn't idealised, there is already a lot of art like that. I've lived my whole life in a fat, chronically ill body and rarely saw anybody that looked like me represented in art or the media. When people say to me 'that's my body!' it means the world to me to know they feel seen too.

TECHNIQUES & PROCESSES

My processes bring together digital art with traditional ink and watercolour techniques. Some of my recent Goddess paintings were created using watercol-



ours made from plant pigments. I used a free-painting technique (no real planning or colour mixing) to respond to the energy and qualities of the paints. It's my intention to start making my own paints and pigments to push this idea further. In addition to this I've recently rediscovered my love of printmaking, carving lino has become a very calming and satisfying process.

ART AS WITCHCRAFT

Art has become part of my Witchcraft practice and the way I honour nature as a Pagan Witch. I create art as part of my spellcrafting practice through sigils and symbolic paintings, and I use drawings as a visual learning tool for developing my knowledge of plants and the seasons.

There are so many ways that creativity can be brought into spellcrafting and a huge history





of artists who have used art to express spiritual and occult concepts, I've barely scratched the surface in my own research but am hugely inspired by artists like Pamela Colman Smith, Hilma Af Klint and contemporary Pagan illustrator Danielle Barlow. I'm lucky to have worked with some amazing spiritual teachers to create illustrated materials for their workshops, books and courses which really cemented that idea of using imagery and symbolism for the development of my personal craft.

In terms of honouring nature, I'm always striving to make my art practice and the business side of my art have as little impact on the environment as possible. The materials we use as artists, the energy that we use and the way we package our work when we sell it is something we can make Earth-conscious choices about. I recently became a Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Champion and have been encouraging other art businesses to ditch single use plastic packaging and products from their stores. I also hope that the art I make can

start to become something that raises awareness of environmental issues and that helps people to connect with the nature and Earth.

My art business

There are two sides of my art business; I create bespoke commissioned art for small witchcraft and spiritual businesses, in particular art for books (covers and interiors), portraits and course materials (like colouring pages) for people who teach workshops online and in person. The other side of my business is the art prints, postcards and greeting cards which I create. I these sell online through Etsy and wholesale to independent shop owners and market stall holders who want something unique.

FIND MORE OF CHARLOTTE'S ART AT THE FOLLOWING PLACES:

Etsy Shop: <https://charlottethomsonart.etsy.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/charlotteart/>

Commissions - <https://www.charlottethomson.co.uk/> or enquiries@charlottethomson.co.uk





MAKING FLOWER WATERS.

The Solstice may be over but celebrating the year and the power of flower waters isn't. Enjoy making this invaluable (but easy to do) rose water in add to your practice.

YOU WILL NEED:

Rose Petals
Distilled Water
A saucepan and a bowl
Muslin or kitchen roll
Bottles or jars to store your flower water in.

METHOD

Pick your rose petals. I have a beautiful, soft pink rambling rose with a delicate scent. I have allowed it to scramble up a tree and wanted to preserve some of it's spirit in my flower water. I picked a few petals from each flower until I had enough for a batch. You can chose any rose colour and type or use cut flowers although they are often unscented.

If picking from outside I then leave the bowl at an angle outside for an hour to let any bugs crawl out. I also gently remove and rehome any left. Once bugless add distilled water to the bowl. I usually put a ratio of one part flower petals to two parts water.

Place the bowl over a pan of simmering water and cover, I use foil. Simmer gently until all of the colour has been removed from the petals. Here you will find out the amazing range of colours you can produce in your flower water. My pale pink petals came out golden, deeper pink can give a soft pink water. Let everything cool.

Once cool filter your rose flower water through a couple of layers of kitchen roll or muslin into a clean bowl or jug.

Sterilise your final jars or bottles by rinsing in boiling water and then placing in a hot oven to dry. Bottle your rose flower water when they are cool.

It will keep in a cool, dark place for a number of weeks and can be added to baths, teas, anoint candles or anything else that requires a flower water.

You can make several using different flowers. Try lavender or camomile using the same technique.

Debbie Munro is a Craft witch, Empath and Tree guardian - she is 52 and married with two grown up daughters. She trained and worked as an archaeologist and as a specialist NICU nurse before being diagnosed with MS. She now owns and run The Lace Knittery a fibre, yarn and indie dyer business in south Somerset where in addition to her own patterns and hand painted and natural dye yarns stocks a wide range of heritage, premium and ethical brands.

She loves nature, dyeing seasonally and working with waste products. She keeps chickens and bees, practice yoga, am an empath, witch, tree guardian and see ghosts and auras. She drinks way too much coffee and swears a lot. Contact Debbie at: thelaceknittery@outlook.com, on Instagram @thelaceknittery and online shop at www.thelaceknittery.com





Words from the Witch's Journals

I have a large wooden cupboard in the alcove off my living room where I keep my 'witchy' stuff. My collection of dragons takes pride of place on the top. Behind them is a painting of clouds drifting across the moon. In front is a crystal ball on a stand giving reversed images of the things that lie behind.

Lammas arrives between the summer solstice and the autumn equinox. It celebrates the first harvest of the year – the grain harvest. Traditionally it is linked with John Barleycorn, often felt to be the living spirit of the grain. There is an old folk song that tells John Barleycorn's story. It appears that we don't really know how old this song is, but there is evidence that it dates back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England. It may be even older than that.

The song describes the terrible things that happen to John Barleycorn as he comes to life, is beaten down, and dies that others may live. It's the life cycle of grain as it grows from seed, then is cut down, used to make bread, beer and whisky, but enough seeds are sown for the grain to rise again in the spring. The song says if you taste his blood twill make your courage rise, a man to forget his woe, twill heighten all his joy – believed to be a reference to its use to make alcohol.

Lammas for us is always a feast, usually with a loaf of homemade bread. One of our friends makes a delicious bread glazed with honey. And as there was often a lot of us who gathered to share the meal, we would have some other form of activity going on.

I don't know the year – my records didn't record it – but I know exactly what we were doing. We delivered a mummer's play that we had written ourselves. Mummer's plays are often thought of as belonging to the Christmas festive season, yet these plays were also performed to mark important stages in the agricultural year such as the grain harvest.

There are several themes found in these plays. Often there is a story of death and resurrection. Usually a character will be killed in a fight and then brought back to life by a doctor, and often that doctor will boast of his skills.

The list of characters will include a hero, the doctor, the narrator, and the fool whose job it is to add that pantomime type silliness to the performance. Other characters will be added depending on who wants to get involved. We wrote this play for a cast of seven, for those who were happy to act without any rehearsal, and being given the script minutes before they were due to perform. It's a good job we were all comfortable in each other's company. Costumes can be as simple as a hat or a mask.

We had a problem with the concept. In the winter mummer's plays, the hero is brought back to life, and gets up instantly. We felt that this didn't really work for John Barleycorn as he has to die so we can use his body for food and alcohol. Hmm, we did a work round for the doctor to leave him dead. We had a villain who decided that this year John Barleycorn would not die.

We also felt that this story could be about John Barleycorn as Jack the Lad, sowing his wild oats so to speak. So we added a love interest, a fair maiden, and to bring it up to date we added that John didn't stay around much. It provided a reason why the villain wanted John Barleycorn to stay alive. All will be revealed shortly.

We also had a bag of random items that played a part in the tomfoolery. So here is the badly-written script for our poorly but enthusiastically performed Lammas mummer's play – John Barleycorn Must Die. What I can tell you is that we had a great time hamming it up followed by a shared meal, which left lasting memories.

John Barleycorn Must Die

Narrator

Roll up, roll up, make room, make way
For here come Ealdor Venefici with their first mummer' play.
A tale of John Barleycorn
A man fast and true.
At each spring time he's born
And my, how he grew.
One day he set out to walk the land
And sew his wild oats, with maidens all around.

John Barleycorn

I'm John Barleycorn, and I'm here today.
If you see a pretty maiden, please send her my way.
Each year from the spring
I go a-wandering
Till I find my fair maiden
And we go 'ker-ching'.
And once we have married, so fast will I flee
But I'll return in a year, just you wait and see.

Narrator

John Barleycorn must hurry, for his maiden is near,
Following close behind her, a villain who holds her dear
(and her fortune.)
If you listen closely – his wicked plan you'll hear.

Villain (*stroking his chin*)

Mwahahahahaha
I am an evil villain, with a cunning plan you see
For this year John Barleycorn will not die.
Instead I shall catch him, lock him up, and throw away the
key
And in the summer our maiden won't know why
Her John Barleycorn doesn't return.
She'll be sad and all his photo's she'll burn.
I'll go to her then, and smile you see.
Her pretty little eyes will only be for me
As will all her riches like her castle by the sea.

Sidekick (*confused*)

Isn't the villain's job to kill the star of the show?

Villain

Shut up man, what would you know.

(*John Barleycorn meets the fool while looking for his maiden. Ham
this up for laughs.*)

John Barleycorn (*to Fool.*)

Have you seen her good sir?

Fool

Seen who?

John Barleycorn

Gertrude, my maiden, my shining star in the sky.

Fool

A fresh apple pie?

John Barleycorn

A pie? Oh no sir, not for I.

Fool

No, no, a Pie, not an eye.

John Barleycorn

No sir, I would not like a pie.

Fool

Eh? I don't want to die - but do you want a pie?

John barleycorn (*resigned to having to eat pie*)

Yes, yes, ok, one pie please.

Fool

That'll be £3.50 please.

John Barleycorn

How much?!!!

Fool

Good grief man, are you deaf?

Villain (*to Sidekick, Maiden listening in, stood behind a tree or something*)

Fetch me a net.

Sidekick

No, I don't want a bet.

Narrator

Not this old chestnut again. HE WANTS A NET

Villain

Indeed go and get a net and when he comes this way, a-catch him we will, oh yes, oh yes.

Maiden

On no, oh no, oh no,
You great ugly buffoon.
I'll chase you away with this water balloon.

Sidekick (*very pleased with himself and threatening*)

Prepared I am, for a day such as this,
Use that balloon, and you get this fish.

Maiden

Help! Help! Help!

Hero

Fear not fair maiden,
Your hero is here.
Soon you'll be grinning
From ear to ear.

Hero (*to Sidekick*)

Put that fish away, oh do not start,
For I came prepared with a large jam tart.

Fool

Ooh. Where?

Villain

Can I have a lick?

(*Hero chases off Villain and Sidekick. John Barleycorn comes striding in*)

Maiden (*swooning*)

John!

John Barleycorn (*to Maiden*)

Gertrude, a marriage we must have and quickly it must be
For time is getting on and soon I must leave you see.

Fool (*to John Barleycorn*)

Do you take her- (*cut off short*)

John Barleycorn

Yes!

Fool (*to Maiden*)

Do you take him- (*cut off short*)

Maiden

Yes, yes, yes!

(*John Barleycorn starts to look ill.*)

Villain (*sneaking in, pointing at John Barleycorn*)

He's dying. Get the doctor.

Doctor (*drinking whisky*)

I'm here, I'm here
Stand back, stand clear.
I'm afraid my diagnosis is not very good. John Barleycorn must
die.

(Aside to the audience.)

For if this doesn't happen, there'll be no whisky for I.

(Doctor leaves John Barleycorn dying, then turns to Villain)

Doctor *(to Villain)*

Now sir, my fee.

Villain

But, but you did nothing.

Doctor

No sir, I did not do nothing. I gave you my excellent diagnosis. John Barleycorn must die. Now my fee.

(Doctor waves now empty glass demanding another drink. Villain scarpers.)

Narrator

John Barleycorn must die
But the maiden will not cry.
He'll return to her soon
And in the meantime
There's pie.

Sidekick *(in the background)*

It's not a pie, it's a tart.

(Crowd rushes to Hero to get some of his large jam tart.)

THE END



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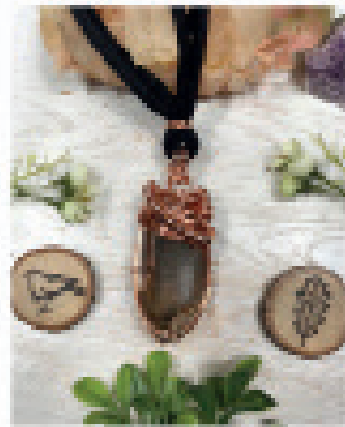
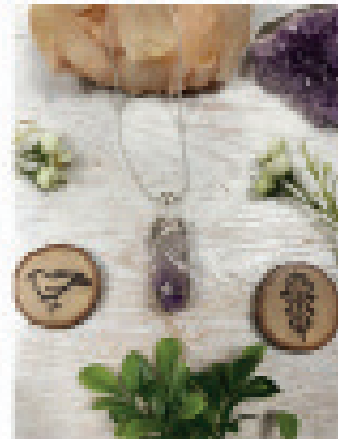
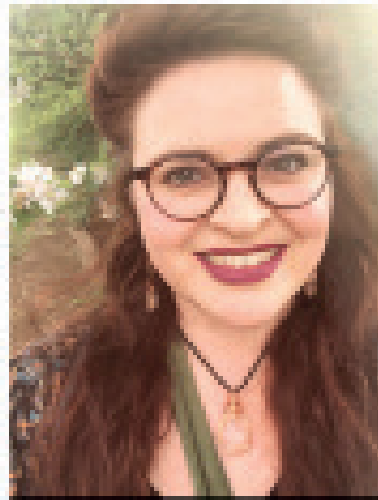
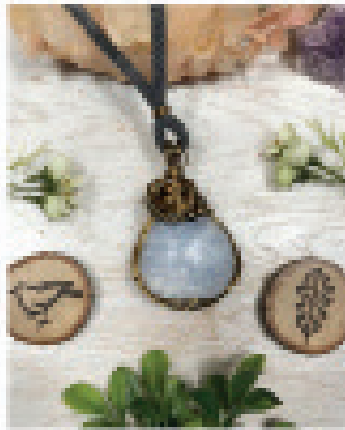


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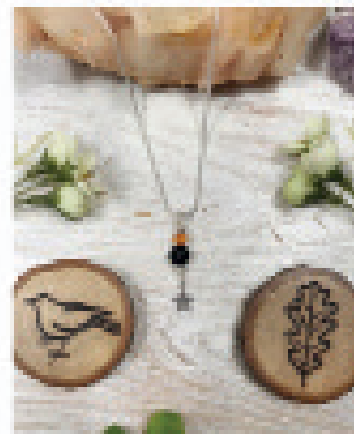
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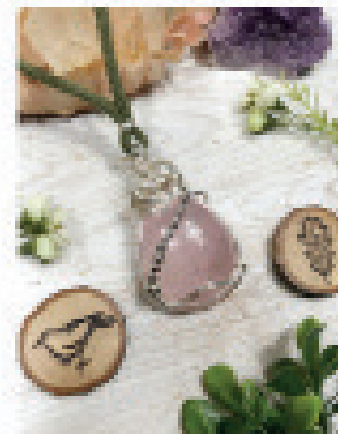


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Wise Words from the Old Crone

If Only!!... and What If!!

All of us at some time in our lives have felt low, hurt, depressed, oppressed and treated unfairly. It happens to absolutely everyone at some point even though we just think it is only us who feel this way. It doesn't help even if we know we are not alone in

our plight and we begin that downward spiral of self doubt and self analysis and of course self-blame. We blame ourselves, we blame others, we blame the situation, we just look for something and someone to put the blame on but most of all we blame ourselves. Then that phrase comes into our heads and won't let our brains rest.

IF ONLY.....!!!!

If only I hadn't said that.....!

If only I had said more.....!

If only I had more time.....!

If only I HADN'T accepted that job.....!

If only I HAD accepted that job.....!

I am sure at least one of these phrases will resonate with you; and you recognise a time when you have said these to yourself. I certainly have.

This kind of inward whipping and non-forgiveness is very disempowering and can easily become a habit. Sure we all have regrets, we all make slip ups and take missteps in our lives and that is part of life and part of who we are. Believe me there is nobody on the face of the earth who has not reacted badly to one situation or another and said and done things we later regret. With hindsight we could change the world but hindsight is just that.....hindsight ...it is not NOW it is not the present and it is



not your current pathway.

Are you happy to use these blunders and misjudgements, as a pebble in your shoe, a thorn in your side, as a continuous hurt, or are you prepared to use them as stepping stones? Do you really want to carry the guilt of missteps in your life forever? Without our mistakes how on earth can we move forward? How would we know we had made an error? Without our errors how can we know to make a better judgement in the future and take a more positive path?

Just stop for a moment and break free. Are you using IF ONLY! as an excuse? Are you trying to convince yourself that all your mistakes are actually down to other people's behaviour or certain circumstances at the time? Perhaps in some small way they were but one tiny step forward is to accept our mistakes, our misplaced words, our wrong pathways. The past is the past and cannot be relived and without a time machine, cannot be changed.

By the way....If anyone out there has invented a time machine, please let me know because BOY, OH BOY could I use it! (Yes I love HG Wells)

Sometimes we need to accept the past circumstances, learn from them but most of all let go of past hurts. Only then are we able to take that step forward.

A while ago I attended a memorial service for a young man who had been profoundly disabled and lost his battle with life. It was his last wish that everyone was given a balloon to blow up. We all had to blow up our balloon, yes really, during the service amid great hilarity. We were also given a Felt Tip Pen to write down something which had upset us or hurt us. All the balloons were tied together and attached to several helium balloons. We watched in awe as our balloons rose higher and higher. Our Chaplin, who took the service, explained that this young man, for whom the service was being held, had explained that he would be up there somewhere and gather up all our troubles and eat them. This made us all smile as he had been known to love his food.

It was a rather fitting sentiment too. The thought that our troubles were no longer ours. He was taking them on board and we no longer needed to hang on to them.

My main mantra in life is based on a quote from Confucius the philosopher. He said....
'Every problem has a solution. If it has no solution then it is no longer a problem. It becomes a fact of life and we must learn to live with it.'

Wise words indeed!



We sometimes need to make a positive decision to step out into the unknown, accept the flow of the Universe and do something we do for other people but not ourselves. We need to employ FORGIVENESS for ourselves.

One brilliant exercise to help is to jot down a few GOOD decisions we have made. Instead of What If?..... tryThank Goodness!.....

Thank goodness I said that.....!

Thank goodness I found the time.....!

Thank goodness I did not accept that job.....!

Thank goodness I did accept that job.....!

Be grateful to yourself that you have made some good choices too and be proud of yourself and what you HAVE achieved.



SO RELAX! ACCEPT! FORGIVE! MOVE ON!

This way we will find balance, symmetry and tranquillity in our lives.

Blessed Be

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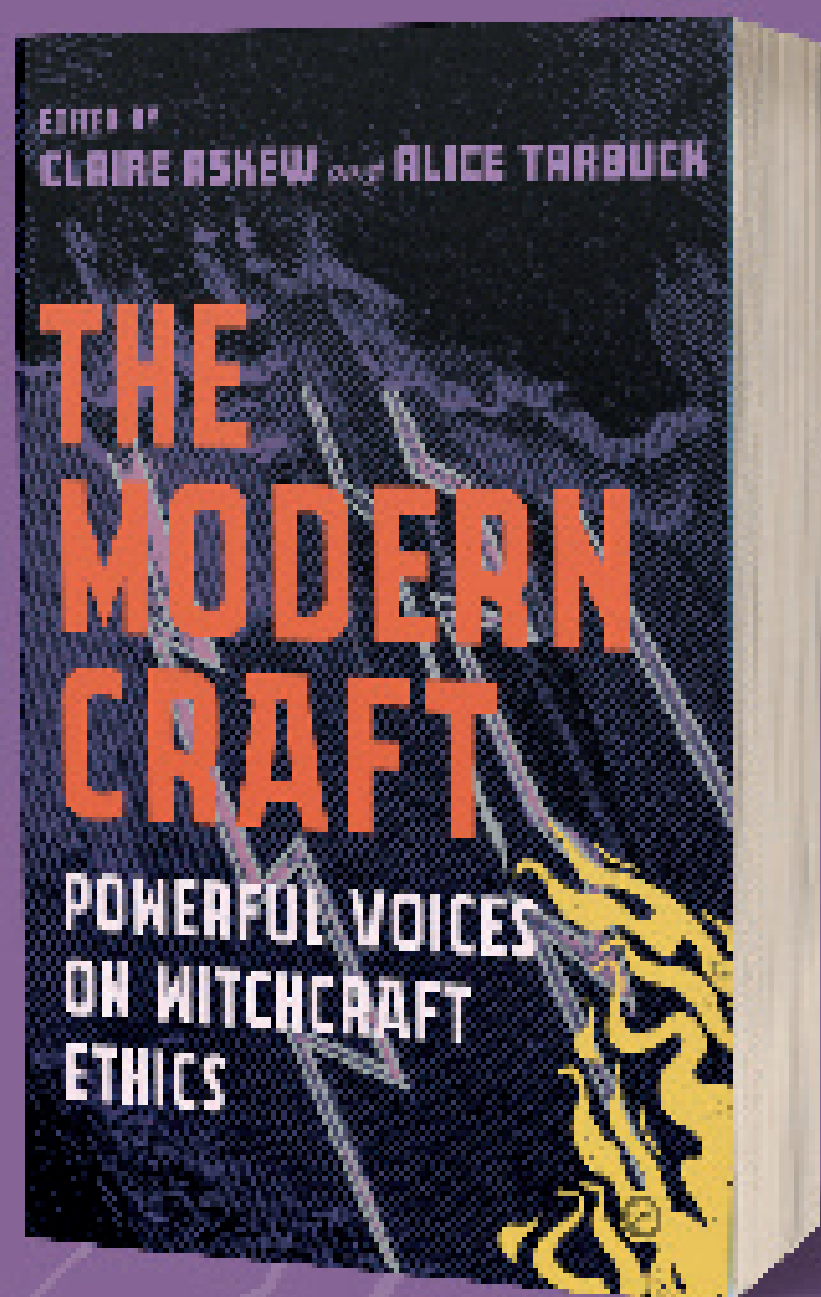


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THE FIELDS OF GOLD WILL DIE
FOR THE BAKING OF NEW BREAD

BEKKI MILNER



WITCH
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Pagan Poetry
&
Fiction

Photo by Klaire Dawn Ader

Amara Hanan

And from the water

comes the measurement of my body.

Already that is mine

to say alhamdulillah for another.

And as things are


made another

knows the

Arrangement of his

will bear know how just inside the water.

Rajal D'Arca Amara



As Above, So Below.

Mirrors mirrors all around.
Mirrors built into the ground.
Mirrors laced into the sky,
Reflecting back the all seeing eye.

Golden ribbons float between,
What we perceive and what's unseen.
Revealing while unravelling,
For those who seek, the veil lifts clean.

Teeny tiny twinkling stars,
How'd you get up so very far?
Have you been lonely in the sky?
As you've watched aeons flutter by?

I'd never wish upon a star,
For it matters not what wishes are.
The truth of it is plain to see,
I am the stars, and they are me.

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