

Aether





**For Faith, for Families,
for Fun...**

*The Magazine for Pagan families,
youth and children.*

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Key

-  Intended for readers 16+
-  Intended for independent readers under 15.
-  Intended for young readers or pre-readers.
-  Intended for all readers.

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Letter from the Editor

I think people underestimate the difficulty in creating a product that resonates across a diverse community. Something both profound and light-hearted, something witty and fun, something intellectual and informative. These are the things we aspire to bring you with this new publication. The Pagan Federation Families Team are trying to reach out and offer the families, youth and children of our community new resources for learning,

thinking, creating and connecting in our faith community and this magazine is just one of the ways we're doing that.

So, what is Aether and why did we choose it?

Well, this very question answers itself in a way. We chose it because asking what it is opens us up to learning many things about many different paths, both in Paganism and other faiths. The Greeks, who first coined the term, thought it was the very breath of the gods, which filled their celestial home. Its translation can be interpreted as "pure, fresh air" or "clear sky" and the embodiment is Aether, the ancient god of light and the "upper sky". It also has many parallels across various Pagan paths, from the god Horus to the goddess Juno and from the god Triglav to the gender neutral Magec, deity of sun and light. Each of these has their own variations and aspects but at their core they represent exactly what we want to highlight; elevation. Whether that's an elevation of intellect, of spirituality, of community connection, of family values or other. We aim to assist, empower and inspire you to lift yourselves to higher elevations than before. We want you to think of this as your magazine, your community creative space, your blank canvas. We want you to feel that you can learn, educate, share, read, laugh and love with this publication.

You may notice throughout these pages that there is limited use of font, text size and background colour. This was a conscious decision made to try to be as accessible as possible for those with visual stress, processing issues, dyslexia, sight limitation and other additional needs. If you're still having trouble with any aspect of our formatting, please let our team know so we can remedy it to the best of our ability.

If you want to get involved by submitting an article, a short story, artwork, a recipe, a review or anything else, just email me at

aether@paganfederation.co.uk

xxx Debi xxx





Letter from the Families Manager

Hail and a very warm welcome to the very first edition of Aether – the brand-new magazine from the Pagan Federation Children and Families Team.

We've been working hard on this as a team since last Yule and it is incredibly exciting to see it come to life and become a real thing after all this time and energy.

I became the manager for this team in October 2018 and it was clear right at the beginning of that time, that there was a lot of work needing to be done for our members and their families. As an organisation, the Pagan Federation does a lot for its members but naturally, a lot of that work is very much behind the scenes. We needed new ways to reach out and connect with them so they can find out about the help we can provide and support we have available for them. Of course, we already have the always amazing quarterly journal, Pagan Dawn, but I still felt something extra was needed to supplement it that focused on that most common and intimate of communities - the family.

Aether is one part of the plan to do just that, to connect with you and support your needs as Pagans with families to care for. It has threefold purpose. The first is to provide ideas and information for parents and carers of children who follow a Pagan path. As parents and carers of children ourselves, we know that it can be incredibly difficult to know where to start for ourselves let alone how to make some aspects child appropriate and access resources to help you along the way.

The second is to include items that are for the children to learn from and enjoy doing. Here we bring together an eclectic mix of activities, stories and information aimed directly at our little people that help them to explore their own path safely yet still creatively and best of all, full of fun. The third is to celebrate the talents and efforts of the community we are reaching out to with this publication. We're lucky to be part of a tribe that has many creative people within it, and we want to give them a place they can shine a light on their work.

It is a part of my job as Children and Families Manager to identify and solve the barriers pagan families face as they practice their faith. It is my hope that through Aether we can begin to do that work, to bring people together for conversation, to find ways to solve problems they are facing and support them when needed.

With this in mind, I would like to ask you to see this publication as yours. Please tell us if there's things you would like to see in Aether or that we should be doing as a team for our members. Likewise, tell us if we're doing a good job. Above all, enjoy wandering along this new path now available to our community.

I would like to take a moment before I bid you farewell to say a huge thank you to our editor, Debi. Without her this would still be a thought in my head or an item on my "to-do eventually" list. I would also like to thank my team for the ideas and contributions that have made our first edition what it is. You are a small but very motivated and dedicated team, and I love you all dearly.

Lastly, thank YOU for giving the first edition of Aether a chance and I hope you'll enjoy reading Aether as much as we've enjoyed creating it!

Brightest of blessings,

Sarah





MAKE YOUR OWN ORACLE CARDS!

What are oracle cards?

An oracle is defined as “a divine communication or revelation” or “any person or thing serving as an agency of divine communication” - in this case, a deck of cards.

We use oracle cards to help us communicate with the divine, to understand the energies around us and to guide us in understanding our situation and making our choices. Playing with oracle cards is a brilliant way to learn the basics of divination. You can also use your cards to inspire your creative projects or to tell stories, as well as for guidance for you and your friends.

There are lots of oracle decks out there, with all kinds of themes from angels to Zen.

Oracle cards show symbolic images to represent these energies. To read the cards, we interpret the symbolism and consider how it applies to our own situation. As with any form of divination, we choose what resonates with us most. So it makes sense to make our own oracle cards, containing images which resonate for us and energies which occur frequently in our lives. Choosing images which already carry powerful symbolism for us makes our readings much more meaningful and also flow more easily, without the sometimes clunky process of considering what a particular image might symbolise for us. The story the cards tell us will immediately be “our” story, because it's prompted by “our” images.

Making your own oracle cards

Making your own oracle deck can be as easy or complicated as you like. You may want to start with a few cards and build them up over time or you may already have lots of images you know you want to include. The beauty of making your own is that anything goes! Your cards can be big or small, square or round, colourful or minimalist. The more of “you” you put into your cards, the more



Clockwise from top left: Camelot Oracle, Hedgewitch's Botanical Oracle, Connected and Free Oracle, Earthbound Oracle.

You don't need to have amazing artistic skills either – many oracle decks are based on photographs or digital artwork, for example. You can paint, draw, collage or even use a mixture of media. What about stitched oracle cards or written oracles containing your favourite quotes? Your cards might be unique to you as an individual, or you could make them to be shared by a group. What would your family oracle deck look like?

The first thing to do is to consider what symbols or images you want on your cards. If you work with a particular pantheon or mythology, you might want to draw on that for your images. Or you can simply look at the world around you and consider the places, imagery and ideas which most resonate for you.



Oracle card design in progress by my six year old:
Whale, Squirrel & Worm.

Here are some examples of images and possible meanings:

Bird - flight, freedom

Tree – stability, steady growth

Flower – beauty

Bee – hard work, community, sweetness

Making personal associations will make your oracle more powerful. For example, an image of your favourite tree will instantly bring to mind the feeling of connection you experience when climbing amongst the branches. An image of the summit of your favourite hill, or the view from it, can symbolise perspective. A card showing the steep path up that hill might symbolise endurance and determination and the rewards they bring.

Once you have at least a few images to start with, it's time to get stuck in and get making. Don't be afraid to experiment and try different media – just play around with your ideas until you find something that sticks.

Remember that your cards will need to last, so use the best materials you can. Recycled card works just great, or you can splash out on beautiful art materials if resources allow. As you will be shuffling them a lot and hopefully keeping them for a long time, consider the best way to keep them in good condition. You could cover them in sticky backed plastic or laminate them if you have access to a laminator.

There are also online services which allow you to upload your artwork and will then print a deck on demand for you. If you want to go down this route, keep in mind that they sometimes have restrictions around size, type of image or the number of cards you can have in a deck. Costs can also vary. However this can be a great way to get something that looks professional and is still unique to you. Try www.printerstudio.com or www.ivorygraphics.co.uk to get you started. Once your cards are complete, you may want to make a special bag to keep them in. You could make it big enough to contain a journal for notes about your readings, or small enough to carry around with you.

Using your oracle cards

Your cards can answer any question you like, although, as with all oracle cards, it is best to keep your question open. Clear your mind and focus on your question, then shuffle your cards. You can pull just one or two cards which give plenty of insight. If you want to do more, a quick online search will reveal many suggested spreads and layouts.

Enjoy! And if you have a go at making your own cards, why not take a picture and send it to us at aether@paganfederation.co.uk with your first name, your age and your district so we can feature your cards in our next issue?

Lisa is PF Children & Families Liaison for London, where she lives with her partner and their children. She'd love to hear from people in London and surrounding areas who are seeking family friendly pagan events. Lisa enjoys creating alongside the kids and playing with her tarot cards.

You can contact Lisa on london.families@paganfederation.co.uk

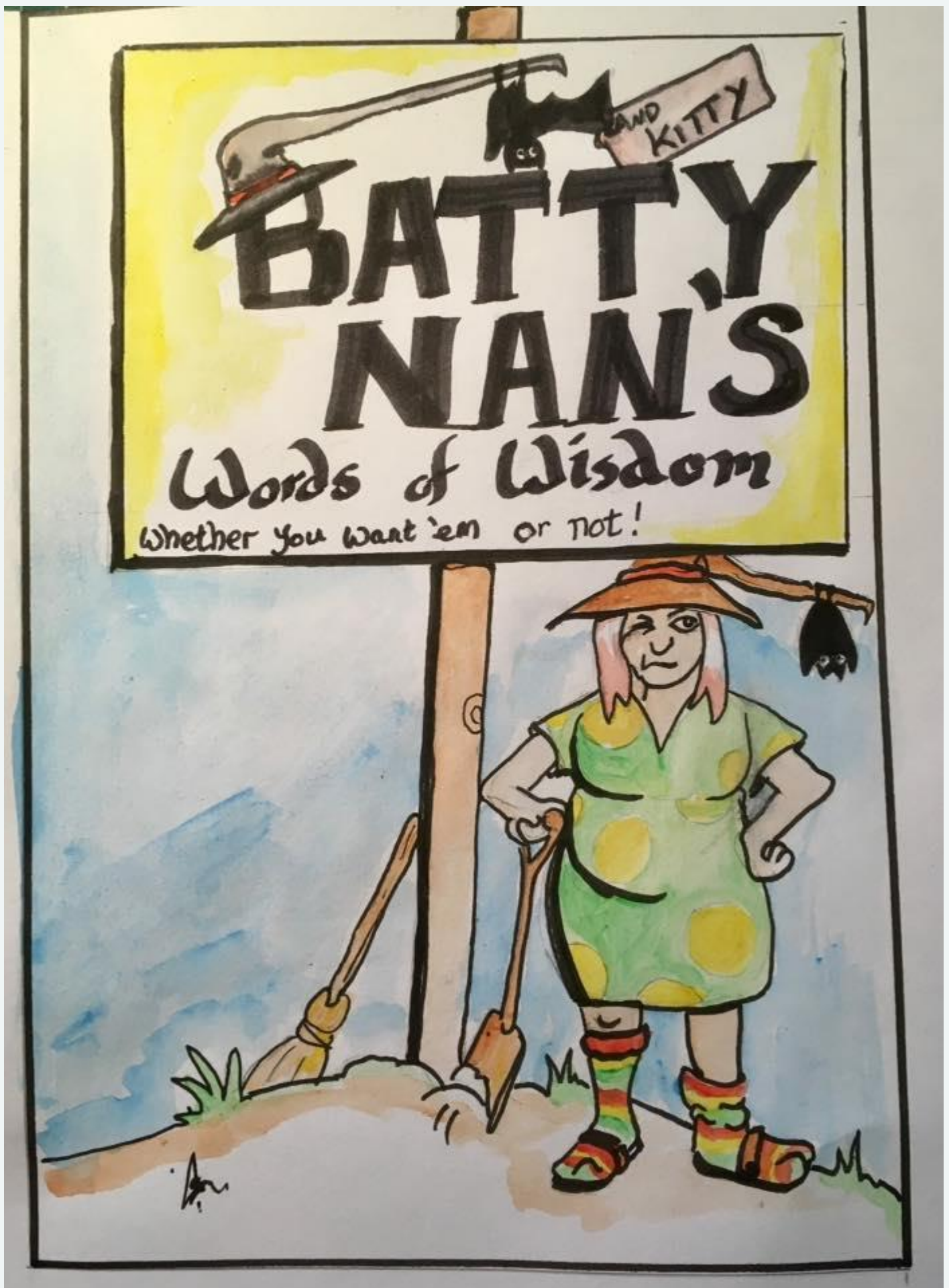
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Illustrator Tegan Swyny
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You can email Batty Nan with your questions and letters of appreciation at
battynan@paganfederation.co.uk



Slugs, Snails and Puppy Dog's Tails!

As I'm writing this feature about bugs and bees and how we can keep the interest of younger generations, instantly a certain nursery rhyme popped in my head. It's one that I have not heard of for a while and doesn't get sung much in toddler group singing sessions as it is probably deemed a little old fashioned. It certainly gave me a good title and opening sentence for what I want to feature about bugs and creepy crawlies and how somehow it interconnects all generations and that all children and youngsters never seem to get creeped out by much!

I'm lucky enough to live in a great part of some fantastic rural countryside by the coast where I grew up and I'm now bringing up my two girls in the same place! I can't help but point out any bees or bugs to them when I catch one in the corner of my eye.



I regularly sign up for local events held through Dorset Wildlife Trust. Nationally the Wildlife Trust does some amazing events that incorporate the whole family!

There was a stand at a local fete recently that was manned by a local, smaller wildlife trust in Devon and the team managed to catch both my girl's attentions with a hedgehog house set up and a make your own bug hotel.

The bug hotel build was simple enough, made with some offcuts of wood, bamboo and string and decorated by both girls – it takes pride of place above the border in our garden awaiting anything that may nest in it!



Build your own bug hotel and see what comes to visit!

Maybe plan for next summer and get some herbs and wildflowers planted in the garden (Have a look into bee bombs, even if you aren't the most natural gardener these are easy to do with kids). Locally, we are often out on family walks and make the most of some brilliant National Trust land locally, and farmers' fields accessible via public footpaths. The most amazing sound I have noticed the last two summers is the return of the cricket and grasshopper calls. I keep pestering myself to remember nets to try and catch some (Any other parents out there may realise this is easier said than done – remembering things, unless it is written down somewhere or on a phone reminder; getting such things can become a lengthy task)!

Nonetheless, when out and about upturn stones and wood, rocks (replace back gently), look down at the ground and in the leaves, bushes and flowers, take photos and identify over a snack or a picnic.

There are plenty of apps out there to help identify your finds!

Blessed Be.

Lizzie lives in Dorset with her husband and their children.

She enjoys making chutney and exploring with her family.

If you live in South West England and are in need of support in finding family friendly Pagan events or similar, you can get in touch at southwest.families@paganfederation.co.uk





Pagan Portals: Stories for the Songs of the Year,

Fiona Tinker (Moon Books)

What is the purpose of a story?

Stories entertain for sure, but many have deeper purposes and one of those is to instruct. It may be many years before the recipient of the story works out the lesson in the tale but a good story will have taken root and grown before then.

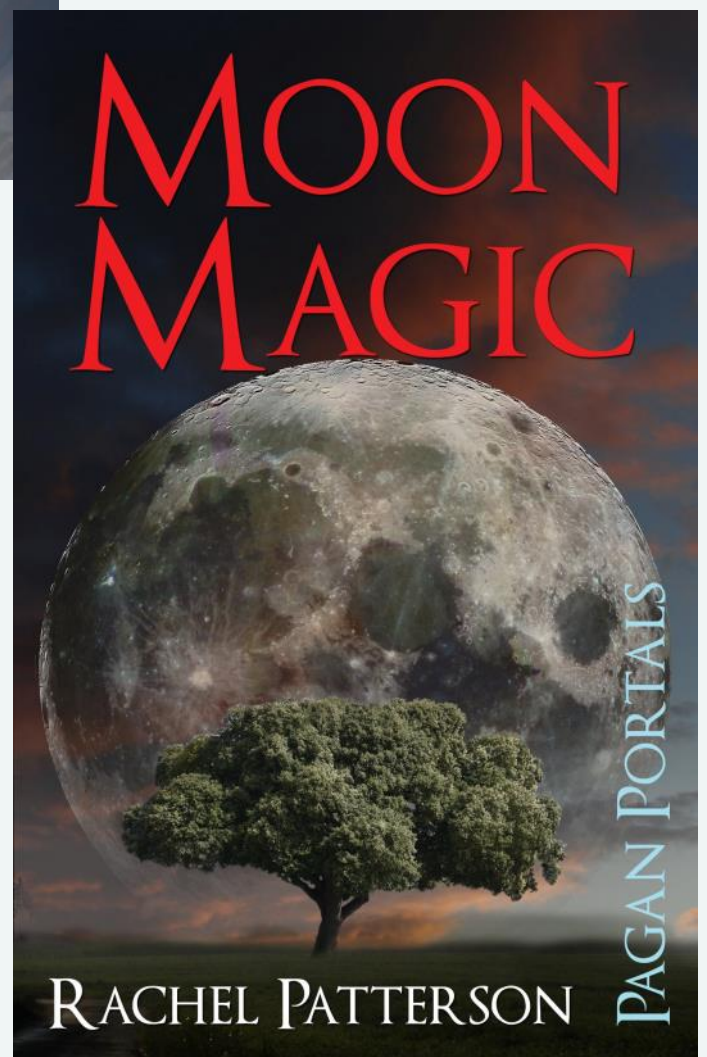
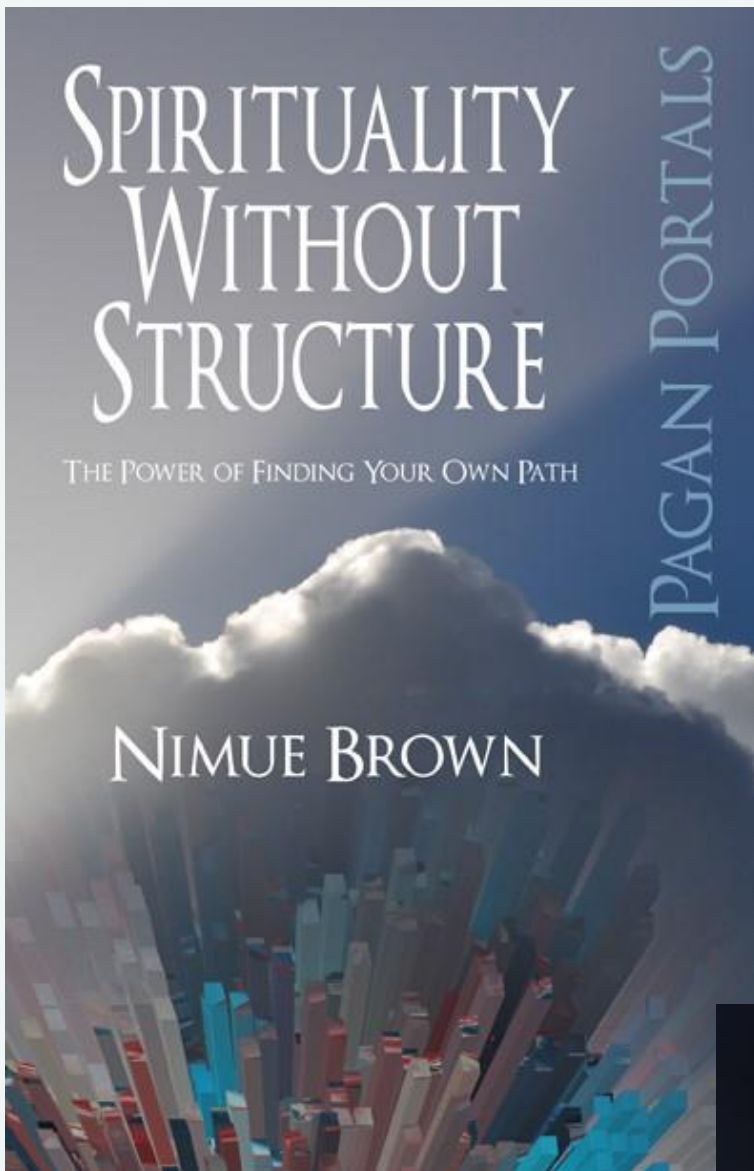
As adults, we appreciate the stories we heard as children and how they shaped who we are. As parents, we wonder how to introduce Pagan ideas to children. Luckily, there are now many books written for Pagan children.

Stories for the Songs of the Year is an addition to this growing genre. It is a set of tales written specifically for Pagan children, tweens and their parents. These tales meander happily through the wheel of the year and the festivals are seen through the eyes of a magical cat and a know-it-all rabbit, in the company of a supporting cast of Celtic Gods, Goddesses and assorted people of the Sidhe.

Young children will enjoy the literal level of the tales. Older children may wish to use them as the basis for their paths of self-discovery and the stories are accompanied by discussions of the major festivals. In addition, an essay for the adults explores various aspects of Pagan parenting from the author's own three-decade experience as a secondary school teacher and as Education Officer for the Scottish Pagan Federation for over a decade.



Pagan Portals: Stories for the Songs of the Year, by Fiona Tinker, will be published by Moon Books in 2020.





PAGAN COOKING

with Kitchen Witch Rachel Patterson

What is Pagan cooking?

I seem to have a bit of a reputation for cake...and I must admit I do love baking.. I find it quite therapeutic.

What exactly is 'pagan cooking'?

Over the past few years I have had the pleasure of writing a Kitchen Witchcraft column for the Pagan Dawn magazine and in it I have covered food for sabbats, different intents (such as prosperity, love, etc) and food to honour particular deities.

Is this perhaps what I would call 'pagan cooking'?

If it is, then is that a bit restrictive?

What does it cover? In my ponderings I have come to the conclusion that it covers quite a lot...

Cooking specific foods and dishes for the sabbats.

Using magical ingredients that correspond to particular intents, such as love and prosperity.

Creating food dishes to honour deity.

Baking bread and cookies to consume within ritual.

Food prepared to serve at workshops and gatherings.

Dishes created in harmony with the moon phase.

Working with seasonal ingredients.

Being mindful of where your ingredients are sourced from.

I could probably go on to include pretty much everything including cooking food for your family.. Which I do on a daily basis and it always involves using seasonal ingredients and being mindful of where the ingredients are sourced. Whenever I cook, I add a dash of magic, whether it is cakes for an open ritual or dinner for my family. I recognise and acknowledge the energy of each ingredient. I stir clockwise to bring positive energy in. When I wash the vegetables, I visualise negative energy draining away, and I try not to cook if I am in a grumpy mood (Your energy will affect the success of the meal and transfer to the ingredients).



The key

For me, the key point is probably seasonal. I believe we have gotten incredibly lost in the world of food supplies. Being able to purchase strawberries in December is convenient but they never taste of anything because they are grown out of season, often in a polytunnel somewhere around the globe.. Not to mention the cost of air fare to ship them here and the eco damage incurred as a result.

When I was a child my father always had an allotment for growing fruit and vegetables, in fact he still does grow a lot of his own produce.. I do have a small garden where I grow lots of herbs and plants and last year acquired a greenhouse too, so I do my bit in a small way. I have for many years subscribed to local vegetable and fruit box deliveries. Fresh locally grown and sourced produce delivered without any plastic bags or unrecyclable packaging. It is a little bit more expensive than supermarket produce but the quality is far superior, as is the taste. Not only do I get delicious items but there is no waste packaging and I am supporting local growers. Of course, it is all seasonal as well.



Mindful

I do eat meat, although much less than I used to and not every day. However, I am very mindful of where the meat is sourced from. In an ideal world I would also purchase my meat from a local organic supplier, but the price is a bit outside of my budget as I have to feed a family of five, all with healthy appetites. I do make sure the meat I purchase is farm assured and I always buy free range eggs. At least I know that the animals have been well cared for. Having worked on a farm in my younger days I am well aware of the 'other side' of the fence from a farming point of view. Supermarkets are very convenient, and they do sell cheaper items, but there is a knock-on effect. If the supermarket wants to sell meat or produce at a cheap price then they will force the suppliers and farmers down in price, which puts a lot of strain on them to produce in quantity at stupidly cheap prices. Farmers markets are excellent if you have one near you and do support your local shops if you can. Sadly, there are no local greengrocers in my area but the lovely veggie box people deliver which makes life much easier.

Little waste

Back to my childhood again, when food didn't seem to ever be wasted. Sunday we had a roast dinner, if it was beef then on Monday we had baked potatoes with cold beef and on Tuesday we had rissoles made with the last of the beef minced up and mixed with the left-over potato. One joint of meat served four of us for three days. Bubble and squeak was a regular too, using up any cooked vegetables and potatoes. One of my favourite cakes is bread pudding, a recipe created to use stale bread and of course treacle tart which uses stale breadcrumbs. Bananas that are particularly ripe get made into banana cake. I often make a big chilli on a Sunday and on the Monday we have the remainder served over baked potatoes or on top of hot dogs. Any vegetables at the end of the week, just before my next vegetable box delivery, get thrown into a stock pot and made into soup. The amount of food that is thrown away in the world each day is shocking. Just a bit of creative thinking makes food go a long way. It will reduce food waste and help the environment, but also help your pocket too.

I have waffled on and probably gone a little astray, but I think this is all part of what 'pagan cooking' means to me.

I am a Pagan Witch, I cook every day – so I always work with pagan cooking!

Convenience

I know I have pushed buying fresh produce locally and using what is in season. However, I am also totally realistic. I am a working wife and mother to hungry (and expensive) teenage children. Cooking should be enjoyable, but I do know that having to create a meal every day for the family can sometimes be a chore. I put my hands up to it – I often use frozen vegetables and tinned fruit...there you go, my secret is out. It is OK, honestly the food police are not going to bash down your door if you make soup from a couple of bags of frozen veg. Or if you make a pie using tinned fruit. In fact, I have made some brilliant dishes using frozen produce. Some vegetables I find are better frozen. Peas for example, shelling a bucket load of peas to get enough for a family meal would take hours and I don't have that kinda time. Frozen peas are an excellent ingredient. French beans are also good frozen.





I find broccoli, carrots and cauliflower go a bit mushy to serve from frozen as a side dish, but they work brilliantly in soups and

casseroles. Sweet potato and butternut squash from the freezer work really well for mash, casserole and soups. The only vegetable I don't ever buy frozen is Brussels sprouts, I love sprouts, but frozen ones are just so mushy and tasteless. I often keep frozen berries in the freezer, they make good crumbles and pies, but the fruit does go very squishy when defrosted. Do what works for you and makes things easier, life is complicated enough as it is!

Rachel Patterson is High Priestess of the Kitchen Witch Coven and an Elder at the online [Kitchen Witch School of Natural Witchcraft](#). A regular columnist with [Fate & Fortune magazine](#), she also contributes articles to several magazines such as [Pagan Dawn](#), [The Magical Times](#) and [Witchcraft & Wicca](#).

You can find more on the [Patheos Pagan](#), [Moon Books](#), [Witches & Pagans](#), and her [own personal](#) blogs.

Rachel Patterson
Witch & Author

www.rachelpatterson.co.uk



Bubble and squeak soup



Bubble and squeak is a staple in the UK, often seen on dinner tables on a Monday to use up the left-over vegetables and potatoes from the roast dinner on Sunday. The name comes from the noise that the veggies make when they are frying in the pan!

This takes the ingredients and puts them into a soup.



- * 1 tablespoon olive oil
- * 1 chopped onion
- * 500g/1 lb potatoes, diced
(I don't peel them, but you can if you prefer)
- * 250g/9 oz carrots, peeled and diced
- * 1.5 litres/3 pints vegetable stock
(or chicken if you prefer)
- * 500g/1 lb Brussels sprouts, finely sliced
- * 2 teaspoons dried parsley
- * Handful of grated cheese
(optional)
- * Salt and pepper

Heat the oil in the pan and sauté the onion for about five minutes, until they are soft.

Add the potatoes and the carrots and cook over a low heat for a further ten minutes.

Pour in the stock, it should come about an inch above the vegetables in the pan. Simmer for another ten minutes.

Add in the Brussels sprouts and cook for a further ten minutes, until all the vegetables are tender.

Blend in a food processor or with a liquidiser.

Reheat, season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with the grated cheese if using.

Roti

Perfect fluffy flat breads to eat with soup, chilli, stew or curry.

- * 225g/8oz plain flour (all-purpose flour)
- * 1 tablespoon baking powder
- * 1 teaspoon vegetable oil, plus extra for cooking
- * 160ml/5.6 fl oz water

Pop the flour and baking powder into a bowl, gradually add the water mixing into a soft dough. You don't need to knead the dough just bring it together into a soft ball.



Pour over the 1 teaspoon of vegetable oil and cover the bowl with clingfilm, rest for 30 minutes.

Roll the dough into a sausage shape and cut into eight equal slices, then roll each piece out into flat circles.

You shouldn't need any flour to roll as the oil stops it from sticking to the board or rolling pin.

If you have a non-stick frying pan you won't need any oil to cook these, otherwise heat a dash of oil in a pan over a medium heat.

Add the rot one at a time and cook for about 30 seconds, turning a couple of times.

Remove from the heat and keep warm ready to serve.

Chocolate orange brownies

Everyone loves a good brownie, and these have the added zing of orange to brighten up even the darkest month.

- * 200g/7 oz butter
- * 75g/2 ½ oz dark chocolate
- * 2 large eggs
- * 225g/8 oz sugar
- * 75g/ 2 ½ oz self-raising flour
- * 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- * 100g/3 ½ oz chocolate chips
- * 100g/3 ½ oz marmalade



Preheat the oven to 350F/180C/Gas 4.

Grease and line a baking tin.

Chop the butter and dark chocolate into pieces and melt in the microwave for 1 minute, stir then repeat until both are melted. Or use a double boiler.

Gently fold in the rest of the ingredients.

Tip into the prepared baking tin and smooth the top.

Bake for 25-30 minutes.

The middle of the brownie will wobble slightly, the mixture continues to set once out of the oven.

Allow to cool in the tin.



Magic of the ingredients

Baking powder - Energy, magic

Brussel sprouts - Stability, endurance, protection

Butter - Peace, spirituality, Faerie

Carrots - Clarity, fertility, passion

Cheese - Success, happiness

Chocolate - Prosperity, positive energy, happiness, love

Eggs - Fertility, creation, life, new beginnings, divination

Flour - Prosperity, rebirth, abundance, wishes

Onion - Passion, fertility

Orange - Love, happiness, uplifting, generosity, purification, clarity, energy, fidelity

Parsley - Protection, purification, lust, happiness, fertility, spirit work

Potato - Energy, magic, grounding, prosperity, healing

Sugar - Love, protection

Vanilla - Love, spirituality, passion, creativity

Recipes from Practically Pagan Cooking by Rachel Patterson

www.rachelpatterson.co.uk



The Pagan Federation

**"a collective and positive voice
to a diverse community"**

Join Today

£20 per year

(payable by cheque, PayPal or Direct Debit)

and includes

4 issues of Pagan Dawn



The Pagan Federation, founded in 1971, works to make Paganism accessible to people who are genuinely seeking a nature-based spiritual path. It is headed by an elected committee and administrative officers and has over 60 regional coordinators who act as its mainstay of activity. Coordinators stay in contact with members, provide information on events and are available to answer queries.

It works for the religious rights of Pagans, that they may worship and live free from defamation. The PF has helped supply expert witnesses in court cases and has effectively assisted in cases of religious discrimination in employment and child custody. It has also succeeded in having Paganism accepted as a valid religion in Scotland and obtained recognition from the Home Office in England and Wales.

The PF promotes factual accuracy, mutual tolerance among faiths and assistance to those who wish to explore Pagan spirituality.

Join online at
www.paganfed.org

PaganAid



**DEAR MOTHER
EARTH...**



**...THANKS FOR
EVERYTHING**

Fighting poverty & protecting Mother Earth
Please support our work...

www.paganaid.org/support/give



Reviews from the Community

Greetings,

I would like to introduce Neal Sutton to you as a Spiritual Celebrant. Neal is a published author of two books and many articles. He is a speaker and runs a monthly group discussing all things spiritual, pagan and Native American.

My Hand Fasting last month was the first hand fasting Neal has officiated on so he was happy to follow my lead in what I required. During discussions he had many ideas for us as well as asking many questions of his own. He was happy to go through a few methods of 'binding' and knotting of our cords so we could chose one that suited us as a couple.

We had already written our vows and Neal was happy to go through them a couple of times with us until we were all comfortable with the flow and order of the service. Neal was full of enthusiasm for us and our event, and was also happy to visit the event with us beforehand to be sure where the altar was to be and where our guests would sit.

I would heartily recommend Neal for all pagan & spiritual rites of passage. At present he is working with a local Druid group in order to learn more about the beliefs and practices. Neal never takes anything for granted or pre-supposes in areas he is weaker on. He's open, honest, and a wonderful person to know.

Iona Winton



Spiritual Celebrant
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Celebrating life - naturally

Book name: Riddle of the Runes

Author: Janina Ramirez

Age Rating: Ages 5+

Rating: ★★★★★

Alva is a girl who dreams of being an investigator who works alongside Uncle Magnus. When she sneaks out, she and her pet wolf, Fenrir, find out that there is a killer or kidnapper on the loose so she will have to be careful. Her uncle always tells her to look at every little detail, boring or really interesting. When her mum found out that she had snuck out, her punishment was no breakfast and no leaving the house for five days, but her Uncle Magnus saved her from part of the punishment...Read It!!!

This book was exciting, but nerve-wracking at the same time, because you don't know what will happen next!

Sophie, Age 11



the Pooka Pages for Pagan Kids

A free magazine - 8 times a year
Filled with original stories, crafts,
coloring pages, herbal lore, recipes
and magic for children.
www.pookapages.com

The advertisement is set against a yellow background with a dark blue border. On the left, there is a black cat wearing a black witch's hat and a gold bell collar. On the right, there is a small illustration of a child in a witch's hat sitting on a colorful circular rug and reading a book. The text is in a mix of black and yellow fonts.



I have recently worked through The Kitchen Witch School Of Natural Witchcraft's Arc of the Goddess course. I was looking for something I could work through in my own time, around my children and family commitments, something just for ME!

I found exactly what I was looking for, a little structure, a nudge in the right direction. I really love the fact that there is a Facebook group support page, I loved the sense of community that flows there. Sharing our experiences, thoughts and inspirational ideas, facilitated by the course. I really loved that the Goddesses were not pre chosen for you, you work with who shows up for you - Which really helps solidify the connections with the Goddesses.

The course lasts a calendar year, at the end of the course you have your very own personal 'Goddess Gang' to help you through the ebb and flow of life

I have also recently completed the 3 training levels through The Kitchen Witch School Of Natural Witchcraft.

I had self educated in the craft since my early teens, I was looking for a little more structure in my learning, whilst still retaining my need for freedom & creative flow. This is exactly what I found in the Forest of Oak level. All of the basic knowledge that you would require to progress in the craft - with a heavy emphasis of following your own intuition, and following what works for you.

I found the school to be extremely friendly, welcoming and encouraging.

I took the first level as a refresher course, before moving on to The Forest of Ash, Level 2 - Which covers different subjects than with Forest of Oak, with much more depth and insight, this level really makes you think and research your answers, helping you to carve out your own daily magical practices, such as meditation, visualisation, colour magic and ritual planning and writing.

Level 3 - Forest of Hawthorn

This level looks again, at different subjects than the previous two levels. Rites of passage, Coven & Dark Gods & Goddesses are some of the subjects covered in this level.

This level brings all of your learning together, giving you the ideal foundations to build your own style of craft, or to progress to High Priestess or High Priest.

For me the added bonus was all of the Branch classes, that are also available on the Kitchen Witch School Forum - Plenty there to keep you busy.

Berni Anderson

**Information about these courses can be found
on the Kitchen Witch Hearth website.**

<https://www.kitchenwitchhearth.net/courses>





Did you know?

February 3rd is YORKSHIRE PUDDING DAY!

It is believed the first published mention of the Yorkshire pudding was in the late 18th Century. It was originally served before the main course as a separate dish, accompanied by gravy. Meat was expensive (as it is now!) so the cheaper pudding was served first to fill you up to make the meat go further. As the meat roasted on the spit above the open fire the batter was placed underneath, allowing the fat and juice from the joint of meat to drip onto the pudding – YUM!

MAKE YOUR OWN!

These light and fluffy British traditions are fabulous served with a roast dinner, but can also be made and filled with chilli, casserole or stew. In Yorkshire where they hail from, they are also apparently eaten spread with fruit jam...

- * 150g/5 ¼ oz plain (all purpose) flour
- * 2 eggs
- * 150ml/5 fl oz milk
- * 110ml/3 ¾ fl oz water
- * Salt and pepper
- * Beef dripping, lard or vegetable oil

Pop the flour in a bowl and beat the eggs into it gradually incorporating the water and milk as you go.

Season with salt and pepper.

Pre-heat the oven to Gas 7/425F/220C.

Add a blob of fat or a dash of oil to each section of the muffin tin or roasting tin and put it in the oven to heat the fat for about 5 minutes until the fat has melted and become hot oil.

Carefully lift the tin out of the oven and pour the batter in.

This makes about 9 individual muffin size puddings or one large roasting tin size.

Bake on the top shelf for about 25 minutes until they have risen and become crisp and golden.

Options

You can add herbs, mustard powder or spices to the batter but also add the magic by serving it with gravy, sauce or syrups.

Pop some sausages into the tray of batter and you have a 'toad in the hole'.





About the Children and Families Team

I often get asked the question “what does the Pagan Federation do for it’s members?” and I thought I would take some time to answer that question here with a special focus on the Children and Families Team.

The PF has existed for almost 50 years now. It’s aims and work have been shaped over that time by the needs of its members and the community they are connected to. It has grown and developed to become what it is today and the formation of the Families team a few short years ago is a part of that development in response to a need within the community.

Just like the PF as a whole, this smaller section of the whole aims to support, educate and promote positively our beliefs and practices. The Families team focuses on the family aspects of community life, working on discovering and finding ways to overcome the obstacles faced such as accessing family friendly moots and events, finding good quality family friendly information about traditions and paths or information to places such as schools and other institutions around ensuring Pagan families have their right to practice the faith they observe.

The team consists of a manager, two deputy managers, a secretary and district liaisons that work closely with district managers and regional co-ordinators. We are a small team at the moment consisting of just four people - but we are passionate, as Pagans with families ourselves, to ensure that families get the support and help they need to fully live their faith without fear of reproach. We are currently looking for suitable people to take up the liaison role in districts that don’t have one and aim to have a full team by the end of 2020 so that we can make sure families across the UK all have the same access to support from us.

We may be a small team, but we have big plans. You’re reading the first of them - Aether has been designed to be fun and informative for the whole family, hopefully helping at least a little to meet the shortfall in resources available to Pagan parents.

Our next project is to create an online moot for families that have problems getting to physical moots whether down to time or the moot not being suitable for children.

There will be activities, talks, interactive items and a lot more to get involved in, all available when you want it to be from wherever you want to access it. Launching at Imbolc 2020, these will be run as events on our Facebook group, will be open to all and guaranteed family friendly. Alongside this, the team are working on putting together their own lists of local resources, groups and events to be able to help their own districts as well as working on our biggest project yet – programmes of education that we can take into schools to teach both staff and students about Paganism. Hopefully this will enhance RE curriculums in schools that don't currently teach Paganism as well as helping staff to understand the beliefs of the students that are Pagan. We are looking forward to hosting the Yule Festival looking at how various cultures celebrate at this time of year as well as a big splash at Imbolc with us launching our online moot and having a special feature in the Imbolc edition of Pagan Dawn.

It is certainly an exciting and busy time for our little team!

Now I need to ask for your help dear reader.

If we could be doing something else to help you and your family, please let us know. We welcome being made aware of issues we don't already know about and we definitely want to be able to help.

If you, or someone you know, would like to help us in our endeavours by becoming a member of the team or contributing to our efforts in some way, then please contact us. Our team needs to grow if we're going to meet our aims and do all the things we want to do.

If you like what we're doing and just want to tell us so or if we've done something wrong, missed something or been somehow mistaken, then please also let us know! Feedback is always taken very seriously whether positive or not so much. We relish positive feedback because it motivates and encourages us, and we adore the critical kind too because it shows us where we need to improve and grow.

I hope you enjoy our efforts and that we can help make life a little easier along the way.

Sarah Kerr—National Families Manager



When I volunteered to write this piece, I procrastinated; I spent most of the following week doing little more than carrying on as usual, in the hope that some sparkling insight might quietly percolate in the back of my brain. But after several days, I started to think more about where I am now.



So here's a little about me and what led to my current situation.

I'm currently a widower and a single father to two children; the eldest is eight and currently in junior school and the youngest is almost four years old and is excited about starting their very first day of school in September.

I met my late wife Petra over twenty years ago when we were university students in the town of Aberystwyth, on the Cardigan coastline of Wales. One of the first things that attracted me to her then was her smile - something she was a little self conscious about. I got over my nerves and eventually we went out together; we swiftly fell in love (though it took me a little while to admit it!) and eventually were married in June 2001.



Petra lived with chronic illness in the form of Fibromyalgia her entire adult life, which adversely affected her mobility and endurance. As a result, I left work to become her carer shortly before we were married, and had remained so since, save for some voluntary work in the Lincoln community and retraining my skills over the years. We didn't start a family until much later, when my son came along in 2011, followed by my daughter in 2015.

It was towards the end of 2016 that Pet became seriously ill, and was twice admitted into hospital, the first time was with suspected Encephalitis and the second after a stroke at home paralysed her right hand side. During the second time in hospital, further tests revealed that Petra had Acute Promyelocytic Leukaemia. Treatment started immediately, but tragically, further complications meant that, despite her sheer tenacity, she passed away one January evening in 2017, with me holding her hand and one of a number of good friends keeping vigil with me.

Though my family have suffered the grief of losing her, I at least still have my children; they give me strength, both in terms of familial bonds and in a sense of purpose, which is to help them grow into confident, compassionate and independent adults. If it weren't for them and the help I've had from my Mother and Father in Law, as well as from some good friends, I would probably have felt more lost and alone than I have done.

There is much to be said, for the company of family and good friends.

I think all who have lost their spouses must feel this to a great degree, but as painful as losing a partner was for me, I feel that it must have been terrifying for my children to lose their mother.

I don't consider myself to be a particularly spiritual person per se; my wife Petra was the Pagan, following a Druidic path. She liked to be involved in many of the rituals and social events held by the PF here in Lincoln and the East Midlands, and as far afield as the Mercian Gathering. Petra very much enjoyed the company of her friends, as did I.

I myself am an Atheist, in that I have no real belief in deities or the supernatural and prefer to weigh matters encountered or presented to me based on evidence. I'm also somewhat less social than Petra was; even so, I made several good friends in the local PF community and beyond, and I still try to see them when I can.



The loneliness and isolation I feel at times when I'm on my own can really get me down, it saps my motivation more insidiously than anything else! So, I often find myself something to do to help keep my mind off it. Sometimes that's just surfing the net watching YouTube, listening to music, playing online games, or watching a film, but it's nicer to talk to a friend instead. I've certainly learned to appreciate this more since losing my best friend Dave Needham at the end of last year.

Being an Atheist does not mean that I cannot appreciate or have a spiritual experience - far from it. I find such moments in my wonder of the world around me, and my being able to still myself and connect with my senses to it.



Often I find time to settle myself and meditate while doing mundane daily activities, such as washing up after a meal, or sorting freshly cleaned laundry; I take a little extra time doing these and focus my mind in the moment. I find this helps me to reconnect to the world and once again appreciate things. It can even be simply from watching my two children play together (when they're not arguing over something, that is!). And though I feel that wonder I felt has diminished of late, it has not entirely vanished. I am still awed and amazed at the sheer variety of things I've seen and continue to see in the world, and I think that along with taking moments to meditate during the day, this helps me to stay grounded, if not be a little less mad!

I still observe the solstices, the equinoxes and holidays like Ostara, Samhain and Yule with my family, because I feel that they help tie me to them, to Petra and to my community and help me to mark the ongoing passage of time.

They also help to remind me that still I'm part of a much bigger world, despite my tendency to feel disconnected from it these days.

For me, at least, I think it's the bonds of family and friends that provide a more fulfilling and spiritual aspect to life; I know that without them, I would feel utterly adrift.



Petra Lucas was the National Deputy Disabilities Manager of the Pagan Federation and was at the heart of everything the Pagan Federation stands for. During her time with the PF Community Team, Petra helped to create many of the resources still available today, such as the online festivals and Batty Nan, who lives on in tribute to Petra, her knowledge and her bright sense of humour.

We on the Community Team who worked with and knew Petra miss her every day and we thank Jim for sharing his experiences

THE PF COMMUNITY TEAM IS RAISING MONEY FOR A FULLY INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE PAGAN RETREAT BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please consider donating to support disabled Pagans, carers and additional needs families in accessing this event, which is intended to be inclusive and accessible for all!



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PF Vice President and Deputy Families Manager, Kryz, includes here some pointers for discussions and ponderings on Pagan ethics for personal, family or group use. We'd love to hear your thoughts on this, no matter your age (but particularly would love to hear from children and youths) and if you'd like to write a Letter to the Editor on this subject, you can email us at aether@paganfederation.co.uk

Pagan ethics

Pagans don't have a set text or guru, we also have many paths and traditions that come under the banner of Paganism.. This makes the subject of ethics very difficult.

Wicca

Do what you will but let it harm none. – Doreen Valiente '64

- * What is will? True will is divine spark that flows through us all and the universe as a whole. Telling what is true will and what is human desire can be difficult.
- * Harm none – what constitutes as harm? What/who constitutes as none?

For my law is love unto all beings – charge of the goddess, Doreen Valiente
This relates to unconditional love.

Perfect love and perfect trust – spellwork and ritual is done in this. Be the best, leave your ego outside of the circle.

- * Perfect love – unconditional, perfect, unattached, without limits or restraints. Love just IS.
- * Perfect trust – in the universe, that we are part of the universe and the universe is us.

3 fold law - the energy you put out returns magnified by three.

Take responsibility. All actions/in actions/thoughts/words etc have consequences that will rebound on you.
Like karma but generally in this life return.

Druid

1. Take responsibility – feel empowered.
2. Engage with the world and value community.
3. Trust that life is fundamentally good and holds inherent meaning and purpose.
4. Appreciates contrasts and polarities of life, be of value to others and the world (*taken from OBOD*).

Always choose truth—the testament of Moran, 17th century Irish text.

- * Truth is different to court of law justice. Truth is a way of being. Everything is connected... web of wyrd/life.

Heathen

Be self-sufficient and self-contained. Be it individually/ritual group or hearth/wider community.

List of virtues given in the Havamal (poetic edda – Icelandic sagas) as refined by author Tony Linsell.

1. keeping of oaths
2. loyalty
3. courage
4. hospitality
5. boldness – in thought and action

General

- * Ancestors often believed in reincarnation to the tribe/bloodline, therefore descendants were responsible for repaying the debts and recompensing mistakes that were left by the deceased.
- * Paganism is based on reverence of nature, its religious practise is all about our each and every interaction. The focus of their living is this planet, its environment, its ecologies and tribes. How we perceive and treat each another – human, plant, animal, stream etc – is the foundation of pagan theology. This is crafting of relationships as a spiritual act.



Greenmantle

A Pagan Journal

<http://www.greenmantle.org.uk/>



Greenmantle is a magazine for Pagans and occultists of all beliefs, paths and denominations. Founded in 1993, it has a unique voice combining thought-provoking and intelligent articles with news, humour, and a light-hearted personal touch. Avoiding the how-to and basic, Greenmantle concentrates more on living and reflecting as a Pagan, than on practice, and perhaps resonates more with the mature Pagan than the novice – though all are most welcome. One of the few surviving hardcopy magazines, Greenmantle has enjoyed over 25 years of serving the Pagan community.



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Join us for Story Time, with different stories to suit all age groups.

In this issue we have:

Change by Fiona Tinker—For ages 11+ and intended for those moving up to high school.

The Royal Messenger by SD Stevens—For ages 14+ and also suitable for adults.

Anansi and the Turtle by Iona Winton—For all ages and intended for under 10's. This would be a great one to read to younger children.



Change

Some of you have made a big change – moving from primary school to secondary. It is scary but it is only one of many changes you will experience in the next decade as you move from child to adult. Change can be frightening but it is also wonderful. Every single one of us changes as we grow. It is part of being human.

If you are learning about a new school, just remember the scary nerves you feel now are the same scary nerves children have always felt when it is time to move away from childhood.

Imagine you can go back in time.

Imagine you can go far, far back in time.

2500 years in fact.

Good.

You're now safely in the past.

Let me introduce you to a boy who has a story to tell about his time of moving from boy to man at the Winter Solstice:

My name is Cathal and I already have eleven winters. This is my twelfth.

I stand here on our land, in the dark of the night, with others of the same age. We shiver with cold as it works its way beneath and between the layers of skins we wear. The fire is too far away from us to be of much use. The antler headpiece my older sister wore last winter is a little too big for me and I feel it slightly loose on my head. We speak not a word.

This time is too important and we can almost taste the excitement in the air around us. The river flows to the side of us, her sacred waters singing softly, re-assuring us with the love of a mother.

It is time for us to join the ranks of the grown. There is a rite of passage we must undergo to mark the end of childhood. I am scared. But, if I am to be no longer considered a child, if I want to be considered a man; this I must do. I look at the others. They too seem anxious.

Only I am not quite sure what it is we must do. Not yet. We've been given some instructions but not told what to expect. However, childhood is over and we must show we can dance to the song of the spiral. We can only dance when we understand.

Our teacher – the Ollamh – is issuing orders and people scurry about carrying them out. The six joyful colours of his robes stand out against the greys and whites of winter. He has overseen our learning for many years, since we were small. He made sure we could hunt and gather, heal and wound, fly like the wind and be as still as one of the great stones that stand in a ring around us. He taught us our history. We know who we are and know from whom we come.

People are happy and strong feelings of love surround everyone and everything. The Ollamh raises his staff and silence falls. He looks towards the east then drops his arm. A single drum beats out a solitary cry in the night air.

People feed the fire and the air fills with the crackle of wood, the smell of smoke and the flitters of sparks chasing each other across the sky.

The welcome warmth of the bigger fire reaches us. Other drums now answer the cry of the lonely one and it is lonely no more.

The throb of the beat can be heard through the feet and I can feel myself moving rhythmically in time.

Family members come towards us, holding out cups for us to drink from. I take mine from my sister. She smiles at me, pinches my cheek and then she is gone, melting back into the crowd close to the fire. I drink from the cup.

The drink sharpens my senses. The music is louder now and I can feel it vibrate through my veins. I feel wonderful and do not want this feeling to end.

But once again the Ollamh lifts his staff and all is immediately silent. He scans the east once more, and then turns to the west. He sings in our Gods. He sings in the land, the sea and the sky. He welcomes our beloved ancient mother and honoured father.

Then there is blood on the snow. One of our winter boars will feed us well.

The Ollamh examines the red patterns on the white ground. He signals to a drummer and a soft, single beat answers him. The Ollamh gestures to us and on cue, we walk softly in single file towards him. We follow him and his fire torch out of the sanctuary of the stones and up the mound, towards Brú na Bóinne – the sacred place of Angus Óg, our ancient yet ever-young God, and our Tuath's protector.

We stop in front of the great carved stone guarding the entrance. The Triple Spiral carved on it seems to wriggle and writhe, dancing its way through time in a circle of life, death and re-birth; telling us stories of the land, the sea and the sky. I follow the swirling arms of the spiral, not certain where one ends and the next begins. I feel dizzy trying to follow its pattern.

It is time to move. We follow the Ollamh around the stone and approach the entrance. We have never been allowed this close before. This is not a place for children. The Ollamh stops and looks at us. He says nothing. No words are needed – we know what to do. Silently, one by one, we enter.

There is another carving of the Triple Spiral at the entrance and as we enter, we each in turn touch it. I am thrilled by the shock of power that seems to jump from it, race up my arm and enter my heart.

We move quietly into position and wait. I know the magic is about to begin.

The drumming outside is muffled and seems very far away. Its throbbing sounds calls to me to join the rhythm and I feel my body swaying. My mind is full of pictures, of old things, of faces I do not know though they look a little like my kinfolk.

The drumming stops.

There is silence.

Then a carnyx demands attention and the silence is absolute. The Ollamh puts out his torch and we are in the dark belly of Brú na Bóinne. I know others are here but I cannot even hear them breathe. I may as well be entirely alone.

Some time passes.

The carnyx calls out again.

Suddenly, a thin finger of light illuminates the passage that we used to enter the Brú. Fascinated, I watch as it slowly creeps its way along the floor. My eyes follow it in wonder, watching as it lights up the passage where its reach shows carvings telling the stories of our people.

It is so beautiful I can hardly blink. I do not want to miss a thing.

The finger of light approaches the darkness at the far end of the passage and I hold my breath. The finger reaches the rock and there is an explosion of light revealing a chamber with another Triple Spiral carved into the rock.

And I am awed.

The light illuminates the Spiral, making it iridescent and luminous. It dances. The light shimmers along each arm of the carving, bringing it to life. The light quivers and sparkles, making one arm dance in to the other, making the whole symbol come alive with pulsing life.

And in the middle, in one small space, is stillness.

I stare at the stillness, aware of the dance of the spiral and the peace at the heart of it.

Then, from the stillness, from the centre, comes a figure. And he is here.

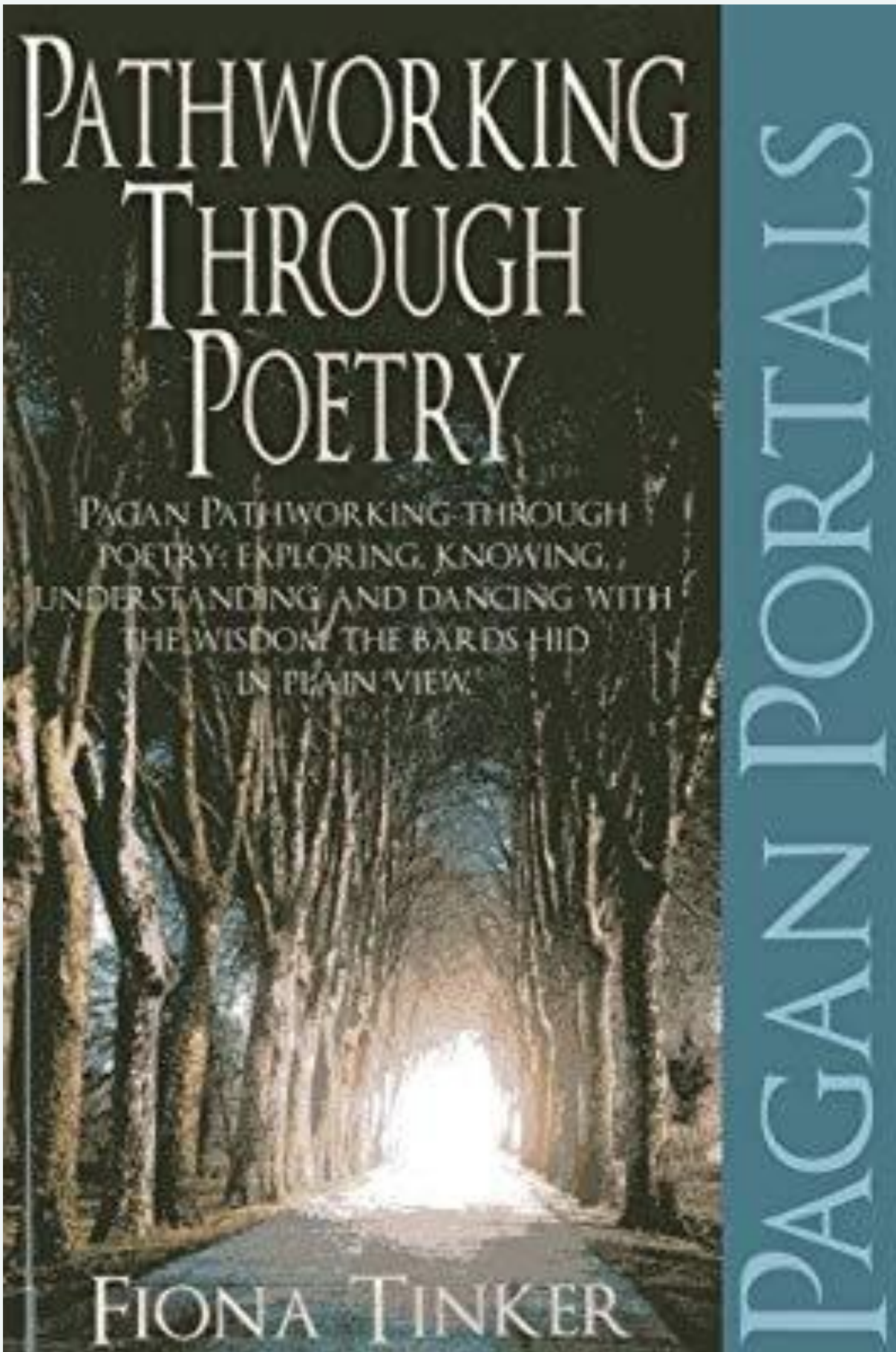
Angus Óg stands before us, smiling.

The light is brighter still. The fingers of the returned sun caress the deepest part of the earth and the promise is made that life will be reborn. And I understand the Song of the Spiral and know I can dance.

My name is Cathal and I already have eleven winters. This is my twelfth.

I am ready to learn and to grow.

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PATHWORKING THROUGH POETRY

PAGAN PATHWORKING THROUGH
POETRY: EXPLORING, KNOWING,
UNDERSTANDING AND DANCING WITH
THE WISDOM THE BARDS HID
IN PLAIN VIEW

FIONA TINKER

PAGAN PORTALS



The Royal Messenger

By SD Stevens

This short story is a part of the Tales of Alhanassa.

Exclusively Written for Aether.

Ambha's stomach rolled with nerves. At the age of 14 it was time to leave her home. Like her mother before her, she would be using her magical abilities to serve the royal family. As a royal messenger she would be flaming over long distances.

Closing her eyes, she mentally collected her magical energy and recited the incantation, "Ostar Moon, Lithna Moon, Imbhane Moon, move me hence." Ambha felt the cold of her ice magic lazily drifting through her body then quickly disappear. When her eyes opened she was still in her bedroom. "I didn't go anywhere!" She complained loudly.

"Where were you going?" Mar stood in the doorway, her old body bent with age. Her cloudy brown eyes, full of mirth.

"Thank you Grandmother, didn't think of that."

Mar left the room, chuckling loud enough for Ambha to hear. Ambha huffed blowing the red hair of her fringe out of her eyes.

Trying the incantation again, she envisioned Mar's chair by the fire. If she was quick she would beat the old woman downstairs. Flames formed around her feet, quickly engulfing her in a flurry of bright colour and rush of cold energy. When the flame died, Ambha stood in the living room and quickly sat down in Mar's chair.

"Got it right this time?" Mar knocked the side of the chair with her walking stick. Ambha stuck out her tongue. Mar's eyes grew wide and she tapped the chair again. "Out'a my chair young lady."

Getting up, Ambha smiled to herself as she trotted off into the kitchen to find Mother.

"Ready to leave?"

"Almost."

"You'll be fine, stop worrying." Mother hugged Ambha tightly.

Her breath caught in her throat, tears suddenly welling in her eyes. Ambha knew her life was changing. It was a huge responsibility for someone her age.

"You will be fine." Mother said again as she tightened her embrace.

Later that morning, Ambha sat in her favourite spot on the back steps. A lone rider entered the through the gate. The butterflies in Ambha's stomach took flight. The rider wore the red cloak of the Royal Messenger Girls so there was no mistaking who she was.

Mother and Father hurried down the steps. Mar followed behind at a slower pace and winked at her.

"I'm Dawn, your companion." The girl looked at Ambha. "I've come to escort you to the palace."

Mother was crying and she tried not too look. Father had a huge smile; the one that spoke of pride and love. She hugged them close, breathing in their familiar scent.

"You will be fine. We will come visit soon." He squeezed her tight then let go. She mounted her own pony and turned towards her companion, Ambha looked over her shoulder and waved, trying hard not to cry.

The sun was setting by the time Ambha and Dawn reached the palace. She was shown her new room, one she'll share with Dawn. After a wash she dressed in messenger uniform; breeches, tunic and white blouse.

They walked through the corridors of the palace. It was grand, with stone pillars and huge stained glass windows. Her feet sank into the rugs. Guards dressed in black armour patrolled the corridors.

Ambha was lead to The Stalls. This was where the messengers waited until a job came in. One wall was covered in copper piping; each with an oval hole at the end. These lead to different sections of the palace and would be used to summon a messenger. Several red cloaks hung on a line of hooks, Ambha itched to try one on.

Three girls sat at a large table at the centre of the room. They smiled at Ambha and said hello, making her nerves settle a little. Red cloaked messengers scurried in and out as they waited. Dawn stayed by her side and told her the names of the other girls.

"Later tonight we'll get to meet the others."

"Oh. I'm not sure I'll remember all their names."

"I was the same when I first came." Dawn laughed.

A whooshing sound had Ambha turning around. A leather tube dropped on to the table from one of the pipes.

"Get the tube, see what's inside." Dawn gently shoved Ambha forward.

Her nervousness returned as she took the scroll from the tube and unrolled the paper. Clearing her throat she read the contents.

“Ambha and Dawn, report to Queen Kohinran’s office right away.” Ambha’s pulse quickened.

“Don't worry it's not far.” Taking two cloaks from the hooks, Dawn passed one to Ambha. She proudly swung it onto her shoulders.

The room they entered was more elaborate than Ambha could have imagined. The rugs felt deeper and the wall coverings were in rich, vibrant colours displaying images of the goddesses.

The door opened, letting in the queen and her aid. Ambha had seen her many times but never this close up. She appeared smaller and older in person. She had long strawberry coloured hair and bright blue eyes. She wore a flowing gown in different shades of green.

“Your Highness, this is the new messenger girl.” The aid announced. Ambha crossed her legs and bent forward, the curtsy felt clumsy and unnatural. She kept her head low and waiting.

“I hope you’ll be as efficient as your mother was.” The queen’s voice held a hint of fondness. “When I was younger, just starting with my royal duties, she became my regular messenger. Now, run along and we will see you both bright and early in the morning.”

“Off you go girls.” The aid flapped her hands, shooing them out of the door.

“That was so exciting! And she remembered my mother! Oh I can't wait for my first assignment.” Ambha bounced with giddiness.

That night, laid in a strange bed, Ambha tried to sleep but couldn't. Who knew what adventures tomorrow would bring.

Join us next time for Ambha’s first Assignment.

©SD Stevens 2019

Bodelia’s Anguish is the prequel to the Tales of Alhanassa series and although The Royal Messenger is intended for those of fourteen and above, Bodelia’s Anguish is recommended for those over eighteen only and is advertised here for parents and guardians.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white, off-the-shoulder, floor-length dress, stands in a lush, green forest. To her left is a large, moss-covered stone wall. In the background, a waterfall cascades down a rocky cliff. The scene is filled with soft, golden light and floating particles, creating a magical atmosphere. The title 'Bodelia's Anguish' is written in a large, ornate, yellow font with a black outline at the top. Below it, the subtitle 'A Short story from The Tales of Alhanssa' is written in a smaller, yellow font. At the bottom, the author's name 'S D Stevens' is written in a large, ornate, yellow font with a black outline.

Bodelia's Anguish

A Short story from
The Tales of Alhanssa

S D Stevens

ANANSI AND THE TURTLE

An African folk tale, told here in the words of Iona Winton

Once, there lived a spider called Anansi. He was a very greedy spider and did not like sharing any of his things with others. One day, he collected some lovely yams from his garden and cooked them with utmost care. The delicious smell of the yams made Anansi hungrier. He somehow managed to wait till lunch time.

Just as he sat down to consume his delicious meal; he heard a knock at his door. Anansi was irritated and opened the door hurriedly. It was the turtle standing at the door. He has been travelling for a very long time and looked very tired

“Hello Anansi, What are you cooking? I can smell something really delicious,” the turtle said.

“Oh! I have cooked some yams for lunch,” Anansi said reluctantly.

“Oh, can I please stay for lunch? I am hungry and tired of all the travelling,” the turtle said.



Anansi was not willing to share his food with the turtle. But it was a custom in the country to share food with visitors who came during lunch or dinner hours. So, Anansi could not refuse. Nevertheless, he was determined not to share his delicious yams with the turtle.

“Please have a seat and enjoy your meal,” Anansi said to the turtle.

Both of them sat on the chairs. The turtle was about to help himself to a share of the yams when Anansi suddenly stopped him.

“Don’t you know that you must clean your hands before you touch your meal? Please wash your hands before you eat,” Anansi instructed the turtle.

The turtle took a look at his hands and saw that they were full of dirt as he has been walking for a very long time. He went to a nearby river and returned after washing his hands.

Anansi had already started his meal. “The yams were getting really cold so I started my lunch. Please join me now,” Anansi said.

However, even this time when the turtle reached for his meal, Anansi stopped him by giving him the same reason. The poor turtle saw that his hands had become dirty once again as he walked back from the

river to the house.



The turtle was very hungry and tired by now. But he still went back to the river to wash his hands. This time he was determined not to let his hands get dirty. He was careful and walked only on the grass to keep

his hands clean. But by the time he reached the table, Anansi had already finished all the food except for a morsel that was spared for the turtle.

The turtle was angry and humiliated. “Thank you for the lovely lunch. I would like to invite you over to my place for a meal someday,” the turtle said and left.

A few days had past and Anansi started thinking about the turtle’s invitation. He was tempted to go for a sumptuous meal at the turtle’s place. After all, he knew that the turtle was an amazing cook.

One day, he went at the bank of the river under which the turtle had his house and stood there at dinner time.

The turtle saw him and said, “Hello Anansi, thank you for coming. Please have dinner with me.” The turtle invited Anansi inside his house, which was underwater.

Anansi could not wait any longer and quickly dived into the water. But alas, he was too light and could not swim deep into the water. Meanwhile, the turtle was ready with the delicious spread.

Anansi tried every possible measure to go under the river; he tried a running jump, a belly flop and a high dive, but could not go beneath the surface of the water. Anansi started thinking hard and finally decided to pick up some rocks and put them in the pockets of his jacket. His plan was successful and this time Anansi reached straight to the turtle's house after diving underwater.



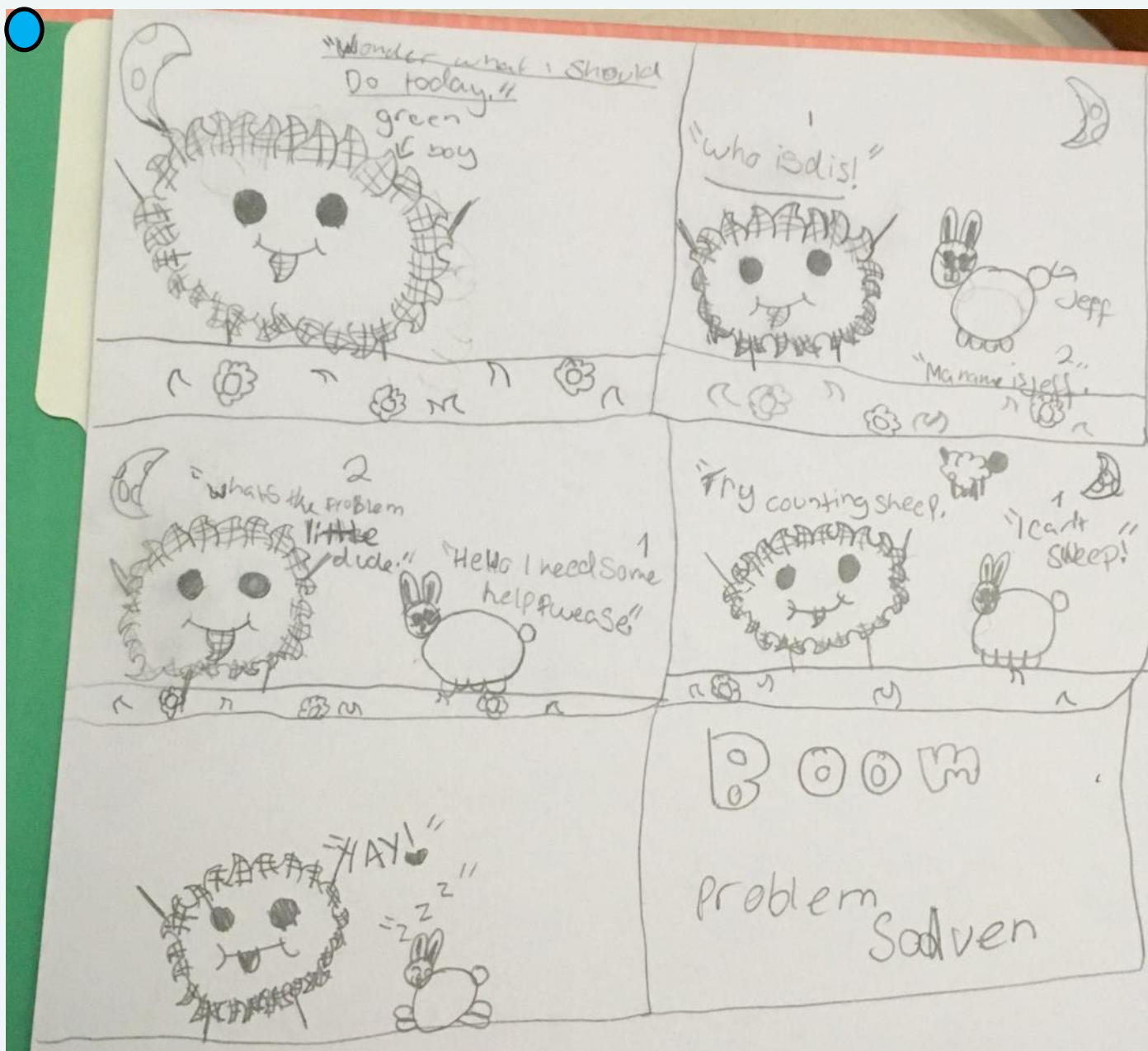
Anansi was impressed to see the delicious spread and was about to dig into the first bite when the turtle stopped him. "Dear Anansi, please remove your jacket before you touch the food. In our custom we do not eat with our jackets on," the turtle said.

Anansi saw that even the turtle was not wearing his jacket. Anansi removed his jacket which was full of rocks and pebbles and within no time he went rushing up to the surface of the water.

Anansi could see the turtle slowly consuming the lovely meal. Anansi felt sad and slowly climbed out of the water. What Anansi learned through this was; Always share your things with friends and they will happily share with you.

Illustrations are by @Wednesday Kirwan
<https://www.wednesdaykirwanart.com/>





The Adventures of GreenBoy by Elaina Gregory, aged 12.

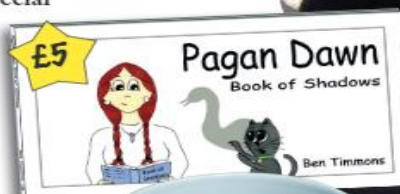
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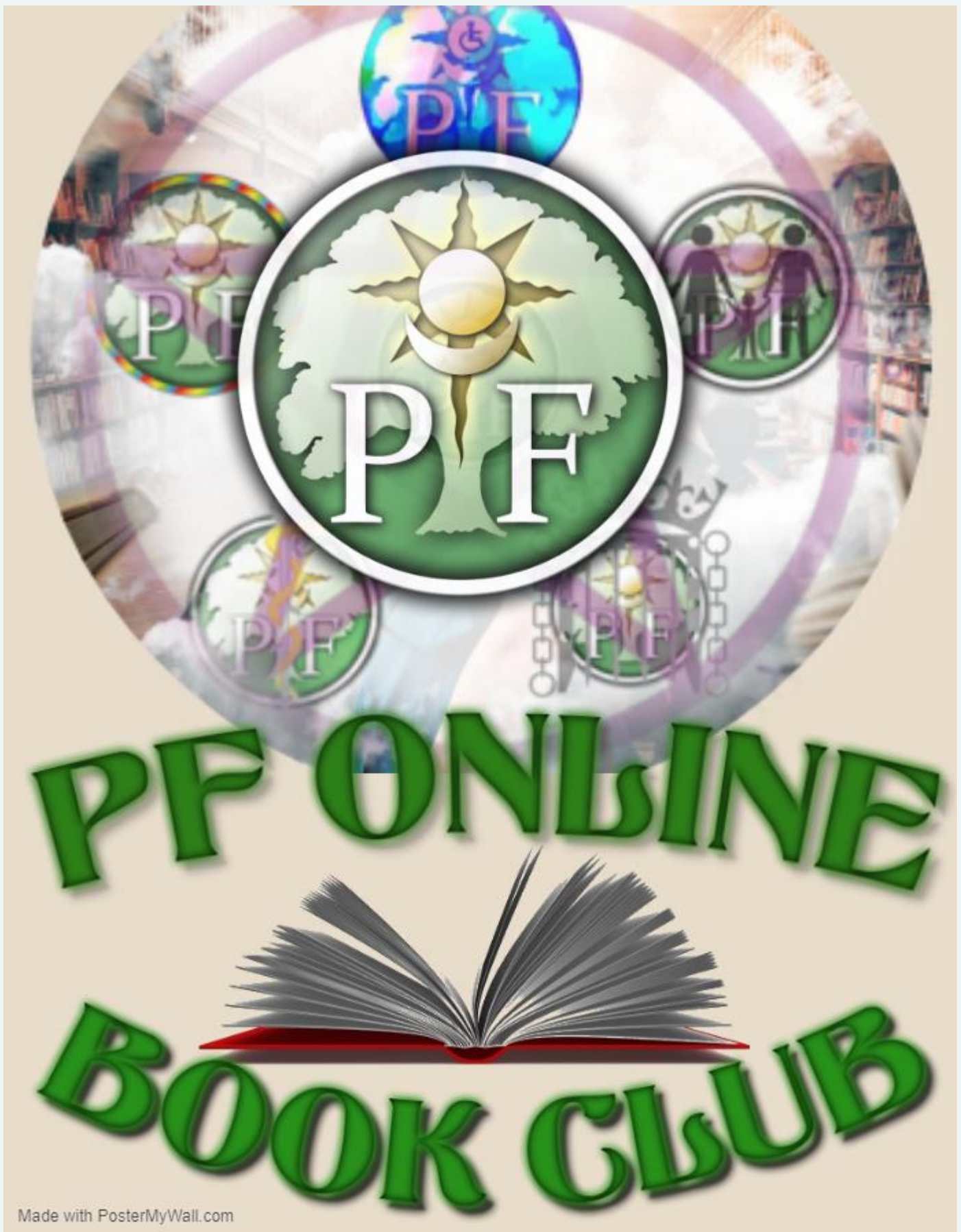
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Raising Pagan Children in the Digital Age: Balancing Nature and Spirituality with Technology

By Pagan Children's Book Author, J. C. Artemisia

In the realm of parenting, technology and nature are often positioned at odds. The common fear is that Internet and the dreaded screen-time disallow connection with the Earth.

Consideration for this conflict is additionally cumbersome to Pagan parents who endeavor to align their children's spirituality with the natural world.

Substitution Balancing

Parents of 21st century children can remember a time before social media and live-streamed video. There is a constant struggle to strike a balance between plugging into technology and rooting into nature. Some standard methods include *healthy screen-time limits* and *role modeling*, through which parents demonstrate the technological use and restraint they would like to see from their children. Alternative strategies include exciting, *immersive play*, encouraging children to splash in puddles, jump in mud, and dance in the rain. Further, parents may consider bringing some of the *outdoors inside* through kitchen herb gardens, rock collections, photos, and other creative collaborations. This is Substitution Balancing, and it is a valid practice and offers children valuable opportunities to put aside technology and spiritually connect with nature.

However, some families may struggle with substitutions as the *only* balancing method; technology is part of the 21st century childhood—and it will play a major role as today's children grow. Rather than always situating spirituality and natural connections as replacements to technology, modern Pagan parents may also find success in contextualizing technology with spiritual practice.

Integrated Balancing

Finding a balance doesn't always need to be a trade-off. There are many opportunities to incorporate technology with nature and/or spirituality in the same experience. Integrated Balancing creates a digital framework for spiritual practice, it allows modern children to engage through familiar and comfortable channels, and it establishes insight and bonding between kids and parents through collaborative communication as old ways meet new.

YouTube Boost

Infinite video resources are just a keystroke away on YouTube, including many teaching animal science, geology, botany, and more. These channels are gateways to the outdoors, educating and encouraging hands-on study. For example, parents can guide their children to watch videos on melittology and then survey and invent ways to support backyard bees and other pollinators.

eBooks and Spiritual Tools

Screen time can directly support Pagan practice when the digital materials are spiritual in focus. The Pagan children's book market is growing, and many of these works are also available as eBooks. Further, parents can encourage kids to develop digital spell books or prayer files to support continued practice.

Exploration Apps

When kids don't want to leave their tablets/phones behind, parents may consider downloading apps they can use when exploring outside. There are many apps that allow users to snap a photo and easily identify plants or insects. Learning is connection; kids can explore and grow with the magick in their own backyard.

Moon, Stars, and Planets App

Celestial alignment apps are perhaps some of the coolest tools ever. Many of these apps are available for free download, and they help users conceptualize exactly where they are in relation to constellations and planets. Kids will love lining-up the moon and seeing the solar system come to life as if the glittering universe were just within reach.

Meditation Music or App

Music is energy, and new media devices allow kids to harness this energy by the gigabyte. As with role-modeling methods, parents can encourage their children to be aware of this energy, help them find spiritually uplifting music, and even breathing apps to support calming meditation.

There is no perfect method for a spiritually connected childhood. Parents can only guide and support kids through this high-speed era. Connection with the universe—much like Internet connection—is not one-size-fits-all. In this modern age, Pagan parents may sometimes need to explore Wi-Fi options to offer their kids a clearer signal.

J. C. Artemisia is a Pantheist Pagan, mother to three young children, and the author of "The Holly King & The Oak King," "Magickal," "A Pagan Book of Holidays," and other popular Pagan children's books. Connect with J. C. on Facebook and Instagram @JCArtemisiaBooks



Tales of Traditions!

Community tales of family & faith traditions and practices

My family Traditions—Jill Wilmot

Samhain

This is a long standing tradition in my family, probably around 20 years. When my two children were younger, they were heavily into the American style of Trick or Treating, which is gradually becoming more prevalent here in the UK. I started setting up a small grotto in the front garden, pumpkins, gravestones, lights in the bushes and creepy things lurking. Over the years it has grown quite large, and become quite popular with the locals.

Last year I did Death's Wedding as a theme. Two skeletons, one dressed as Death and a deathly maiden in a black sparkly dress with a black wig and flowers in the hair standing hand in hand near the front door (The skeletons are five feet tall and I make them stand with the help of two artist's easels!)

Around them were skeletons of rats, snakes and a skeleton bird in a cage. Other bones were scattered around, among the usual



gravestones, pumpkins and a fruit bat hanging overhead. There are sound effects too, I have CDs called Movie-style Haunted castle and Thunderstorm. Haven't managed to get the lightning effects sorted out yet, though! The candles are the electric style ones (I don't want any burning incidents).

I don't go in for the inflatable, jokey stuff; I prefer to have it all looking as realistic as possible. I sit out dressed in a robe and cloak. (I'm old, I don't need a lot of makeup to look scary!) I don't do the pointy hat thing, some stereotypes are just too far out! I have a table with my crystal ball and a Tarot pack, and a big plastic cauldron full of party bags with individually wrapped sweets and novelties, which each child gets if they brave the walk. Often as I sit there, listening to the comments, it's usually the older ones who are the scaredy cats, and when they come into the garden and get near the door, I say hello and they jump out of their skins! They get full value, both the Trick and the Treat! Most of the kids come round with their parents, which I think is a good thing, as it could be easily perverted, and wrongful assumptions made, (not ideal in this day and age!)

I am moving house soon, going to Wales, so unsure if I will be able to continue to do it, as there are a few highly Christian folk around, but I'll give it a go!

After that, I can get on with the real purpose of the evening!



My Family Traditions—Debi Gregory

Winter Solstice

I, like many others, come from a Christian background. Almost my whole family follow the Latter-Day Saints (more commonly, but somewhat inaccurately, known as Mormons) branch of Christianity and I get a great many of my ideals and opinions on faith and faith community from my LDS upbringing, something I've brought to my role with the PF, to great success, even if I do say so myself.

So, when it comes to traditions in the Winter season, the inspiration for the holiday period in my family comes from a few places. It's a busy combination of family, faith, secular and wildly made up traditions!

So, we tend to do the bulk of our celebrating on the actual date of the Winter Solstice, which changes slightly every year (this year it's on December 21st at precisely 22:23 for those of us in the UK, you can check this website for more info on tracking Earth's tilt on Her axis <https://www.archaeoastronomy.com/2018.html>).

The children open a present the night before, which is usually some really comfy PJs and they also get a present on the foot of their bed, which is something my parents did when we were little. I'll always remember my big brother one year got a stocking full of jelly beans and I woke first to the noise of my mum giggling (she was always up before us and ridiculously impatient for us to wake!) and secondly to the sound of my brother in the next room saying "oooooooooooooh!" in a rather high pitched and excited voice as he stuffed his face with handfuls at a time.

I wanted that excitement for my children and so every year, we wait until they're asleep and put a present at the foot of their beds. Last year they got big, fluffy slippers and dressing gowns, which they refused to take off all day. After the bed presents have been opened, it's time for them to get in bed with us for morning snuggles. This isn't actually a Solstice thing, we do it a lot, the difference this time is that we all jump on Daddy, who is pretending to be asleep and also pretends to forget what day it is and refuses to get up. Our oldest asked us last year how long we were going to keep pretending we believe that Daddy has forgotten and the answer is "until the baby is too big to sit on Daddy's head!"

So, after snuggles, we head downstairs. The door to the living room is papered up so the children have to rip through it... And yes, their Daddy did once shut the door so they banged into it. I did not laugh. Not even slightly. I swear.
#TrueStory #OkILaughedALittle

While I make everyone's favourite breakfasts and put the meat for dinner in the oven, the children and Daddy go outside to drink hot chocolates in their PJs, hats, gloves and scarves to light the Yule log in the garden. We try to stay outside for long enough to watch the sun rise but don't always manage it. After breakfast the real fun begins! Each child gets five presents hidden around the house, each present has a clue to where it is and then a clue on the present to help them guess what's inside and there are chocolatey or baked prizes for guessing correctly! After the present hunt and opening of the rest of the gifts (which also have clues on them), it's usually time to eat. The clues and discussions and fun spread even the smallest amount of gifts into a fun filled morning and early afternoon.

After the food, which changes every year depending on the mood of the family, we play games until the sun starts to set. Once the sun starts to go down, we go back outside and take with us slips of paper on which we've written things that we hope for the coming months.



Last year our oldest burned a slip saying she hoped the Winter would bring snow, our youngest girl wished for a short Winter with no fast wind and our boy wished for trains... With him, it's always about trains! I always set hopes for health, comfort and happiness into the fire, hoping that the fire burning will sustain us through the Winter months.

Then it's back inside for games and stories until bed time!

Christmas Eve and Boxing Day are spent with family in the secular and Christian fashion. It doesn't feel like the holiday season to me unless I go to a carol service with Mum. Christmas Day is usually spent with food and Christmas films and a good fire going.

So, all in all, it's a pretty well rounded holiday season... But hey, we wouldn't be adverse to making it more diverse, if the opportunity arose!



My Family Traditions—Janey Manton

Imbolc

Imbolc is my favourite festival. At the end of January the days are starting to be visibly brighter and, although February can be a bitter month, there are little signs of life and hope; snowdrops, catkins and little green shoots show us that the world is waking and the goddess is returning to the earth. For me Imbolc is the time that the year starts to feel new.

Imbolc is only celebrated with close pagan friends because nobody else really knows about it – it is a bit of a secret! There are no public holidays – like Beltane or Lammas - and the general public are not aware of Imbolc in the way that they are of Samhain and the Summer Solstice and after the madness of the 12 days of Yule, Imbolc is quiet and private and personal.

First – and most important – Imbolc is a festival of purity and simplicity. It is a time for a good spring clean – any decorations or goodies left over from Yule have been disposed of by now and cleaned away. Celebrating Imbolc is an opportunity for a deep clean in the last week of January.

We celebrate on the evening of January 31st with a “white” meal and any food we eat at Imbolc is bought new – no Yule leftovers! “White” food could be chicken and rice or macaroni cheese – although we are not too strict about it - so we could accompany our white main course with a colourful salad or green vegetables. White puddings like pavlova or home made ice-cream are fun to make and a chance to involve children in cooking and decorating. The table is laid with a white cloth and three white candles to symbolise the triple goddess.

Traditionally Imbolc is also associated with candles - the dark nights are a good time for candle magic - and around this time I enjoy making new candles from old candles. I melt down the old wax from all the birthdays and other decorations from the past year, mix the wax with citronella oil and make insect repellent jam-jar candles to burn over the summer and while I am doing it, I am thinking about the summer and planning what I will do when the weather is warm and the living is easy.

Out moot celebrates the turning of the wheel of the year with public rituals but at Imbolc it is only the hardy and determined who brave sub-zero temperatures to make their way into the woods! Our Imbolc ritual is usually about plans and thinking ahead. The ritual is usually quiet and meditative, thinking of things that we want to accomplish over the coming year. We might write wishes and aspirations on bay leaves to burn in the fire. However, last year we danced with staffs and drums to “wake the hidden seed” and honour the rising of the Spring.

That said – some of our group are getting older and less inclined to ritual in minus temperatures and more people with children are reluctant to be out late at night so next year we are planning a daylight ritual – Wassailing in a local orchard. Wassailing is a fabulous activity for Imbolc!

Wassailing is intended to wake the orchards and encourage the trees to bare good fruit. We have wonderful pagan friends who regularly organise a Wassailing party to bless their allotment on New Year’s Day and there are often organised Wassails at local public gardens, but you could Wassail in your own garden or local park to encourage the fruit trees to grow.



You need – a pre-prepared pile of toast, a cauldron of mulled cider or spiced apple juice, a sharing cup or horn and rattles and drums to make a big noise. The group dress warmly, go to the orchard and warm up the spicy apple drink in the cauldron over a fire (or camping stove.) The group surround their first tree and sing their wassailing song. One person is carrying the cauldron (cauldron bearer) and somebody else will soak a piece of toast (Toast bearer!) in the spicy drink and hang it on the tree, everybody cheers and bangs their drums and then passes a horn/cup of the spicy apple drink to toast the apple tree. The group process from tree to tree repeating the ritual and making plenty of noise to scare away evil spirits and wake the trees. Initially the singing is tuneful and a bit self-conscious but – especially if the spicy apple drink is alcoholic - after a few rounds of the cup it tends to become a bit more rumbustious and enthusiastic! I am looking forward to using my new Wassail rattle – made at a recent camp from beer bottle caps from happy occasions – bringing a happy sound of happy times to the orchard in the early Spring.



*We wassail thee little apple tree
And hope that thou shall bear.
For the Lord alone knows where we'll be,
to make merry another new year.
So bear well, and grow well,
and merry may we be.
Let every man raise up his cup
and drink health to the old apple tree*

Community Art Gallery



Art by Dr Andrea Redmond

<https://www.facebook.com/Cailleach-Moon-Cottage-721376161386359/>





Bumble and Pip
By April Cope



PRINT OUT PAGES

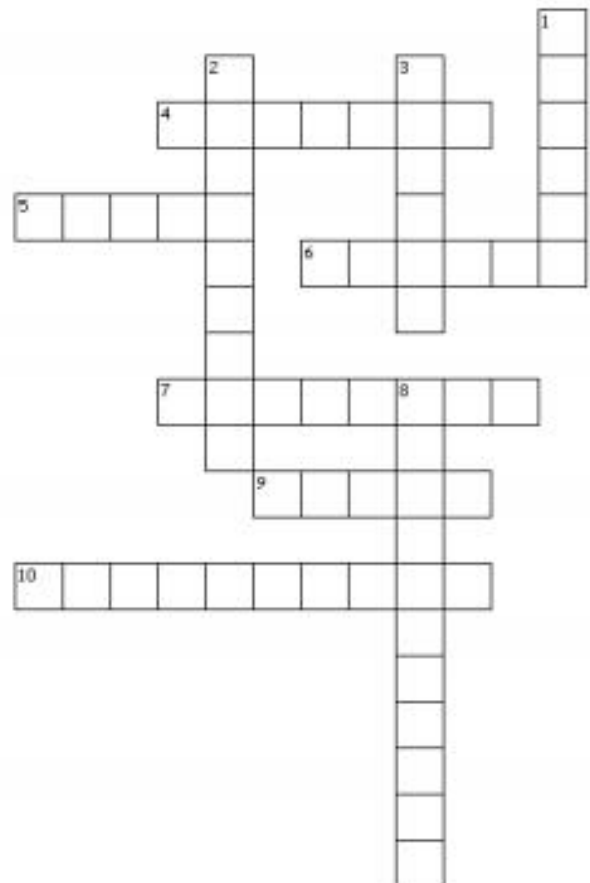
Imbolc crossword

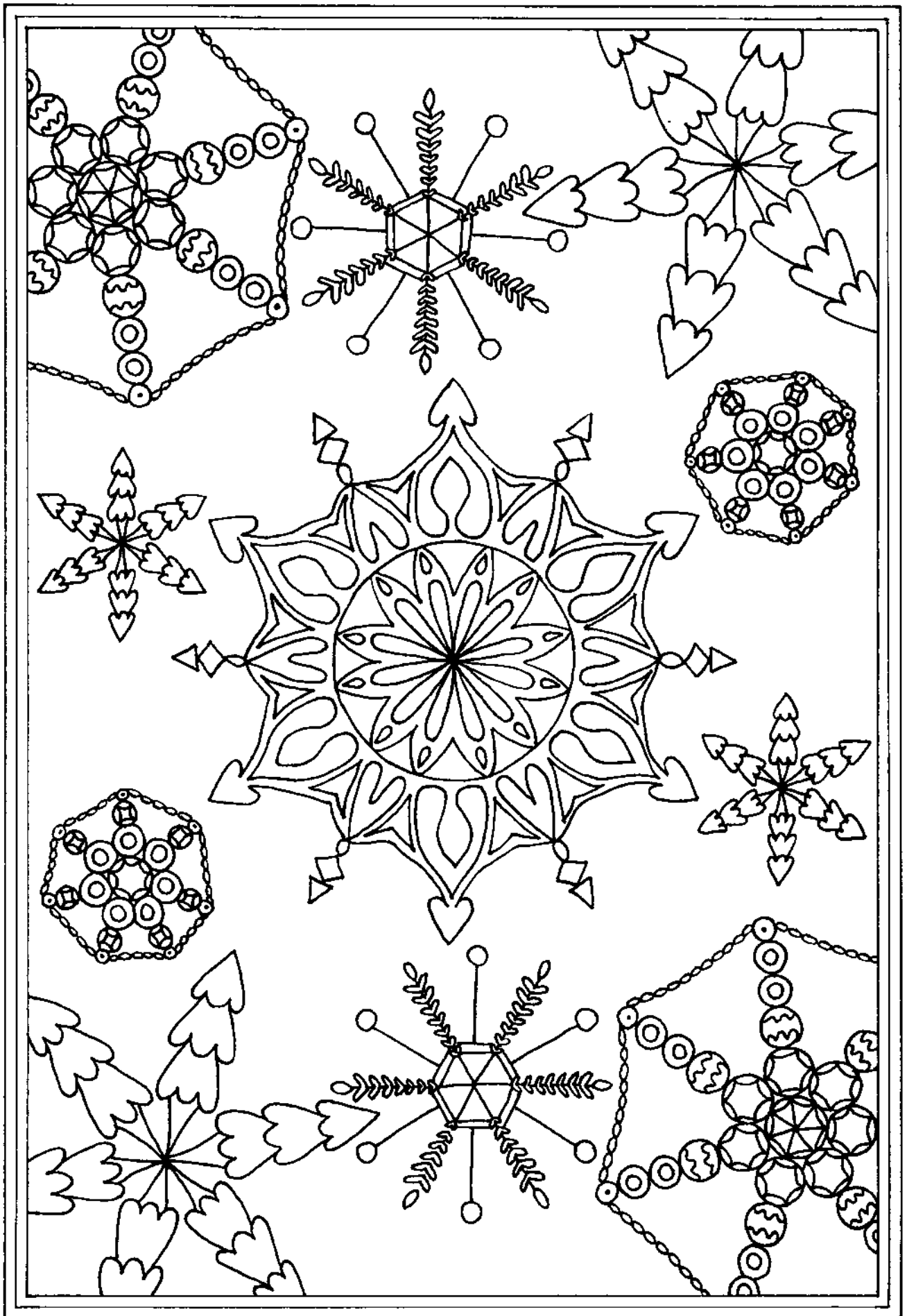
Across

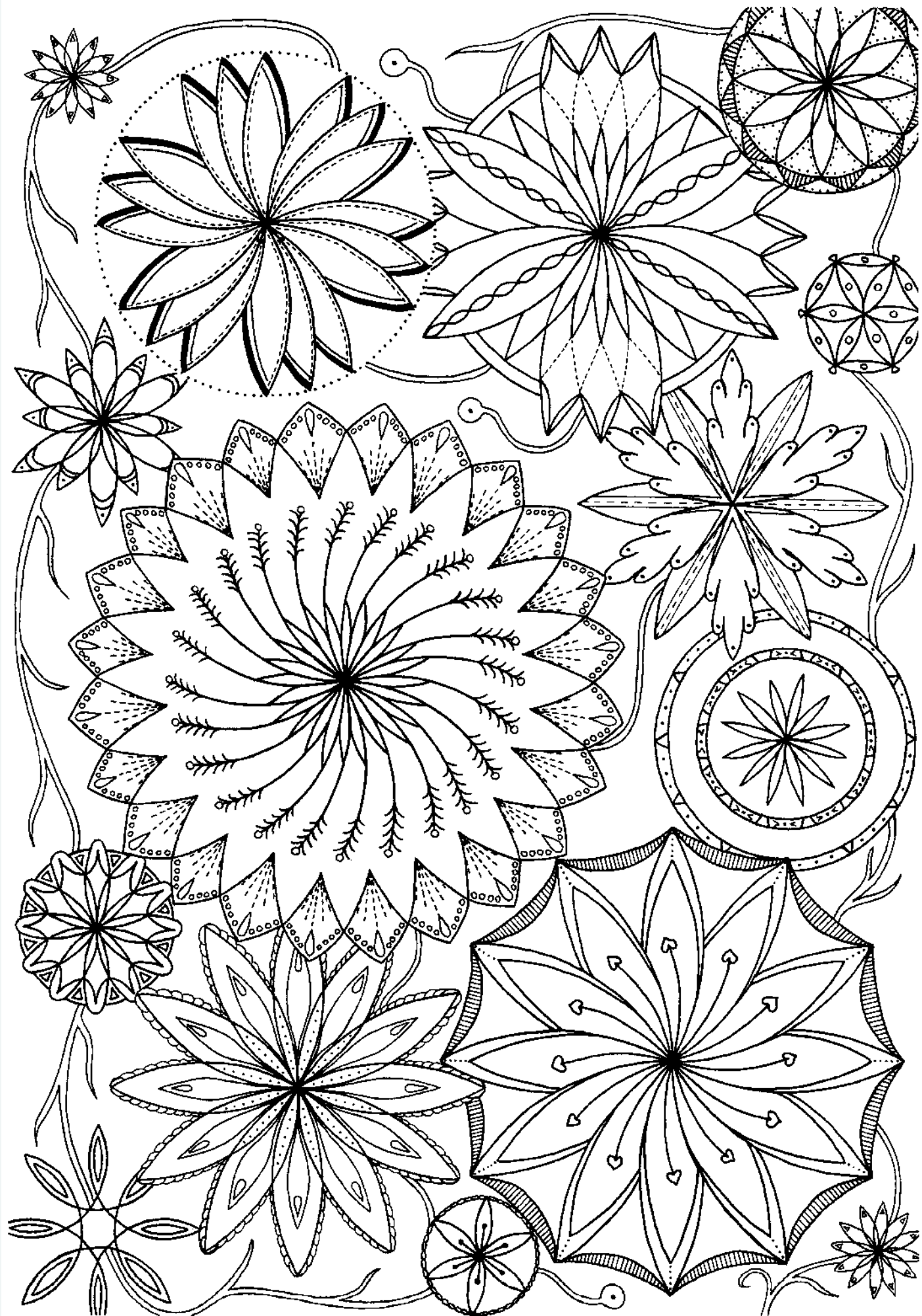
- 4. First month of the year
- 5. Colour of Blackthorn blossom
- 6. The youngest form of the triple goddess
- 7. Early flowering small white flower
- 9. Baby sheep
- 10. Roman festival of cleansing and fertility

Down

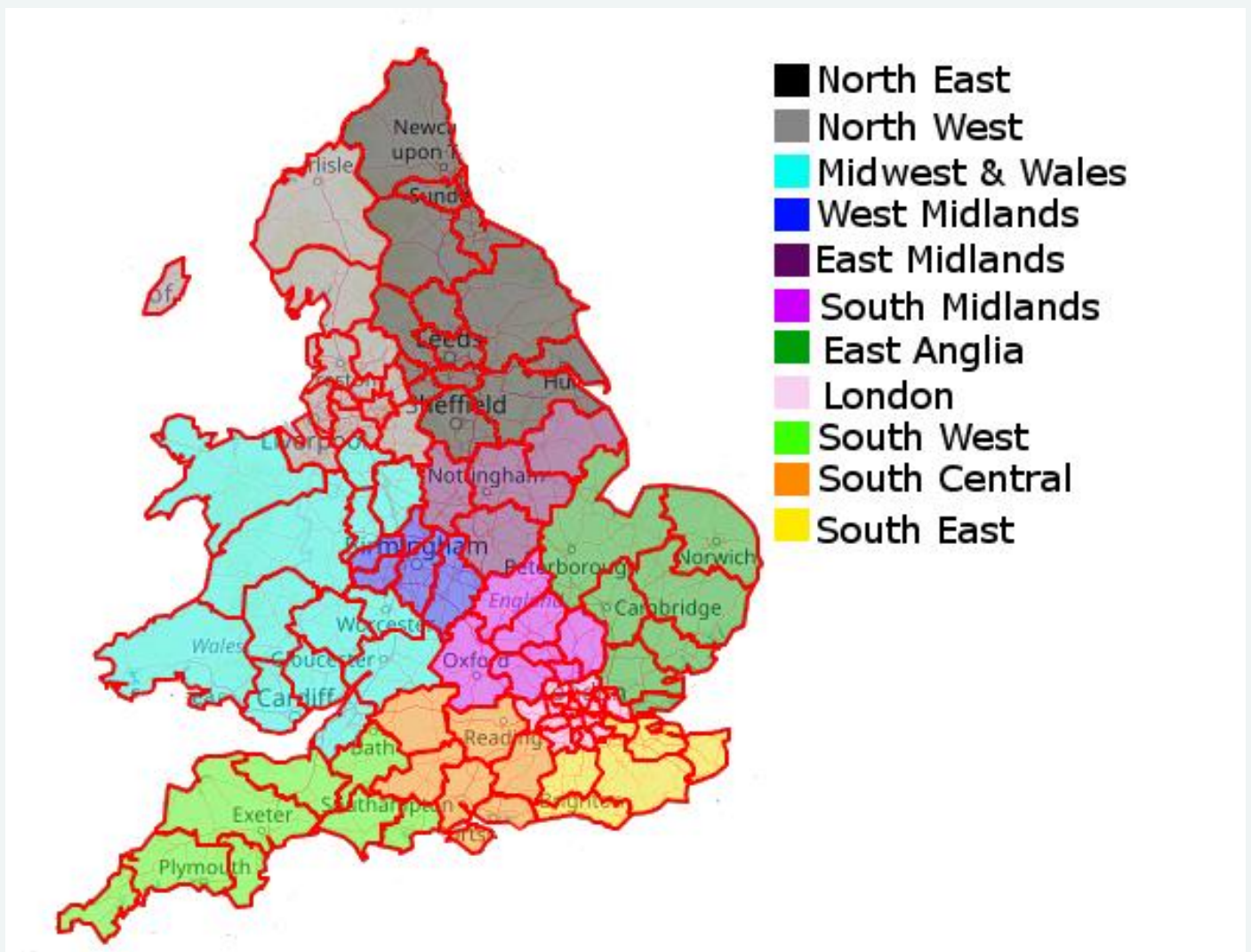
- 1. Dangling flower cluster seen in Spring
- 2. Saints day in February
- 3. Goddess of healing, smithcraft and poetry
- 8. Scottish poet celebrated in January







If you're unsure which PF district you're in, this handy map by Jason Slowe can help!



Diversity and Paganism

with Sarah Kerr

noun

the state of being diverse.

a range of different things.

plural noun: **diversities**

Diversity is a big buzz word in the world right now and rightly so. Especially given the current state of world affairs with racism, bigotry and many more offensive forms of unacceptance being obviously on the rise. Some people even see diversity as a threat to them and their own ways of living, somehow imagining that people different to them will take something from them simply because they are different in some way. The reason then, that diversity has become a buzz word, is that it is very much needed right now.

The sensible among us humans seek to embrace diversity in all its forms because we can see that it's not only a normal part of life, its essential for growth, development and evolution. We show everyone around us how to behave, including our peers, children and elders when we practice tolerance and understanding. It is important that we practice it ourselves because we know that without diversity, we would literally become unable to adapt to an ever-changing world and leave ourselves extinct.

From a personal point of view, I see diversity as much more than just describing that there is variance in the world. To me it's also about encompassing respect and full acceptance for all the uniqueness to be found in the world. I know that it takes all sorts to make a world work and the tales of old gods and their cultures spelled it out for me beautifully as I grew.

The stories of Pagan deities were firm favourites of mine as I was growing up. Not only was I encouraged to read a lot, but I ended up spending many hours in the library during secondary school because I was bullied for guess what? Being different to everyone else. During that time, I read anything and everything I could get my hands on and loved every minute of it. I am truly grateful for it now because I can see the treasure those stories hold.

I know that it doesn't matter if you're old and missing an eye, a female in charge of war or have green skin. In these worlds, you aren't even looked at twice if you happen to have four arms, are born in the wrong body and decide to change your appearance or are otherwise "different" to the norm.

They taught me I could be anything I felt inside to be true and that if I grew out of that truth or learned differently, then I could change my mind. They showed me it was ok to be different to others and that it is our uniqueness that truly matters.

I believe this is also true for many other Pagans as we seem to be a community who is largely tolerant of other paths and I wonder to myself if they learned in a similar way. I definitely know some people who did, and wholeheartedly believe that it is one of the common threads to the understanding that we share.

Paganism is itself diverse, just like the stories within it. Norse mythology is as different to Japanese or Greek mythology as fruit is to a beef burger, yet all the stories have one thing in common. They teach us about life and living it, no matter what their physical location is because no matter where we are in the world, we all share the deep inner things that matter to us – living our best lives in peace with loving and supportive kith and kin. We all suffer loss and pain as much as we all relish joy and contentment and these stories help us deal with those things through the understanding of others.

My initial intent with this article was to simply explore the world of diversity within Pagan deities and their stories. The more I delved into the subject, the more I found to talk about. I realise now that this was too big a subject to be covered in a single article of less than 800 words and so have made the decision to make this an introduction to an exploration of diversity within Paganism through its stories.

Why? Because it matters that we embrace diversity. It isn't just a buzz word; it has a deeper meaning that is a desperately needed thing in the world right now.

See you next time!



YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

Growing up in a pagan family—By Beth Larman

Growing up in a pagan family has been fun and beneficial, I've learnt new things and had my confidence boosted. I didn't like reading out loud to a group of people, it terrified me, I would stutter and stammer and struggle to read. As a young child I would participate in ritual and would regularly be the bread or mead bearer. My words were always simple as I shared bread or mead with everyone attending; "may you never hunger" or "may you never thirst".

The more I participated, the more confident I felt, and addressing people was no longer scary. When I turned 14 my Mum felt I was old enough to participate more fully, if I wanted. I did want to but I was so nervous about a bigger spoken part. Encouraged by the people of Lindum Circle, I tried it. No one minded that I struggled with words, told me off or laughed. They would just whisper the right word and I could continue. That support was what led me to be able to not only call one of the quarters on a regular basis, but to be able to speak publicly.

My family's beliefs have also exposed me to different belief systems, which included different paths within the pagan community and other religions, which has shown me how different religions practice. Within some of my Mum's Interfaith work I have attended mosques and joined in with prayer and discussion. I believe that this understanding has helped form me into the tolerant, accepting person I am today.

The group I go to is an eclectic group, within this group there are Heathens, Wiccans, Shamans and Druids (to name just a few of the paths I am aware of within our group). Our rituals regularly include different aspects of each path, so that no one feels excluded.

Being part of this group has helped teach me how to ground and read energy. I can now feel negative energy and positive energy, and most importantly, how to protect myself from negative energy.

I have attended workshops and activities, including crystal and Tarot, and of the most importance, nature based activities and talks on conservation, ecology and the environment.

With my Mum, I have attended Pagan festivals and Gatherings and been free to learn and experience so much. One of my favourite things is the drumming and dancing around the fire.

We have our own activities at home to celebrate the turning of the Wheel of the Year. One of my favourite rituals is Imbolc as every year I make bread in the shape of Brigid's cross. Imbolc is a celebration ritual, halfway between the winter solstice and spring equinox and celebrates the beginning of spring.

Growing up in a pagan family has been incredible. The wider pagan community is full of wonderful, interesting, caring people, who have become like family. There's an old saying "it takes a village to raise a child". For me, the pagan community has been that village and people have stepped up and supported me when necessary.

As I was approaching 16, I had a Maidening Ceremony, to welcome me to adulthood. It was a huge ritual and every person there pledged to help me and support me. I felt very loved and totally empowered, entering adult life with such a wonderful support network.

I am also lucky that my Mum's two best friends are like aunts to me. Both are Pagan and volunteer for the Pagan Federation. If my Mum can't help, you can bet Aunty Debi and Aunty Mel can!

My life has been enriched with understanding and learning, which many of my peers seem to have missed out on. If only everyone got such a great start in life...

Beth lives in North Lincolnshire with her family and many pets. She's training as a mechanic and enjoys riding her horses, playing with the dogs and being with nature.



What is secularism and why does it matter?

Megan Manson is a Pagan who runs a moot in Gravesend, Kent. She's also a campaigns officer at the National Secular Society, an organisation that's over 150 years old. The NSS campaigns for the separation of religion and state and equal respect for everyone's human rights, so no one is either advantaged or disadvantaged because of their beliefs. Here Megan explains more about secularism and why she campaigns for secular democracy in the UK.

The UK's religious landscape has experienced dramatic changes over the last decade. We are now more religiously-diverse than ever before. At the same time, increasing numbers of people are abandoning organised religion – especially young people.

Diversity in religion and belief brings many benefits to society. But sometimes it can also lead to tension and conflict. How can we ensure people of all faiths and none are treated equally and can live in harmony? Secularism offers many answers.

Secularism is often confused with atheism, but the two are quite different. Secularism has nothing to do with belief, or disbelief, in deities. It is a political principle about how religion interacts with society, politics and law. This means anyone of any religion or belief can be a secularist. I have worked with atheist secularists, Christian secularists, Jewish secularists, Muslim secularists, and of course Pagan secularists. We may follow different religions and philosophies, but we are all united in our belief that all people, regardless of religion or belief, are equal, and entitled to the same basic human rights.

And that's what secularism is all about.

Separation of religion and state

Secularists believe that nobody in society should be disadvantaged or privileged because of their religion, or because they have no religion. That's one reason why secularists think state and religion should be separate.

When the state supports a particular religion, it gives that religion special status over other beliefs, meaning that people of different religions or no religion are disadvantaged. A 2017 study by the Pew Research Center found

that countries with some form of state religion are more likely to restrict religious freedom than those without a state religion. This includes the UK, where the Church of England is the established religion of the state.

Equally, secularists are opposed to states that are hostile to religious people, such as China where members of religious groups not explicitly sanctioned by the government are routinely persecuted. People should be free to live according to whatever religion or belief they like, provided they don't harm anyone or impose their beliefs on to others.

Democracy and Human Rights

Another reason why secularists believe there should be separation between religion and state is because it is more democratic. Granting unelected religious clerics positions in government gives them considerable power to push their agenda. Furthermore, secularists believe our laws should be made democratically by parliament, rather than determined by the interpretation of religious scripture by priests or scholars.

Historically secularists have long been champions of other progressive and liberal ideas, including equal rights for women, LGBT+ people and minority religion and belief groups. Powerful religious organisations have played a key role in marginalising and oppressing people based on their sex, sexual orientation or religious or philosophical beliefs if they differ from the status quo. Decades of campaigns by secularists and other progressive groups mean that things have improved for women and minorities in the UK and elsewhere, but there's still a lot of work to do. That's why defending women's rights, LGBT+ equality and the rights of minority groups from religious oppression is still high on the secularist agenda.

Freedom

One of our most important human rights is the right to free expression. That's why secularists have long championed freedom of speech, including by challenging blasphemy laws. Blasphemy laws are used to punish people who criticise or mock religion, or otherwise offend religious leaders. It's amazing to think that even though the NSS has been campaigning to end blasphemy laws

for over a century, the laws were only repealed in England and Wales in 2008! (They still exist on paper in Scotland and Northern Ireland).

This is vital for everyone, not least Pagans and members of other minority religions. Many Pagan beliefs and practices have traditionally been regarded as 'blasphemous' in Christianity and other religions. Freedom of expression, including the freedom to offend religious sensibilities, means freedom of religion and belief is protected for all.

Education

The most common reason members of the public contact the National Secular Society for assistance is because they're worried about religious imposition in their local schools. Secularists believe all state schools should be equally welcome to families of all faiths and none. But religion has an unusually strong influence on education in this country: about one third of state-funded schools are faith schools that promote particular religious doctrines and give favourable treatment to families and teachers of a particular faith.

What's more, every state-funded school in the UK is required by law to hold daily acts of Christian worship. Pupils are not given the right to opt themselves out of acts of worship unless they are Sixth Formers. This requirement, found in no other western democracy, does not respect pupils' and teachers' rights to freedom of religion and freedom from religion. It's important to teach about different religions and beliefs in schools – but this is completely different from compelling pupils to pray.

A diverse society doesn't have to mean a divided one. That's why I campaign for an inclusive society where no religious group is able to unduly influence public policy, or impose their views and practices on people who don't share their faith. A society where everyone's human rights are balanced fairly. Whatever your beliefs, secularism protects you.

For more information about the National Secular Society, please visit www.secularism.org.uk, or email Megan at megan.manson@secularism.org.uk.

A DEED WITHOUT A NAME:

Unearthing the Legacy of Traditional Witchcraft

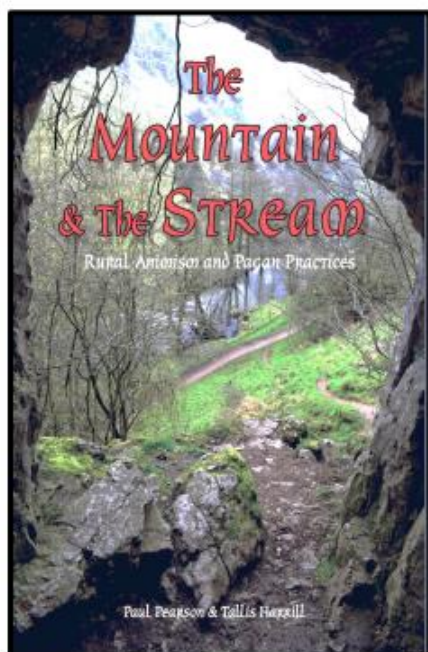


Lee Morgan

With Illustrations by Brett Morgan.

"There is a key question when it comes to witchcraft, and yet it is too often skipped right over. We talk about being here, or walking down the 'crooked path' because of a call, and too often neglect to ask 'who is calling'? And where does this 'crooked path' lead?"

Lee Morgan
www.moon-books.net



THE MOUNTAIN & THE STREAM

Rumours of ancient traditions have followed Paganism since before Gerald Gardner brought Wicca to the public. Modern scholars have cast doubt on the so-called survivals championed by Margaret Murray and her counterparts.

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"...it is a lovely read: fast-paced, clearly-written, intelligent, passionately sincere and moving, and containing some very interesting new information."

- Professor Ronald Hutton

"...One heck of a page turner... Not often I read a Pagan book that I can't stop reading until I've finished it."

- Mike Stygal (outgoing President of the Pagan Federation)

Windgather Publishing

Jingle sticks—With Krys Holmes

One thing that's always associated with this time of year is jingly bells, and this is a really easy craft to do with your witchling.

You don't need many supplies and no tools are required. Just a stick, some jingly bells plus some thread or yarn to tie them on with, and ribbon or long scraps of fabric in the colours of your choice, for this time of year I went with red, gold, green and silver.



I know I said no tools, and it's not essential, but if you want to remove the bark and sand the stick smooth you can. The stick just needs to be a decent length (mine's approx. 40cm) and not going to hurt small hands when holding it.

The first thing you need to do is string some jingly bells. I used a scrap of double knit yarn I had lurking around. To secure the bells at intervals along the length, tie a knot then thread a bell, tie a knot a couple of inches further along and thread another bell. Repeat this till you get to the end, just remember to leave a bit of length free at each end to secure it to the stick. Once you've done this, tie one end to the stick and wrap it up and back down again and then used the thread from the first knot to secure the other end down.



Now it's time to add the ribbons and long scraps of fabric. Literally just tie them to the stick making sure not to cover the jingly bells.

Your jingle stick is now done.

If you make a jingle stick with your littles and teenies and would like to share your creations, you can email a picture to us at aether@paganfederation.co.uk



Community Creations



Greenman
fun at
Kedleston Hall
with
Jen Pattison
& family.





World Interfaith Harmony week takes place from 1st to 7th February 2020. It is an annual observance led by the United Nations. Our world, today, is becoming increasingly polarised- differences of political views, differences of cultural perspectives, differences of religious belief and practice, a rise in racism and discrimination- all contributing to tension within and between communities and nations. Very often, the polarisation is enabled by a limited understanding of those who are different. Interfaith dialogue and activity can, and does, help to bridge the understanding gap, and leads to seemingly unlikely friendships and stronger ties between communities in society.

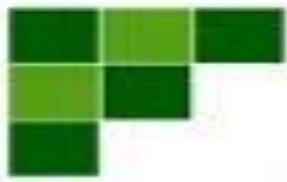
The Pagan Federation has been involved in Interfaith work for a great many years. That work has not just been about educating others about Pagans and Paganisms, but also about creating an environment that makes it possible for Pagans to be recognised and included in society as Pagans.

So why is religion and belief so important? Well, what we believe, how we understand the universe around us, the values we hold, all influence how we behave and the decisions we make in our lives. Understanding why things are important to others, even when we don't feel they are important to us, helps us to better recognise the need to make space for others to observe their beliefs, practices and values. The only subject in schools that schools are legally required to teach, is Religious Education. This is because it is recognised that religion and belief play a very important part in society, and learning about different beliefs and practices helps us to function as a more peaceful and cohesive society. It can also be fun, learning about our friends and neighbours.

Perhaps you could get involved in something for World Interfaith Harmony week, and share your beliefs and how you understand the universe with others?
<https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>

Mike Stygal is the Vice President of the Pagan Federation. He is a former teacher and currently sits on the Inter Faith Council UK. He enjoys breaking his back when working on his land and tripping over his many cats.





POLICE PAGAN ASSOCIATION

Andrew Pardy of the Police Pagan Association shares with us some advice on regulations relevant to Pagans and Pagan families.

CARRYING YOUR ATHAME IN PUBLIC

Section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 is the offence of being in possession of a bladed or sharply pointed article in a public place. There is a defence to this offence if the article is used for religious reasons. Paganism is a recognised religion under UK law.

It is important to note that a defence does NOT mean that you cannot be arrested; a defence is what you have to prove at court if you are charged with the offence. So in strictly technical terms you can still be arrested and charged even if you are in full Pagan regalia, at a Pagan ritual in a public place because you have, technically committed the offence. You would have to then use your defence of having it for religious reasons in Court where, if satisfied, the Court will discharge you.

However, in the real world, if a defence exists, and is obvious or easily proven at the time, you are unlikely to be arrested. If you are arrested and can then satisfy your interviewers and the CPS that you had it with you for religious reasons, you are unlikely to be charged. In the circumstances above, it would be obvious that the individual is using their Athame for a religious purposes, and it is unlikely that you would be arrested, but each incident is assessed on its own circumstances.

Possession of a bladed or sharply pointed article can mean more than simply holding it; it can include being in your pocket or rucksack, or in your car if it is parked nearby, or in a locker. What police officers will be looking for if you are stopped is how your Athame is being stored or carried and how easy it would be to use there and then.

If, for example, you have your Athame unsheathed in your hand whilst walking through town, you would probably not be able to use the defence of religious reasons. However, if you had your Athame in your rucksack, wrapped in cloth, under several other items therein, you would not be deemed to have it readily to hand to use in crime; If you are in your car, you are far more likely to be able to use the defence of religious reasons if your Athame is in the boot along with your other ritual items, than if it is easily to hand in the driver's door well.

Bear in mind you would still have to explain for what religious reason you are carrying your Athame, i.e. on your way to or from a ritual; you cannot habitually carry your Athame around daily and rely on religious reasons as Pagans have no need nor any religious direction to do so, unlike Sikh Kirpans, which have to be worn as one of the 5 Ks defined in their religious doctrine. You also cannot use the defence of forgetting that you had your Athame in your rucksack or car, so remember to put it back on your home altar when you are done!

The Police Pagan Association are regularly called by police officers who have stopped an individual with a sharply bladed or pointed article who claim to be carrying it for religious reasons; we are often able to determine very quickly whether they are a genuine Pagan or someone trying to pull a fast one. If you are stopped by the police, feel free to provide them with our number, provided below.

DISCRIMINATION

The Equality Act 2010 is a law which protects you from discrimination and unfair treatment on the basis of certain personal characteristics, such as religion or belief; Paganism is a recognised religion under this legislation. There are several different types of discrimination.

Direct discrimination is when you're treated differently and less favourably than someone else for certain reasons; an example of this would be a youth club with different opening times for the local Asian and black communities. This is a deliberate policy by the youth club to avoid any trouble between the two communities. This is racial segregation and is unlawful discrimination.

Indirect discrimination is when a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way, but it has a worse effect on some people than others; an example of this would be a Health Club that only accepts members who are on the electoral register; this would indirectly discriminate against Gypsy and Traveller communities who are less likely to be on the electoral register due to their transient lifestyle.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour which you find offensive or which makes you feel intimidated or humiliated. An example of this would be a bus driver making racist comments whilst driving. They aren't directed towards anyone in particular, but it creates an intimidating and hostile environment for the passengers, any of whom could bring a claim for harassment regardless of their race.

Victimisation is when someone treats you badly or subjects you to a detriment because you complain about discrimination or help someone who has been the victim of discrimination. Because the Equality Act recognises you may be worried about complaining, you have extra legal protection when you complain about discrimination. An example of this would be being denied a promotion after you make a complaint of sex discrimination against your employer. This is victimisation and action could be taken against your employer under the Equality Act.

In certain specific circumstances discrimination in itself is not deemed unlawful if it can be proven that there is an objective justification for doing so. The Equality Act says discrimination can only ever be justified if the person who's discriminating against you can show it's a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

An example would be the fire service requiring all job applicants to take a number of physical tests. This could amount to indirect discrimination because of age, as older people are less likely to pass the tests than younger applicants. But the fire service can probably justify this, as Fire-fighting is a job which requires great physical capability. The reason for the test is to make sure candidates are fit enough to do the job and ensure the proper functioning of the fire service.

This is a legitimate aim, and making candidates take physical tests is a proportionate way of achieving this aim.

Positive discrimination occurs when someone with a protected characteristic is treated more favourably than another, and in doing so, puts the other at a disadvantage. This is often confused with positive action, in which steps can be taken to ensure that disadvantaged people are given the same level playing field as others.

A good way to explain the difference between positive discrimination and positive action is to imagine that two people have to get over a 6ft wall to get a job; one person is 6ft tall, and the other is 4ft tall. It would be far easier for the 6ft person to get over the wall. Positive discrimination would be physically helping the 4ft person over the wall; positive action would be giving the 4ft person a 2ft box to stand on so that both people start off on an equal standing.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS

It is important to differentiate between religious observance and religious ceremonies. Religious observance covers the defined religious holidays such as Yule, Samhain, Ostara etc. As Paganism is a recognised religion under UK law any request of absence for the purpose of religious observance should be treated as authorised. Religious ceremonies, such as handfastings, naming ceremonies etc. are not defined as religious holidays and are therefore subject to the discretion of the school; if absence is granted for a ceremony it will not usually be recorded as being for religious observance. This applies to all religions, e.g. Easter may be a day of religious observance for a Christian, but a Christening would not.

The Department for Education (DofE) and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) have both produced documentary guidance that covers this area, and both recognise Paganism as a religion. It is worth noting that the DofE state that the day of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the students' parents belong, and that schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance, which may prove challenging for religions such as Paganism.

Although this is an area of civil law, discrimination under civil law can become a criminal issue. As such the PPA have assisted in advising involved parties in relation to issues arising around absence or leave for religious observance

TIME OFF WORK FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS

Employers in the UK are under no obligation in law to give time off to their employees for religious events or observation, however most reputable UK employers will have a leave policy and an equality policy that accommodates their duties under employment law and the Equality Act 2010 and which reflects the expectation that they should consider all requests for leave carefully, sympathetically and without discrimination.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) have produced a document specifically covering this topic, entitled 'Religion or Belief: Key Points for the Workplace' which explains that an employer is not simply allowed to refuse a leave request for religious reasons simply because they do not recognise, agree with or understand the religion of the applicant – this would be an example of direct discrimination.

However, an employer does have a duty to consider a number of things when any request for leave is made; an example would be the number of other employees who want leave - or have already been granted leave - during the same period, so that their functionality or productivity is not adversely affected. An employer should consider requests carefully and sympathetically, be reasonable and flexible where possible, and discuss the request and explore any concerns with their employee. Refusing a request without a good business reason could amount to discrimination.

It is worth noting that the employee also has a certain amount of responsibilities in these cases; job applicants should always familiarise themselves with the leave and equality policies of their potential employer. When considering an application for time off, employees should communicate with their employer as early as possible, to minimise the chances of disruption and to allow accommodations to be made. An employee, in making a request, should be reasonable, flexible and sympathetic in taking into account the demands of their job and the needs of the organisation employing them.

Rewilding with Lisa Woodworth



A lot is being said about the not so distant future, about the environmental plight our children and grandchildren face if *something* isn't done **NOW**! The problem is that most of us don't know what our 'something' is. It all seems so infinitesimally small. If you're anything like me, you are struggling with balancing the car miles to the farm shop against the masses of plastic boxes and wraps your food comes home in if you nip down the road; trying to find a shampoo bar that doesn't cost a fortune but keeps 3 or 4 heads clean for the maximum length of time to offset the cost; persuading lifelong carnivores to eat maybe a little less meat... It's bewildering. Don't get me wrong, every tiny step is helping, and if we all do it, those tiny steps add up.

This is where re-wilding comes in. By allowing nature back into our precious outside spaces, we can encourage and give sanctuary to dwindling plant, insect, bird and animal populations. It doesn't mean you go inside and stay there, only going out to attack the ivy that's threatening to seal off your front door. Humans have lived in harmony with nature before. We can still have great outdoor spaces, but we need to think about them and use them differently. Re-wilding can be a fabulous Pagan teaching (and learning) opportunity.

Traditionally, most people with kids have a garden that is part scuffed lawn, part (adult sanctuary) patio and a shed for the generations of bikes, scooters, bouncy castles and a mower squeezed in the corner. There may be a tiny strip of football trampled bedding plants around the edges, but essentially, our gardens have to be quick and easy to maintain, and allow our kids the freedom to run and play in safety. Trying to balance this with keeping the local wildlife happy or just the thought of filling your garden with creepy crawlies, frogs and mice can seem a very tall order.

The beauty of turning over control of your garden to nature is, I think, in reconnection. You can read up about your local wildlife, plan your garden according to what you want to see and do, and you'll start to notice things you would never have had the privilege to see before in your rather flat and sterile space.

You'll then start to spot things outside your own garden and you and the kids can explore and find out more. Learn about life cycles, water cycles, the carbon cycle (the Krebs cycle is only for the very committed, I still have nightmares!). You can maybe grow fruit and veg and try foraging, cook something unusual together. Maybe stay up late and hunt moths or bats or hedgehogs with a torch. It can be a tool to connect with your environment and with each other, and you'll give your kids strong roots to grow with.

To get you started, the three most important things anyone can do in any size space are:

Don't use chemicals.

Fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides all need to stop. It's not just the effect they have when they are used, it's also the effect they have when they are produced. Leave the weeds, or hoe / hand pull the ones you can't live with. Use traps, natural pesticides and deterrents for pests, and use those farm shop scraps to make beautiful compost.

Provide appropriate habitats.

Don't just buy or make bug hotels and birdhouses with the kids, part of this involves trying to see your garden how a bird or a hedgehog or other creature would. Kids are BRILLIANT at this. Is your bird table in the middle of the lawn and far from the bird house? If you were a bird, do you think that would make you feel safe? If you were a hedgehog, where would the best snails be? Can they actually get in and out of the garden past the 6 foot fence?

This also means 'do not disturb'. Mow the lawn less, cut the hedge less, if you hate weeds, try just doing some window dressing and just weed and mulch the front of the border.

Provide useful food and water.

A water source of any kind is essential, however, ponds and small children do not mix. A shallow bowl filled with pebbles and water will provide plenty of safe water for drinking and washing. The pebbles mean that even the tiniest creature can get in and out again safely. You can delegate responsibility for filling this to the little ones and get them to watch for birds splashing in there.

You do not have to let the weeds run riot, never mow the lawn and leave your garden to turn into something that looks like a long abandoned car park. Leave the lawn weeds, maybe, but if you don't like the look of dandelions and plantains, pull them out. You don't have to have the space for wildflower meadows, but you can sow wildflowers in blocks to give a more designed and aesthetic look. Use British natives that have single flowers (avoid the ones with stacks of petals, bees will struggle to get to the nectar and they tend to have low nectar reserves). Piet Oudolf is a garden designer who uses drifts of grasses and prairie flowers to provide a flow between cultivated lawn and natural surroundings. This style is also really low maintenance, needing just to be cut back in the Autumn, or better than that, enjoy the seed heads and the change of colours over the winter and maybe do a little tidy up in Spring. Keep on top of brambles, dog roses and any other plants that creep in that may be harmful to children. Spurge (*Euphorbia spp*) all have harmful sap. If you are unlucky enough to wind up with Giant Hogweed, please seek professional help. The sap, coupled with exposure to strong sunlight, will give you very nasty blisters. Stagnant water is a breeding ground for biting insects, so empty out any pots or buckets regularly.

Growing your own food and medicines is amazing for the environment, and for yourself. Even if you just grow some tomatoes in a pot or hanging basket, it's one less commercially produced item that needs to be cultivated and transported. Chard is a beautiful plant that is so easy for kids to grow and it has stems that are practically all the colours of the rainbow. It can be grown in with other plants, and it just needs to be gently wilted to eat. Perfect for a camp out barbecue. Old fashioned kitchen gardens or potagers look beautiful and provide you with some of what you need. You can use this to teach the kids about nutrition, or maybe how their ancestors would use plants for cloth and dye.

Hapa zome is a Japanese print making technique where leaves and flowers are placed inside folded cloth and then bashed (gently) with a stone. You can upcycle some of the kids' old clothes or make cushions from an old sheet.

One last point is about drainage. If you seriously want to help the environment, do not lay any non porous paths, driveways or patios. The amount of flooding we have now is partly down to the fact that water has less area to drain away. If you need a firm surface to put out a table or sun lounger, try using geo cells. These are plastic or metal frameworks that hold soil or gravel. They are cheap and the easiest thing to lay. This is the one place where plastic is an advantage. I've never understood using something indestructible to make throwaway items, and using materials that degrade to build houses.

I hope this has given you some inspiration. I know the idea of making your children MORE wild seems crazy, but hopefully they'll use it to grow up with a respect and love for their environment and a sense of grounding.

Lisa Woodworth lives in the Wirral with her husband and two children. She has been a gardener since 2003 and has studied Horticulture with The Royal Horticultural Society. She has recently begun to study Horticultural Therapy and Land Reclamation.



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The Power of Beauty: A Short Essay on 'Faeries'



Author: Claire Hamilton

Date: 26/09/2019

For as long as there has been the written word, there have been stories depicting creatures of the supernatural realms. One niche in particular, that of 'faeries', seems to have a long-standing significance in terms of spirituality. The idea that tiny human-like creatures - which possess a care-free yet highly mischievous nature - are hopping around at the bottom of the garden and playing amongst the flowers, usually excites our imaginations and leads us down a path towards the mystical. However, the present-day notions of all things faerie including what they are, how they look and how they behave, are modern constructs that are not in line with the traditions of those who believed in them or wrote about them in the past. This short essay provides a brief overview of powerful and beautiful faeries, according to Celtic mythology.

An image of beauty

Faeries and their mystical kingdoms have been an integral part of Celtic cultures for thousands of years. Although each of the cultures have their own stories and names for faeries (MacLeod, 2012, pp. 37-38), they all seem to conform regarding the imagery used when describing these beings or places. For example, in the Irish tale 'The Wooing of Etain', the faerie Etain is described as having long, blond hair and fair skin, and wearing beautifully embroidered gowns of green, purple, silver and gold, which all shone in the sunlight (Stewart, 1996, pp. 26-27). In the same vein, the Scottish tale 'The Game of Chess' describes the voice of the Faerie Queen as smooth, sweet and loving, and so can potentially lure humans to her (Stewart, 1996, p. 133).

Another thing that the Celtic faeries have in common, is their human appearance. They seem to be human in both body and stature, yet they possess otherworldly beauty and magic.

This is a far cry from the flying, cheeky rascals that we buy or make homes for in our gardens today. However, it can be said that the modern faeries have retained their menacing behaviour from their Celtic counterparts, even if it is dulled considerably. The faeries of old were mainly docile and sweet-natured, but they could also be cruel and ruthless in terms of both nature and their use of magic. Much of this magic resided within the faeries, but was heightened within proximity of their magical worlds, and this is what I shall turn to now.

The land of the faeries

Our pre-Christian ancestors believed in other realms just as we do, so it may not be too farfetched to say that then, the new religion of Christianity may have drawn some influence from the native cultures. For instance, the Christian concept of Heaven may be another version of what the Celtic peoples called the ‘Otherworld’, or ‘Underworld’. In Celtic literature, this was a place where great adventures took place but unless the person was in contact with faeries for whatever reasons, it was usually a difficult place to get to. Not only was it difficult to travel there – time was also manipulated so that a few days in the Otherworld would be comparable to a year in this world. This is also where the belief that the borders between this world and that, merged at certain times of year began. The Celts believed that it was easier for humans and faeries to communicate and even travel between realms at these times, Samhain especially.

The Otherworld is as beautiful as its inhabitants and is described as a peaceful place with no pain, sorrow or death. Much of the imagery between the land of the faeries and the creatures themselves is shared. An example of this is the description of apple trees in ‘The Voyage of Bran’, where the apples are ruby red, and the branches shine as silver in the sunlight. The air is filled with sweet and intoxicating music, drawing parallels with the faeries’ voices (MacLeod, 2012, p. 36).



And so, it would seem that not only do the faeries possess magic to draw humans to their world for whatever purpose, but the Otherworld has its own magic to essentially trap the humans there. With promises of having everything they ever wanted, only a select few have ever left the faeries and their Otherworld.

Bibliography

MacLeod, S. P., 2012. *Celtic Myth and Religion : A Study of Traditional Belief, with Newly Translated Prayers, Poems and Songs*. 1st ed. Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc..

Stewart, R. J., 1996. *Celtic Myths, Celtic Legends*. 1st ed. London: Blanford.

Aether Glossary

Here are some definitions and links that may be useful for those new to the community, youths and children.

Pantheon – A group of deities associated with a specific group.

Aether – The upper sky or breath of the divine.

Resonates – To trigger positive feelings or an emotional response.

Faith – A system of spiritual belief.

Horus – A sun god of Egyptian origin.

Juno – Roman queen of heaven.

Triglav – Slavic deity.

Magec – Deity of light.

Oracle – A divine form of communication.

Oracle cards – Cards used to communicate with the divine.

Divine – Comes from the Latin word for “godly” and is associated with anything deemed “more than” or “super” natural.

Revelation – A profound understanding or communication.

Symbolic/symbolism – When one thing represents or stands in for something else.

Angels – Divine messengers.

Zen – A state of meditation.

Divination – To communicate with “other” or to interpret signs.

Sabbats – Seasonal festivals that celebrate the changing wheel of the year.

Deities – Personification of the divine.

Moot – A meeting of Pagans.

Moon phase – The cycle of the moon from waxing to waning.

Mindful – To take more conscious notice.

Hail – A form of recognising the divine or the congregation.

Sidhe (pronounced shee) – Magical creatures in Celtic and Gaelic mythology. Often compared to fairies.

Wicca – Pagan path often associated with witchcraft.

Faerie/fae – Mythical beings associated with many belief systems.

Celebrant – A person who performs ceremonies such as birth blessings, funerals and Pagan unions.

Altar – A sacred space, often displaying tools of an individual’s path.

Rite/rites – A ritual or ceremony of divine or spiritual significance.

Druid – Celtic Earth based path.

Runes – Ancient Germanic alphabet now often used in divination.

Atheist – An individual who doesn’t subscribe to conventional constructs of spiritual beliefs.

PF – The Pagan Federation – An organisation who aims to support the Pagan community and educate those outside the community on Pagan practices.

Meditate – To either look inward or look to the divine in an attempt to find answers or calm.

Solstice – Points of the year when the Earth is tilting either closest too or farthest away from the Sun, either at Summer or Winter, causing the longest and shortest days of the year.

Equinox – Points precisely halfway between the Solstices.

Samhain – Often confused with or associated with Halloween, this is the festival halfway between the Autumnal Equinox and Winter Solstice and is often associated with death or new beginnings.

Ostara – Associated with the Spring Equinox.

Yule – A Northern European celebration of the Winter Solstice.

Guru – A spiritual guide or mentor.

Doreen Valiente (pronounced valient-ey) – Often called the Mother of Modern Witchcraft. Important figure for anyone in the Pagan community, a pioneer of our modern practices.

Pagan/Paganism – A term for those who identify as falling under the umbrella term for many, mostly Earth based, practices.

Tradition – A series of practices or beliefs that are handed down through generations or practiced regularly and consistently.

Ritual – A ceremony repeated at significant times or for significant reasons.

Spell/spell work – A ritual with a specific purpose. A working of intent.

Karma – The ideology that your actions have further consequences that will manifest.

Wyrd – Similar to fate or karma.

Havamal – An ancient text of Nordic origin.

Ancestors – The generations that came before, your deceased family.

Reincarnation – The ideology that a being can be reborn into another life after death.

Tribe – A group of people who are connected by ancestors, beliefs or customs.

Religious practice – The beliefs and traditions of a particular faith or faith group.

Theology – The study of the divine and spiritual.

Occult/Occultist – Relating to magic or supernatural practices.

Denominations – Particular faith groups.

Magic – Some call this the supernatural ability to harness and control and others call it other things. It's best to read a lot and decide for yourself.

Magick – A word used to distinguish the magic of faith beliefs from the stereotype of magic and magicians tricks.

Celestial – Heavenly or divine.

Relevant links -

Dorset Wildlife Trust - <https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/>

National trust - <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/>

Pagan Federation – <https://paganfed.org/>

Pagan Federation Shop - <https://paganfed.org/shop/paganfederation-products>

Wildlife Trust - <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/>

Witchy clip art credit - <http://www.joellessacredgrove.com/Clipart/index.html>



Thank you for taking the time to read this publication, which has featured work from people all over the Pagan community!

We at the Pagan Federation thank our contributors and we wish you, our whole community, a very happy and blessed holiday season!

