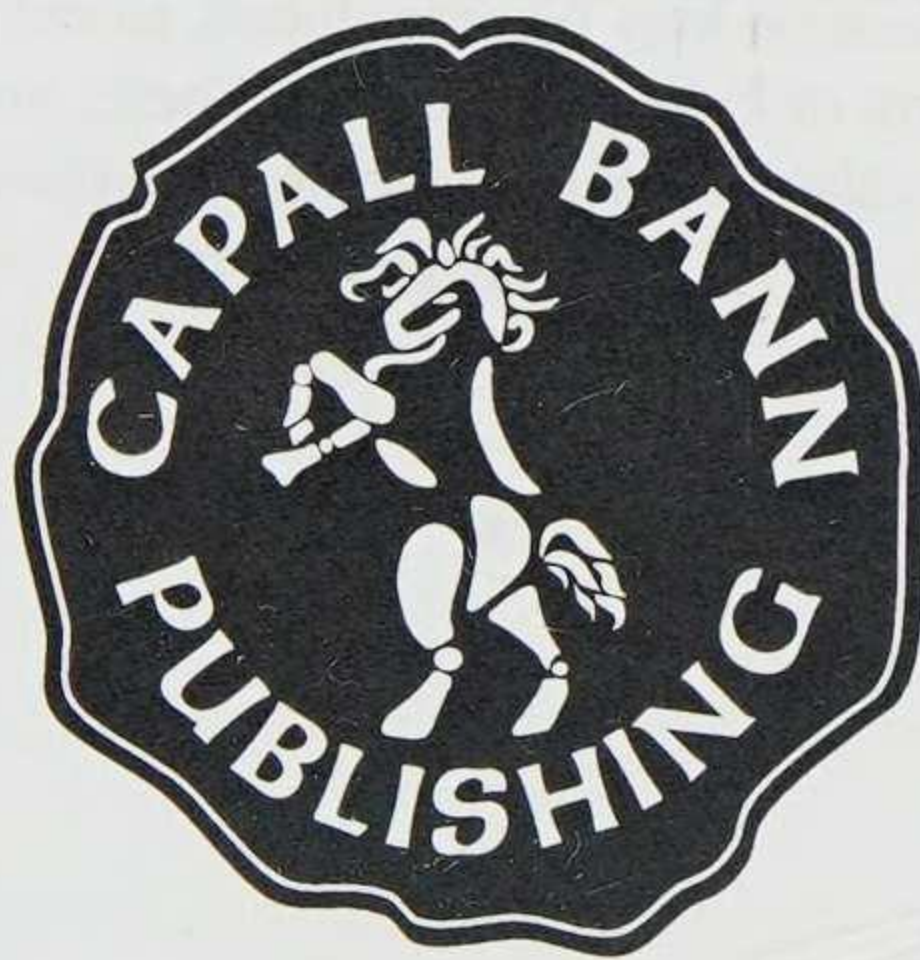
A young woman with blonde hair, wearing a white long-sleeved top and white pants, stands on a rocky beach at night. She is holding a glowing golden chalice with both hands, and a bright, sparkling light emanates from it, surrounded by several starburst effects. The background features a large, full moon in a dark blue sky, with dark, jagged rock formations and waves crashing against the shore. The overall scene is mystical and atmospheric.

REAL
WICCA
FOR TEENS

ANNA FRANKLIN
& SUE PHILLIPS

REAL WICCA For Teens

Anna Franklin & Sue Phillips



www.capallbann.co.uk

REAL WICCA For Teens

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REAL WICCA

Anna F. ...
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Introduction

In recent years there have been a number of American TV series and movies featuring witches and Wicca, and this has sparked off an unprecedented interest in modern witchcraft [also called Wicca or the Craft] and magic. Many teenagers are getting involved or seeking information about the Craft, often from dubious sources. While some of the TV programs are hugely entertaining [we love watching them ourselves] they give a distorted or completely false idea of what Wicca is really about. While the Craft does not admit the under eighteens to covens, we Wiccans must recognise that younger teenagers are becoming involved and are practising a form of Wicca, whether Craft elders like it or not. We must acknowledge that their interest is genuine and provide the guidance that they actually need to find out what Wicca is about, and to work safely and effectively.

Craft elders are disturbed by some of the material aimed at teenagers on the Internet and in many books, which is often misleading and sometimes dangerous. Sue and I have been horrified to find internet sites aimed at teenagers, with instructions for conjuring up entities and spirits with no indication at all that this could be both perilous and frightening. Some sites seem to suggest that spells are a method of getting something for nothing with no price to pay [untrue] and that this is all that Wicca is about. It is not. These sites and spells are written by people who know very little more about magic than those they are trying to inform, or by people who do not believe in magic but who are cynically trying to make money by giving people what they want- not what is true.

This book aims to give real information about Wicca, including methods of working *real* Wicca, to teenagers. It also aims to answer their parents' and friends' questions about the Craft. There are plenty of books available that cover the various aspects of Paganism and witchcraft for adults, but for younger people a lot of this information is irrelevant or unsuitable. When we looked around we discovered that there is very little information written especially for young people who want to work real Wicca, rather than the Sabrina the Teenage Witch playacting kind. This is a guide especially for this fast growing section of the Pagan community. You'll learn what Wicca is, what you need to do, and what you don't. You'll also learn how to avoid common mistakes that can cause unnecessary problems. Things that many books don't tell you.

The Wiccan Religion

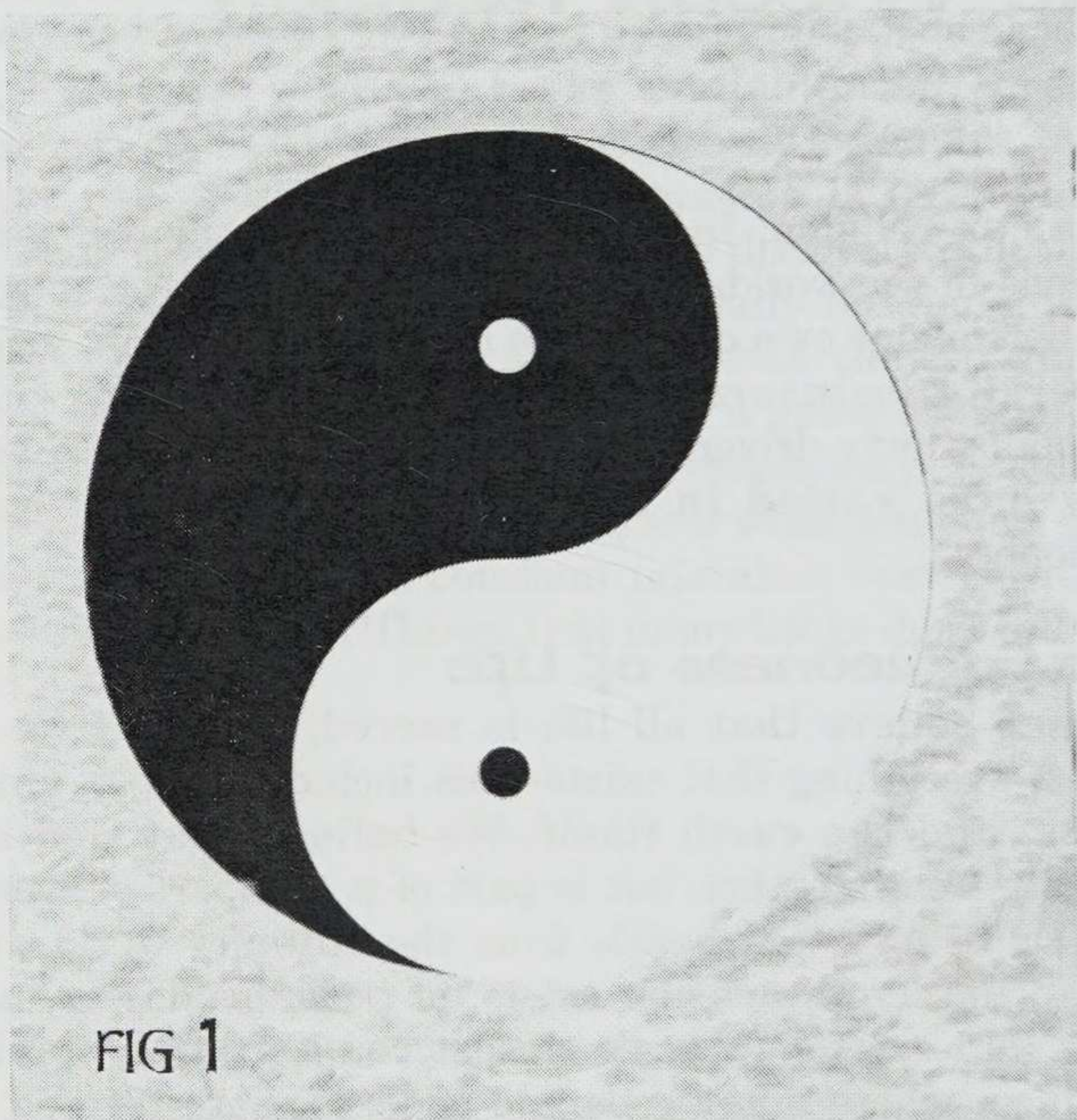
Wicca is a religion. In fact, it is one of the fastest growing religions in the world. Wiccans come from all levels of society. Members of our own coven have included policemen, teachers, university lecturers, nurses, lawyers, artists, writers, musicians, lorry drivers, cooks, engineers and landed gentry! They have varied in age from eighteen year olds to pensioners.

The Sacredness of Life

Wiccans believe that all life is sacred, and that we must respect everything that exists- this includes people, animals, plants, and the earth itself. We believe that God is not separate from creation, but is part of it and part of everyone. Wiccans believe that beside from the ordinary world we can see, an unseen dimension exists, of gods, goddesses, nature devas and spirits. Wicca's closest counterpart is probably Hinduism where many gods and goddesses are revered, each with a responsibility for a particular aspect of life. Some Wiccans believe that all gods and goddesses are aspects of one God and one Goddess, others believe that each god and goddess is a separate entity. Wicca is not dogmatic, it doesn't tell people what they must believe, only that the Universe and everything in it is holy, unique and worthy of reverence.

Nature in Balance

Wiccans believe that there is a natural balance in the world and that we should try to live within it. When things are out of balance bad things will follow. To take an example [one that has actually happened over and over again in recent times]: a greedy manufacturer pours pollutants into a river, killing the fish and the creatures that live within it, and sickening the



animals that drink from it or who eat the fish. Perhaps a man drinks the water or eats a contaminated fish becomes ill and dies. His family is left without a breadwinner and the children without a protector, and the effects go on and on. When a river dies the landscape around it and the animals within it also suffer. You can see a whole chain of consequences arising from one destructive action, eventually spreading its influence and perhaps affecting thousands of people. Wicca is concerned with understanding the natural balance and the effects of actions.

This idea of harmony is very important to Wiccans and we recognise the perfect balance of male and female, day and night, summer and winter, light and darkness, life and death,

God and Goddess. One cannot exist without its opposite. One is not good and the other bad, but both are equally necessary, like the two sides of a coin. This harmony is symbolised in the ancient ying/yang Chinese symbol. You are probably familiar with it already [see figure 1]. The symbol is a circle, which represents wholeness. It is divided into two interlocking halves, one white, and one black. Within each half is the germ of the other, represented by the dots of opposite colour. It stands for the two opposites that form one perfect whole.

Wiccans always try to maintain the natural balance, sometimes by using magic. The village wise woman or shaman was the first person a man or woman in trouble would turn to as the witch would understand what had happened to disturb the natural balance, and see what had to be done to put it right. When a body is out of balance, a person becomes ill. Witches were the healers, but not just of human bodies, or even just human minds and spirits too, but of the whole natural balance.

The Survival of The Old Religion

Wicca has existed for thousands of years under various names. It has its origins in the Pagan customs and beliefs of Western Europeans. Surprisingly, many of these customs still influence the lives of people today, though they may not know it. For example, Christmas was deliberately set in December to replace the popular Pagan festival of the winter solstice, when the sun is reborn and the custom of goodwill to all men was a sacred law and warfare was forbidden. [Scholars think that the actual birthday of Jesus was in March.] The Christian festival of Easter replaced the Pagan celebrations of Ostara, the vernal equinox, when the earth was reborn with spring and the vegetation god emerged from the cave where he had spent the cold months. This was a time when the Saxon goddess Ostara, in the form of a hare, spread fertility and new life- she is remembered in the form of the Easter bunny. At Ostara eggs were given as gifts and we still do this

too, though now they are chocolate ones. Many of the festivals and feast days that people in Britain celebrate are Pagan in origin- May Day was the old Celtic festival of Beltane, the custom of holidays in August originated with the feast of Lughnasa, and so on and so on.

The early Christian Church was determined to stamp out all other religions in the world [though most Christians today have a more enlightened attitude]. As a result, native Paganism almost died out. Anyone found practising the Old Religion [or Judaism, or Islam, or Hinduism for that matter] would be put on trial and had either to confess to being in league with the devil or be put to death, usually by hanging. Though the popular image of the condemned witch is of being burnt at the stake, very few British witches were burned, though a great many were on the Continent. Now most people realise that devil worship has nothing at all to do with Wicca, which is simply a survival of the old Pagan religion of this island.

Because our religion almost died out as a result of centuries of persecution, torture and death, modern Pagans have to look to the past to rediscover our Old Gods and our Old Religion, our pre-Christian heritage. In particular, Wiccans have restored the feminine side of the divine, the Goddess or goddesses. The earliest deity known to humankind was a goddess, not a god, and in ancient times the feminine was always acknowledged in a variety of goddesses- goddesses of the moon, of love, of the earth, of flowers, of childbirth and so on. However, when the three religions of the Middle East were imported [Christianity, Islam and Judaism] each worshipped a single male God. Some believed that all women were intrinsically evil, controlled by the devil to bring about the downfall of men, and that they should be controlled by men who were the chosen sex. It was hotly debated in the early Christian church whether women even had souls. Certainly it was believed that their souls were inferior to

men's and that they could not act as priests or serve in the church. Often they had to sit separately so as not to contaminate the men. It was at this point in history that women lost their status and their rights. Eventually women healers and midwives lost their right to practice and were prosecuted as witches. The general public were very slow to give up their worship of beloved goddesses, and the church managed this by turning many of them into Christian saints. For example the Celtic goddess Brighid became St Brigit, a harvest goddess at Scythe Well became St Sidwell, Sarn Elen became St Helen and so on. Others goddesses are half remembered in folk tales and became fairy figures such as Ireland's fairy queen Aine, once a Celtic moon goddess, and fairy king Finvarra, once the god of the dead.

Paganism is not an anti-Christian religion. Pagans and Christians existed peacefully side by side for many years until the Christian church determined to rid themselves of any rivals. Some early churches even had altars to both the Old Gods and the New Christian God. Everyone is entitled to believe what they choose and Wiccans respect that. Wiccans do not try to convert people, and we do not go about preaching our beliefs to people who are not interested. We recognise that everyone has their own path to follow to the Divine, and the same path is not right for everyone.

What Wiccans Do

Wiccans have no central church, and no central leader telling everyone how they must act and what they must believe. It is a very individual religion. Some witches always worship and act alone, and these are called solitaries, or sometimes hedgewitches. These may never have any contact with other witches at all. Others organise themselves into groups called covens. Covens are guided by experienced witches called Elders, under the leadership of the most qualified priest and priestess who have the titles of High Priest and High Priestess. Everyone who is properly initiated into Wicca

becomes a priest or priestess, as Wiccans believe that every witch has the right to approach the God and Goddess without an intermediary, in the form of a priest, between them. However, by an agreed unwritten law, no reputable coven will initiate a person under the age of eighteen, or take them on for training. Beware of any coven who says they will- they may not be true Wiccans, but people with ulterior motives.

Covens meet once at month at the full moon, and this meeting is called an Esbat. At these gatherings witches may meditate, hold a ritual in honour of the full moon, train members of the group, perform any healing magic or spells that are need, and share some food and drink. In addition, covens will celebrate the eight Wiccan festivals of Samhain, Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Midsummer, Lammas and Harvest. Sometimes two or more covens will join together for these great celebrations. Each of these festivals marks the turning of the year -from winter to spring, spring to early summer, Midsummer to the start of the harvest and so on. A ritual is held during which the participants will act out a reflection of what is happening in nature at that time. Songs are sung, stories told, and food and drink shared.

Wicca includes many different types of coven. Some follow the Celtic tradition, some the Norse, others Roman or Greek. Some mix up all these in a brand that is called eclectic, and this is very popular among American witches in particular.

Magic is an intrinsic part of Wicca. We believe that there is a part of the divine in everyone and everything, which gives us a connection that can be utilised. Like the ancient Celts, most Wiccans believe that there is an unseen Otherworld overlapping our own, inhabited by gods and goddesses, nature spirits, elementals and wildfolk. These are honoured and sought for their guidance and help. Most people associate Wicca with spells, and they are used when necessary. However, they are a tiny part of Wicca and a tiny part of

magic. The real magic is concerned with changing the witch into a person who can foresee the chain of events that results from an action, and who can know the Otherworld, using the magic this gives them to bring harmony into our world.

The Wiccan Laws

Most of us are brought up with some idea of right or wrong according to the society we live in. It gives us a code of conduct so that people can get on with their lives and don't go around killing each other just because they're having a bad day. Generally this code is loosely based on the local religion, be it Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism or any other. Wicca has its own laws; just two basic rules that encompass everything.

The first is the Law of Threefold Return. In its easiest form, for every thing you do, you will get three times as much back, but not always in the same form. Perhaps you might be angry with someone and spread nasty rumours about them. In consequence you find that a whole group of people are not talking to you. This is akin to the idea of karma, a philosophy accepted by a large percentage of the world's peoples; they believe that we have more than one life and that that what we do in one life will affect how the next one goes. However witches believe that the price will be paid in this life, not the next. If you do a lot of good, you'll reap the rewards, but if you do harm, then you'll pay the price - even if your intentions were good. A witch must keep the balance and understand the consequences of actions. This is why witches were called Wise Women or Cunning Men.

Incidentally, many Wiccans [though not all] believe in reincarnation. We go through progressive lifetimes, learning with each and resting in between in the Summerland, until we are ready to be with the Goddess forever. You don't have to accept this view to be a Wiccan, but at least allow for the possibility.

If you perform magic and cast spells then the Threefold Law is called into action, which is why we are so careful to only perform spells that are necessary. You really do reap what you sow and as a witch you must think before you act. This simple law is spelled out in many traditional fairy stories where the hero or heroine is often asked to help a poor old woman and when they do, she turns into a good fairy and grants them three wishes. One good deed brings three rewards. But we must be sure the deed is really a good one.

The other witches' law is the Wicca Rede: *Eight words the wiccan rede fulfil - an' it harm non, do what ye will.* Sounds easy doesn't it? Do what you will- unless it harms another. But this means as long as it harms no other being, the earth or yourself. Wiccans believe that all life is deserving of respect, people, animals, plants, and Mother Earth herself most of all. Witches consider the consequences of any action, especially when it comes to casting spells. Is your intention good? Have you thought about the consequences? Sometimes an act that seems beneficial can have a knock on effect that will harm another and you can be sure the Threefold Law will swing into action. Nobody will be asking whether you meant to cause the damage.

The Sacred World

Witches begin their training by learning about the natural cycles of the land, and the magic that lies behind them. Many religions teach that humans have been put on earth as a punishment, to suffer, or to prove themselves worthy to live somewhere better. In contrast, we believe that the earth part of the Divine, a living paradise, only spoiled in places by human beings who do not recognise that it is sacred. God and creation are not separate, but interconnected. The ancient people saw the earth as a goddess, one who gave life to everything on it, and we still use the phrases 'Mother Earth' and 'Mother Nature'. In Greece this goddess was called Gaia, and a few years ago a man called James Lovelock wrote a book about his 'Gaia Theory'. He said that the Earth reacted like a living entity to any attacks made on it [in the form of pollution, excessive mining etc.] by trying to shake off the pesky parasites [human beings] that prey upon it with earthquakes, floods and so on. Because the seed planted in the dark ground germinate and grows, the earth was considered to be the womb of Mother Earth. Caves, wells and other openings into it were regarded as very sacred places and were used for the worship of the Earth Mother.

You may have heard some places, like Stonehenge, called 'sacred sites'. While witches believe that the whole of creation is sacred, some places are regarded as very holy because they have particular powers or spirits connected with them. Some think that the ancient people marked out very powerful places with stone circles and standing stones, and that these are connected by straight pathways called ley lines. Mysterious straight paths across the countryside are often associated

with spirits and are said to be the paths that fairies take when they are travelling, or perhaps the paths that the souls of the dead take to the Otherworld.

However, not all special places are marked by stones. Most witches believe that every place has its own spirit and own particular kind of energy. Some of these are very special and must be regarded as holy, though unless you look carefully, you might pass them by. Those who are sensitive know how to look for the signs that mark such. The rune master Nigel Pennick says that it might just be a twisted tree, a peculiar rock formation, a spring, a waterfall, the grass may be greener, or there may be strange bare patches. These are places where our ancestors would have taken offerings and performed rites. They may have legends about them, or they may be unknown to anyone but you.

The ancients believed that every river and stream had within it a water spirit or water god or goddess, and many rivers still bear the name of their original god. For example the Tamar in Cornwall is named after an old goddess, the river Clyde after the goddess Clota, the 'Divine Cleanser', the River Boyne after the goddess Boanne and so on. Water has often been considered to be a living thing, or certainly to have the power of sustaining, bestowing and even restoring life. Every ancient society honoured springs, wells and water sources as sacred.

To the witch, everything possesses spirit, a living force within it, which vibrates to the pulse of the earth itself. This is the force that we work with. The Saxon sorcerer saw the world as being held in permanent balance between the powers of fire and frost, comparable to the idea of yin and yang. Everything in the universe [Gods, men, plants, animals etc.] was thought to be connected by a system of fibres, like a web. Any vibration on the web eventually reverberated everywhere else, like ripple moving out from a stone thrown into a pond. As

witches we use this idea of the web in our magic. In Saxon countries it was called 'The Web of Wyrđ'. *Wyrđ* roughly means 'fate'. As our understanding grows, we become aware of the working of the web, and its more subtle realms. We are part of the web, can attune to its various energies and magically vibrate the web with full knowledge of the outcome.

There is magic to be found on the city streets, in parks and houses as well as fields, meadows, woodlands and rivers. Many people flock to stone circles, long barrows and standing stones to perform workings, demanding that they give up their energy, often without finding out what kind of energy they possess or even whether they are willing to give it up. Worse still, some of them leave crystals in these sites to supposedly charge them, disrupting and defecting not only the energy flow of the site but the energies for miles around. This has a similar effect to a stone thrown in a pond: the effects continue to radiate. There is enough disruption from roads and buildings without us ignorantly adding to it. Some irresponsible people leave rubbish at the sites, the remains of fires and candles or even damage the monuments themselves. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing!

The Goddess

Witches worship a Goddess as well as a God. Worship of the Great Goddess goes back tens of thousands of years and seems to have begun far earlier than the worship of any male deity. In ancient times people saw magic and holiness everywhere. The moon hung mysteriously in the sky night after night without falling down, swelling and shrinking through predictable but inexplicable phases. The earth seemed to be able to produce all manner and plants and animals- plants appeared to be 'born' from the ground. Both moon and earth were revered and worshipped as goddesses. Women found that their menstrual cycles seemed to coincide with the moon's changes - in fact the word menstruation actually comes from an ancient word for moon. A woman's body swells roundly during pregnancy and people compared this with the full moon, which is why the Goddess of the full moon is seen as a pregnant mother figure.

Because the moon grew, aged, and then vanished, people assumed that it had died and the following new moon was truly a new moon, the old moon that had died appeared to have been reborn. It seemed logical to assume that they could do the same. This may be why the most ancient graves contain the remains of people who were buried in the foetal position - the position of an unborn baby in the womb. They expected to be reborn from the Earth Mother.

The earliest recognisable likeness of a goddess was a figurine of a plump, pregnant, motherly woman. Woman's ability to give birth was the first magic. To begin with nobody realised that men played any part in the process; the power was all the woman's. Yes, mother was the first goddess!

As civilisations began to grow, the goddess acquired many names, different nations had different names for the same belief, and some gave her many names each describing a different aspect of her power. Artemis, Astarte, Diana, Aphrodite, Gaia, Cerridwen, Isis, Arianrhod, Hera, Freya, Iduna, Danu, Aine - these are just a few of the names given to goddesses in the past.

Of course, our modern scientific minds have learned that the moon is just a barren rocky satellite of the earth, which in turn is just a rocky satellite of the sun. Neither is alive. That's patently obvious: or is it?

The earth is constantly in a state of change. In the 1970s, a scientist named James Lovelock started to study these changes. He found that the planet doesn't always behave entirely 'scientifically'. The more he studied, the more he realised that it behaved more like a living body than anything else and seemed to keep a natural balance between the various gases in the atmosphere that did not 'compute'. By all calculations there should be a very different balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide, even allowing for the action of plants, animals and even plankton. The difference was being made by the occasional volcanic eruption and clouds, those fluffy things that float through the sky with no purpose other than to blot out the sun when we try to sunbathe. He concluded that life on earth is supported by a living earth. He called this living being Gaia after the ancient Greek earth goddess and wrote a book called *The Gaia Hypothesis* to explain his theory. Lovelock arrived at his conclusions by applying sound scientific principles to the behaviour of our planet, confirming what Pagans have been saying all along!

We still refer to Mother Earth and Mother Nature as people have for centuries and we owe a responsibility to this great being who feeds us and gives us life.

The world's oceans are tidal because the moon's gravity pulls the water towards wherever it happens to be. There is strong evidence that the moon affects the water in our bodies in the same way, affecting our moods and general health [we are 80% water]. We see the Goddess of the phases of the moon, the new, growing moon is the maiden goddess, the full, pregnant moon is the mother goddess, the shrinking, waning moon is the ageing crone. We can also see the Goddess in the earth- she is the Earth Mother who gives birth to everything that grows. All are aspects of the Great Goddess who rules all creation in partnership with her husband, the God.

The Goddess has a sacred number and anything relating to that number is special to Her. The number is five. Five is a key number in our lives. Think about it. We have five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Fingers and toes come in fives. Even the holes on our faces add up to five [ears are on our heads, not actually our faces]. There are five magical elements - earth, air, fire, water and spirit. There are five directions too; north, south, east, west and centre. In Ancient Greece five points symbolised man.

Any plant that exhibits growth related to the number five is counted as a plant of the goddess. These include five petalled flowers and trees with leaves that have five lobes or leaflets, such as the maple and the horse chestnut. Apples are also sacred to the Goddess because when you cut an apple through crosswise, there are five seeds making a pentagram [five pointed star].

Witches wear a pentacle [five pointed star surrounded by a circle] to represent all of this for five is the sacred number of the Goddess. Each point relates to one of the five elements or directions and its power comes from its ability to encompass all in one and this is the lesson of the sacred number of the Goddess.

The Apple as a Fruit of the Goddess.

Cut open an apple by cutting it crosswise.

Look at the centre of the apple. You will see that the seed cases are formed into a pentagram. The apple itself is the surrounding circle that makes it into a pentacle.

Spend a little time considering the meaning of the number five.

Consider your five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste. Imagine how it would be to live without them.

Consider the hand that is holding your apple. It has five fingers- five reminders of the sacred number of the Goddess.

Whenever you eat an apple, consider the magical number it symbolises. This is why apples often appear in fairy tales, bringing magic with them.

Natural Cycles -The Magical Moon

We are all affected by the moon's phases. The moon's gravity can affect the water in our bodies [the human body is eighty per cent water], just like the oceans' tides. This can affect our emotions and mental state. It was once accepted as fact that mental illness became worse at full moon, giving rise to the term 'lunatic'. Women's menstrual cycles are very often around twenty-eight to twenty-nine days long, like the cycle of the moon, and for this reason the moon is associated with the feminine.

The moon is very important to Pagans. Many goddesses and even a few gods are lunar deities and we honour them every time we honour the moon. Each phase of the moon has its own character and will strengthen magical work that is practised in harmony with these energies. Most people think that the moon has three phases, but actually it has four :

Dark- when there is no moon visible in the sky. For witches this is a time for deep thinking and meditation.

Waxing- when the moon looks like a thin sliver and gradually waxes, or grows. Witches use this time to plant seeds, start projects and work magic connecting with increase, growing and gaining.

Full moon- a time for powerful healing magic when the energies of the moon are at their greatest.

Waning - after the full moon, the moon shrinks again into a sickle shape, and this is called waning. Witches connect this with pruning, harvesting and magical acts designed to decrease something, like a rash or acne.

Finally the moon shrinks away to become the dark moon once more and the process begins again.

Try observing the moon's phases. Take a little time to stand outside in the evening where you can see the moon and feel the differing energies for yourself. Don't worry if at first you don't really get much of an impression. We have to learn to sense these things.

The old witches regarded the moon as a goddess. Every month she was born in the dark time, was a young girl as the waxing moon, a pregnant mother with the full moon, and old crone at the waning moon, before dying at the dark moon and regenerating to be reborn in the next month. Witches feel particularly attached to the goddess of the moon as she rules over so many magical acts.

The Dark Moon

This phase, when the moon is invisible in the sky represents the powers of regeneration ruled over by the Dark Goddess. It is the shortest phase, but equally as important as the other three, perhaps even more so.

The easiest way to illustrate the power of the Dark Goddess is to think of a seed. It can sit in a packet or on a shelf for months, sometimes even years, scarcely changing at all. Yet if we plant it in the earth and provide it with warmth, air and moisture changes will begin to occur finally resulting in the seed becoming a new plant. All this takes place in the dark, unseen. This is also true of life in general; the baby in the womb or the chick in the egg must all grow in the dark until they are ready to exist in the world as individuals.

Life is a procession of phases through bright happy days and dark sad times. When we are happy we often give little thought to the things that matter to us. It is often during the darkest most painful times that we start to take a long hard

look at what makes up our lives. We sometimes withdraw into ourselves, drawing on close ties of family and friendship and it is at these times that we discover inner strengths that we had not even realised existed. Strengths that allow us change our lives and ourselves beyond recognition.

The Waxing Moon

Waxing is just another word for growing and refers to the phase between dark moon and full moon when the moon is growing day by day. Waxing moon is a time for beginnings. Ideas that have been forming during the three days of the dark moon are ready to come out into the light and to be put into action.

It is a time ruled over by the young Maiden Goddess whose life is still before her. She is full of potential and promise of achievements to come. Her colour is white and her energy is growth and development. Seedlings re-potted on the waxing moon will benefit from the energies of this time. This is also a good time to add money to your savings as the waxing moon energies will help it to stay put and grow for you.

As we grow and mature we reach out and build up connections and ties with others. Where we once needed only our family we now learn the value of friendship and begin to search for the special people in our lives. Friendships and alliances made in youth, just before we become adults are often the longest lived and closest relationships that we'll ever have in our lives outside marriage.

Growing, learning, supporting and depending on each other - this is the power of the Maiden Goddess of the Waxing Moon.

Full Moon

The full moon is a powerful time. This is the time that we call Esbat when witches usually hold their monthly meeting. It is represented by a lovely mature goddess in the full bloom of

pregnancy. She contains life within her, and all the potentials of life. The full moon is a time when creativity comes to the fore. It is a time for creative projects of all kinds and the best time for performing positive magic- healing, blessing and so on.

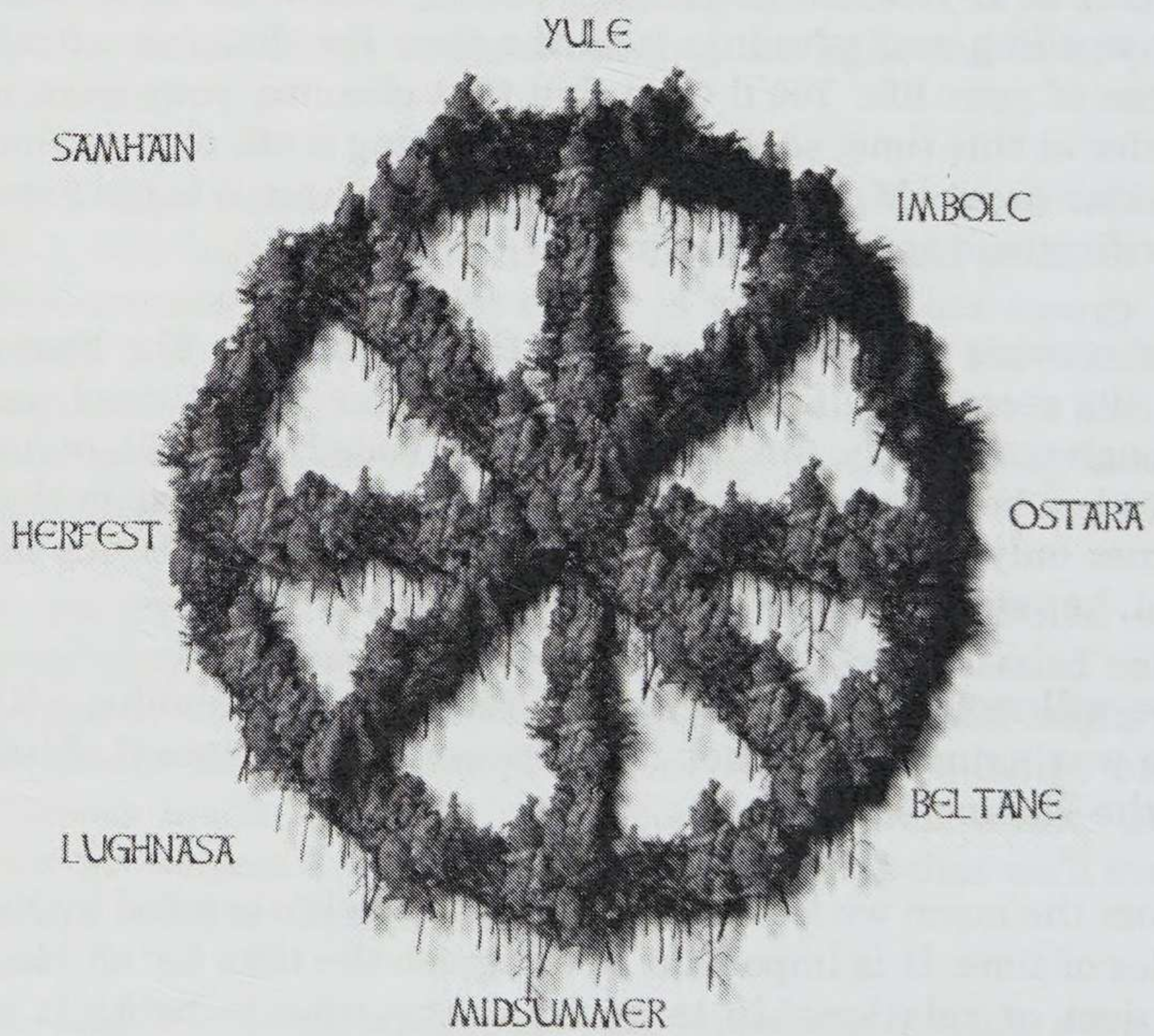
The Waning Moon

The phase of the waning moon is a time for winding down and letting go. If you have bad habits, this is a good time to give them up. If a relationship has run its course, now is the time to end it. If you like gardening, waning moon is a good time for weeding and pruning. It is the time for cleaning out all areas of your life. You'll even find that cleaning your room is easier at this time, so if you've been putting it off, pick up that duster now. Magically too, this is when we perform purifications and cleansing magic.

The waning moon represents the Crone Goddess. She knows all the secrets of life, magic and death. Her face is lined and though once lovely, this beauty has now faded. But still, in her eyes is a beauty far more precious - the beauty of wisdom that comes only with experience. She knows that death is not the end, but simply a phase.

She will return to the dark to be reborn as the maiden with the waxing moon, for such is the power of the Crone Goddess of the Waning Moon.

From the moon we learn that everything in life is ruled by the tides of time. It is important to recognise the time for an idea, project or relationship to be born, the time to bring it to maturity and the time to let go of it. Important to recognise that you may be in a growing stage or a fallow stage, that this will change and return in its season, changeless but ever changing, ebbing and flowing.



The Cycle of The Seasons

Through the year we are conscious not just of the ebb and flow of moon energies, but also that the sun strengthens in summer and weakens in winter. Plants grow in the summer and die in the winter. Of course, this will vary according to where you live, but in the part of the world where Wicca originated the year has for ages past been divided into four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter.

If you imagine that time is a never ending cycle of seasons, like the cycles of the moon, it makes sense that this cycle of the year is represented as a turning wheel which is divided by spokes, representing the festivals of the changing seasons. Witches celebrate eight seasonal festivals, calling them the Sabbats, which are first and foremost holy days, but they are also great occasions of fun and much of the time is spent in feasting and socialising. Because they are highly magical they are also good times to work spells, but the tide of the season has to be taken into account. It's no good casting a love spell at Samhain when all the energies are about winter, death and passing!

The character of each Sabbat is determined by the energies of the time of year. These are, in order:

1st November Samhain

Samhain [pronounced Sa'wain] occurs on the first day of November. However, because the Celts always began the celebration of a holy day on the evening before, it begins on the evening of 31st October, all Hallow's Eve or Halloween.

The festival marks the start of winter when the period of growth is over and the days begin to grow cold and dark. In ancient times the tribe would bring down their cattle and sheep from the summer pastures and some would have to be slaughtered to provide meat for the winter. For the Celts this was the Festival of the Dead, and a time when the dead could visit the living. This is why Halloween is still associated with ghosts and spirits to this day. For the Celts this was also the start of the New Year. It may seem strange to us, but the Celts believed that night came before day, and winter came before summer- life began in the darkness and grew into the light.

21st December Yule

Yule is the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. In Britain there are only about six hours of daylight remaining. However, after today the sun gradually gets stronger and, imperceptibly at first, the days lengthen. Thus Yule [which means 'wheel'] marks the rebirth of the sun when the tide turns and energy begins to flow back into the earth.

For many thousands of years Pagans have celebrated it as the birth of the sun god. Traditionally, the celebration lasts for twelve days while he grows from babe to young man. The Christians took over the festival and celebrated it as the birthday of Christ.

1st February Imbolc

Imbolc is another of the festivals of our Celtic ancestors. It marks the very first stirrings of spring when the first green shoots and snowdrops can be seen peeking through the snow. The energy tide of the earth is gradually increasing in strength. Because of this Pagans celebrate it as the time when the winter goddess transforms into the maiden goddess of spring, sometimes called Bride or Brigid who chases away the dragon that represents darkness, cold and death. This festival was Christianised as Candlemas, when all the church

candles are blessed for the coming year- a suitable promise of light in a time of darkness.

21st March Ostara

Ostara is the spring equinox, when the hours of daylight have increased to the point when day and night are of equal length- twelve hours of each- and still the hours of daylight continue to increase. As they do the weather warms up and we see the beginning of spring proper and the blossoming of the earth after its long winter rest. For many Pagans this festival marked the time when the vegetation god emerged from the cave where he spent the winter, bringing greenery and life back to the world. The festival is named after Ostara, the Saxon Goddess of Spring. Without even changing the name much, it was Christianised as Easter.

1st May Beltane

Known nowadays as May Day, Beltane was one Pagan festival that the Christians never managed to take over. It remained a festival designed to lend power to the growing crops, observed with fertility rituals such as circle dancing around maypoles, the election of a May king and queen, bonfire leaping, hobby horse dancers, collecting hawthorns and greenery and other stuff much frowned upon by the authorities.

21st June the Summer Solstice

This is the longest day and shortest night of the year, widely celebrated throughout the world. You may have seen television pictures of modern Druids celebrating at Stonehenge on this day. It is one of the most potently magical days of all when it comes to casting spells or practising divination. Witches celebrate the power of the Sun God on this day, make magic and collect herbs for charms and healing.

1st August Lughnasa

Lughnasa [pronounced loonassa] marks the beginning of the harvest. In ancient times the first of the harvest would be offered to the gods to thank them for what they had provided, and to ask them to protect the crops until they were all safely gathered in, for this was only the start. The festival is named after the Celtic god Lugh, and literally means 'the games of Lugh'. The Celtic tribes held great assemblies at this time, celebrating marriages, holding games and contests and negotiating contracts. The festival was adopted by the Anglo-Saxon settlers of Britain, and became part of the church calendar as Lammas [or 'loaf mass'] when bread made from the first grain of the harvest was blessed. Some witches call the festival Lammas rather than Lughnasa.

21st September the Autumn Equinox

This time marks the end of the harvest and the completion of the year. What was sown has been reaped. It is often called the Harvest Festival or Harvest Home in Christian communities. It is a festival of both joy and sorrow- joy because the harvest has been gathered in, and sorrow because this means the death of summer.

The cycle then begins again.

Some Sabbats were celebrated more energetically than others and when the authorities were trying to stamp out Paganism, ordinary people clung tightly to these favourite feast days and so they were incorporated into the Christian calendar under new names. The autumn equinox became the harvest festival, Ostara is now Easter and Yule was moved back a few days and called Christmas. Traditionally Sabbats were celebrated the night before the official date of the festival. This is still continued today at New Year. The wildest, most frantic celebrations take place on the eve of the New Year, with the major excitement centred on midnight. We continue to celebrate throughout the actual New Year's Day, but this tends to be a quieter, family affair.

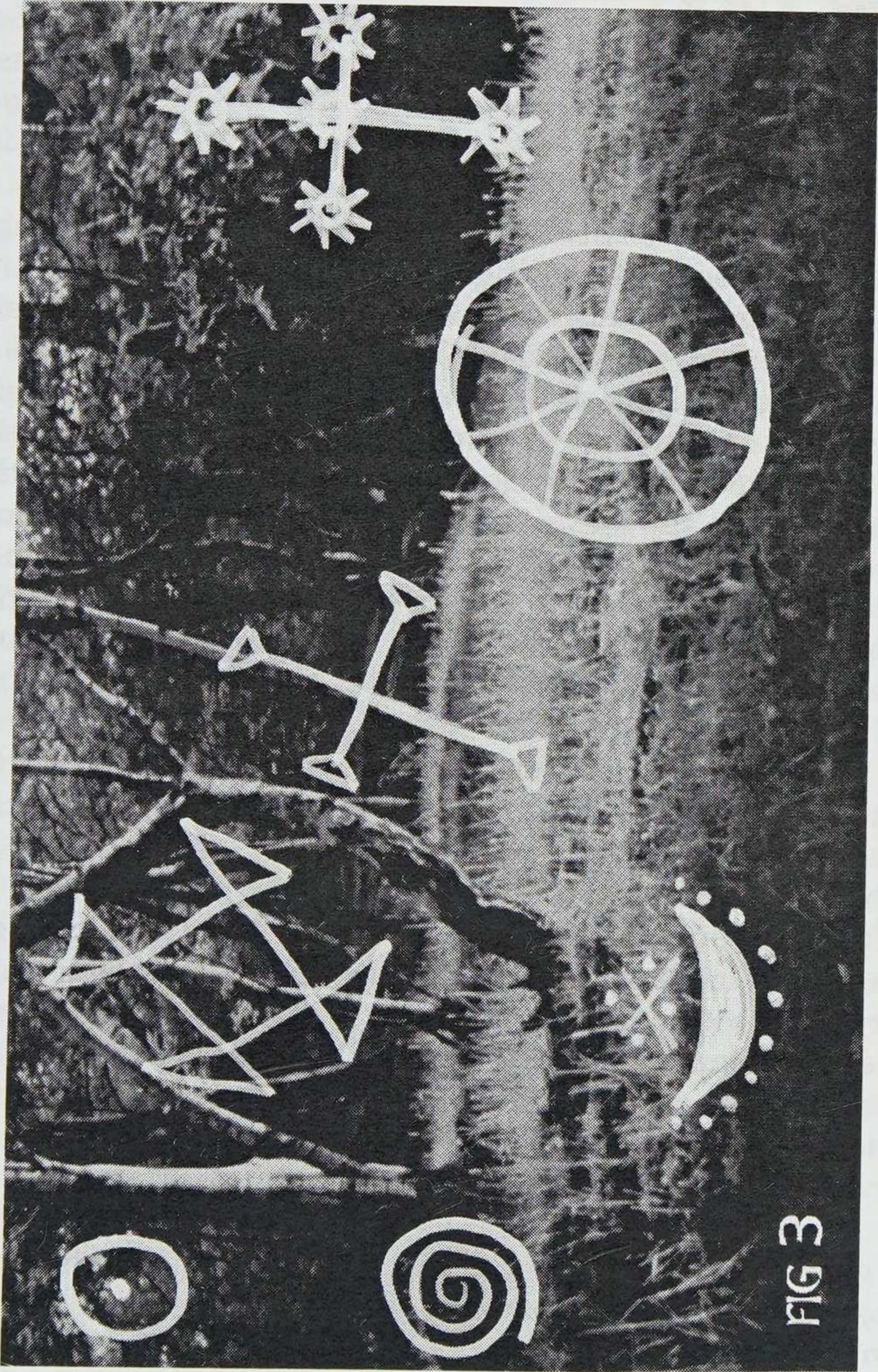


FIG 3

The God

So far we have become familiar with the Goddess as she is manifested in the body of the Earth and the Moon. The energy of the God is somewhat different, though he too has many different aspects. His is the power of the sun and of growth and movement. He is the Wild God of the forests, the Lord of the Animals, the King of the Sun, and the Spirit of the Corn. The earth is of the Goddess, whilst the green shoots are of the God. The nurturing and cycles of life and death belong to the Goddess, whilst the movements and energies of the creatures of the earth are of the God. The cycles of the moon are dedicated to the Goddess, while the cycle of the sun and the turning of the year are represented by the life of the God and his relationship with the Goddess.

Yule is the shortest day of the year, when the sun is at its weakest and the hours of daylight are shortest. With the following dawn the God is born as a baby boy. By Imbolc he has become a youth and the first signs of spring are seen in the land. Through the following seasons he begins to grow stronger and more powerful, becoming an adult at Ostara and marrying the Goddess at Beltane. It is this marriage that makes the Earth Goddess blossom and bear fruit at the harvest. He reaches the height of his power at the summer solstice, the longest day of the year when everything seems to be growing faster than at any other time.

The god's life is short. By the festival of Lughnasa his job is almost done. The first harvest is being gathered and thanks given to the God who appears as Corn Spirit. He dies when the last of the grain crop is cut off at the main harvest festival of the autumn equinox. Once he has gone, the sun became a

poor weak shadow of its former self. Without his heat the weather begins to cool, nights lengthen and the days shorten into winter. Cold and darkness rule until his return. At his death he descends to the Underworld and becomes its king at Samhain [Halloween], ruling over the dead. From then on he journeys through the land of death towards Yule and his rebirth, when his power re-enters the sun and the days begin to lengthen once more. The cycle begins again. Witches call this never ending cycle the Eternal Return.

Thus we know that life will spring anew from the earth thanks to the God's fertilising powers. Through the God we learn that without a balance of male and female energies there can be no life. Without the powers of the God the Goddess could not bring to life all the young animals, plants and children. The male and the female have equal importance in this world. Life and death are natural phases in a continuous cycle and this is the lesson of the God.

Throughout history the God has had thousands of names, including Cernunnos, Lugh, Herne, Apollo, Zeus, Pan, Hermes, Thor, Odin, Ra, Thoth, and Horus.

Celebrating The Wiccan Festivals

Celebration can come in many forms, and you might want to mark the turning of the year by a quiet meditation or a full on party. Each of the eight Wiccan festivals, or Sabbats, has a definite feel about it, and if possible go out into the countryside, park, or garden and observe the effects of the seasonal energies. These simple walks can sometime become magical experiences and this becomes more likely as you learn to attune to the universal energies.

We have suggested various activities for celebrating each festival in turn. Look through these suggestions in plenty of time; some of the ideas require some preparation. This particularly applies to the food. Remember to cook magically: think of the meaning of the Sabbat as you work and try to transfer some of this meaning into what you are preparing.

Samhain Eve or Halloween October 31

This Sabbat is the first in the Pagan year and is usually celebrated on the 31st October, actually the Eve of Samhain. Nowadays we call it Halloween. For Pagans it marks the beginning of the dark, cold days of winter.

In the old days the only food available at Samhain was what had been harvested. Little else could grow through the cold times to come, so great care was taken of the store cupboards.

The animals would be brought down from their summer pastures to more sheltered winter quarters. Most of the outside work was complete by now so apart from feeding and checking livestock, a lot of time was spent indoors sitting around the fire and perhaps repairing equipment that would be needed for the following spring. Favourite activities included singing old songs and telling stories, especially ghost stories! Samhain was also the Celtic Festival of the Dead when the spirits of the ancestors were honoured.

To understand why we celebrate our New Year at such a time we need to think about the Crone Goddess who rules over Samhain. She brings the winter and cold which kills the vegetation and sends some animals into hibernation. But though the trees shed their leaves they are not dead, but only withdrawing into themselves. Though the corn is harvested, the seeds are sown in the ground and the grain will sprout again.

This is represented, in myth, by the death of the Corn God. The Goddess is his wife, and she mourns his passing. But death is not the end. He is journeying through the Otherworld towards a new life. She represents a time of death, but also the hidden beginnings of renewal as she waits to transform from ancient hag back into the Maiden Goddess with the spring. Without this dark death time, there can be no light and no life - if you don't plant the seed, it can never grow. The cold dark days of winter prepared the way for the light and warmth of summer.

We recognise decline and death as natural events, not something to be ignored or swept under the carpet, but part of the cycle as the wheel turns once more towards life. For though we pay our respects to the power of death at Samhain we are ever aware of the hidden promise of new life to come. Perhaps this is why celebrations of Halloween have retained their popularity without any formal encouragement at all.

This is the Sabbat when much of our time is spent in divination - either scrying, dowsing [usually with a pendulum] or simply closing our eyes and waiting for whatever visions may come. It is believed that the veil that separates our world from the spirit world becomes very thin at this time. In many Celtic countries a light is placed in the window to help guide these wandering spirits back where they came from. Sometimes food was placed outside for them too and this is a possible origin of the Trick or Treat tradition when children dress up in their Halloween costumes and roam the streets demanding treats. Some sensitive people can actually see these roaming spirits. The Celts accepted this as natural and normal and took the opportunity to consult the spirits of their ancestors and ask for guidance. This tradition is found in many other cultures throughout the world too. In Wicca we do not summon the dead, as Spiritualists do: if we need their guidance we invite them to be present at Samhain and leave the decision on whether to attend up to them.

Samhain Mask

Masks have been a part of these festivals since before records were kept and the practice is worldwide, so why not make your own? Perhaps a mask representing the ancient Crone Goddess, or the God, who is often depicted with stag's antlers [in recognition of his role as lord of all creatures]. Other possible themes are animals- choose one that you feel a special bond with.

Materials:

Newspaper

Wallpaper paste

Water

Twigs for antlers if required

Non-toxic paints

1 round balloon for each mask

Elastic or ribbon

Rubber gloves.

Draw a face on one side of the balloon, marking a line around

where you want the edge of the mask to come. Include eyes and mouth. Tear up the newspaper into strips or small pieces the size of postage stamps and drop these into the paste. With rubber gloves on, lift the paper out and begin covering the area you have marked on the balloon, leaving spaces for mouth and eyeholes so that you can see and breathe. Apply about three layers.

If you want to add antlers, use suitable twig shapes, padded up with more papier maché if required.

Allow to dry out a little, then remove the mask from the balloon. Trim around the edges to neaten them. Make small holes about 1/2 an inch [1/2 cm] from the edge of the mask where the elastic or ribbon is to go. This will hold your mask on, so place the holes carefully.

When fully dry, decorate your mask with paints. Attach the elastic or ribbons

Celebrating the Crone

The Crone Goddess is a very old, wise woman and at this time we should remember that the elderly have an awful lot to teach us. Spend time with older members of your family, or visit and make friends with an elderly neighbour. Closer to home your parents will have gathered a great deal of wisdom in the course of their own lives, though you are probably at the stage when the last thing you want to do is listen to what they have to say. That's normal, but this is a time when you should put your natural irritation aside and let them have their say.

Ask them this question in your own words: could you name one piece of advice you wish somebody had offered you when you were my age? Take the trouble to listen to what they have to say and you may just learn something.

Guiding Light

The Celts provided a candle in the window for the spirits to find their way at Samhain. Perhaps you could place a small light in your window to light the way for passing spirits? This is not an invitation to enter, just a kind of 'street light' for them to find their way by.

Spooky Stories

Another favourite tradition at this darkest time of year is the ghost story! The idea of such stories was to create a tingle of excitement and fear. Either get everyone present to tell a short, spooky story, or maybe try the 'round robin' method. One person starts and talks for a set time [maybe a minute] then they have to stop - even in mid sentence and the next person carries on the tale. The last person to continue the story must think of an ending. A spooky one, of course!

Samhain Recipes

Toffee Apples

8 oz sugar
1/4 pt boiling water
Apples

Method

Dissolve the sugar in the water and boil until the sugar caramelises. Fix wooden sticks to the apples and dip the apples in the caramel. Stand on a greased baking sheet until cool.

Cornflakes Cakes

1 cup Cornflakes
1/2 cup broken or grated chocolate
Baking parchment or similar to stand the cakes on

Method

Melt the chocolate as for the chocolate apples, then just stir in

the Cornflakes. Spoon into small heaps on the parchment and leave to set. Store in an airtight container.

Spicy Pumpkin Snack Seeds

[If you've never tried eating the seeds, you may be pleasantly surprised.]

Pumpkin seeds washed and with the pumpkin pulp removed

Salt

Mixed spice

Method

Spread the pumpkin seeds on a baking tray and sprinkle with salt and mixed spice. Bake in a moderate oven at 190C/ 375F gas mark 5 for 15-20 minutes or until golden and crispy. When cool store in an airtight container. Eat like peanuts.

Samhain Wraiths

8 oz plain flour

1 egg

Cider

Method

Sift the flour into a cold bowl and beat in the egg. Gradually beat in the cider to form a foaming batter. Spoon the mixture a little at a time into a hot, lightly greased frying pan, tipping the pan to spread the mixture very thinly and allowing the batter to form a lacy texture and irregular shape. Fry until set on both sides, turning once. And keep warm until all wraiths are cooked. Dust with icing sugar and serve immediately.

Yule - The Winter Solstice

December 21

The name of this Sabbat comes from the old Saxon word *yul*, meaning wheel. It is the winter solstice, the shortest day of

the year. The Celts believed that the real sun god died after the harvest and an imposter took his place. Whilst this fake sun god was in the sky, there was reduced light and little heat while the real god was travelling through the Underworld towards rebirth. Whilst he was away, everything died back and the world became steadily colder, caught in the icy grip of winter.

At Yule the real sun god completed his journey and was reborn as a child of the Goddess. This was a time of great rejoicing - it has always been a major celebration that included feasting and merrymaking.

From this day on the sun gradually regains its strength and the days lengthen. We are reminded once again that it is during the darkest time that rebirth takes place. The festival of Yule is celebrated with candles and lights- sympathetic magic to encourage the Sun God who is now no more than an infant - feeble and quick to tire. He is present in the sky for only a few short hours each day to begin with. He must be nurtured by the Goddess until he is stronger and can once more bring life and warmth to the earth. The sun will begin to gain strength and the days become steadily longer. As the Sun God's strength increases, so the power of new growth prepares to manifest in nature. From the dark death of winter come light, life and rebirth.

This is one of the most joyful festivals of the year and lasts a full twelve days. The Celts looked upon it as a season of goodwill and peace to all when war was absolutely forbidden. Warriors would return home to their families, the store cupboards would be opened and all the rich foods that had been saved would be brought out for great feasts and merrymaking. The druids cut the mistletoe which takes on magical properties at this time of year. The leaves were given out as remedies [the berries are poisonous] and sprigs were hung on the doors as a sign of welcome. The custom of kissing

under the mistletoe is very ancient, and was once a fertility custom, but you were meant to remove a berry for each kiss.

Above all, Yule is the festival of the child. In many societies children are given gifts at this time of year. The Scandinavian god Odin, the origin of Father Christmas, was believed to travel from house to house bringing rewards for good children, but a just bundle of birch twigs for naughty ones. In Italy Befana brings sweets for good children, and bits of coal for bad ones. Yule tends to bring out the child in all of us.

The Tree of Lights

At Yule we celebrate the rebirth of the Sun, encouraging him with lights. An ancient Pagan custom is to bring in a tree and decorate it fairy lights and tinsel to represent the sun and growing light. Top it with a fairy, which once represented the resident spirit of the tree. Welcome the newborn Sun/Son with singing and food.

Pagan Party

Yule is the time for celebration, so why not throw a party? In former times the Lord of the Manor would give up his power for the duration of the celebrations and either the court jester, or a servant would become the Lord of Misrule. Everyone had to obey him and his job was to organise games and pranks and to make sure nothing too serious or important took place. The name of the game was fun! Choose your own Lord [or Lady] of misrule for the meeting by baking a bean or silver coin in the cake. Whoever gets this piece becomes the chief of the feast.

Yule Wreath

The wreath is a circle that, like a necklace, symbolises the never-ending cycle of existence- life, death and rebirth and is a very important symbol at this Sabbat. It is traditionally made from natural things like pine cones and evergreen branches, brightened up with dried fruits, berries and

coloured ribbons. All the materials suggested are optional; just use whatever you have. Use old decorations and baubles, dried flowers or grasses may be sprayed or dyed red, green, silver or gold.

Materials:

Wire coat-hanger or bought wire wreath base

Pinecones

A few sprigs of evergreen foliage from holly, ivy, conifer

Dried or artificial fruits or shatterproof Christmas tree baubles

Florist wire

Red ribbon

Green florist tape

Method

Fix a wire to each pinecone, bauble, evergreen sprig or fruit so that you will be able to attach it securely to the wreath - just twist it around however it looks best and seems to grip the item most firmly. Pull the main part of the coat hanger into a circle. You should be able to do this quite easily by hand. Attach the end of the green tape to the hook of the coat hanger then begin winding it around to hide the wire. Continue wrapping, gradually working your way down to the main part of the coat hanger.

Lay the first pinecone onto the ring with its wire pointing in the same direction as the part of the ring you are about to wrap. Twist the florist wire a couple of times to hold it in place, leaving the loose ends parallel with the uncovered portion of the coat hanger, then wrap tape over the first inch or two closest to the cone, going over both the florist wire and the coat hanger wire at the same time. The idea is to wrap everything onto the ring, slightly overlapping new items as you work so that when you finish no wires will be visible.

Add an evergreen sprig close to the cone and wrap it into place in the same way. Continue, adding more decorations as you work. Keep overlapping them so that the wrapped base doesn't show through too much. Finish it off with bows made from the red ribbon and hang it on a door as a welcome to visitors.

Recipes For Yule

Yule Cake

9 oz plain flour
1 tsp. ground mixed spice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cinnamon

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. mixed fruit
2 oz chopped blanched almonds
3 oz glace cherries
8 oz demerara sugar
8 oz butter
4 beaten eggs
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbs. black treacle
3 tbs. rum

Sieve together flour and mixed spice in a large bowl. In a separate bowl cream together the butter and sugar until very pale and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, a little at a time, adding a little of the flour to prevent the eggs from curdling. Stir in the treacle and add this to the flour, together with the mixed fruit, peel, cherries and nuts. Stir until well combined. Double line the base and sides of an 8 inch cake tin with grease proof paper. To insulate the tin and prevent the cake burning, tie a band of doubled brown paper around the outside, so that it comes 1 inch above the side of the tin. Turn the cake mixture into the tin and bake in a cool oven at 150C/300F/gas mark 2 for 3 hours. Reduce the heat to 140C/275F/gas mark 1 and continue cooking for a further 50 minutes or until a skewer inserted comes out clean. Leave

the cake in the tin for 10 minutes, during which time it will shrink away from the sides and can then be turned out onto a wire cooling rack. When cool, but not cold, turn the cake upside down and make holes in the bottom with a skewer. Spoon the rum over and allow it to soak in. Leave until cold and wrap and store in an airtight tin. When required, drizzle the cake with a little more rum, over the top this time, coat with marzipan and ice as desired, perhaps with fondant decorations in the shapes of violets, apples, acorns, holly leaves and mistletoe. Alternatively, decorate with bundles of cinnamon sticks, sprigs of holly and mistletoe.

The cake should be made six weeks to a month before Yule and iced one week before.

German Festive Tiles

4 oz margarine

3 oz butter

2 oz icing sugar

5 oz plain flour

4 oz self raising flour

1 tbs. cornflour

These biscuits are a traditional festive treat in Germany and are threaded with ribbons and hung on the tree. Using a wooden spoon mix the butter sugar together until it begins to soften and become slightly creamy. It will become paler as the creaming process takes place. Fold in the three kinds of flour, stirring until they are thoroughly mixed in the mixture should form a ball. Turn this out onto a clean work surface and knead it a little to make a smooth dough.

Wrap in cling film and chill in the fridge for half an hour, while you go and wrap presents or sort out the festive decorations.

Roll out the dough on a floured board to 1/4 inch thick. Cut into tile shapes and make a hole in one corner with a pointed knife or maybe a large drinking straw [don't put the hole too

near the edge or it will give way when you thread your ribbon on]. Wet the surface of the tile and add patterns made from left over dough. Choose solar images like golden suns, robins [they have been associated with Yuletide since way back when], holly leaves with red berries and anything else that comes to mind]. Bake at 180C/350F/gas mark 4 for 15 minutes.

Allow to cool before adding any other decorations you like-royal icing, patterns painted in food colouring - whatever takes your fancy. When the decorations are set, thread your festive tiles on ribbons and hang on the tree or give as gifts.

Brandy Snaps

3 oz butter

2 oz sugar

3 fl oz golden syrup

2 oz flour

1 tsp. ground ginger

Juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon

6 fl oz double cream

2 tbs. brandy

Method

Heat the oven to 180C/350F/gas mark 4. Grease a baking sheet. In a pan melt the butter, sugar and golden syrup over a low heat. Remove from the heat and add the flour, ginger and lemon juice. Beat until the mixture is smooth. Drop spoonfuls onto a baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes. Turn off the oven and leave the biscuits in there to keep warm- if they cool they won't be malleable. One by one remove them from the baking sheet with a palette knife and curl them round the handle of a greased wooden spoon. Ease them off and put them on a cooling rack. When you are ready to serve them, beat up the cream until thick and add the brandy. Whisk up again until stiff and pipe into the brandy snaps.

Mint Humbugs

1 lb. soft brown sugar
3 tbs. butter
5 fl oz water
1 tbs. golden syrup
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cream of tartar
4 drops peppermint oil
2 tbs. icing sugar

Method

Put the butter, sugar, water, syrup and cream of tartar on a pan and stir over a low heat to dissolve the sugar. Increase the heat slightly and cover the pan. Cook for three minutes. Turn up the heat and bring to the boil. Continue to boil until a drop of the mixture, dropped into cold water, sets into a brittle thread which will bend and break. When this happens, remove from the heat and pour the mixture onto an oiled board. Sprinkle with the peppermint oil and work the mixture with a palette knife until it is cool enough to handle. Oil your hands and stretch out the mixture into a rope and then fold back again. Continue to do this repeatedly until the mixture becomes elastic and shiny. Dust a surface with icing sugar and roll the mixture into a long rope. Snip with scissors into humbugs. Store them in an airtight jar.

Chocolate Fudge

2 oz butter
1 lb. sugar
5 fl oz milk
2 oz dark chocolate

Method

Put the milk, sugar and chocolate on a pan and stir over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to the boil and continue boiling [do not stir] until a little of the fudge dropped into cold water forms a soft ball. Remove from the heat and cool for 5 minutes. Cut the butter into pieces and beat into the

fudge, continue to beat until the fudge is smooth and thick. Pour the fudge into a well greased tin and allow to cool before cutting into squares.

Peppermint Creams

1 lb. icing sugar
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 egg white
4 drops peppermint essence

Method

Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl. Sprinkle a board with icing sugar and roll out the peppermint mixture to 1/4 inch thick. Cut the mixture into shapes.

Rum Truffles

8 oz dark chocolate
2 tbs. icing sugar
1 tsp. rum essence
2 oz chocolate sprinkles

Method

Melt the chocolate in a bowl over a pan of hot water, or in the microwave. Combine with the sugar and rum essence, stirring with a wooden spoon until well blended. Cool for 15 minutes and shape into small balls with your hands. Roll them in the chocolate sprinkles or cocoa powder.

Imbolc

February 2

At Imbolc there are signs that winter is coming to an end. Though the weather continues to be cold, there are snowdrops, buds on some of the trees and sap rising in the branches, giving twigs a red appearance. Older breeds of sheep lamb at this time: a promise of the year renewing itself.

At the Imbolc festival this is symbolised by the Crone Goddess of winter being transformed into the Maiden Goddess of spring. Her power is in the promise of things to come. The ancient Romans celebrated this festival as Februa, which gave its name to the month of February. The women underwent purification rituals, reflecting the purification of the Earth as it is washed by the late winter/early spring rains. They then carried candles in a procession through the town. The festival was Christianised as Candlemas, when all the church candles are blessed for the coming year.

Imbolc is the festival of the old Celtic goddess Brighid, Christianised as St. Brigit or St. Bride. Her name means 'fiery arrow' and she was the goddess of all smiths and jewellers, as well as being a goddess of healing and the patron of bards and poets. In ancient times bards would carry golden branches hung with little golden bells in her honour. These would be shaken to signify the beginning or end of a performance or to emphasise an important or especially funny line. As the goddess of spring and all newborn things, she might be called upon to bless a woman in childbirth.

Sometimes particular corn dollies or Brighid dolls were fashioned and placed in a little 'Brighid's Bed' and the goddess [or later the saint] was invited to come in and spend Imbolc with the family. The hearth would be raked out and the ashes flattened. If marks or footprints were found there the morning after, the family knew that Brighid has blessed them. Special cakes called Bride or Brighid cakes were also made.

Spring Cleaning [magically]

Imbolc is a powerful time of the entire year for cleaning and clearing old energies. Give your magical area or your bedroom a spring clean. If you have any crystals wash these in running water, imagining all the confused energies flowing into the earth to be reused for the benefit of all creation. Then place

them on a windowsill to recharge in the rays of the sun or moon. This is also a good time to cleanse and bless any tools you use for your Wiccan activities.

Crystal Gazing

Crystal gazing is especially favoured at this time, so if you have a crystal ball, give it a polish. Sit quietly with your sphere resting in your hands and gaze at it, concentrating on a patch of reflected light on its surface. If you don't have a crystal ball, you can pour some black ink into a bowl to make a scrying dish. Fishing floats make great substitute crystal balls. You can sometimes get these from 'trendy' interior decorator shops [or ship's chandlers] for very little money. Alternatively, if you can get hold of a plain lead crystal paperweight, you could try this. With all divining tools, remember that their main job is to help you focus your psychic abilities. The material they are made from is of secondary importance.

Empty your mind and allow images to come if they will. Afterwards write down what you saw in your Book of Shadows together with any sensations or emotions you were feeling at the same time. These can help put your reading into context. When you have had time to reflect on what you saw, add a little note about what you think it symbolised. Later, as events unfold, you may be able to see patterns in life that relate to what you saw whilst you were scrying.

If you like you could get a book about divination, but since most seem to interpret every symbol differently, this can be less helpful than building up your own references through trial and error. Be careful not to offer to read for anyone else until you are very clear on what you are seeing. It may help to take your clues from what you have learned so far about the directions and their energies. A feather or a bird for example could be related to the element of air and could relate to a feeling of freedom, or an idea [air relates to thought], or

maybe communication with someone a long way away. It might mean something altogether different to you, which is why it is best to build up your own dictionary of symbols.

Bardic Bough

Materials:

A small branch about two or three feet long and just thick enough to hold comfortably in the hand

Some small golden coloured bells [available at Craft shops - use whatever you can get]

Gold spray paint

Florist wire

Newspaper or other protection for surfaces

In an open space, with any surfaces protected by newspaper, paint the florist wire and the branch with the gold paint. When completely dry, twist one wire onto each bell and use these to fix all the bells firmly to the branch. Making sure they don't touch, otherwise they will not ring clearly.

There you have your bardic bough. Use when telling stories or to accompany songs and chants.

Imbolc Recipes

Leek and Potato Soup

2 oz butter

1 lb. leeks

3 potatoes, peeled and chopped

2 pints vegetable stock

1 tsp. mixed herbs

Seasoning to taste

$\frac{1}{4}$ pint milk

Pinch cayenne pepper

Method

Fry the leek and potatoes in the butter for 5 minutes. Add the stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for 15 minutes, add the

seasoning and herbs. Simmer 30 minutes longer and liquidise. Return to the pan, add the milk and heat through.

Gaelic Herb Potatoes

2 lb. potatoes, peeled and sliced

1 tsp. mixed herbs

1 tbsp. finely chopped onion

Seasoning

Water to cover

3 oz butter

3 tbs. milk

Method

Boil the potatoes with the herbs, adding seasoning to taste. Simmer until the water has fully evaporated. Stir in the milk and butter and continue to cook until the milk and butter have been fully absorbed and the potatoes are soft and fluffy. Mix well with a wooden spoon and serve.

Brigid's Curd Cheese

1 pt full cream milk

Few drops vegetarian rennet or lemon juice

Seasoning

This is a very mild cheese that is easy to make. Be sure to use spotlessly clean utensils. Heat the milk to 16C. Add the rennet or lemon juice to curdle the mixture - it looks pretty unappetising at this stage. Pour it all into a cheesecloth bag [some people improvise with a very clean old shirt sleeve knotted at the cuff. Hang this over a large bowl to drain overnight. Take the remaining curd cheese from the bag, sprinkle with salt and shape as required. These can be rolled in herbs or ground black pepper or crushed mustard seeds. Perhaps you might like to roll the cheese in paprika to represent the reddening of the shoots. Refrigerate and eat within 1 week.

Brigid Cakes

1 lb. plain flour
4 oz margarine
4oz sugar
2 oz chopped peel
æ pint milk
Pinch of salt
1 tsp. bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp. cream of tartar
4 oz sultanas

Method

Sieve the flour and salt, cream of tartar and bicarbonate of soda into a bowl. Rub in the margarine, then add the sugar, peel and sultana. Add the milk and knead into a dough. Place in a greased 7" tin and bake in a hot oven at 200C/400F/gas mark 6 for 60 minutes. Turn the oven down to 180C/350F/gas mark 4 and bake for another 30 minutes. Turn out and cut into smaller pieces to serve.

First Green Leaves

1 lb. icing sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. cornflour
Evaporated milk
1 tsp. vanilla essence
Green food colouring

Method

Sift together the cornflour and sugar. Stir in the vanilla and colouring. Thoroughly mix in enough evaporated milk to form a stiff but workable paste and knead until well combined. Turn out onto a work top dusted with icing sugar and roll out to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Cut into narrow leaf shapes and leave to dry out thoroughly. Keep in a refrigerator.

Bakewell Pudding

8 oz shortcrust pastry

1 egg

1 tbs. brown sugar

Ground almonds

Strawberry or raspberry jam

Method

Line a shallow baking dish with pastry, beat the egg, add the sugar and enough ground almonds to make a thick paste. Spread the bottom of the tart with jam and cover with the almond mixture. Bake in a moderate at 180C/350F/gas mark 4 oven for 30 minutes or until brown on top.

Ostara - The Vernal Equinox

March 21/22

Ostara is the vernal [or spring] equinox when day and night are of equal length [i.e. twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of night], but the light is gaining and the hours of daylight are increasing each day. This has always been a favourite occasion in temperate regions. After the cold winter and chilly days of early spring the weather is beginning to get a little warmer as the sun's rays become stronger.

The ancients believed that at the spring equinox the Vegetation God returned to the world from the cave where he had spent the winter. Many European folk celebrations represented him [and still do] in the form of the Green Man or Green George, a man covered in leaves and greenery. This is the time when seeds are sown, leaves are appearing on trees and there are spring flowers in bloom - daffodils, crocuses, gorse. Everywhere life is returning to the earth.

Birds and animals are preparing to mate, building nests and seeking partners. The Saxons believed that the goddess

Eostre, in the form of a hare, travelled about the land, renewing the fertility of the earth and its creatures. Christianity never managed to shake off this ancient Pagan totem and today we still have the idea of the Easter Bunny - a caricature of the original.

Another very Pagan tradition of Ostara, still observed today is the gift of an egg, though today they are usually chocolate. The egg is still a powerful representation of life and fertility.

Dyed eggs

A widespread Ostara tradition is egg dying. It's very easy to colour the shells of eggs whilst they are being boiled - white shells give the best results, but brown eggs are fine. Just include a brightly coloured spice such as turmeric with the boiling water, which will give you yellow shells, or onion skins for orange eggs, beetroot for pink. Another nice idea is to paint the shells of cooked eggs with food colourings after they cool. There are many traditional old patterns used for this - spirals that represent the renewal of life, equal armed crosses that represent the four stations of the sun [the two solstices and two equinoxes], circles that represent wholeness and so on [see fig. 3]. Painting eggs this way is an act of magic, and giving them as gifts a nice way of bestowing good wishes for the coming year.

Decorated blown eggshell

A largish fresh egg [hen, duck, goose]

Darning needle or something with a sharp point for making holes in the egg

A small dish

Watercolour paint/ poster paint/ acrylic paint

Varnish

Wash the egg in soapy water and rinse well. Carefully make a hole in each end of your egg, making the hole in the bottom a little larger than the one in the top, pushing the darning

needle in until it pierces the membrane that surrounds the white and goes through to the yolk. Holding the egg over the dish, put the top hole to your lips and blow very hard to get the contents of the egg out. Wash and rinse the shell very gently in cool water and allow to dry.

Paint the eggshell in your desired pattern, and leave to dry out. A coat of clear varnish will protect the paint [clear nail enamel will do if you have nothing else]. To display the eggs, you could arrange a group of them in a pretty basket, or single eggs can have three beads glued to the base so that they will stand.

Ostara Recipes

Stuffed Eggs

9 hard boiled eggs
1 bunch finely chopped watercress
6 tbs. plain yoghurt
4 oz cream cheese
Seasoning

Method

Halve the eggs and remove the yolks. Mix the yolks with the other ingredients and spoon or pipe the mixture back into the eggs.

Hot Cross Buns

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. plain flour
Pinch salt
2 tsp. mixed spice
2 oz butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz fresh yeast or 1 sachet dried yeast
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pint warm water
1 oz caster sugar
2 oz currants

2 oz mixed peel

1 egg, beaten

To make the crosses:

3 oz plain flour

4 tbs. water

For the glaze:

2 tbs. caster sugar

1 tbs. milk

Method

Sift the flour, salt and spice into a bowl. Stir the started yeast into a well made in the flour mixture. Add the dry ingredients and the egg. Knead well on a floured board. Return to the bowl and cover with a clean cloth and leave in a warm place to rise for around an hour. Knead lightly again. Divide into 16 pieces and roll each piece into a ball. Flatten with your hand. Place on a baking tray and cover with a cloth and leave to prove for 30 minutes. To make the crosses mix the flour and water to make a paste. Place in a piping bag and pipe a cross onto each of the risen buns. Bake the buns at 220C/425F/gas mark 7 for 15 to 20 minutes. Meanwhile make the glaze by dissolving the sugar in the milk. Bring to the boil and remove from the heat. Brush the buns with the glaze as soon as they come out of the oven.

These are traditionally eaten on Good Friday, but cakes marked this way are pre-Christian, the cross on the round bun representing the quartered circle, the four directions and solar increase.

Traditional Simnel Cake

4 oz butter

4 oz brown sugar

5 oz plain flour

1 oz ground almonds

3 eggs

6 oz currants

4 oz raisins
Grated rind and juice of 1/2 lemon
1/2 tsp. Mixed spice
1/2 tsp. baking powder
6 oz marzipan [almond paste]

Method

Cream the butter and sugar and gradually add the beaten eggs. Fold in the flour, almonds, spice and baking powder. Stir in the lemon juice and rind, and the dried fruits. Grease and line an 8" cake tin and spoon in half the mixture. Smooth down and put in a layer of rolled out marzipan. Add the rest of the cake mixture and bake at 180C/350F/gas mark 4 for 2 hours. Decorate the top with 13 marzipan balls.

This is a traditional Easter cake, the 13 decorations of the top supposedly representing Jesus and the twelve apostles, but actually a much older representation of the 13 lunar months of the year.

Ostara Biscuits

6 oz margarine
10 oz plain flour
2 oz cornflour
6 oz sugar
1 level tsp. baking powder
2 egg whites
1 egg yolk
Food colouring

Method

Stir all the ingredients [except the egg yolk] together to form a soft dough. Knead lightly and roll out to 1/8 inch. Cut out shapes such as suns, eggs, hares, coiled serpents etc. and put the biscuits onto a baking sheet which has been sprinkled with flour. Beat the egg yolk and divide it into as many

separate pots as the number of colours you want to use, and add a little food colouring to each. Paint the resulting pigments onto the biscuits with a small brush. Bake for 10-15 minutes at 180C/350F/gas mark 4.

Spring Flowers

1 lb. icing sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ lb. cornflour

Evaporated milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ -1 tsp. almond oil

Few drops yellow colouring

Small piece angelica, finely chopped

Method

Sift together the cornflour and sugar. Stir in the almond oil. Thoroughly mix in enough evaporated milk to form a stiff but workable paste and knead until well combined. Turn out onto work top dusted with icing sugar and roll out to $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick. Cut into flower shapes and leave to dry out thoroughly. Decorate centres with tiny pieces of angelica. Keep in a refrigerator.

Beltane

1st May

Beltane is usually celebrated on 1st May, hence its alternative name of May Day. The weather is much warmer and summer is beginning. In temperate regions trees are in full leaf, most crops are planted, and the whole world seems to be alive with flowers and young animals. Fertility and the return of summer are what this festival is all about.

Beltane was observed when flowers appeared on the hawthorn, representing the blossoming of the Summer Goddess. 'Maying' was a popular Beltane custom, going out into the woods to gather the first boughs of hawthorn. At any

other time of year it is considered unlucky to bring hawthorn flowers into the house, but this taboo is lifted at Beltane, when the tree takes on magical properties and when falling asleep under a flowering tree is to risk being carried away by fairies! People also gathered 'nuts' or rather knots [bunches] of woodland flowers. Flowers picked in May had special magical properties. Cowslips picked at dawn were strewn in the house as a protection, while marsh marigolds were hung over the door to protect from storms. Houses were decorated with fresh greenery. Maying was also an opportunity for the Love Chase, when the village girls would pretend to flee from the young men, before allowing themselves to be caught and kissed.

Beltane is named after the Celtic god of fire and light, Bel the 'bright one'. The ancients considered that it was the marriage of the sun god and earth goddess that brought life to the land, generating animals and plant life in the summer months. These were represented in every village by the May queen and king. She represents flowers and new growth, he represents the death of winter and the rebirth of summer. In some pageants he performs a death scene and leaps back to life as the Summer and dances with the Queen of May. Most places have May Queens but few retain a May King, who was once equally important. She is covered in flowers, he is covered in ivy, holly, birch, poplar, fir greenery. In some places the queen and king are called 'the bride and groom'. A traditional Beltane activity is dancing around the maypole; a symbol of the god. It was hoped that the dance would bring his fertilising power back to the earth to generate crops and livestock.

Hawthorn Beauty Spell

According to an old custom, dew collected from the hawthorn on May Day was a particularly potent beauty charm:

*The girl who on the first of May
Goes to the fields at the break of day
And washes in dew from the hawthorn tree
Ever more beautiful shall be.*

Dancing

Beltane is a time for merriment and dancing. If you can learn maypole or other traditional early summer dances that would be very good. Many places have folk dances based on their ancient Pagan roots and these are steadily being lost. Find out what exists in your area and consider joining in. If this isn't possible organise your own dance. Any circle folk or country-dance will do, but be aware of the direction in which you are moving- the dance should be deosil [sunwise or clockwise] to wind up the summer. If you are dancing out of doors, don't be too surprised if out of the corner of your eye you catch sight of nature spirits joining in. Quietly bid them welcome and don't make a big fuss, or they may be frightened away.

Beltane Recipes

Nettle Soup

2 onions

1 clove garlic

2 potatoes

1 ¹/₂ pints vegetable stock

¹/₂ pint milk

Leaves stripped from 10 nettle stems

Fresh parsley to garnish

Method

Peel and chop the onion, garlic and potatoes, fry gently in some oil until soft. Add the nettle leaves and the stock. Boil for 20 minutes. Liquidise, the return to the pan, add the

seasoning and the milk and reheat. Garnish with parsley to serve.

Woodland Sprite Salad

6 medium size potatoes
Small handful young hawthorn leaves
Lettuce leaves
3 tbs. olive oil
French dressing
A few edible hawthorn flowers

Method

Clean and boil the potatoes in their skins. Leave to cool. Dice them and mix with the dressing and hawthorn leaves. Serve on a bed of lettuce and garnish with the flowers.

Mai Bowl

1 handful hawthorn flowers
2 pints sparking apple juice
Pinch of cinnamon
Pinch of ginger

Method

Add the cinnamon and ginger to the apple juice and serve sprinkled with hawthorn flowers.

Beltane Biscuits

6 oz margarine
10 oz plain flour
2 oz cornflour
6 oz sugar
1 level tsp. baking powder
2 egg whites
1 egg yolk
Food colouring

Method

Stir all the ingredients [except the egg yolk and food colouring] together to form a soft dough. Knead lightly and roll out to 1/8 inch. Cut out shapes such as green men, leaves, flowers, maypoles, etc. and put the biscuits onto a baking sheet which has been sprinkled with flour. Beat the egg yolk and divide it into as many separate pots as the number of colours you want to use and add a little food colouring to each. Paint the resulting pigments onto the biscuits with a small brush. Bake for 10-15 minutes at 180C/350F/gas mark 4 .

The Summer Solstice

21st June

The summer solstice is the longest day of the year. Many northern countries have just a very few hours of darkness: some, such as Norway and other countries in the far north, have sunlight for the entire twenty-four hours. Surprisingly enough, although this is the longest, it is not usually the hottest day of the year. That is still to come and usually occurs around the next festival, Lughnasa.

This festival marks the peak of the sun god's powers and in ancient times was one of the high points of the Pagan year. You may have seen pictures of modern druids celebrating at Stonehenge on this day. This is 'high tide' when it comes to the flow of energies in the world. You only have to read folk tales and fairy stories to see just how magical the summer solstice was considered to be. This is also the most powerful day for casting most types of spells and performing acts of divination.

Because of the time of year, the solstice is traditionally celebrated out of doors to honour the power of the Sun God and deosil [clockwise] dancing took place once again. On the eve of the solstice people climbed to the tops of hills remained

there all night, holding a vigil until the dawn. Bonfires and lanterns were lit all across Europe to honour the Sun, because after this his power declines and the days become shorter and shorter until the shortest day, the winter solstice.

Plants and crystals take on special powers at this time, charged with the power of the sun. On the day of the summer solstice witches and healers would collect herbs for their spells and potions, enough for the rest of the year. Any left over from the year before would be burned on the bonfire.

Sensing the tide of the year

Go out the day before the solstice and climb a hill near you. It doesn't have to be especially large; just high enough to raise you above the surrounding land. Try to feel the connecting energies of the earth and sun.

Divination

The solstice is one of those magical times when young women would hope to foresee or even find their future husbands. A girl would sometimes place the nodules from the root of the herb mugwort under her pillow to bring dreams of her future husband.

Protection Charm

Gather enough St John's Wort to make a garland and hang it on the front door, or in the barn or garage to protect the entire property.

To Go Unseen

Gather fern seeds at midnight on the eve of the Summer Solstice. Carry these with you if you wish to pass unseen in public. Unseen is not quite the same as invisible- it actually works by making people not notice you.

Recipes For Midsummer

Midsummer Soup

12 tomatoes
2 cloves garlic
2 pt. water
2 slices bread
1 green pepper
1 onion
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cucumber
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. chilli powder
Tbs. olive oil
Pinch black pepper

Heat the water to boiling point in a pan and drop the tomatoes in. Turn off the heat and leave for about five seconds. Carefully lift out the tomatoes with a straining spoon. Skin them [you will find the skins will slip straight off] and discard the skins. Put all ingredients including the water into a blender or food processor and blend. You can make it as smooth or as chunky as you like.

Warm through or chill and eat cold.

Tarragon Tomatoes

6 tomatoes
1 tsp. chopped tarragon
Black pepper
2 oz. cheese, crumbled
Salt
2 tbs. olive oil
Juice of 1 lemon

Slice the tomatoes and arrange them on a plate. Combine the oil, lemon juice, tarragon, salt and black pepper in a bottle. Seal and shake well until the ingredients are thoroughly mixed.

Dress the tomatoes with this and top with the cheese.

Floral Salad

[If you don't have all ingredients available, just include those you have.]

Handful of baby spinach leaves

1 baby cos lettuce

Two or three chopped nasturtium leaves

1 apple cubed and dipped in lemon juice

1 small cucumber, cubed

1 carrot cut in matchsticks

A few fresh mint leaves

Nasturtium flowers or calendula petals

Sweet Violets

Borage flowers

3 tbs. oil

Juice and grated rind of 1/2 a lemon

1 garlic clove, crushed

Method

Put the oil, lemon and crushed garlic into a jar or bottle, seal and shake well. Set aside. Break up the lettuce without cutting and arrange it with all the other ingredients in a serving bowl. Just before serving pour over the oil mixture as a dressing.

Midsummer Herb Butter

2 oz butter

3 tbs. tarragon herb finely chopped

Seasoning

Method

Using a pestle and mortar, or strong bowl and wooden spoon grind the herb into the butter. When thoroughly blended roll into a sausage shape and wrap in foil. Chill the butter until it is quite firm. Cut into slices and serve as a garnish.

Fennel Salad Dressing

2 tbs. young fennel leaves finely chopped

2 tbs. extra virgin olive oil

1 tsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. mustard

Seasoning

Method

Combine all ingredients in a sealable container. Seal and shake well. Refrigerate until required, shaking again before using.

Camomile Tea

Palmful of fresh camomile flowers or 2 rounded teaspoons dried camomile flowers [available from health food shops and herbalists]

1 pint boiling water

Method

Wash the herb, pour over the boiling water in a teapot or jug and cover. Infuse 10 minutes.

Strain and serve, adding a little sugar or honey to taste.

Camomile is not only a sacred solstice herb but is also linked to the sun's healing and regenerative properties.

Lughnasa

1st August

Lughnasa [pronounced loo-na-sa] is named for the Celtic god Lugh, meaning 'the assembly of Lugh', and great gatherings once took in his honour at the beginning of August. He is associated with protecting the crops until they are gathered in. Though most of the crops are ripening nicely, storms and floods may still come to ruin the harvest so the gods were asked for their help in protecting the precious produce. Lughnasa is the time when the first grains and apples are

ready for harvesting. In days gone by, people would take some of the first grain and make a special loaf, which was blessed and offered to the gods in thanks. Some of the first ripe fruits would be picked, or the first potatoes dug and a special dinner made. This festival was Christianised as Lammas in the Anglican Church.

Whether you call the festival Lammas or Lughnasa, it marks the end of the summer season of growth when the heat of the Dog Days ripens and dries the grain in the fields. Though the weather is hot and sultry, the Irish reckon it the start of autumn, as growth is ended and the harvest begins. In fact, it was considered unlucky to pick any fruit, reap any grain, or dig up any vegetables before Lughnasa, and was the sign of being a bad manager. However, if you ate a good meal on Lughnasa you would not go hungry for the next twelve months. Factory and school holidays were timed to coincide with the start of cropping so that more people would be free to help with the harvesting. Even today, early August remains the traditional time for summer holidays, games, races, and fairs.

Modern Pagans also celebrate Lammas as the start of the harvest, giving thanks for the bounty of the Earth. A loaf of bread is baked or bought, preferably one in the traditional plait or sheaf shape. It is blessed, divided up, and the first portion is laid on the altar or on the ground, as an offering to the gods.

Lughnasa marks the end of the period of growth. The Summer is ended and Autumn approaches. The tide of the year begins to ebb.

The Harvest

If you live in the countryside, go out and sit on the edge of a field of ripe grain before it is harvested. Just sit with your eyes closed and take in the energies of the place. Perhaps it is

possible for you to help with the harvest? Some people earn a little money this way, but it isn't always practical where the whole business has been mechanised so that one person now does the work of many. After the grain has been cut, return to the field. Feel the difference.

Making a Difference

In an age when crops can be imported all year round, we tend to forget just how important this time was to our ancestors—the failure of the harvest meant starvation and death. This is just as true today in many parts of the globe. As we thank the gods for the harvest, we should remember those not so fortunate in the poorer parts of the world and offer up a prayer for them. If you can afford it, some practical help in the form of a charitable donation would be useful.

Sun Pomander

This is one of the easiest things to make. It can be started now to represent the sun that has ripened the harvest and will be ready to give as a gift at Yule.

Materials:

One fresh orange [thin skinned, slightly dry tasting ones are ideal for this]

Packet of dried cloves

Ribbon

Gold pins [find these in your Craft store, they are sold for lacemaking]

A scrap of thick towelling, several tissues or three sheets of kitchen towel folded into quarters

Method

With a piece of chalk or a fibre tipped pen, draw two thick lines on your orange to divide it vertically into quarters. Avoiding these lines, start pushing the pointed ends of the cloves into the orange skin leaving one clove width of space between each. Push them all the way in until only the heads

are visible. Continue until the orange is covered all over except for the lines you drew.

Sit the orange on your tissue or cloth and place it somewhere warm and airy, preferably dark as well. An airing cupboard is ideal, but sometimes the tops of kitchen cabinets get very warm and dry. Make sure there is plenty of padding underneath and that this is absorbent so that the fruit dries properly and doesn't rot. If the place is dusty, lay another piece of tissue or cloth over the top to protect it. Forget for a few weeks.

When you get around to remembering, check the orange. It should be getting drier now and the cloves will have been pulled closer together. When the orange is completely hard and dry, tie ribbon around the two lines you left, fixing top and bottom with a gold pin. If you like you could leave a little extra ribbon for a handle, but tie it off firmly so that it doesn't pull out the pins. The pomander is now finished and should smell wonderfully of spiced orange. Use it as a solar image at Yule or give as a gift.

Lammas Loaf Blessing

Lughnasa is the first harvest feast of the year and a special kind of bread was made from the fresh grain which was broken and shared in a special ceremony. This was originally called *hlafmaesse* [loaf-mass] and gradually became Lammas, a modern word for this festival. Part of this celebration sometimes involves breaking off a piece of the Lammas loaf and stating out loud all the things you consider to be a blessing in your life. This can be anything - a happy home life, good friends, a sunny day or just the fact that the bread tastes good. The important thing at this festival is to concentrate on the good things in life and not dwell on the bad.

Apple Harvest

Lughnasa also marks the beginning of the apple harvest and a traditional European drink called Lamb's Wool was once shared to honour the God. It was a hot spiced drink made from ale or apple cider. Small pieces of apple or toast are floated on the surface and, as the cup is passed around the circle, each member takes out one piece, wishes everyone else good luck, and eats it.

Feasting!

As this is the beginning of the harvest it is also the start of the time of plenty with summer fruit in the hedgerows as well as ripe grain in the field. Lughnasa is mainly concerned with food, so get out your wooden spoon and start cooking a feast! Bread made with the freshest flour you can get hold of should be the centrepiece, but it would be good if everyone could bring something to the table. Other popular foods include summer fruits, corn cobs, popcorn - in fact anything made from grain or soft fruits, including juice drinks made from grapes or apples.

Lughnasa Recipes

Salad Bowl

Make up a salad bowl with all the fresh and baby vegetables available. You'll find baby carrots are delicious raw and so is cauliflower when it's chopped up and eaten with dips. Try something new: you might be surprised.

Plaited Lughnasa Loaf

1 1/2tbs. sugar

1/2oz yeast

6 fl oz milk

1 lb. plain strong flour

Pinch salt

3 eggs, beaten

for glaze:

1 egg beaten

Poppy seeds

Method

Start the yeast with a little sugar and the slightly warmed milk. Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. When the yeast is frothy add it to the bowl with the eggs and sugar. Mix to a smooth dough. Cover and leave in a warm place for an hour to double in size. Knead until smooth, divide into three strands and plait together. Place on a baking tray, cover and leave to prove for another 40 minutes. Brush with egg and sprinkle on the poppy seeds. Bake at 220C/425F/gas mark 7 for 15 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 190C/375F/gas mark 5 and bake for another 25 minutes.

Soda Bread

2 lb. flour

2 tsp. bicarbonate of soda

1 tsp. salt

12 fl oz buttermilk or milk

Method

Sift the flour, bicarbonate and salt into a bowl. Add the buttermilk and mix to a smooth dough. Shape into a large flat 'pancake' and mark the centre with a cross. Bake for 35 minutes at 220C/425F/gas mark 7 .

Apricot Mousse

1 lb apricots

3 oz caster sugar

3 tsp. powdered gelatine

Juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon

3 egg whites, beaten until stiff

5 fl oz double cream, whipped

Method

Wash and halve the apricots. Remove the stones and set aside. Gently cook the apricots in enough water to cover until pulpy. Liquidise and sweeten to taste. Leave to cool. Meanwhile, dissolve the gelatine in the lemon juice, adding a little water if necessary and beat into the puree. Beat until the mixture starts to thicken then fold in the cream and egg whites. Turn into a serving dish and chill for 1 hour.

Baked Apples

Apples

Brown sugar

Raisins

Method

Core the apples and place them on a baking tray. Fill the centres with brown sugar and raisins and bake in a moderate oven at 170C/325F/gas mark 3 for 1 hour or microwave on high for 3 minutes.

The Autumn Equinox

21st /22nd September

This is the harvest festival, sometimes called Herfest, though in American books you may see it referred to as Mabon, named for the Welsh god Mabon, meaning Great Son. He was the son of the goddess Modron, whose name means Great Mother. Mabon is a god of the harvest, fertility and is sometimes described as a sun god.

This is the main harvest festival of the Pagan year, celebrated on the Autumn Equinox when day and night are of equal length, but the dark is gaining and the hours of daylight are getting shorter, while the hours of night are getting longer. It marks the gathering of the last of the grain harvest. As the Spirit of Vegetation lived in the corn, it was important not to

kill it, but preserve it throughout the winter so that it might make the fields fertile next spring. The harvesters carefully circled the last remaining ears of grain and cut it to make into a corn dolly. This would be kept in the farmhouse all winter, in a place of honour, then buried at the spring ploughing.

After the gathering of the crops came the harvest feast. Every door and gate of the farm would be decorated with corn, flowers, greenery and ribbons. Scythes and sickles would be similarly decorated and stood in place of honour in alcoves and recesses in the house.

It is time to give thanks for the gifts of the Goddess and God who have provided enough for us to survive the winter. Nowadays this may seem a little pointless: we can get practically any food at almost any time of year, but this was not always so and if the harvest was poor, people died. In many parts of the world this is still true. All food comes from nature, however mankind tries to manipulate the growing seasons and the size and shape of the fruits.

Tuning into the Season

Help out with the harvest if you can. Do you have relatives with large gardens? Help bring in the harvest in exchange for a little for yourself. Most people are glad of a hand at this time and all gardens seem to manage to produce more than is needed. Gather with a glad heart and a quiet prayer of thanks to the God and Goddess.

The Grain

Fill some vases with dried arrangements of dried grasses [wheat, oats, barley and rye if you can get them]. Wild grasses also ripen at this time and were the original grains in ancient times, so give them a place in your arrangements.

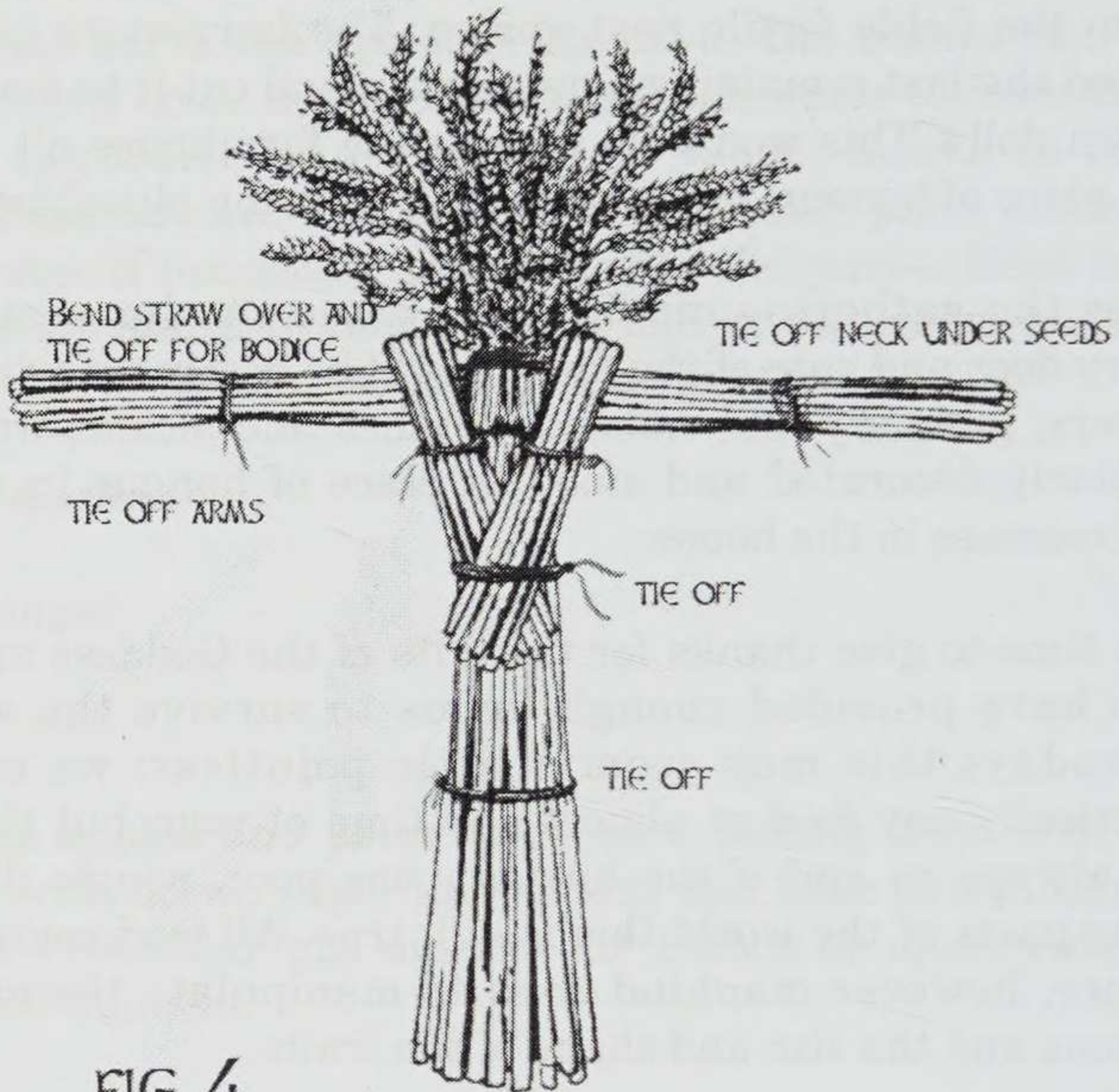


FIG 4

Electing a Harvest Lord or Lady

If you have a party, draw lots for a Lord or Lady of the feast. This person should wear a hat decorated with poppies, ears of wheat, barley etc and can order stories, entertainment and food from the others. For the duration of the feast, everyone else must address them as 'My Lord' or 'My Lady'

Corn Dolly

The last sheaf was often plaited into a vaguely human shape or a more abstract and symbolic representation of the corn spirit. In Welsh the word for religion is *crefydd* from *crefu* to implore for, and *ydd*, corn. Each locality developed its own variations and there are dozens of different traditional designs such as the Durham chandelier, the Northamptonshire horns and the Suffolk horseshoe. The

ribbons that bind it are significant in their colours, yellow for the sun, red for sacrifice, blue for love, green for wisdom and white for strength. You can relive something of the spirit of the harvest by making a corn dolly.

Take five hollow straws about eight inches (20 cm) long and tie them in the middle. Fold the bunch in half and tie again to make the head. Take four more straws about four inches (10 cm) long and tie them together a short distance from the ends, these will form the arms of the figure. Slot this into the straws, which form the body. Tie the ends of the longer straws to make the legs, this should give you a figure about three inches (7.5 cm) tall. (See figure 4)

Harvest Recipes

Harvest Salad

2 apples

2 fresh carrots

1/4 cup sultanas or raisins

1/2 cup orange juice

Method

Grate the apples and carrots and put into a salad bowl. Stir in the sultanas. Pour the juice over and stir gently but thoroughly so that the ingredients are well coated. Eat with cheese or cooked meats.

Corn on the Cob

One ear of corn per person

Butter

Salt to taste

Find a large pan and fill it two thirds full with water. Put in the corn. There should be enough room for the corn to roll around in the water. Heat to boiling point. When it is bubbling and the corn is rolling, turn down the heat so that it continues to simmer. Cook for around ten minutes or until the

corn is bright yellow and tender. Serve with plenty of butter and a sprinkle of salt. It is easier to eat if you insert some kind of spike into each end of the corn so that it can be picked up and the kernels nibbled off. If you have nothing suitable, use two table forks.

Stuffed Marrow

1 marrow
3 onions
2 oz chopped nuts
2 oz pine kernels, chopped
4 oz bread crumbs
2 oz butter
1 tsp. mixed herbs
1 tsp. marmite
1 egg
Salt and pepper

Method

Peel the marrow and chop in half. Scoop out the centre and discard. Fry the chopped onions in the butter and add the other ingredients. Fill the centre of the marrow with the mixture and bake, covered, in a hot oven at 400F/200C/gas mark 6 for 60 minutes.

Autumn Pudding

10 thin slices of bread
4 oz sugar
2 fl oz water
10 oz apples, peeled, cored and sliced
10 oz plums, halved and stoned
10 oz blackberries

Method

Cut each bread slice into four fingers. In a large pan dissolve the sugar in the water add the apples and plums, cover and cook gently for 10 minutes or until tender. Add the small soft

fruits and cook for another 5 minutes. Line a 2 lb. loaf tin with the bread fingers. Pour in half the hot fruit. Add a single layer of bread fingers. Pour in the rest of the fruit. Top with another layer of bread fingers. Cover the pudding with foil and put the board on top so that it rests directly on the pudding. Weight this down with something that will press the ingredients without forcing them out of the tin. Leave overnight in a cool place. Do not turn out until you are ready to serve - it won't keep its shape for long.

Carrot Cake

12 oz wholemeal flour
3 level tsp. baking powder
3 level tsp. mixed spice
8 oz brown sugar
1 lb. grated carrots
7 fl oz oil
3 level tbs. golden syrup
3 eggs, beaten

Method

Sift the flour, baking powder and spice into a bowl. Add the sugar and carrot and mix in. Put the oil and golden syrup in a pan and heat slowly to melt the syrup. Add to the carrot mixture. Add the eggs a little at a time. Pour into a greased cake tin and bake at 350F/180C/gas mark 4 for around one and a half hours. Cool in the tin.

Apple and Blackberry Fool

10 oz blackberries
1 lb. apples, peeled, cored and sliced.
2 oz caster sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pt fresh double cream

Method

Cook the apples and blackberries with the sugar in a very little water until very soft. Liquidise. Whip the cream until



FIG 5 PENTACLE

fairly stiff and put a little to one side for topping. Fold the fruit puree into the cream. Spoon into individual glasses. Chill. Before serving, top with a little of the cream and decorate with pieces of fruit as desired.

Blackberry and Apple Jam

4 lb. blackberries

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cooking apples, peeled and cored

$\frac{1}{2}$ pt water

6 lb. sugar

Method

Wash the blackberries and simmer with half the water. In a separate pan simmer the apples with the rest of the water. Mash the apples and combine with the blackberries, add the sugar and boil until setting point. Pour into warm jars.

[Yield 10 lb.]

The Cycle then begins again!

Spells

Many people think that all witches do all day is cast spells. This is far from the truth and spells are only a tiny part of Wicca, but magic is used when required. Everybody tends to associate magic with spells and whilst we have tried to show that this isn't always the case, we know that spells are very attractive, and that you are going to try some whatever we say. So let's get it right and use them properly.

Magic is a very real force, let's get that straight from the start. It is neither good nor evil, but can be used for either. It doesn't come in two varieties- black label for use with evil, and white label for use with good. However, magic should only be used for need, not for greed. I was always taught that selfish magic is *called* black, while helpful magic is *called* white. All magic rebounds on the caster threefold, and any use of 'black' magic for selfish or evil purposes will have to be paid for threefold. Remember that before you ask for a million pounds or cast a curse! This is something you won't read in some books of spells, but as a very experienced witch I can assure you that it is true.

Is it Necessary?

Remember that spells are to be used only when needed and with good heart. There is a temptation to cast a spell for someone if we think they need our help, but take great care. What might look like a terrible situation to you might actually be somebody else's idea of happiness. You should never interfere with someone else's life without asking their permission- you might be doing more harm than good, and what you think is right for them may not be what they want at all!

Is It What You Really Want?

There is an old saying- Be careful what you wish for as you may get it. You must think very carefully about using a spell, what its aim is and how you word it. Do you remember all those tales of people who got three wishes and ended up worse off because they were not careful? One such tale concerns a poor fisherman and it is worth telling it here:

There was once a poor fisherman who lived with his wife at the edge of the land where it touches the sea. Each day the fisherman would go out in his boat and fish until evening when he would row back to shore and take whatever he had caught home to his wife. Often he caught only just enough to feed them and there was little left over to sell and so they remained poor.

One day when he cast his net he caught only one fish. Disappointed he took the fish home to his wife and she prepared to cook it. Just as she was about to cut it up, the fish spoke. It said:

‘Please don’t kill me.’

The fisherman’s wife was so surprised she dropped the knife. Quickly she turned to her husband who had fallen asleep in his chair and shook him awake.

‘That fish you caught - it just spoke to me!’ she cried.

‘You’re dreaming wife,’ replied the fisherman, ‘fish can’t talk.’

‘Then come and see for yourself’

The fisherman’s wife dragged her husband over to the table and picked up the knife. Just as she raised it to cut the fish, the fish spoke again:

‘If you spare my life I shall grant you three wishes for I am a magical fish.’

The fisherman scratched his head in wonderment. His wife picked up the fish and handed it to him. ‘You must take it back to the sea. Then we’ll decide how to use our good fortune’ The fish was duly returned to the sea and the fisherman

hurried back to discuss the three wishes they had been promised. His stomach was rumbling for the fish was to have been their only meal of the day and so he now had nothing to eat. As the joyful couple sat down and began to talk about what they would like to wish for, the fisherman's stomach growled again. He was so hungry he could think of little but food.

'Well, wife, if we use the wishes wisely we will never have to eat fish again. Just think, we could have anything we liked.' His wife agreed, for she too was heartily sick of eating fish for every meal.

'Imagine,' he continued, feeling hungrier and hungrier, 'we could eat whatever we liked. Ah, I wish I had a nice big sausage to eat right now...'

There was a flash and a bang and there before him was the biggest sausage he'd ever seen. His wife leapt up in a rage. 'You fool! You've gone and wasted one of our wishes on a silly sausage. We only have two wishes left now. I wish it was stuck to your nose!'

Of course, the sausage attached itself immediately to the fisherman's nose and could not be moved, no matter how they pulled and tugged. The fisherman's wife even tried to cut it off, but as soon as the knife had gone through it, it just stuck itself back together again. Hoping the spell would end at midnight as happens in some fairy tails the couple went to bed, still hungry. In the morning the sausage was still stuck fast and they both agreed that they must use their third and final wish to remove it. This time they were more careful about the wording of the wish and at least had a sausage to eat that day, but the fisherman never saw the magic fish again and they remained poor.

There are two morals in this story. Firstly when magic is involved, always be very careful of what you say as it can have a powerful effect. Secondly, spells [a magic wish is a

spell] last forever if they do not have a time limit.

You also have to consider the rule of Threefold Return: in magic whatever you do will return to you threefold. This means if you cast a harmful spell, no matter how good your intentions, you will pay three times for any problems you cause. All actions have consequences for good or ill.

Curses are like young chickens- somehow or other they always come home to roost.

As experienced witches we often have to pick up the pieces when someone's magic goes wrong, but sometimes things have gone too far for anyone to help. One young girl we heard about wanted to curse her ex-boyfriend's new girlfriend. She thought that with her out of the way they might get back together. She found a spell in a book and cast the curse. It worked very well. The rival was killed in a car crash. The only problem was our would-be wicked witch's own mother was giving the rival girl a ride at the time and was also killed. The ex-boyfriend was in the car and was crippled for life. Now our wicked witch has to live with the consequences of her actions. And this is a true story.

Focus

Accuracy and focussed intent are vital or the spell might not have the effect you wish it to have- it might go awry and do all sorts of strange things. This is why you have to record every detail in your Book of Shadows, including all ingredients with details of quantities and any special instructions for gathering, such as season, time of day etc. There should be clear instructions for working the spell including any deities or powers to be called upon and words of power to be included.

Never Say Forever

There is no time limit on a spell unless you put one on- anybody who tells you otherwise does not believe that magic

is real, but is simply a method of giving yourself a confidence boost. Sue and I, on the other hand, know that magic is a real force and one that can backfire if used unskillfully. A spell cast will not just last for three weeks, the fizzle out- if you say forever, it will last forever unless broken in a magical way.

No spell should have an ending that includes the word *forever*, or any similar expression. In magic forever means exactly that and is very difficult, sometimes impossible to cancel. When you cast a spell you direct energy and energy is never destroyed! This can cause havoc with your future life. Imagine doing a love spell that binds you forever to a boy you really like- and then you go off him. Getting him out of your hair could prove extremely difficult. He could pester you for life. Both of you would be unhappy. You could then find he pops up in your next life and the one after that. You did say forever! He might be not nearly so gorgeous or desirable, but most definitely there. What's worse, he could be feeling exactly the same but neither of you able to do anything about it. *Never say forever!*

Times for Magic

Timing is important in magic. Every day of the week and every moon phase - even the time of the year - will affect the energies of the ingredients. Certain times provide the right energies for specific types of magic. A table is provided below so you can get it exactly right.

Times of the Moon

Witches often cast their spells according to the phases of the moon. Earlier we saw how the different phases of the moon had distinct energies. You can utilize these when you cast spells.

Waxing Moon: The time of the waxing moon is best for spells of protection, love, money drawing, studying, fertility, friendship, creativity, relationships and healing. The energies

are expansive and growing, so any spell you cast now should be concerned with things growing and flourishing. A healing spell cast now would be concerned with growing health [as opposed to a diminishing disease spell cast at the waning moon].

Full Moon: The energies of the full moon are best used for scrying and divination, love magic, fertility, developing psychic abilities, clairvoyance and healing.

Waning Moon: The time of the waning moon is best for spells of purification, cleansing and banishing. It is a time when the moon and its energies are diminishing, so it is used for spells to diminish something, whether this be an illness, a bad habit, a negative energy, the effects of a bad spell, ending relationships and so on.

Dark Moon: The days of the dark moon have their own magic best used for deep meditation and inner journeying, though evil magicians have been known to use the time for casting curses.

Planetary Times

In addition to the energies of the moon, the planets also affect magical work. Each day is ruled by a planet, which in turn governs certain areas of magical work. For example, if you wanted to work a love spell, you would perform it on a Friday, the day governed by the planet Venus which rules all areas of love. Your spell is likely to work better if you can combine a suitable day of the week with the right moon phase.

Sunday is ruled by the Sun and is best day for spells concerning work, employment, friendship and healing.

Monday is ruled by the Moon and suits spells concerned with gardens, agriculture, psychic ability, the home and medicine.

Tuesday is ruled by Mars and is the best day for spells concerned with competition, debates and gaining courage.

Wednesday is ruled by Mercury and is the day for spells concerning study, teaching, divination, messages and communications.

Thursday is ruled by the planet Jupiter and governs material things such as money, property and luck. You might cast a spell today to change your luck.

Friday is ruled by Venus and governs love, art, music, incense and perfume making.

Saturday is ruled by Saturn and concerns magic to do with the elderly, death, re-incarnation, wills and endings [ending relationships etc.].

Composing a Spell

Spells do not have to be complicated or contain a large number of ingredients- remember, they are there to focus your intent and the magical energy you raise. However, everything you use has energy of its own, and you can use this to reinforce the energy of the spell. For example, if you wanted to cast a love spell you would perform it on a Friday at the waxing or full moon. You might use herbs connected with love such as apple blossom, rose and lavender, plus crystals connected with love such as garnet or rose quartz, and use the colour pink for ribbons or pouches. See section on herbs and section on crystals you can use as many or as few ingredients as you like.

A popular method of casting a spell is to mix up herbs, oils and crystals and wrap them in a cloth or put them in a pouch, tying it with a ribbon. [This is often called a charm bag.]

Conversely, if you use a lot of things with unsuitable energies they can diffuse the spell before it has even started, so it is worth while preparing your ingredients carefully.

After this you might compose a verse to chant while you mix and empower your spell. It doesn't have to rhyme but this is traditional. These words help to focus the magic. For a more powerful spell you can invoke a god or goddess to help you, but remember, these are awesome beings and might not want to be disturbed. They are not your servants, and may not be interested in your whims. Wait until you are properly acquainted with any deity before you start summoning them- it is only polite after all.

Precautions and No- No's -

Here are a few simple rules to keep you out of trouble.

NEVER cast a spell without the full consent of **ALL** those concerned.

ALWAYS set a time limit on spells. Otherwise they may continue to work forever and will be difficult to undo.

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER SAY FOREVER. This is one of the most important and most frequently flouted rules, especially with love spells. Just imagine casting a love spell then discovering that the person is a complete dork. You'd find yourself ending up with them again life after life, century after century till the end of time. And they may not be too pleased either.

ALWAYS have a genuine reason for casting a spell.

NEVER cast a spell to hurt, harm or even inconvenience anyone. You will be the loser.

SPELLS ALTER THINGS so never cast a spell to keep something the same. For example, if you have a boyfriend that loves you, don't cast a spell to keep him. The spell will alter the flow of energies and disrupt the relationship.

ONCE IS ENOUGH. Perform a spell for a single purpose only once. Though some spells are carried out over a period of time [three days for example, or a month] ignore any books that

tell you to perform a spell three times or more. It is impossible to perform a spell the same way more than once- the vibration of your voice will be different, the hour and planetary alignments will not be the same and so on. This is sending out conflicting messages into the cosmos, and a chaotic result is what you will get in return. If the first spell is working the second spell will often send it off course, because you have altered the instruction by word or deed. Add a third to that and who knows what will happen.

BE PATIENT. It may take weeks or months for the results of the spell to be observed. If nothing happens then either you failed to charge the spell properly, or the Goddess does not want you to have what you wished for. She may think that it is better for you to earn it in another way or do without.

Some Spells

Spell to Lift the Blues

Eggcupful of sunflower oil

Five drops lemon balm [melissa] oil

On the first day of the new moon add the lemon balm [*Melissa officinalis*] oil to the sunflower oil. Focus and charge the spell. (Visualise the magical energy flowing into it). Each night before you go to sleep rub some into your forehead. Do this until the full moon.

Spell to Help you Study

Quartz crystal

Yellow pouch

Wash the crystal and place it on a sunny windowsill on a Wednesday morning. This will charge it with energy. In the evening, take it in your hand and say:

I charge you crystal that you be

An aid in study and friend to me

Store within all wit and learning

With passing days and seasons turning

*Ready to give this knowledge to me
When I require it, you set it free.*

Charge the spell. Place the crystal in the yellow bag. Yellow is the magical colour of air and intellect and will enhance the working of the quartz crystal. Take it with you to lessons and when you want to store knowledge in the crystal just touch the bag. When you want to recall that knowledge, touch the bag again.

Spell To Bring Good Dreams

Two pieces of blue cloth 15 cm square

A handful of dried hop flowers

A handful of dried camomile flowers

Needle and cotton

On a Monday, take the two pieces of cloth, place them right sides together and stitch up three sides. Turn right side out and stuff the resulting pouch with the hop and camomile flowers [you can buy these from a health food shop]. Sew up the remaining side. Focus and charge the spell. Place the spell bag under your pillow when you go to bed to have peaceful dreams.

Bathtime Beauty Charm

A piece of white muslin or cotton 9 cm square

Piece of string or ribbon

2 tbsp. oats

2 tbsp. lavender flowers

This charm will bring beauty and smoothness to the skin. On a Friday, lay out the muslin and sprinkle on the oats and lavender. Gather up the edges and tie with the string. Use the bath bag by tying it beneath the hot tap when you are running the bath. The water will run through the bag and charge the water with the power of the herbs.

Glossy Hair Charm

Take a sprig of rosemary and pour a pint of boiling water over it. Cool and use this water to give your hair a final rinse.

Healing Salve

¹/₄ lb of marigold petals

¹/₂ lb cold cream or Vaseline

Cut up the herbs and place in a large pan with the cold cream or Vaseline. Simmer on a very low heat for 45 minutes, then strain the cream into clean jars. Label them and store in a cool dark place. This salve can be used on bruises and burns. Make on a Sunday.

An Irish Blessing

May the blessing of light be with you - light outside and light within.

May the sun shine upon you and warm your heart 'til it glows like a great peat fire

*May the blessing of rain - the sweet, soft rain- fall upon you
So that little flowers may spring up to shed their sweetness in the air*

May the blessings of the earth - the good, rich earth - be with you.

May the earth be soft under you when you rest upon it, tired at the end of the day.

An Irish Blessing For Travellers

May the road rise to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

The rains fall soft upon your fields and,

Until we meet again,

May the Lord hold you in the palm of his hand.

Seed Spell for Knowledge

At the waxing moon, take a few seeds and shake them out onto a plate. Hold your hand over them and say "I bless these seeds and ask that as they are planted and grow, so the seed of knowledge should be planted within me. I ask that as these seeds grow, so too shall I grow in learning. Blessed Be." Plant the seeds and look after them carefully.

Ash Dream Divination

In Lancashire triple leaves plucked from the common ash were used by girls to cause prophetic dreams of future lovers. The spell worked better if the ash had an even number of branches each side of the tree - count them! Put an ash leaf beneath your pillow saying:

*Even-ash, even-ash, I pluck thee,
This night my own true love to see,
Neither in his bed nor in the bare,
But in the clothes he does every day wear.*

Pin Healing Spell

The ash was a tree of healing, a tradition preserved in folklore; the ash tree reputedly had the ability to cure disease by taking it from the sufferer. The following is a very old healing spell for the cure of warts, pimples, boils and other skin problems:

Wear a pin for three days, then go to an ash tree and say:

'Ashen tree, ashen tree, pray buy this sickness of me',

Insert the pin into the tree. The disease then appears as knobs on the tree and you will be free of it.

Rainbow Spell

Take seven ribbons at least twelve inches (30 cm) long in the colours of white, violet, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. They represent the seven chakras or energy centres of your body.

Red is the root chakra, which governs physical energy in your body.

Orange is the spleen chakra, which relates to sexuality and levels of vitality.

Yellow is the solar plexus chakra, which relates to the mental aspect of your emotional life.

Green is for the heart chakra, which is concerned with how you give and receive love.

Blue is for the throat chakra, which is concerned with communication.

Violet is for the third eye chakra concerned with psychic ability.

Finally, white is the crown chakra; it relates to your spirituality and unites the actions of all the other chakras.

Take the seven ribbons, go to the top of a hill, and holding the ribbons tightly in one hand, let the wind blow through them. Feel its power as it rushes past you, chasing through the trees and grass. Feel the power of the hill itself, raised above the surrounding countryside. Let its power enter you through the soles of your bare feet and rise up through you. Say:

*Power of wind, the air blows free,
Power of earth and grass and tree,
Fill me now, O powers unseen,
Charge the red, orange, yellow, and green,
Quicken the blue, the violet and white,
Fill them up with all your might,
With your power empowering me,
As I will so mote it be.*

Release the power into your fluttering ribbons.

Take the ribbons home and tie a knot in one end. Hang them above your bed or place them on your altar so that you can draw on the power of the spell when you need it.

Bread Spell

Make a loaf of bread at and before you put the loaf into the oven, dip a paintbrush in milk and write on the crust what you most desire, focussing hard on it. Bake the bread then eat it while still warm.

Sun Catchers

Hang crystals, faceted glass and sun catchers in the windows of your house. These deflect negative energy and shed cheerful rainbows throughout your rooms.

Spell To Guard Your Book Of Shadows

Small cup of sunflower oil
A few drops of chamomile oil
1 basil or birch leaf
Your Book of Shadows
Pen
Red Ink

Into the cup of sunflower oil add seven drops of chamomile essential oil with the words:

*Power of sun and earth and fire
Grant me all that I desire
This magic oil I now blend
To bring about mine own end*

Dip the index finger of your strongest hand into the oils and make a small dot on the front and then the back cover with the words:

*Now in this magic hour
By root and stem and flower
I protect this book
From glance or look
From prying eyes
From written lies
None shall see*

*None but me
What is written here.*

Take the pen and in red ink inscribe the sign of a pentacle [see figure] on the flysheet of the book. Place a small dot of protective oil on the leaf and press this between the covers of the book. It too will offer protection. The protective oil left over can be stored in a jar, kept in a dark place and used when needed.

To Dispel Someone's Anger Against You

Honey
Large Seashell
Pinch of Salt
Pebble

This is a very ancient spell. Put some honey and a pinch of salt into the shell. Drink the honey and salt from the shell and say:

*As the bowstring from the bow,
Thus do I take off thy anger from thy heart,
So that, having become of the same mind,
We shall associate like friends!
Like friends we shall associate-
I take off thy anger.
Under a stone that is heavy do we cast thy anger.*

Throw the pebble into running water or bury it in the earth. When next you meet the person who was angry, speak gently to them and all should be well.

Feather Message

Take a feather and hold it in your hand. Think of a message that you would like to send to someone. It is best to make this as short and simple as possible: call me, or I love you, something of that kind. Concentrate the thoughts of your message into the feather. Take the feather to a windy spot

and tie it to a tree or bush, allowing it to transmit the message to the wind, which will deliver it.

Mood Stone to Improve the Atmosphere of a Room

Find and cleanse a small pebble. Set it on a sunny windowsill to charge for a day and a night [preferably at the full moon to ensure balanced energies, though this can vary depending on what mood you want to create]. When the stone is charged, hold it in the palm of your hand and think of the room you are going to use your mood stone. If it is for a bedroom, you may want gentle, calming energies. If for a lounge, you may want it to be a little more lively, but very friendly. When you have decided, visualize the room as if this atmosphere already existed. Think of yourself in the room feeling happy and harmonious. See it as if it already is the way you'd like it to be and concentrate this vision into the stone. When you feel the stone is fully programmed, set it in the room somewhere it won't be knocked or touched and watch the atmosphere improve.

When Spells Go Wrong

Spells can go wrong. We have already discussed some of the ways that this can happen but a week rarely goes by when I don't get a call from someone suffering from the effects of a misjudged spell. Once free, magic cannot be recalled and you will probably just have to suffer the consequences- three fold, remember?

The best way to avoid this is to be careful in the first place but if a spell has gone wrong there are a few things that you can do to limit the effects.

Dis-spelling

If you have made up a pouch or tied up a cloth containing magical ingredients, these can be opened, the ingredients separated and thrown into running water with the words:

*Let this spell's course be run,
Ingredients scattered and magic done
I beg you Goddess, hear my call
Let this end now, once and for all.*

For best effect do this on a day of Saturn [Saturday].

Spell Breaking

Once cast a spell can never truly be re-called but you may be able to limit it. On a day of Saturn at the waning moon take a black ribbon and say:

*On such and such a day I cast a spell [name the day]
To cause such and such to happen [describe the spell]
I call upon all the powers to witness
That as I cut this ribbon [cut the ribbon]
So I cut the power of the spell
I earth its power*

And end its magic

So mote it be!

Take the ribbon and burn it or bury it in the earth.

Reflecting Mirror

If you are suffering from the effects of someone else's spell you can deflect the magic back to them by visualising a cocoon all around yourself. The outer surface of this cocoon is like a mirror, and reflects any magic back to its sender. Say:

By this mirror's shining face

Send magic back unto its place

Reflect it back from whence it came

Wrap it up and send it hame!

[Hame is an old Scottish word for home.]

Witch Ball

A witch ball is a glass ball or fishing float that is hung in the window of your room. It is a protective object that deflects negativity and bad magic away from you. Charge it with the words:

By witch ball's shining face

Send magic back unto its place

Reflect it back from whence it came

Wrap it up and send it hame!

Haematite Necklace

Wear a necklace of haematite stones to protect you from magical or psychic influences. Of course, you cannot practice magic, divination or scrying while wearing it.

Witch's Bottle

Spells are thought to travel in straight lines and be caught up in any nets or tangles. To protect yourself against the effects of a spell wear any piece of jewellery with an interlacing pattern, such as Celtic knotwork, braid your hair or make a witch's bottle by filling a bottle or jar with threads of coloured wool. Keep it in your room.

Divination

Everything we do, say and even think affects our lives and the lives of those around us. Like pebbles dropped into water, the ripples spread and interact with ripples from pebbles dropped by others. When we talk of divination, we are not always trying to see directly into the future, but to get an idea of what might happen if we continue as we are and to identify potential problems or helpful influences; the ripples from those other pebbles. It is useful if a major decision has to be made, but should only ever be used as a guide. Using divination can make us think about problems in a new way, explore issues from different angles, and look at fresh approaches to solutions. The future is not set and we have the power to change our lives for better or worse according to the decisions we make and actions we take.

There are various divinatory methods available and what may suit one person may not suit another. Take a look at those that interest you and take time to study at least one. You will find that even the simplest requires time and effort to learn and it is very easy to misread the signs, especially when just beginning, so don't be tempted to set yourself up as a 'fortune teller'. At best you'll be proven wrong more often than right and at worst, you could frighten somebody with a poorly interpreted reading. A good way of getting practice to begin with is to try reading the present and the past. This is easier to check and you will become familiar with the signs and symbols what they might mean. Until you understand these you have no hope of understanding clues to the possible future.

This is just a starting point, but can be far more helpful than most people realise. If you understand what has caused your life to be as it is, you can then go forward with wisdom and understanding to create the future you would like for yourself.

Numerology

We view our universe in terms of numbers. Think how scientists count and measure everything to understand how it works. The ancients also knew that numbers and mathematics underlay creation, and believed that numbers were magical, each number possessing certain qualities. A type of divination was developed from this, called numerology.

A popular use of numerology is to gain self knowledge by name analysis. Write down your name. This should be the name you are usually known by. If your name is actually Richard Edward Smith, but you are normally called Rick Smith, write down Rick Smith. Next each letter is assigned a numerical value according to the following table:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

So, taking our example of Rick Smith we have

RICK SMITH
149928

Add all these numbers together and this gives us 56. These two digits are then added together $5+6=11$. If we have a double number again, these two numbers are added together $1+1=2$. So Rick Smith is a two, in numerological terms. [I should point out here that there are lots of different systems of numerology, and this is just one.] So now we can look at the number types below and analyse Rick's personality:

One

This is the number of wholeness, power, generation, creation and force, ruled by the sun. Number One people are forceful, opinionated, ambitious and obstinate. One people have massive egos and always know they are right [even when they are wrong] and will never concede a single point in an argument. One people can be enormously successful as they possess the drive single mindedness and sense of superiority to achieve what they want. One people may also be funny, charming and clever. On the other hand, the bore that corners you at a party and imagines that you will be fascinated when he talks endlessly about himself, his hobbies, his family, his model trains, and how he is going to be rich and famous, well, he is probably also a One.

Two

Two is the number of polarity, separation, opposites and balance, ruled by the moon. Two people are calm, sweet, placid and like to keep the peace. But don't be fooled as still waters run deep, and they have all sorts of ideas and schemes in mind, just biding their time until the right moment.

Three

Naturally lucky, Three people are bright, attractive and charming, if rather flighty and easily bored. Three people are proud and independent, hating to be pinned down. They will always have plenty of admirers but prefer to remain unattached.

Four

Four people are reliable and trustworthy, practical and hardworking. Four people like to be well thought of and to 'fit in' with their friends. Some Four people lack imagination and distrust flighty creative types and can be thought of as a bit dull on occasions. However, they are loyal friends you can depend on in a crisis.

Five

Five people are attractive, energetic, sexy and just a little dangerous. They like to get their own way and are capable of walking over other people to get it. Five people are quick and clever, able to make a success of anything they turn their talents to. However, they hate restrictions and responsibilities, and are unlikely to be faithful, though any relationship with a Five is likely to be exciting.

Six

Six people are even tempered, fair and principled. They like to create harmony around themselves, both amongst their friends and in their surroundings. They make loyal friends and partners, though they love gossip and sometimes consider themselves a cut above others.

Seven

Seven people are loners, aloof, mysterious and secretive. This is often the number of people interested in magic and the occult. Sometimes they find it hard to fit in with others who have more mundane interests and think that the world does not understand them, reacting sarcastically or scornfully to any approaches. Because of this they may be unhappy and lonely, but they are often very clever, disciplined and talented.

Eight

Eight people are single minded and head for success, whatever the cost. They cling on and work hard, though they may be rather insensitive to the feelings of others. They are not interested in anything they cannot hold in their hands, and love money and possessions for their own sake. Anything they have, they hold onto, and can be a bit on the mean side.

Nine

This person is an idealist who always seeks to know the truth. Nine people hate unfairness and lies. They can be impulsive and a bit tactless as they pursue their ideals. They are not

always easy to be around, but they are passionate, romantic and loyal.

Coin Divination

You know how people sometimes toss a coin to make a decision- who will kick off at a football match, for example, or perhaps to decide between strawberry and chocolate ice cream? Well, coins have long been used as a form of divination. You may have heard of the Chinese I Ching where three coins are used to give an indication of life trends from how they fall. This is quite a complex system, but you can use ordinary coins like ten pence pieces or fifty pence pieces to practice a form of divination. Toss the coins in the air and let them land on the ground, while asking a silent question.

All Three Heads

The answer is most definitely a yes.

Two Heads And One Tail

Things are generally in your favour, but you will need to proceed with caution

One Head And Two Tails

Though things seem to be going against you, this is not really the case. You just need to look harder for the positive.

Three Tails

The answer is definitely a no.

Two Tails And One Head

You can't seem to do anything right at the moment, so it is best just to sit back for a while and let things take their course.

One Tail And Two Heads

Things are generally going against you at the moment, but you are about to turn the corner and things will get better.

Playing Cards

You have probably heard of tarot cards, which many professional fortune tellers use to glimpse future trends, but did you know that ordinary playing cards can be used? Only thirty-two cards are used, so separate these from the deck—just the cards from seven to king in each suit, plus the aces. Cut and shuffle the cards. Lay out the first five cards in a row to represent the past, the second five cards in a row to represent the present, and the next five cards in a row to represent the future.

Hearts- emotional matters and relationships

7 Harmonious relationships and marriages

8 A journey

9 The matter will be resolved as you hope. This usually refers to a relationship.

10 Unexpected success and great good fortune, especially in relationships.

Jack A male friend or lover who is charming but not to be trusted

Queen A friendly, warm, fair haired woman

King A fair man who is generous and well disposed towards you.

Ace Great happiness in the area of relationships. Harmony and contentment. Good news.

Spades- intellectual matters and misfortunes

7 Quarrels and upsets

8 Bad news leading to unhappiness

9 Failure, bad luck

10 Bad news leading to anxiety or a journey

Jack A dark young man who is not to be trusted

Queen A widow or divorcee who is scheming

King A man of authority who is not what he seems

Ace A business proposition or marriage proposal

Diamonds- money and practical matters

7 An surprising gift

8 A short, happy trip or excursion

9 News about money, business or property

10 A marked change in the course of events

Jack A messenger

Queen A handsome woman who is nevertheless malicious

King A capable, powerful man

Ace Important news, probably in a letter

Clubs- creativity and spiritual matters

7 A small child influences you

8 A dark woman who brings joy

9 A good partnership or marriage

10 An unexpected legacy

Jack A dark young man who is sincere

Queen A dark woman who is warm, affectionate and well meaning

King A dark man who is helpful and kind

Ace Success

Dowsing

Dowsing is a method of using your intuition to find out information. People seeking underground water sources and precious minerals have used it for thousands of years. More recently pendulum dowsing has been used to detect health problems and allergies as well as earth energies. A pendulum is simply a piece of cord or fine chain with a weight on the end. You might have a pendant that will serve or you can purchase a purpose made one.

Take your pendulum and hold it comfortably in your dominant hand [the hand you use for writing] so that the weight hangs down and is free to swing in any direction. Set the pendulum swinging to and fro.

Ask a question to which you know the answer will be no [such as 'Am I a camel?'] and watch the pendulum's swing. Ask a question to which you know the answer will be yes [such as 'Am I human?']. Make up some more yes or no questions. Make them simple and definitely yes or no - maybe doesn't work too well for beginners and either or questions don't work for anyone. The pendulum will probably swing differently for each of you - this is a very personal skill.

Try dowsing your friends' hands. The pendulum will swing one way for boys, the other way for girls. Make a note of which is which. In times gone by [and nowadays in some countries] people would dowse an expectant mother's 'bump' to try to predict whether the baby was going to be a boy or a girl.

Herbs And Oils

Since the dawn of time herbs have been used to heal the ills of the body: at one time they were the only medicine. However, the early Christians regarded herbalism as Pagan magic and attempted to ban it. They thought that if God intended someone to get better, they would get better. If he intended them to die, they would die. Prayer was the only medicine permitted. However, the practice of herbalism continued to flourish under the auspices of the wise women and cunning men, and was eventually adopted by the adherents of the new religion. During the Middle Ages the rich and poor alike would go to the local monks for treatment, and monastery gardens became botanical treasure houses. If the monks failed then the sick would seek out the wise woman who perhaps preserved the ancient knowledge and who would prescribe herbal remedies along with spells and incantations in the old manner.

Though modern medicine still owes most of its cures to plant derivatives, the introduction of chemical drugs like sulphur, arsenic and mercury by Paracelsus eventually lead to the preponderance of chemical remedies. However, with the modern interest in complimentary and holistic therapy many healers think that there is more to curing a disease than getting rid of the symptoms. Holistic therapists regard disease as an imbalance of the body, stemming from a variety of causes including environmental, dietary, stress related or even spiritual.

Healing with plants and plant extracts has always been part of the witch's armoury. Essential oils have been used for

thousands of years to treat illness and are very useful self help tools. They are easily available, and although quite expensive, a little goes a long way. They also have an effect on mood and the emotions. Different oils are stimulating or calming, and can be used to treat depression or anxiety and stress. Always make sure that you buy 100% pure essential oils from a reputable supplier. Most perfume oils are synthetic and have no therapeutic effect.

How To Use The Oils

Pure essential oils can be used in several ways:

1. In the bath- blend 20 drops of essential oil with 30ml of vegetable oil and add 2 teaspoons to the bath after it has run. Swirl it about in the water to ensure dispersion over the surface. As you get into the bath the oil will coat your skin, and the heat of the water helps its absorption. You will also breathe in the vapours. For an aromatherapy bath do not use soap- treat it as a therapy, not a wash.
2. Massage- most oils diluted with a base oil may safely be applied to the skin. Add 15-20 drops of essential oil to 30 ml of vegetable oil. An aromatherapy massage is a relaxing experience, designed to free the body from tension and apply healing oils to the skin. For headaches and migraine a suitable oil may be massaged just into the temples and neck or for treating arthritic knees a suitable oil may be used on the painful site and so on.
3. Vapourisation- all essential oils readily evaporate and many are antiseptic and make good air fresheners. Essential oils may also be used to create a relaxing or stimulating atmosphere. A purpose made oil evaporator can be used, or a few drops of oil can be added to a dish of water placed on a radiator.
4. In creams and lotions- oils can be blended with a lotion or your usual moisturiser. Add around 20 drops to 100ml of lotion.

Do not take any of the oils internally, except on the advice of a qualified therapist. The oils are highly concentrated and can be damaging or even poisonous when taken internally.

Some Useful Oils:

Bergamot

This oil is used to flavour Earl Grey tea. Add a few drops to a bowl of boiling water and inhale for chest infections. It helps ease the discomfort of chicken pox, shingles and cold sores. Do not apply to the skin before exposing yourself to strong sunlight.

Camomile

This oil is especially useful for girls and women. You can use some diluted camomile oil in your bath or massage some into your tummy to ease painful periods. Rub some dilute oil into the skin to relieve muscular aches and pains. Camomile is a very calming oil that can be used to soothe anxiety and relieve insomnia.

Eucalyptus

The main use of eucalyptus is in the treatment of colds, sinus problems and coughs. Dilute some in a base oil and add a few drops to the bath or rub into the chest. Use in an evaporator in the sick room to kill off air borne microbes.

Juniper

Blend six drops of juniper oil with a cream or lotion to treat acne and oily skin or add a drop to the final rinse for greasy hair. Use some dilute juniper oil in the bath to ease painful periods.

Lavender

Is the most versatile and safest of all the oils, valuable in a large number of conditions such as headaches, migraine, irregular periods, aches and pains, sprains, anxiety,

irritability, cellulite, colds and flu, bites and burns. Apply neat to burns to reduce the pain and inflammation, to lessen the scarring and reduce the shock. For period pains massage some dilute oil into the lower back and abdomen. For tension headaches and migraines, massage into the temples and the back of the neck. For insomnia use in the bath before going to bed and sprinkle two drops on the pillow.

Rosemary

Is a stimulating oil with many uses. Add a drop to the final hair rinse to treat dandruff. Rosemary has a strong stimulant effect on the mind, clearing the head and clarifying thoughts. Use in the bath to relieve tiredness.

Base Oils

Generally speaking, essential oils should always be used in a dilute form. A few drops of essential oil are blended with a base oil. Any vegetable oil will do - sunflower, almond, olive, wheatgerm etc. Do not use baby oil, which is a mineral oil. If you wish to keep the blended oil for more than a few weeks, use a wheatgerm base or add 10% of vitamin E oil.

Plant Magic

Plants are used for magic, as well as healing. They can be put into charm bags, used in incenses, or made into magical tools. The edible ones are sometimes taken in teas and potions, but this is a very specialised area and you need to be well qualified to do this. It would be safe to occasionally use some herb teabags, such as camomile tea, ready made from the health food shop, but even these should not be taken on a regular basis without advice from a qualified herbalist. The witch should be able to identify the plants he or she uses, and collect small samples from the wild as needed. Herbs are used for decoration at the festivals, when they add their energy to the atmosphere.

ALDER *Alnus sp.*

The alder is widespread in Asia, Africa, America and Europe, fringing streams, rivers, and lakes. Alder wood is oily and endures for a long period under water and so was employed for making bridges. The alder symbolises the warm fire of the sun at the vernal equinox which reclaims the land from the winter floods.

ALMOND *Amygdalus communis*

The almond is native to Asia and North Africa. The themes of the almond are spring, regeneration, divination and fertility. The blossoms, wood and nuts are used.

ANEMONE *Anemone pulsatilla*

The meadow anemone is the herald of spring, appearing around the spring equinox or Easter time, hence its common names of 'pasque flower' and 'Easter flower'. It is sacred to the spring/summer goddess.

ANGELICA *Angelica sp.*

Angelica is a member of the parsley family and is probably a native of Europe. There are about 30 varieties. Angelica is a sacred herb of Beltane, imbued with the power of the sun. It is also used at midsummer to celebrate the power the sun to overcome winter, decay and negativity. Angelica is an important ingredient in charms of healing, protection, cleansing, exorcism and purification. Use to purify the personal aura, the temple or sacred space and magical tools, as well as houses and work places.

APPLE *Malus sp.*

When an apple is cut in half it reveals a pentacle, the symbol of the Goddess. It is sacred to the goddess of love and harmony.

BASIL *Ocimum sp.*

Basil is called the 'Witch's Herb' and throughout the ages witches have used it for magic- for healing the body, in love spells and during initiation rites.

BAY *Laurus nobilis*

The sweet bay is an evergreen tree naturalised around the Mediterranean. It is sacred to sun gods and goddesses, and gods and goddesses of the dawn. It is a herb of prophecy and divination. Tarot cards can be consecrated with bay incense. Bay incense can be used for cleansing the temple and magical tools and to magically 'seal' doorways and windows against negativity.

BEECH *Fagus sp.*

Beeches are found in the northern temperate zones of North America and Europe. Both the Greek Artemis and Roman Diana, goddesses of the moon, were worshipped as beech trees in sacred groves. An incense of beech can be used to consecrate magical books or used to aid the concentration while studying magical scripts and alphabets.

BETONY *Betonica officinalis*

Betony herb is found growing throughout Europe, mainly in woods and copses. It is associated with Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine, and Chiron, the famous centaur, patron of herbalists. The primary uses of betony are in healing and dispelling negativity.

BIRCH *Betula sp.*

The European birch tree has a bright, white bark and is associated with light and the sun. In the Nordic tradition the birch (Beorc, Byarka, or Berkana) is a symbol of Mother Earth and represents the feminine powers of growth, healing, and the natural world.

BLACKBERRY *Rubus sp.*

There are very many species of bramble including the dewberry and the cloudberry. The leaves and berries are used at the autumn equinox in herb teas.

BLACKTHORN *Prunus spinosa*

The blackthorn is a spiny shrub or small tree native to Britain, Europe and parts of Asia occurring in hedgerows, thickets and on waste ground. Blackthorn has ominous associations because it is the Thorn of Winter, the ripening of its fruits signifying that winter has the land in its icy grip, when the earth sleeps and the Goddess takes back souls into the underworld.

BROOM *Cytisus sp.*

Broom is native to Britain, temperate Europe and Asia. Its bright yellow flowers blossom in late April and early May. It is associated with the sun and the coming of summer. The flowering of the broom sweeps away the winter, negativity and darkness. It is particularly sacred to the Welsh goddess Blodeuwedd ['Flower Face'] who was created from nine types of blossoms, including broom, meadowsweet and oak.

CARNATION *Dianthus sp.*

Carnations originally grew wild in the Mediterranean region. The Athenians gave them the name *Dianthos*, meaning 'flower of Zeus'. The common name derives from 'coronation' because pinks were used for celebratory garlands for festivals and coronations, particularly wreaths to celebrate betrothals of marriage.

CEDAR *Cedrus sp.*

True cedars belong to the genus *Cedrus*, and are native to mountainous areas of North Africa and Asia. The fragrant wood has been used in incenses for millennia. It drives away ghosts and evil spirits and dispels negativity.

CENTUARY *Erythroea sp.*

Centuary is an annual plant native to Britain, Europe and North Africa. It is associated with the centaur Chiron, a patron of herbalists. Chiron was accidentally wounded by a poisoned arrow and used this plant to try and cure his wound. He was never completely healed however, but this gave him greater insight into the suffering of others. In the medieval period centuary was much associated with witches.

CAMOMILE *Anthemis nobilis, Matricaria chamomilla*

Camomiles are native to Europe, North Africa and temperate Asia. It is sacred to the sun and sun gods like the Egyptian Ra, the Celtic Cernunnos and the Norse Baldur. Camomile is one of the sacred herbs of midsummer.

CINNAMON *Cinnamomum zeylanicum / Cinnamomum lauraceae*

Cinnamon is a tree that is native to Sri Lanka and China. In the East, it was burnt in temples to purify them. Used in incenses cinnamon raises magical vibration and creates a peaceful energy.

CLOVER *Trifolium sp.*

Clover occurs in great abundance throughout Britain, Europe, central and northern Asia. It is sacred to the Triple Goddess and fairies.

CYPRESS *Cupressus sp.*

Cypress an evergreen tree that grow in North America, Europe, and Asia. It is a tree of death, mourning and funerals. It was called 'the mournful tree' by the Greeks and Romans.

DAISY (ENGLISH) *Bellis perennis*

The daisy is a hardy perennial which is native to Europe and Asia. It is sacred to sun gods and goddesses and is associated with purity, innocence and faithful love.

DANDELION *Taraxacum officinale*

Dandelion is a hardy perennial plant that is native throughout the northern hemisphere. It has a bright-yellow wild flower which is an obvious sun emblem.

DILL *Anethum graveolens*

Dill is an aromatic, upright, annual herb native to the eastern Mediterranean, India, Iran, Russia and western Asia. It was known as one of the 'St. John's Eve' herbs and was valued as a protection against witchcraft.

ELDER *Sambucus nigra*

Elder is the name of a group of 30 species of small trees which grow in temperate areas of the Northern Hemisphere. It is said that where the elder grows, the Goddess is not far away. In the winter the tree is called Lady Elder, the holy tree of the matrons, the three goddesses personify maiden, mother and crone. The sweet blossom can be collected in June and makes a good fixative for herbal incenses. The leaves should be gathered on Midsummer morning for healing. The bark and berries may be collected in the early autumn.

FIR (SILVER) *Abies alba*

About 25 species of fir tree are widely scattered throughout the Northern Hemisphere. The magical child, the son or sun, is born beneath the fir tree at the winter solstice. The fir is sacred to the Goddess as both mother and patroness of childbirth.

FRANKINCENSE *Boswellia thurifera* / *Boswellia carteri*

Frankincense is a gum resin obtained from the '*Boswellia thurifera*' tree. The frankincense tree is native to the Middle East and Somalia. It is widely used as an important ingredient of incense. It cleanses, purifies, consecrates and raises vibrations. Frankincense is associated with sun gods and may be used in all rituals to do with the sun.

Frankincense is also associated with Moon Goddesses and may be used during moon rituals.

HAWTHORN *Crataegus monogyna*

Hawthorn is the common name for several small trees of the genus *Crataegus*, native to temperate regions. The flowering of the hawthorn in May signals the start of summer. It is a tree of the summer goddess and it is forbidden to bring it indoors except at the fire festival of Beltane [May Eve].

HAZEL *Corylus avellana*

Hazel is the common name applied to trees and shrubs of the genus *Corylus*, found throughout the temperate regions of North America and Eurasia. The Celts associated the tree with wisdom.

HEATHER *Calluna vulgaris*

Heather is an evergreen shrub belonging to the family *Ericaceae* found throughout Western Europe and in parts of North America. It is sacred to the goddess of midsummer, who sometimes appeared as a Queen Bee, as bees love to drink from heather flowers.

HOLLY *Ilex aquifolium*

Hollies have glossy, evergreen leaves and bright red berries. Holly is sacred to Crone aspects of the Goddess, such as the Cailleach Bheur and the Morrighu and to sky and thunder gods such as the Holly King, Jesus, Llew, Lugh, Mars, Saturn, Tannus, Taran and Thor. The berries symbolise the sun, light, fire and warmth.

IVY *Hedera helix*

The evergreen English ivy is native to Eurasia and is a climber that clings to walls and trees. Ivy is a symbol of rebirth and regeneration.

JUNIPER *Juniperis communis*

Junipers are evergreen trees belonging to the cypress family found throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Juniper represents truth, justice and the power of the light to uncover evil.

LAVENDER *Lavandula officinalis*

Lavender is the name given to 28 species of the genus *Lavandula* native to the Mediterranean region. It honours the planet Mercury, the element of air, and the deities Cernunnos, Circe, Hecate, Medea, Saturn and Serpent Goddesses. Lavender purifies, heals and cleanses.

LEMON BALM *Melissa officinalis*

Lemon balm is a hardy, herbaceous perennial native to southern Europe. It honours the Moon, Artemis, Diana and other Moon Goddesses.

MARIGOLD *Calendula officinalis*

Marigold is a hardy, annual herb native to central and southern Europe and Asia. It is dedicated to the Sun, and is a herb of healing and protection.

MARJORAM *Origanum vulgare*.

Marjoram is native to North Africa and Asia. It is a herb of protection that repels negativity and brings happiness. It is sacred to the Goddess of Love.

MISTLETOE *Viscum album*

Mistletoe grows as a parasite on the trunks and branches of various trees. It is a protective herb, used against disease and misfortunes. It is a plant of fertility and rebirth. NB. The berries are deadly poisonous.

MULBERRY *Morus nigra*

Mulberry is a group of ornamental trees and shrubs that have small, round, sweet fruits. It is sacred to goddesses of wisdom, spinning and weaving.

MYRRH *Commiphora myrrha*

Myrrh is a gum resin from trees of the genus *Commiphora* found mainly in Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia. It is a herb of love, fertility, death, regeneration and rebirth.

MYRTLE *Myrtus communis*

Myrtle is an evergreen shrub or small tree which grows wild in regions along the Mediterranean Sea and temperate regions of Asia. It is a tree which reflects the Goddess in all her aspects, and is employed for prophecy, love, fertility and marriage, death and regeneration.

NETTLE *Urtica dioica*

Nettles are coarse herbs that grow as weeds in North America, Europe, and Asia. Nettle is a herb of healing and protection, used to dispel negativity.

OAK *Quercus robur*

There are more than 600 species of oaks, all of which grow naturally only in the Northern Hemisphere. Oak was the most sacred tree of the druids. It is sacred to Allah, Arianrhod, Artemis, Balder, Blodeuwedd, Brighid, Ceirddylad, Cernunnos, Cerridwen, Cybele, The Dagda, Dianus, Donar, Dryads, Erato, The Erinyes, Hades, Hecate, Hercules, Herne, Horus, Indra, Janicot, Janus, Jehovah, Jupiter, Kirke, Llyr, Nephthys, Odin, Pan, Pluto, Rhea, Tannus, Taran, Thor, Ukho, Vishnu, Zeus, Athene, Mars, Ares and Ukko,

OLIVE *Olea europaea*

Olive trees grow throughout the subtropical regions of the Old World. Olive is the symbol of new beginnings, peace, continuity, and the expulsion of evil and negativity.

PARSLEY *Petroselinum crispum* / *P. sativum*

Parsley was first grown in Sardinia and southern Italy and belongs to the *Umbelliferae* family. Parsley is associated with death aspects of the Goddess, the Underworld and with gaining ancestral knowledge.

PINE *Pinus sylvestris*

The pine is a tree of the spring equinox, fertility, regeneration and new beginnings. Pine resin, needles and wood are all used in incense. Pine may also be employed for purification, cleansing and dispelling negativity.

POPPY, FIELD *Papaver rhoeas*

The genus *Papaver* contains about 50 species and occurs principally in the northern temperate zone favouring open, well-drained areas. Poppies are sacred to goddesses of fertility and the harvest. Use the seeds for fertility, luck, to attract money and love.

PRIMROSE *Primula vulgaris*

The primrose is a hardy, herbaceous perennial native to western Europe, North America and Asia Minor. Primroses are associated with the fairies, with the spring, spring goddesses and with the gifts of song and poetry.

REED *Phragmites communis*

The reed is found growing in marshes, at water edges and in moist woodland in almost all countries of the temperate and warm regions. The reed bed was seen as the entrance to the underworld, from which the sun was reborn. Because they are filled with air or spirit reeds are associated with the speaking of the spirits. Reeds are a symbol of royalty and sun gods.

ROSE *Rosa sp.*

Roses are symbolic of love, peace, secrecy, rebirth and resurrection. Burn rose petals to change your luck. The white rose represents purity, perfection, innocence, virginity and the

Maiden Goddess, while the red is earthly passion and fertility, and the Mother Goddess. Add rose petals to incense for spells and rituals of love and marriage.

ROSEMARY *Rosemarinus officinalis*

Rosemary is a hardy perennial native to the Mediterranean region. It helps the mind and the memory. Use also for healing, love, marriage, births, funerals and memorial services, for protection and to dispel negativity and evil. The fairy folk are particularly fond of rosemary and the plant attracts them.

ROWAN *Sorbus aucuparia*

Rowans are a group of trees or shrubs that grow in the Northern Hemisphere, mainly in high places. Rowan's associations are with witchcraft, protection, divination and the dead. The berries are marked with the sign of the pentagram, the sign of protection. Rowan is sacred to Brighid and Brigantia, and may be used at Imbolc.

SAGE *Salvia officinalis*

Sage is a fragrant shrub native to southern Europe. It is associated with wisdom, prophetic dreams and warding off the evil eye. Sage is a herb of purification and its smoke may be directed to cleanse the aura, the working area and magical tools.

ST. JOHN'S WORT *Hypericum perforatum*

St. John's wort is a hardy perennial native to Europe and western Asia. It is a protective and counter-magic herb. It was considered to be a herb of protection by the ancient Greeks. St. John's wort is one of the many herbs which gain special powers at Midsummer, when it should be collected for magical purposes. It repels negativity.

THYME *Thymus vulgaris*

Thyme is the name of a group of fragrant, shrubby mint plants native to the Mediterranean region. The ancient Greeks used thyme as temple incense. It is a herb of purification and protection.

VIOLET (SWEET) *Viola odorata*

Violet is a hardy perennial native to Europe and north Africa. The Greeks saw the violet as being a symbol of fertility, sacred to Aphrodite and frequently added it to love potions. Violets are a symbol of the constancy of love and fertility. Mix with lavender to attract a new love.

WILLOW *Salix species.*

The willow tree lives in moist habitats such as riverbanks. It is a plant of the moon goddess and strengthens the intuition and gives inspiration.

YARROW *Achillea millefolium*

Yarrow, native to the whole of Europe, is a hardy herbaceous perennial. Yarrow is one of the sacred herbs of Midsummer and should be gathered for magical purposes or for extra healing power at the solstice. Yarrow incense can be used to promote divination and clairvoyance.

Making Magical Bath Salts

Take 1oz or 28 gms of salt and place in a non porous ceramic basin and add a total of 6-8 drops of undiluted essential oil. Blend in with a pestle and place in an airtight jar until required. If you like, you can add colour in the form of food colouring. This colour should be added before the oil and blended until it is smooth throughout.

Rosemary Banishing Salt

1 cup salt

15 drops Rosemary oil

Bowl for mixing

Spoon

Jar to store it in

Few drops of blue food colouring

Rosemary [*Rosemarinus officinalis*, which translates as 'rose of the sea'] has many healing qualities and is especially good banishing negative energies. Use this salt in the bath when you need to rid yourself of bad luck, anger or minor illnesses. Place the salt and rosemary oil in a ceramic bowl [not metal] saying:

'Flower of the sea,

Bring your blessings to me.'

Mix them together, adding the food colouring and saying:

'Blessings of the Crone I ask

As I bend to do this task

When I use this in my bath

Let ill be a thing of the past'

Next time you run a bath put in the salts. Soak in the water for a while then allow the water to drain away and visualise the problems going with it down the plughole.

Lavender Complexion Scrub

1 cup oatmeal

1/4 cup dried lavender flowers

Pestle and mortar or coffee grinder [it will smell of lavender afterwards, so make sure it is cleaned thoroughly].

Put your ingredients into the mortar or grinder. When all is well blended, store in an airtight jar. To use, pour about a teaspoonful into the palm of your hand and add a few drops of water to make a paste. Rub this paste over the problem areas of your skin, wipe off immediately with tissue or cotton, then rinse. Use twice to three times a week to keep your complexion clear.

Marigold Acne Scrub

1 handful marigold flowers.
3 pints boiling water
2 tablespoons bran
1 tablespoon salt

Take the marigold flowers and pour the boiling water over them. Leave to infuse for two hours. Strain and keep the water. Take four and a half tablespoons of this water and add the bran and salt. Mash and mix with a fork to make a paste. Use this paste as a facial scrub, massaging into the skin for several minutes. Rinse off with water.

Elderflower Hand Cream

1 jar petroleum jelly
5 handfuls elderflowers

Over a low heat melt the petroleum jelly in a pan. When liquid add the elderflowers. Stew very gently for 30-40 minutes, removing it from the heat occasionally to prevent burning. Pour through a sieve into glass jars, label and store in a cool place.

Rosemary Treatment for Enlarged Pores

1 cup oats
8 oz yoghurt
Bowl of boiling water
Sprig of rosemary

Mix the oats and yoghurt into a paste and place in the fridge for a few hours. Then crush the rosemary a little and place the sprig the boiling water. With a towel over your head allow the heat to open the pores. Then rub the yoghurt and oat mixture into the skin and allow it to dry on the face. Rinse off with tepid water. Finish off with a splash of cold water.

Strawberry Tooth Whitener

Squash fresh strawberries until the juice runs out. Dip your toothbrush into the juice and brush in the usual way. It really does whiten teeth!

Crystals

Crystals tend to go in and out of favour, depending on the current fashion, but they have measurable energies that are affected by the tides of the moon and of the year. They can enhance magical energies and for that reason we feel that their use is valid, whatever the current trend. It is important to remember that crystals are often mined in a way that causes great damage, so try to obtain yours second hand if possible so that no further harm will come to the Earth. Better still, look around where you live - in some places crystals are to be found just lying on the earth's surface - or in a corner of your jewel box.

Although crystals do have individual characteristics, listed below, these are affected by the actual colour of the crystal, so you can use the colour chart in the appendix for their associations.

When using gems and crystals in jewellery the metal used for the setting can sometimes enhance the effects. Gems allied to the Sun are generally set in gold. Those allied to the Moon are set in silver. Often either is equally acceptable and witches sometimes choose the setting to bring out particular characteristics in the crystal. Traditionally certain uncut red stones such as rubies and garnets were set in iron if they were to be used for magic.

Wash your crystals in running water and place them in sun or moonlight to charge. Crystals charged at different moon phases will absorb those energies and we sometimes do this. Crystals needed for enhancing energies or bringing power to a new project are charged at the waxing or full moon, those needed to reduce fevers or help end a situation are charged at

the waning or dark moon. Crystals charged in the sun will take on the characteristics of the time of year in the same way.

Most stones have a specific polarity, often called a gender - either positive [male] or negative [female] and this can be determined by dowsing. Male or positive stones bring dynamic energy to the wearer whereas negative or female stones have a more calming, soothing effect. By combining a positive and a negative stone it is sometimes possible to bring a greater sense of balance to our energy fields. Sometimes a crystal is placed on a witch's altar to represent the Goddess or the God. In this case it is necessary to know the gender of the crystal as it would be inappropriate to use a male crystal to represent the Goddess.

The virtues listed here are mainly traditional and may vary from one part of the world to another. Please be aware that we are not recommending that you go out and get every crystal on the list. That would be pointless and wasteful. If, however a crystal comes your way as a gift, or is passed on by someone who no longer wants it, the list will tell you how it can help enhance your life. Alternative names are given in brackets.

Adder's Beads: [Hag Stone] any small stone with a natural hole. Hang over the bed to ward off nightmares. These are traditionally used for healing and are charged at the full moon.

Agate: brings friendship, communion with nature spirits, and physical vitality. A good anti stress stone.

Amazonite: healing, spiritual growth, heals emotional disorders and mental anxiety. Enhances the properties of other crystals and essential oils.

Amber: forms part of the witches' traditional necklace [along with jet] because it can retain a magical charge. Takes a

negative electric charge when rubbed briskly. Sacred to ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans.

Amethyst: benefits the nervous system, eases grief, aids meditation It is a powerful protection against psychic attack when set in silver. Balances the body's energy field, and heals headaches when rubbed over the site of pain. Brings good dreams, enhances memory and quickens the wits. Hold in the hand or place over third eye [middle of the brow] for spiritual and psychic development.

Apache Tear Drop [a form of obsidian]: A powerful good luck charm.

Aquamarine: helps bring visions and develop clairvoyant abilities whilst promoting logical thinking. A good luck charm for interviews and exams. Excellent amulet for journeys over water [even in a plane], especially if set in silver. Benefits the eyes, liver, throat, and stomach.

Aventurine: a good gem for all creative people, brings luck in love and games. The green of the gem relates it to earth energy. Used in money spells in the US where paper money is green. Leave a piece overnight in a bowl of water and use to wash inflamed eyes and skin, or anoint the head to ease migraine. Benefits digestion, pituitary gland, muscles, and nervous system. Aids creative visualisation.

Beryl: called the "mystic's stone" once used to make crystal balls, and used as a dowsing stone. Place yellow or golden beryl over third eye [middle of the brow] to enhance psychic abilities. Hold in the left hand during meditations. Wear to banish fear, strengthen the intellect, protect against enemies, win arguments [if right], and become courteous. Attracts the opposite sex for single people but guards against being pressured into 'going too far'. Use to promote friendship or to reconcile enemies.

Blood Stone: used by ancient Tibetans and Greeks to slow down or prevent bleeding. Helps detoxify the physical body. Wear as an amulet for fame and long life. Place under your pillow for dreams of the future.

Blue Lace Agate: wear to strengthen the power of the sun in your zodiac sign and bring inner peace. Helps communication: keep a piece in rooms where people gather to promote harmony. Sharpens the sight and illuminates the mind.

Carbuncle: a red gem, often a dome shaped garnet or ruby [both are usually faceted]. Once set in iron as love stone. Hinders sadness and bad dreams. Promotes health, but if the owner becomes ill a carbuncle's colour will fade.

Cornelian (Carnelian): varies in shade from pale orange to red. Symbolises good luck and contentment. Wear against skin diseases, to calm anger, promote courage and fluent speech. Helps focus the mind and is good for forgetfulness. Hold over the womb to ease menstrual cramps. Carnelian draws energy into the physical body and so eases fatigue.

Chalcedony: brings luck in love. Relieves depression and enhances strength. The stone will help you overcome self-delusion and sharpen your self-knowledge.

Chrysolite: called peridot if bright green, olivine if olive shade. Helps calm fears.

Chrysoprase: wear as an amulet for happiness and to strengthen the eyes. Activates clairvoyant abilities.

Citrine: soothing, helps control emotions, clarifies the mind. Improves poor circulation, helps throat disorders.

Coral: not really a gemstone but has been used magically for centuries [never obtain new as its collection causes grave

damage to the environment]. Used to strengthen the heart and spleen. The red variety's colour is said to fade when its wearer is ill.

Crazy Lace Agate worn by the ancients to appease the gods and inspire courage. It sharpens the sight, illuminates the mind, gives vitality, improves ego and self-esteem and helps the wearer speak well in public.

Diamond: enhances the actions of any gem it is worn with - especially amethyst and emerald. Inspires courage - wear on the left arm touching the skin to drive away night fears. Said to reconcile quarrelling couples. Its hardness gave it the reputation for making the wearer invulnerable. Allied to the sun, so is most powerful when set in gold.

Emerald: linked to earth energies, said to bring health, wealth and good luck to the wearer. Assists clairvoyance. Wear in a ring to enhance memory and ease dizziness. Will exaggerate the wearer's character - the good become better, the bad become worse!

Garnet: balances natural energies and brings self-confidence, allowing the wearer to let go of old grudges. Goes dull when danger threatens. Improves blood and skin disorders. Increases psychic sensitivity. Assists meditative rituals. Place under your pillow to discourage bad dreams. To attract a soul mate wear a heart shaped garnet over the heart [see also carbuncle].

Hematite: protects the wearer from negative or disruptive energies.

Hyacinth: protective. Wear to boost the immune system. Said to bring wealth and honour to wearer.

Jacinth: increases psychic powers. It is often worn or carried as an amulet for the attainment of honour, prudence and

wisdom. Jacinth's yellow colour is cheering and stimulates the mind- especially the deeper yellow shades. Give as a gift to win affection.

Jade (Nephrite): sacred to the Chinese Goddess of healing and mercy and symbolic of tranquillity and wisdom. Said to help kidney disorders. Made into amulets for long life, good health and good luck. Jade butterfly amulets attract love and good fortune.

Jasper: usually green, wear to avert nightmares.

Jet: holds a magical charge and is a protective, traditional mourning stone. Jet gives spiritual strength but may encourage a materialistic attitude [the opposite of spiritual] if worn to excess. Used by healers to treat headaches.

Lapis Lazuli: worn as an amulet to cure melancholy.

Lodestone (Loadstone): a magnetic stone that attracts ferrous metals. Said to endow wearer with divine inspiration, secret knowledge and the gift of prophecy.

Malachite: used in ancient times for colic, cramp, rheumatism and to help tone muscles

Moonstone: associated with the moon, so is usually set in silver. Receptive, helps balance and soothe emotions, restoring peace and calm. Like jet and amber it will hold a magical charge. Moonstones aid the development of clairvoyance and other psychic powers.

Obsidian: said to improve the eyesight and promote learning. Snowflake obsidian can help develop psychic skills. It sharpens all aspects of inner and outer vision and reveals the ego.

Opal: sacred to Venus, the Roman goddess of love and reputed to bring misfortune if an opal wearer deceives or abuses another in love. Once called the tears of the moon, opal is said to grow dull if the wearer is ill or depressed.

Pearl: worn as an amulet for longevity. Reputed to bring bad luck or tears, but can also bring about arguments and quarrels that clear the air and restore true harmony.

Pebble: can be used in the same way as crystals: dowse to find its polarity. A traditional cure for a wart is to bury a pebble. Pebble shapes have their own magic. Black kidney-shaped pebbles bring health, fortune and protection. Stones marked with circles are said to draw wealth to the wearer. Stones shaped naturally like a couple embracing are love charms. In Scotland stones shaped like body parts were dipped in water and rubbed all over the corresponding part of the body to heal it.

Quartz: - one of the most abundant minerals on the planet, quartz has many forms. The clear points are considered masculine and energising, while crystals from the base of the bed are feminine and calming.

Quartz, clear: [rock crystal]: a masculine crystal used for positive energies and healing, especially where low energy levels are the main problem. Healers use rock crystal pendulums both for diagnosis and for healing. Should not be worn continuously; its action may reverse and sap the energy.

Quartz, milky: [snow quartz]: similar properties to rose quartz. The feminine equivalent to clear quartz.

Quartz, rose: relaxing, soothing. Good for restful sleep- keep a piece next to the bed. Brings inner peace and eases resentment. Often used in love spells.

Quartz, smoky [Scots topaz]: energising. Sometimes used to strengthen visionary capacity. Use with caution, the effects can be overwhelming. Do not store in the bedroom as it may cause sleepless nights.

Ruby: said to darken or cloud over when evil threatens. Linked both to fire and earth energies. Calming, invigorating, dispels fear, keeps thoughts pure. Worn as protection against evil. Wear with caution when in love - it can strengthen a good relationship but break up a bad one [see also carbuncle].

Sapphire: A sapphire should always be a gift. Brings tranquillity, peace of mind.

Sardonyx: was once often used to make cameos. Improves the memory and disposition [makes a cranky person more pleasant].

Sodalite: helps prolong physical endurance. Promotes inner harmony and disposes of destructive attitudes and grudges. Beneficial to oversensitive types. Meditate with a piece over the third eye [centre of brow] to awaken psychic abilities.

Spinel [Spinal]: also known as the star ruby. Used to prevent nightmares, chills, flu and to energise the spleen.

Star Sapphire [Asteria Sapphire]: also called the Star of Peace as it brings peace to the troubled mind. Pope Innocent III decreed the pope's ring should be a white star sapphire set in gold to bring peace to the world.

Tiger's Eye [Tigereye]: Stimulates courage and inner strength, whilst allowing the wearer to see their own faults, bringing a responsible attitude. Relieves nightmares and helps you keep what you possess. Worn to avert the evil eye and to overcome negativity.

Topaz: comes in many colours. It is worn as an amulet for wisdom, wealth, and beauty and against lust and greed. The orange variety stimulates courage, joy and contentment. Placed on the forehead it eases a troubled mind, nerves and insomnia. Topaz has a great affinity with the Sun.

Tourmaline: possesses both positive and negative electrical poles. Can give a boost to physical energy levels after nervous exhaustion. Encourages a positive outlook by overcoming sadness, fear and negative thoughts. Wear to attract favours and friendship.

Turquoise: worn as an amulet for good luck and to avert the evil eye. Reconciles quarrelling couples. Wear when suffering from grief to bring peace. Set in silver for best effect.

Unikite: balances the emotions, healing hurt and allowing the wearer to give and receive unconditional love.

Zircon: A good stone for teens to wear as it balances emotions. Green and brown varieties are worn to draw wealth.

Programming Your Crystals

If you have any crystals, dowse them and decide how best to use them. Some may be better for healing, others for love magic, others for soothing, invigorating, or enhancing psychic abilities.

Cleanse the crystals you are going to use by holding them under running water [under the tap is fine] to rid them of any energies they have picked up.

Now sit and meditate with the crystal in your hand, studying its every detail. When you feel you 'know' it well enough, give it a purpose. Concentrate on the purpose [this may be healing,

energising, blessing or soothing]. Press the crystal lightly to your brow and 'tell' it its job.

Place it somewhere it won't be disturbed, or you may prefer to wear or carry it until its job is done. Afterwards, cleanse it again and set it back on the windowsill to charge.

Crystal Amulets

If your gems have come ready set with little bellcaps on for a chain to be threaded through, you can easily program a crystal and wear it as an amulet. For example, if you have to speak in class or present a seminar you might want to make a crazy lace agate amulet to help give you confidence and make you articulate. If you are going on a journey you could charge a jet amulet to protect you from travel accidents and so on.

Alternatively you can program a stone and just carry it in your pocket- amulets work best when they are carried on the person, rather than in a bag or purse.

Timing

Gems and time have been linked in many ways. Old-fashioned clockwork timepieces often have bearings made from precious stones - usually low grade sapphires, rubies or garnets. Modern watches incorporate quartz crystals to ensure accuracy.

When it comes to charging any kind of crystal, one day is not necessarily as good as another. Each day of the week has specific significance, as do the phases of the moon and even the seasons of the year. Understanding the importance of timing can make your gems even more powerful. Most gems have associations with particular days, months or moon phases and even specific hours that are worth noting. These have been worked out over thousands of years and do seem to help us work in harmony with our gems.

In addition, you can consider charging your gem at a time that will enhance the purpose you wish to put it to. Weekdays and the phases of the moon can all be used.

Moon Phases

A gem that you want to use to enhance your strength could be charged in the full moon. If you have a bad habit you wish to be rid of, charge your gem in the waning moon. Dark moon is the time for planning and preparing the ground. It is also the best time for divination and a scrying gem charged now will be very powerful. Waxing moon is the time for growth and is the ideal time to charge a gem that will be a gift for a child. It is also a good time to charge a gem if you are just beginning a new project.

Days Of The Week

For beginning a project the best weekday to charge a gem is Sunday, the day of the sun. It is the first day of the week and has powerful energies that will enhance the growth of any project. Charge your gem on this day for wealth and health.

MONDAY: Gems charged on Monday will take on some characteristics of the moon and will be useful for healing, intuition and emotions.

TUESDAY is the day of Tiw [Tir], the Nordic god of war and justice. Charge gems on this day for vital energy, strength and the courage to face adversity.

WEDNESDAY is named for Woden [Odin] the Nordic god who rules wisdom, communication and knowledge so gems charged on this day will help you study and interact with others.

THURSDAY is Thor's day. Thor is the Nordic thunder god who brought fertility to the land by smashing mountains into soil with his magical hammer 'Thunderer'. Thor was a god of the common people and representations of his hammer were used in marriage ceremonies to bring prosperity and fertility. Charge a gem on this day to help bring your plans to fruition.

FRIDAY is named for Freya, Nordic goddess of love and beauty. Gems for romance are best charged on this day.

SATURDAY is Saturn's day. Saturn is the Roman god who rules time. He represents caution and conservation so if you are inclined to overspend, charge a gem on this day to help keep your spendthrift nature in check.

Days For Wearing Gems

SUNDAY topaz, diamond

MONDAY pearl, moonstone

TUESDAY ruby, asteria sapphire, emerald

WEDNESDAY amethyst, asteria ruby

THURSDAY sapphire

FRIDAY emerald

SATURDAY turquoise, rainbow moonstone, diamond, sapphire

Days For Making Amulets And Talismans

[charms for bringing luck, love, wisdom, healing, and protection]

SUNDAY pearl

MONDAY emerald, pearl, tourmaline

TUESDAY topaz, amethyst

WEDNESDAY turquoise

THURSDAY sapphire, emerald

FRIDAY ruby, turquoise

SATURDAY amethyst, onyx

Birthstones And Months For Wearing Gemstones

[whether you are born in a particular month or not, you can wear its gemstone to enhance your energies]

JANUARY garnet

FEBRUARY amethyst

MARCH aquamarine

APRIL diamond

MAY emerald, tourmaline

JUNE pearl, moonstone,

JULY ruby
AUGUST peridot, sardonyx,
SEPTEMBER sapphire, tourmaline
OCTOBER opal, beryl
NOVEMBER beryl, topaz
DECEMBER garnet, turquoise, zircon

Astrological Birthstones

[wear in the same way as monthly birthstones, an alternative chart is given in the appendices]

ARIES aventurine, diamond,
TAURUS emerald
GEMINI garnet, moonstone, pearl
CANCER aventurine, moonstone, ruby
LEO peridot, Sardonyx, tourmaline
VIRGO sapphire
LIBRA aventurine moonstone, opal, blue tourmaline
SCORPIO topaz
SAGITTARIUS amethyst, lapis lazuli, turquoise, zircon, pink
tourmaline [rubellite]
CAPRICORN garnet
AQUARIUS amethyst, aquamarine
PISCES amethyst, aquamarine

Rituals

You may read that witches perform rituals, and it is true, we do. However, most people don't really understand what a ritual is. Any act that is performed deliberately and with intent can be a ritual. When you get ready to go out you may have a bath, lay your clothes out, put on your make up, get dressed and lastly fix your hair. This might be your ritual every time you go out.

All religions have rituals too. The Christian mass or church service is a ritual. Religious rituals involve words and actions that symbolise something much greater. When a Catholic priest blesses the bread and wine, the parishioners believe that these become the body and blood that Jesus sacrificed in order to save the world. One small act, the blessing of the bread and wine, symbolises a much greater act, the sacrifice of a God. By participating in that smaller act, the parishioners become part of the greater one.

Wiccan rituals are concerned with nature. Our seasonal Sabbats are re-enactments of what is happening at that time of year. At Imbolc we purify ourselves by washing in water, just as the face of the earth is washed by the spring rains. At Ostara we bless the seeds that are to be sown, and the young animals that are being born. At Beltane the priestess is crowned with flowers, as Mother Earth is, and we dance round the maypole. At the summer solstice we celebrate the light and growth. At Lughnasa we cut the first of the crops and give thanks. At the harvest festival we cut the last of the corn and mourn the death of the vegetation god. At Samhain we acknowledge the start of winter and cold. At Yule we celebrate the rebirth of the sun, and the cycle begins again.

Many groups and covens have different forms of words and mimes for these rituals.

The Circle

You might already know that witches work within 'magic circles', but very few people realise why - including many who use circles on a regular basis.

When the witch casts a circle, he or she creates a space apart from ordinary life. When he or she enters the circle she/he leaves the ordinary world behind and enters a realm of sacred space and time. Time often flows differently in the circle, and when the witch leaves it after what may seem a few minutes, many hours may have passed in reality.

The circle is always a place of power. It is a universal symbol of wholeness and completion. When Christian missionaries reached the Native Americans, they asked the people how they saw God and, in answer, they drew the circle of the feathered sun, red feathers pointing both inwards and outwards, showing energy moving both in to the centre and outwards to the edges, containing everything.

The whole circle symbolises continuity, eternity, completion and the absence of time and space. As it represents what is complete and unbroken, it also symbolises God. But the circle can be divided: halved, quartered, or separated into degrees and so on. But far from indicating imperfection, when these fractions are contained within the circle they represent the balance and harmony of such divisions. Remember what an important idea this balance is to Wiccans? Think of that famous yin yang symbol we saw earlier. Within the circle, opposites [such as day and night, summer and winter] are united.

The Celtic cross [a circle with an equal-armed cross within it] is a pre-Christian symbol representing the circle quartered through the compass points of north, east, south and west. It is an ancient symbol of the sun and its four yearly festivals, the two equinoxes and solstices. The quartered circle represents the passing of the four seasons.

The Cardinal Points

In the Craft nature is respected and interacted with in many ways. We recognise that there are many forms of energy in and around us that affects everything in creation, and that they are all linked. If you travel somewhere new, you will be aware that you are travelling in a particular direction. If you go any distance, you will notice the changes in climate according to which direction you travel. Directions are relevant and important.

The four main directions are north, south, east and west. These are known as the Cardinal Points or the Quarters because when drawn onto a magic circle they divide it into quarters. During rituals we invoke the four directions. This means that we are inviting the powers of the north, south, east and west into our ritual space to help and guard us.

North

The north is the point of the circle associated with the winter solstice [Yule], cold, darkness, midnight, starlight, old age and death. However, it is also the point of regeneration, rebirth and life through death, as it is at the winter solstice that the sun is reborn. It then gains strength and grows stronger up until the summer solstice. The north is associated with the element of earth.

East

The east is the point of the circle associated with the spring equinox. The east is associated with sunrise, dawn and gestation, the beginning of growth; a time of green youth. It is

connected with the element of air. In a stone circle orientated to the vernal equinox, the sun will rise directly in the east, over the east stone at the equinox.

South

The south is the point of the circle associated with the summer solstice, with the zenith of the sun's strength, midday, with things beginning to ripen, with maturity and the prime of life. It is connected with the element of fire.

West

The west is the point of the circle associated with the autumn equinox and the completion of the harvest, with twilight, sunset, completion and decline. It is associated with the element of water.

The Elements

The elements as understood within the Craft are not quite the same as the elements you will probably have studied in school and they have nothing to do with the periodic table. In magic the term element refers to a type of fundamental energy and there are five.

Earth

Hold a pebble in your hand - feel its weight and solidity.

The element of earth includes everything that is solid and tangible. Of course that means the planet Earth but also the teeth in our heads and the bones in our bodies. Rocks, stones and crystals are often seen as the bones of Mother Earth - her skeleton, so these fall under the dominion of the element of earth. Earth energy relates to the material and the practical - including wealth and health. It is associated with our five ordinary senses - seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching and is the slowest moving energy.

It is the most solid element, associated with the north and its colours are brown and green.

Air

Hold a feather in your hand allow it to drop through the air as you consider the description. Blow it and watch it flutter.

Air is an invisible gas. Its energy is felt only in the wind and can manifest in a light breeze or a destructive hurricane. Air is the breath that sustains us, the rhythm and energy of life itself. It is associated with thought, communication and the powers of the mind and is the fastest moving energy. Sudden ideas are brought to us by the element of air. It is the element associated with the direction of the east and its colour is yellow.

Fire

Light a red candle.

Fire seems the most mysterious and unpredictable of all the elements. It can manifest as a flickering candle flame, or a cosy hearth fire. If not guarded it can become wild very easily and burn down a house or rage across the land as forest fire, engulfing all in its path. It is the spark of life. Fire transforms what it consumes. The element of Fire should always be used with great care and should never be allowed to take control. It is the element that causes the greatest changes and is associated with passion and creativity. Its direction is south and its colour is flaming red.

Water

Hold a dish of water, and let a drop fall into the palm of your hand and let it trickle from hand to hand.

Water represents all liquids from the mighty oceans to the blood that flows through our veins. Water can manifest in a drop of dew, a gentle rain to the raging flood or the crash of

the ocean wave that can tear ships to pieces. A trickle of water will eventually wear away a mountain. Our bodies are eighty percent water and without water we die quite quickly. It is associated with emotions and feelings and the subconscious mind. It is an element of hidden strength, ebb and flow, and is associated with the west. Its colour is blue.

Spirit

Hold a flower. Touch its petals, and smell its fragrance.

Spirit is the most difficult element to describe and is often simply 'taken as read' by many writers and teachers. It is what makes us alive. Spirit is manifest in all things, for all of creation is alive in its own way and some say that all things have a spirit counterpart that is invisible to us but works with us on another plane. It is associated with the centre of the magic circle and its colour is white [a colour made from every other hue in the spectrum].

Frequently Asked Questions And Answers

Why Are So Many Young People Suddenly Interested In Wicca?

There is more interest in Paganism and Witchcraft [or Wicca] than at any time for several hundred years and ordinary people of all ages are choosing to get involved. Nowadays, thanks to movies like *The Craft*, and TV programs like *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, more teenagers and young people are beginning to get interested in Wicca, and are asking questions about magic, wanting a new view of what is a very ancient religion. If you've decided to read this book, the chances are you already know, or think you know a little about Wicca and are ready to learn a little more. This book is a guide especially for young people. You'll learn how to avoid common mistakes that can cause unnecessary problems.

What Is Wicca?

Wicca, or witchcraft, is an ancient Pagan religion. It recognises that the world we live in, and all life upon it, is sacred. The manifest world is not separate from divinity, but part of it. The word pagan just means 'person of the countryside' in recognition of this belief. Wiccans honour a variety of gods and goddesses, rather than just one. Our beliefs in this area are similar to Hinduism where many gods and goddesses are revered, but all are simply aspects of divinity and are responsible for a particular area of life. Perhaps more similar still are the beliefs of Native American Indians, with their awareness of the sacredness of the Earth, its spirits and its magic.

Magic is a big part of the Wiccan system. The idea that the universe is a soulless, mechanical place is alien to the Wiccan. For the Wiccan divinity is contained within everything- people, animals, plants, rocks and the earth itself- everything resonates with a magical consciousness.

Wicca is a belief system that takes these things into account. A Wiccan or witch is someone who follows this belief system and lives accordingly.

Don't Witches Worship The Devil?

Absolutely not! Witches worship the old gods of nature and do not even believe in the devil. This creature is part of the Christian myth system. Witches believe that all life is sacred and should be respected. The pursuit and worship of evil is about as far from Wiccan practice as you can get.

Are Witches Satanists?

Again, absolutely not! Satanists, who worship the Christian devil, have first to believe in him. As we have explained, Wiccans do not believe in this personification of evil. Satanism has nothing at all to do with Wicca.

Do Witches Worship God?

Witches honour a variety of gods and goddesses, rather than one supreme deity. Some witches think that these are all aspects of a single God and Goddess, others that they are entirely separate beings. The important point here is that Wiccans acknowledge a female aspect to divinity. The earliest divinity known to human beings was probably the Mother Goddess, usually depicted as pregnant and 'motherly'. Gradually, over the centuries, she was said to have brothers, husbands and sons, until Middle Eastern religions like Judaism, Islam and Christianity discarded her altogether in favour of a supreme male deity. Often the rights and roles of women were suppressed at the same time.

Do Witches Have Commandments?

Christians have Ten Commandments but Wiccans have only one. It's known as the Wiccan Rede and contains all the rules we need for life in one simple phrase: *Eight words the wiccan rede fulfil - an' it harm non, do what ye will.* It sounds like a very easy way of living doesn't it? Do what ever you like so long as you harm none - but it is far tougher than you may imagine. Harm none means exactly that. No person, no animal, not yourself, nor Mother Earth. Have a think about things you do in the course of an average day and consider the consequences.

In addition to the Rede, there is a universal law that applies to everyone on the planet. This is the Law of Threefold Return which ensures that every deed we do, good or bad, is repaid three times. This means that if you do good you eventually receive it back threefold in some form, but if you do harm, then it will cost your threefold. This law exists and cannot be avoided or side-stepped, so if you think magic is a way of getting something you want without consequences or payment- think again! It works whether you like it or not, as people who use magic thoughtlessly soon find out.

Don't Witches Have To Join a Coven?

Some will study alone and single witches are generally referred to as solitaires, or sometimes hedge witches. Many prefer company and will gather to form a coven. The word simply refers to a company of witches who meet regularly. Forget all those tales about needing thirteen, six or four. That's not true at all. The important thing is that the members trust each other completely and can depend on each other.

When you are young, it may seem a good idea to learn from your elders and often is if the coven consists of members of your family who have been practising since the year dot, but joining a coven of adults can be a really bad idea for many

reasons. Not all adults are entirely without fault and may teach you bad habits or worse. We have heard tales of youngsters being told they must go through strange initiation rituals that can be both harmful and demeaning. Some unscrupulous people actually pretend to believe in the religion of Wicca just so they can get into a position of power over others.

This is not a problem limited to the Craft. Throughout the twentieth century new religious sects kept springing up which purported to be the 'true way to God' - actually most of them were just an effective way of separating people from their money and the leaders became rich on the backs of their followers. Worse than these, though are the frauds that persuade newcomers that the only way to become a true witch is to have sex with the head priest or priestess. This is totally untrue and degrades the entire meaning of Wicca. That's just the way some sick individuals get their kicks. It's better to keep clear until you understand what is acceptable and what is not.

Don't Witches Work Naked?

If you look in some books about Wicca you will notice that the participants are unclothed. This is referred to in the Craft as skyclad and some claim that it isn't possible to perform rituals or magic any other way. Well, that's not true! It isn't so much what you are or are not wearing that matters, but how you feel. Attitude is everything and most people tend to feel just a bit silly, not to mention embarrassed without their clothes. Of course, if you happen to be a naturist, then it will feel perfectly natural to be free of the encumbrance of clothing, but for the rest of us, wearing something made from natural fibres in a suitable colour is more conducive to success. The choice is ultimately your own. Remember this. If you have elected to join a coven and they stipulate that you must work skyclad, think twice. Though many covens contain only genuine people, such rules are very attractive to the wrong

kind of person. Nobody should ever be forced to do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. It breaks the Wiccan Rede. Another consideration is that somebody might decide to take advantage of the occasion to take a few snaps. Would you want to be seen by strangers without your clothes?

A really nice custom is to make your own robes. Natural fibres are favourite because they can enhance the magical energies, whereas some man made fibres can block them, so choose cotton, linen, wool, or silk. If you like you can wear outfits that make you feel 'witchy' at other times, but this is not necessary. The most powerful witches do not advertise their identity but look quite ordinary.

Are Wiccans Anti-Christian?

Because our religion almost died out as a result of centuries of persecution, modern Pagans have to look to the past to rediscover our Old Gods and our Old Religion- our pre-Christian heritage. But Wicca is not an anti-Christian religion. Pagans and Christians existed peacefully side by side for centuries until the church began to persecute Pagans. Everyone is entitled to believe what they choose and we respect that. Wiccans believe that everyone must be free to follow the path that is true for them, as long as they do not break the Wiccan Rede and cause harm to another.

What Are The 'Burning Times'?

You may come across a reference to 'the Burning Times' in books about witchcraft. Witches use this phrase to refer to the times of persecution, when many ordinary men and women were tortured and executed, usually by hanging in Britain, but by burning in many parts of Europe. Some of these people were genuine Pagans, martyred for their religious beliefs. Others were simply confused old women, suspected because they spoke to their pet cats- a sure sign of having a familiar! Yet others were people who had earned the enmity of another villager who made use of the laws to get rid of them.

The law forbidding witches to practice their religion was not repealed until the 1950s. Many still face oppression and intimidation today.

If Witches Were Persecuted How Did Wicca Survive?

People who followed the Old Ways became very secretive. Often only two or three friends would meet together. If larger groups met they would use only 'code names' or the magical names they had adopted so that no one knew the real identity of anyone else. Very little was written down, and no special tools were kept for magic- only everyday objects were used like the best cup or the best knife. Witches were told by the Elders that if they were arrested they should agree to any rubbish to save themselves pain and torture- the gods would forgive them. If possible a drugged potion would be smuggled to them to save them the pain of the execution. Unfortunately, much of our written history and knowledge was lost in this period.

How Did Wicca Re-emerge?

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there was a lot of interest in magic and the occult. People were beginning to collect information on folk lore and folk magic before it disappeared forever as places became industrialised and left the old country ways behind. Two important works on the survival of witchcraft were *The Gospel of Aradia* by Charles G. Leland, published in 1890, and Professor Margaret Murray's *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* published in 1921. The first was an account of contemporary practices of Italian witches, who cast spells in the name of the ancient goddess Diana and her daughter Aradia, who was called Goddess of the Witches. Murray's book detailed the survival of an ancient pagan religion, persecuted as witchcraft by its oppressors. She followed this with *The God of the Witches* which examined accounts of witches worship, and concluded that their chief deity was the ancient Horned God, called Cernunnos by the Celts. He was the stag horned god of

fertility and death, also called Herne the Hunter.

However, the Witchcraft Act was not repealed in Britain until 1951. Until then you could be prosecuted for being a witch. It was only after witchcraft became legal that people began to admit that they were practising witches. The first was Gerald Gardner [1884-1964] who wrote several books on modern witchcraft- in fact he originated the term Wicca. His first book about the craft was a novel, called *High Magick's Aid*, but *Witchcraft Today* [1954] and *The Meaning of Witchcraft* [1959] were non fiction accounts of his initiation into a New Forest coven and the rituals and practices of witchcraft. Gardner is called the 'Father of Modern Witchcraft' and his works have remained immensely influential. He was happy to give interviews about his beliefs to newspapers and the TV and Wicca gained many new followers including Doreen Valiente, who re-wrote many of Gardner's rituals and who is often called 'The Mother of Modern Wicca'.

An English witch called Sybil Leek was instrumental in introducing Wicca into America in the early 1960s, along with an American called Raymond Buckland, who corresponded with Gerald Gardner before being initiated into one of his covens.

Shortly after Gerald Gardner 'went public' several other witches came forward, some having been initiated into traditions slightly different to Gardner's, but 95% of modern Wicca can be traced to Gardner's influence.

Do Wiccans Have Priests?

Yes, but we also have priestesses. In fact, everyone who is initiated into a coven becomes a priest or priestess. We believe that nearly everyone is capable of performing this function, and may learn to conduct rituals and services. We don't believe that an intermediary needs to stand between us and the gods.

Are There Different 'Sects' Among Witches And Pagans?

Paganism is a nature religion that has many forms and traditions. Pagans honour various gods, goddesses and elemental forces, according to the particular path they have chosen. This may sound complex, but in fact almost all of the major world religions have a number of different versions. Look at Christianity- in one town alone you might find ten or eleven churches, each worshipping in a different way. So it is with Pagans. All believe that the divine manifests in nature, so that when they look at a tree, or a stream, they see something special and holy. Most Pagans don't consider themselves above nature, but part of it. Within this basic belief there is plenty of room for individuality and some paths are more popular than others.

Witches are Pagans who follow the path sometimes known as witchcraft, Wicca, or the Craft, which includes a study of magic and a system of initiation. It has a history that goes back far into antiquity, but has been revived and brought up to date over the last few decades by people such as Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente.

Some witches find that they are drawn to work with Celtic deities, others with gods and goddesses of the Northern tradition, some with Greek, others with Egyptian and so on.

Do Witches Have Special Festivals?

Wicca is a way of life and should be lived everyday. However, witches do also have special festivals and honour the phases of the moon, often celebrating the full moon [this is called an Esbat], and also eight major festivals in the year called Sabbats.

The Sabbats include the two solstices [21st June and 21st December] marking the longest and shortest days of the year, and the two equinoxes [March 21st and September 21st]

when day and night are of equal length. In addition the four chief festivals of our Celtic ancestors are celebrated. These are Imbolc [1st February], Beltane [May 1st], Lughnasa [August 1st] and Samhain [November 1st].

Because the Pagan population were already celebrating these festivals, the Christian church adopted many of them into its own calendar, in many cases transferring the feast days of saints from other days in the year to those of popular Pagan celebrations. For example, the winter solstice, when the rebirth of the sun was celebrated, became Christmas Day, celebrating Christ's birth, even though all the evidence shows that he was most likely born in March. Easter, celebrating the resurgence and nature and the rebirth of the vegetation god from a cave, became Easter, named for the Pagan hare-headed goddess Ostara, and the Easter bunny is still a part of the festivities! Lughnasa, the start of the harvest, became Lammas, Imbolc became Candlemas, and Samhain, the Celtic festival honouring the dead and the passing of summer, became All Hallow's Eve, which you might know as Halloween.

Is There Really a Book Of Shadows?

Yes, there is, but you can't buy one, and it isn't the kind of book you see on TV. Each witch must construct his or own Book of Shadows in their own handwriting; if a person joins a coven, he or she will have to copy the coven's book. Solo witches create their own by recording in it every spell, ritual and technique they use.

It's often said that the more we learn, the more we find there is to learn. In other words, fools think they know everything, whilst the wise realise they know barely anything at all. Wicca is the Craft of the Wise, and we accept that we will never stop learning as long as we live. To help us in our quest towards wisdom witches often keep the Book of Shadows or a Magical Diary. Its purpose is to keep a record of everything

you do and think as you learn about magic and the Craft- this will help you learn what works and what doesn't. Set aside enough time to record any ceremonies you performed, spells you cast, acts of divination [such as reading runes or tarot] or your meditations in much detail as you can, including time of day, weather and any other significant factors. Dreams are especially important. If you find some things difficult to describe, don't be afraid to draw little pictures or diagrams. Immediately after a meditation you will probably remember every detail, but the memory may fade like dreams often do and the lesson will be lost. Remember, this is a private book. You don't have to share it with anyone if you don't want to, but within its pages you need to be totally honest.

Do Witches Really Have Broomsticks?

Yes, most witches do possess a broomstick. It is one of the special magical tools of the witch. We don't actually fly through the sky on them, but they are used for sweeping any place where magic or ritual is to be performed. This is a magical act in itself, cleaning the spot of any negativity or badness. When witches get married, the couple often jump over the broomstick, an old fertility custom.

Do Witches Have Other Magical Tools?

Yes, we have several. One is called the athame [pronounced ath-ame], or sometimes the athamé [pronounced ath-aim-ee], and which is a black handled knife. This is blunt, since it is never used to cut anything. It is used to invoke [call up] the magic circle. Some witches also have a white handled knife called a curfane, used to carve symbols into candles, cut cords or cake and so on. Big covens might use a sword instead of an athame for casting a circle, though this is rare as the blades are quite long and can be dangerous!

Another tool is a cup, and when a witch is initiated they are given a cup as a present- a witch never buys his or own cup. During the ritual it will be filled with drink and passed

around as a symbol of sharing and love. This is a very ancient practise that pre-dates Christianity by many thousands of years.

Many witches also own cauldrons, which may be filled with candles, water or flowers as the occasion demands. It symbolises the womb of Mother Earth.

The best known magical tool is probably the wand, and we use these too, to invite rather than invoke, or to direct power into spells and so on. Different woods are used for different purposes, apple for love, rowan for divination, birch for purification and fertility, bramble for healing and hazel for a good, general purpose wand.

Other tools might include the pentacle- a plate or copper dish marked with the sign of the pentacle for holding cakes or objects to be blessed, cords for measuring out the magical circle or tying up for knot magic, crystals and amulets. There are also various types of magical jewellery a witch might possess, such as a pentacle pendant, an amber and jet necklace, a moonstone ring and a silver or copper bangle.

Do Witches Adopt Special Names?

Some people like to choose a special name that they use just for their Wiccan work, and a name is chosen at initiation. This is known as a magical name and has certain advantages- you leave the everyday world behind and become a magical being who will learn to see things in an entirely new way. Having a magical name can help separate the two worlds and some people find this very useful. Another reason people choose a magical name is for anonymity. In the bad old days when witchcraft was under attack, it was dangerous to be named as a witch, so, like spies in a war, they took secret names and did not refer to each other's everyday names at all in connection with the coven.

Appendix 1

Zodiac Herbs And Perfumes

ARIES:

Allspice	Betony	Blackberry	Black pepper
Carnation	Cedar	Cinnamon	Clove
Copal	Coriander	Cumin	Fennel
Frankincense	Galangal	Ginger	Juniper
Marjoram	Mustard	Neroli	Pennyroyal
Peppermint	Petitgrain	Pine	Rosemary
Thyme	Woodruff		

TAURUS:

Apple	Cardamom	Daisy	Honeysuckle
Lilac	Lovage	Magnolia	Moss
Mugwort	Oakmoss	Orchid	Patchouli
Periwinkle	Plumeria	Rose	Thyme
Tonka	Vanilla	Violet	Ylang ylang

GEMINI:

Almond	Anise	Benzoin	Bergamot herb
Caraway	Citron	Clover	Dill
Horehound	Lavender	Lemongrass	Lily
Mace	Mastic	Meadowsweet	Mint
Parsley	Peppermint	Sweet Pea	

CANCER:

Agrimony	Calamus	Cardamom	Chamomile
Daisy	Eucalyptus	Gardenia	Honeysuckle
Hyssop	Jasmine	Lemon	Lemon balm

Lilac	Lily	Myrrh	Palmarosa
Plumeria	Rose-white	Sandalwood	Violet
Yarrow			

LEO:

Acacia	Angelica	Bay	Basil
Benzoin	Borage	Calendula	Cinnamon
Copal	Eyebright	Frankincense	Ginger
Juniper	Lime	Mastic	Nasturtium
Neroli	Nutmeg	Orange	Peony
Petitgrain	Rosemary	Rue	Rue
Saffron	Sandal-red	Sunflower	

VIRGO:

Almond	Bergamot	Carraway	Cedar
Clary sage	Costmary	Cypress	Dill
Fennel	Honeysuckle	Lavender	Lemon balm
Lily	Mace	Mint	Moss
Oakmoss	Patchouli	Valerian	

LIBRA:

Apple	Catnip	Chamomile	Daffodil
Dill	Eucalyptus	Fennel	Geranium
Lilac	Magnolia	Marjoram	Mugwort
Orchid	Palmarosa	Peppermint	Pine
Spearmint	Rose	Sweetpea	Thyme
Vanilla	Vervain	Violet	

SCORPIO:

Allspice	Basil	Black pepper	Cardomom
Coffee	Clove	Cumin	Galangal
Gardenia	Ginger	Hyacinth	Hops
Myrrh	Pennyroyal	Pine	Thyme
Tuberose	Vanilla	Violet	Woodruff

SAGITTARIUS:

Anise	Bergamot	Calendula	Carnation
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	[citrus]		
Cedar	Clove	Copal	Dandelion
Dragonsblood	Fir	Frankincense	Ginger
Honeysuckle	Hyssop	Juniper	Lemon balm
Mace	Mallow	Marshmallow	Nutmeg
Oakmoss	Orange	Rose	Rosemary
Saffron	Sage	Sassafras	Ylang ylang

CAPRICORN:

Comfrey	Cypress	Honeysuckle	Lilac
Magnolia	Mimosa	Moss	Myrrh
Patchouli	Tonka	Tulip	Vertivert
Vervain			

AQUARIUS:

Acacia	Almond	Benzoin	Citron
Costmary	Cypress	Hops	Lavender
Lemon verbena	Mace	Mastic	Mimosa
Mint	Parsley	Patchouli	Pine
Star Anise	Sweet Pea		

PISCES:

Alder	Anise	Apple	Calamus
Camphor	Cardamom	Catnip	Clove
Eucalyptus	Gardenia	Honeysuckle	Hyacinth
Jasmine	Lemon	Lily	Mimosa
Mugwort	Myrrh	Nutmeg	Orris (iris)
Palmarosa	Sage	Sandalwood	Sarsaparilla
	-white		
Sweetpea	Vanilla	Ylang ylang	

Appendix 2

Zodiac Gems

CAPRICORN

Ruby, agate, garnet, onyx

AQUARIUS

Garnet, green moss gate, opal, amethyst, hyacinth

PISCES

Rock crystal, sapphire, amethyst, bloodstone

ARIES

Bloodstone. Diamond, quartz, jasper

TAURUS

Sapphire, emerald, amber, coral, aventurine

GEMINI

Agate, chrysophase, tigers eye, emerald

CANCER

Moonstones, pearl, agate, chalcedony, opal

LEO

Tourmaline, amber, sardonyx, onyx, peridot, rock crystal

VIRGO

Jasper, carnelian, jade, sapphire, opal, citrine

LIBRA

Opal, lapis lazuli, peridot, chrysolite, sapphire

SCORPIO

Aquamarine, topaz, beryl, citrine, yellow topaz

SAGITTARIUS

Sapphire, turquoise, topaz, amethyst, zircon, lapis lazuli

Appendix 3

Magical Names

The choice of name, or even whether you even want to bother with a magical name is entirely up to the individual. Inspiration for names tends to come from the natural and magical world, or from legends and fables. Here are some suggestions if the idea appeals. Take any part that appeals and mix with any other, or weave into your own name.

Plants:

Alder, Angelica, Ash, Aspen, Basil, Betony, Birch, Blackthorn, Cedar, Clover, Cypress, Elder, Fern, Flax, Heather, Holly, Hyssop, Ivy, Juniper, Laurel, Linden, Lotus, May, Mulberry, Mullein, Myrtle, Oak, Rowan, Rosemary, Saffron, Willow, Violet

Ogham: *You might like to choose a name from Ogham, the Celtic tree alphabet -*

Beith [birch], Luis [Rowan], Fearn [alder], Saille [willow], Nuin [ash], Huathe [hawthorn], Duir [oak], Tinne [holly], Coll [hazel], Quert [apple], Muin [vine], Gort [ivy], NgEtal [reed], Straif [blackthorn], Ruis [elder], Ailim [silver fir], Ohn [furze], Ur [heather], Eadha [white poplar], Ioho [yew], Koad [grove], Oir [spindle], Uilleand [honeysuckle], Phagos [beech], Mor [sea].

Animals:

Adder, Badger [or Brock], Bear, Cat, Cobra, Crow, Fox, Horse, Otter, Owl, Panther, Raven, Rook, Salmon, Wolf.

Elements:

Air [gale, hurricane, breeze, wind], Fire [flame, spark, blaze], Water [river, lake, tempest, storm], Earth [rock, cliff, hill, plain], Spirit.

Crystals:

Agate, Amber, Amethyst, Beryl, Cornelian, Diamond, Emerald, Garnet, Iolite, Jet, Opal, Pearl, Quartz, Ruby, Sapphire, Topaz.

Legendary figures:

Arthur, Conan, Diarmuid, Finn MacCool, Fintan, Gräinne, Gwydion, Lancelot, Merlin, Morgana le Fey, Ninian [Nimue], Taliesin.

If none of the suggestions find favour, take a look at the natural world around you. This was the traditional way Native Americans used for naming their children. There is no right or wrong way to choose a magical name. You may have had one in mind for some time. Perhaps you would like to meditate and take whatever comes to you during the meditation. Don't let anyone choose your name for you, or don't be persuaded into a name you don't feel comfortable with.

Some choose plants or animals they feel an affinity with. Ravens, crows, foxes and wolves are popular. Herbs have great appeal since they can often sound very well. Some include a name that relates to their heritage. Some combine an animal name with their own everyday name. Other options include taking the name or part of the name of a famous wizard from legend - especially from the Arthurian tales. There are any number of Merlins, Morgans, Morganas, Nimues, and Nuins. Take a look on the Pagan or occult shelf of your local book shop. Many authors write under assumed names which may or may not be the same as their magical names. It may give you some ideas, but remember that the

choice is ultimately your own and nobody has a right to tell you what you should call yourself.

Sometimes people decide to include the name of a deity within their magical name. We urge caution if you are tempted to do this. Unless specifically invited to do so by that deity, you could well cause offence. You will no doubt wonder how you would know if a deity invited you to use their name? Well it's one of those things that if you have to ask, then you can be sure that you haven't been invited.

Appendix 4

Colour

BLACK: rejection of ego, possibilities waiting to be realised, anticipation,

Contrary Aspects: weak life force, illness, unprotected, self-effacement, poor self image

BLUE: healing, spiritual development, protection, calming and teaching

Contrary aspects: complacency, spiritual dilettantism

BROWN: earthiness, sexuality, practicality and environment awareness

Contrary aspects: greed, selfishness and laziness

GOLD: spiritual strength, spiritual zest and service to others

GREEN: fertility, prosperity, growth, creativity, love, change and balance

Contrary aspects: enviousness, dissipation

GREY: communication

Contrary aspects: sadness, depression

INDIGO: perceptiveness, vision and intuition

Contrary aspects: pitiless, waywardness

MAGENTA: vision, creativity, insight

Contrary aspects: impetuosity, recklessness

ORANGE: optimism, success, courage, bravery and ambition
Contrary aspects: conceit, self-importance

PINK: love, friendship, happiness, harmony, peace
compassion

Contrary aspects: sentimentalism, self - pity, false pity

PURPLE: strength, mastery

Contrary aspects: arrogance, domineering

RED: life, vitality, energy, sex drive

Contrary aspects: aggression, anger and frustration

SILVER: intuition, truth, enlightenment

Contrary aspects: melancholy, dread

TURQUOISE: inventiveness, conception, philosophy

Contrary aspects: pre-occupation with the self, over control,
retreat

VIOLET: mastery, ceremony, spirituality, self-respect,
spiritual growth and fulfilment

Contrary aspects: playing at things, unfocused, emotional
distance, closed to other points of view

WHITE: purity, harmony, psychic development, the dispelling
of negativity, purification, cleansing, tranquillity, protection

YELLOW: intellectual development, strength of mind

Contrary aspects: over cautiousness, rigid attitudes, fear of
risk, low self esteem, poor self knowledge

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