



Issue 3 Winter Solstice 2020 from the Pagan Federation
Children and Families Team

AETHER



**PAGAN FAMILY FUN, WINTER
2020 TO SPRING 2021**

Contents

- 3— Letter from the Editor
- 4— Letter from PF Children & Families Manager
- 6— Making a Sun Shaker
- 10— Birds in Winter
- 16— Magical Cooking with Rachel Patterson
- 19— A Very Merry, Completely Unconventional, Not Quite Christmas...
- 24— Pagan Aid Needs Your Help
- 26— Community Reviews Update
- 27— Competition—win Aether Patches!
- 28— Printable colouring pages
- 35— Imbolc Aether Patch news
- 36— Poetry Book Submissions
- 37— Poetry from the Community
- 41— Story Time
- 47— Winter Solstice around the world
- 50— Practically Pagan
- 52— Meet the Team
- 54— Pagan tools for beginners
- 57— Family Deities—Chantico
- 60— Pagan Puzzler
- 62— From the Window
- 65— Meet the Elemenpals
- 66— Credits
- 68— Puzzle Answers
- 69— District info and Glossary

Key

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

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.

Letter from the Editor



Welcome to the third issue of Aether, a magazine for Pagan families and children. I found myself quite unexpectedly in the editor's chair earlier this year, with some impressive boots to fill, after two outstanding issues packed with fun and inspiring content. So, what have we got for you this time around?

Well, as the wheel inevitably turns, we come to the Winter Solstice – possibly the strangest one ever for many of us. Some folks are facing a Yuletide without some of their loved ones for the very first time. But, for others, being isolated at any time of the year is part of reality, whether that's due to disabilities, personal circumstances, or other reasons. If one good thing

can come out of this year, I hope it can be that, as a community (and maybe a species!), we learn to have empathy for those that have to put up with the very real restrictions and limitations that most of us have unexpectedly ended up living with this year.

With that in mind, we've got some fab content to keep you entertained. There are colouring sheets for kids of all ages (I can't wait to do them!) including the incredible artwork of Kay Savage and Sarah Kerr. We've got some mouth-watering recipes from Kitchen Witch, Rachel Patterson. There are some great crafts to do, plus news about the fantastic Aether Patches – have you started doing your quests yet?

As always, we're always waiting to hear from *you*, our readers. Tell us what you loved about the magazine, and what you'd like to see more of. Or, why not submit a piece yourself for the next issue? We're always looking for:

- Reviews of books, music, community services aimed at families
- Articles on experiences as a Pagan parent or growing up in a Pagan family
- Family orientated content on any aspect of Paganism
- Crafts, recipes, poems, artwork, and songs

Our next issue will be out at Summer Solstice, so send your feedback and submissions to aether@paganfederation.co.uk.

Winter Solstice in my house is about food, family and fun. Whatever yours means to you, I wish you merriment and warmth.

Sláinte (health), Mabh Savage, Aether Editor

Image shows Mabh, Nathan (10) and Ember (3), shared with permission.





Letter from the Families Manager

My first 6 months as Children and Families manager has been a little strange because of Covid. We've not been able to get out into the community and meet people, neither have our kids, but the team has been trying to help folk through with online things and other activities.

Every Friday we've been running Kids Korner over on our Facebook group, where children and families get to share what they've been up to, their artwork, pictures from nature walks, their views on the given topic and how they are doing with their Aether patches.

[Aether patches](#) were another exciting scheme implemented recently. We started with just the four elements but they were so well received we started work on quests for the festivals too. The Samhain Patch was released at Autumn Equinox and we are now proud to present the Imbolc Patch as well. Thank you everyone who has given us feedback, it is really encouraging to hear how much you and your family are enjoying them. The patches for the elements are now available to purchase from our shop and later on in this issue there is a chance to win a full set!

In June we took part in the Wildlife Trust 30 days wild, coming up with a different lockdown friendly activity each day on our blog and social media to help our families join in too. We had lovely feedback from this, so to help folk struggling with lockdown, we did a 31 days of Samhain as well. Again we had some lovely messages and saw some great pictures as part of our Kids Korner from those of you joining in. We've been asked if we'll be doing more of these and the answer is yes, keep your eyes on our blog and [Facebook group](#) to join in when we do.

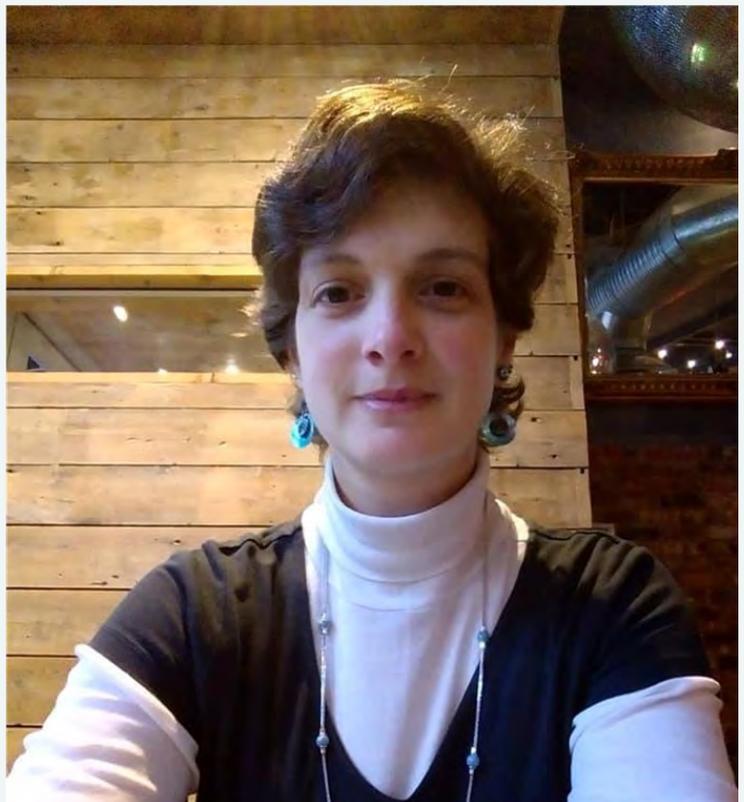
Talking of blogs. The children and families team have a blog called '[Thoughts from the Aether](#)', where we've been sharing ideas on how to celebrate the festivals with children of all ages, other random thoughts or family adventures, and our new series coming monthly - an A to Z of family friendly deities. Check out our blog for the ones we've already released and keep an eye out for the rest of the alphabet. <https://www.pfcommunity.org.uk>



We also put up on our website a list of Pagan books and resources for children and families. These include books for the parents on how to share your Paganism with your children, sharing festivals, moon celebrations; even rites of passage. There are books for children of all ages, some stories, many informative books, like ABC board books for tots with a pagan theme all the way through to Paganism for teenagers. There is also a selection of useful websites where you will find more resources to help you, such as ezines, colouring pages, activities for the festivals etc. If you know of any other books or resources you think should be on our list, do get in touch (children.families@paganfederation.co.uk)

We also had an exciting opportunity in the West Midlands for one of our families to take part in a short interfaith film by Coventry City Council. It was lovely seeing a young pagan standing alongside children of other faiths in such a production. If you've not already seen it you can check it out on YouTube, just search for Coventry City Council Together we can get through this or use this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyS4OekeRNo>

The Children and Families team are currently working hard on more projects for you. We are hoping to create more resources, a few sneak previews of which I believe have made it into this issue. There's the rest of the alphabet of deities to go and of course more Aether patch quest packs to make. If you have any other ideas or suggestions you would like to see from the team, please do get in touch.



Well that's enough from me!
Enjoy this latest issue of Aether.

Krys

Making a Rising Sun Shaker



What you need:

Paper plate

PVA glue (or some other way to seal the plate, sticky dots, tape, staples etc)

Clothes pegs (if using glue)

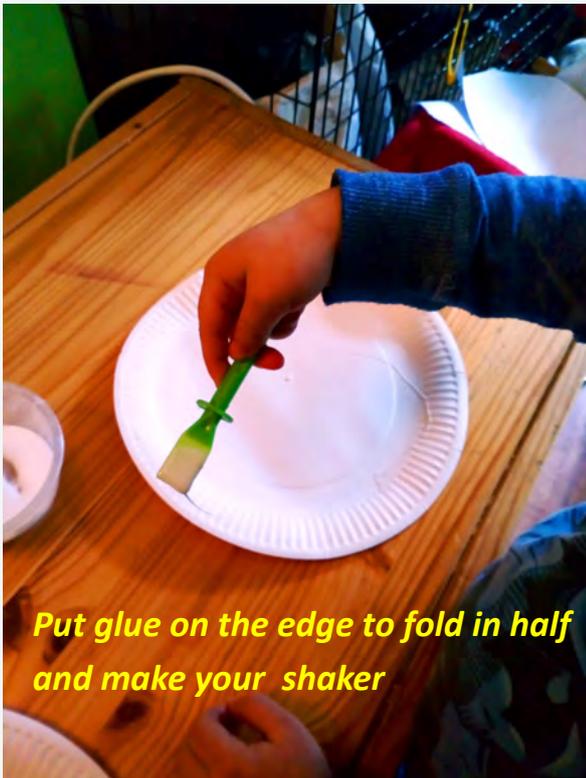
Paint in sunny colours (or pencils, crayons, felt pens etc)

Dried peas (or rice or anything else to make it make a noise when shaken)

How to:

Step 1: The first thing to do is decorate your plate as a big sun, we used paint but you could also use felt pens, pencils, crayons, sticky paper. Get creating and have fun with it. You could do swirls, the suns rays, even put a smiley face on if you wish. Just make sure you decorate the underside of the plate and not the side you would put your food on.





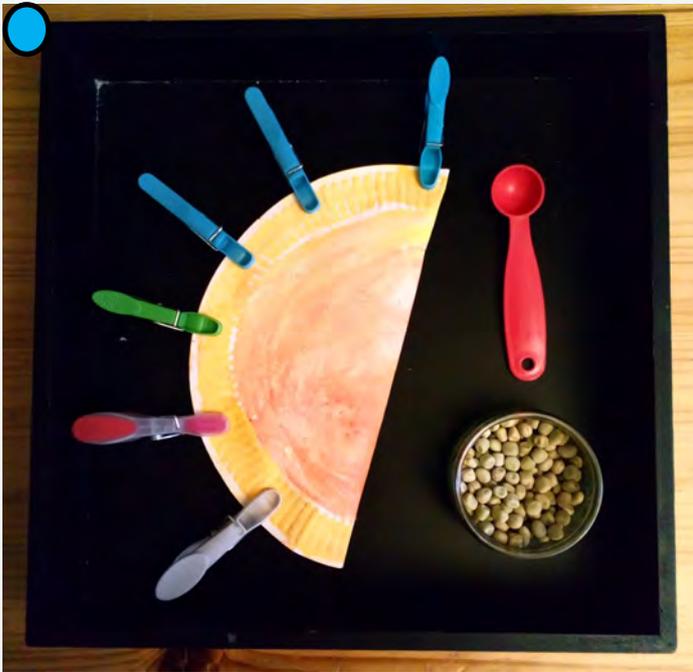
Put glue on the edge to fold in half and make your shaker

Step 2: When your plate is dry, coat the edge (on the side that hasn't been painted) in PVA glue. Fold your plate in half and hold the edges shut using the clothes pegs till the glue has dried. Don't forget to leave an inch unglued so you can fill your shaker!



Step 3: When the glue is dry, remove the pegs and pour a spoonful of dried peas, beans or rice (or something similar) into your shaker through the hole you left open. Glue the hole shut and hold it with another peg until dried.

Continued on next page...



A scoopful of dried peas to fill the shaker with; set up for my toddler to do—but rice works well too!



Filling the shaker is a great way to work on those fine motor skills. Once the shaker is as full as you want it, glue the hole and use a peg to hold it closed.





Step 4: Make lots of noise!

Use your shaker before the solstice to encourage the return of the sun, or after the solstice to welcome it back. Different ingredients in different quantities will make a range of different sounds. Why not make a few and have a play with the sounds they make?



We'd love to see your creations! If you make a sun shaker, or any other seasonal crafts, send your pictures or videos to aether@paganfederation.co.uk or pop along to our dedicated Families Facebook Group at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PaganFederationFamilies>





Birds in Winter



Did you know there are plenty of species of birds that are still active even in the cold winter months? Bird watching is one of our favourite things to do as a family. For the kids, there's the excitement of a new visitor to the garden, and the wide-eyed wonder as the birds grab food then fly to a safe spot in the tree. For me, as a (technically) grown-up and a Pagan on a nature-based path, I love feeling connected to an aspect of nature that's so completely different to us. Birds are creatures of air, of the sky, and have many fascinating associations in folklore and mythology.



As it gets colder, it's important to put food and water out for birds, and be sure to crack the ice daily on any water dishes that may have frozen. See how many of the following birds you can see this year in your garden, and if you're not in the UK, please [get in touch](#) and tell us what birds you see in your part of the world!



Starling

Starlings are dark birds at first glance, but they're speckled with paler blotches all over. Their feathers are also highly iridescent, which means that when they catch the light, you can see many colours like blues and greens. Starlings are here all year round, but we may see more in winter as some migrate from Eastern Europe. Look out for "murmurations" of starlings; huge clouds of flying starling that seem to swirl and make strange shapes in the sky.

Associations

Music

Education

Family

Curiosity

Folklore Snippet

Starlings are excellent mimics – ones local to us mimic a neighbour whistling, and (more annoyingly) a car alarm! In the *Mabinogion*, Branwen uses a starling as a messenger to tell her brother, King Bran, where she is imprisoned.



Robin



Perhaps our most familiar winter birds, thanks to any number of greetings cards showing snowy scenes with these red-breasted birds up front and centre. Robins are actually present in the UK all year round, but perhaps more noticeable in winter as other species migrate away. Robins

are brave and will often come very close to humans, especially if you've been turning the earth in the garden or allotment and there's the chance of a juicy worm! *More on next page...*



Robin Associations

Bravery

Fierceness (robins will fight to the death for their territory!)

Beauty in simplicity

Fire

Blood

Kindness

Generosity

Folklore Snippet

An 1868 edition of *Note and Queries* records a belief that if one should let a robin die in their hands, their hands will forever more shake.

pected. 'It is unlucky to kill a robin.' 'How badly you write,' I said one day to a boy in our parish school; 'your hand shakes so that you can't hold the pen steady. Have you been running hard, or anything of that sort?' 'No,' replied the lad, 'it always shakes: I once had a robin die in my hand; and they say that if a robin dies in your hand, it will always shake.'

Blackbird

Blackbirds are either black with a bright yellow beak or brown all over. They are heard most loudly at dawn and dusk, as they announce their presence and vie for territory. Because of this, they are thought of as gatekeepers between our world and others, as they herald the times of day when everything changes. Blackbirds also love hedgerows, another way that they live at the edge of things.



Associations

New beginnings

Transformation

Travel, both astral and physical

Omens of both death and birth





Blackbird Folklore Snippet

In the Irish tale of *Finn and the Man in the Tree*, Derg Corra (the man in the tree) shares nuts with a blackbird, then the water from his strange white, bronze vessel in which swims a trout. This tale combines the three realms of Earth, Sea, and Sky (from Irish tradition) and shows a beautiful connection between human and nature.

Wren

Wrens are rarer in winter as they are so small, and need to eat so often in order to get the fuel they require to cope with the low temperatures. They move very fast, and you may see one darting across a fence or into a bush.

Associations

- Strength and skill
- The smallest things having the most power
- Intelligence and wit
- Ambition



Folklore Snippet

In 96 C.E., Greek philosopher Plutarch referenced a tale allegedly by Aesop called the King of the Birds. The birds decided they would choose whoever could go highest as their leader. Everyone was pretty certain that the eagle would win, but as the eagle soared higher than anyone else, he became tired, and confident that he had won, began to relax and drift downwards. At that point, the wren took off from where he had been perched on the eagle's back, flew the highest and won the title.



Crow

Crows are my favourite bird. Their shadowy silhouettes are familiar in most places in the world. Did you know Antarctica is the only continent where you won't find crows? During winter, they are still active, and often more easily visible against frost coated roofs or bare trees. The crow is a member of the corvid family which includes jackdaws, magpies, and many more.

Associations

Death or change
Deities such as the
Mórrígan and her
counterparts like Badb
Mischief
Devotion and loyalty
Intellect
Compassion



Folklore Snippet

According to Irish legends in the Metrical Dindshenchas, Bresal, King of the Formorians, named his druid 'Crow', for being wry, witty with words and greedy. I don't think crows are particularly greedy, but they are scavengers, which means they also clean up after us!

There are many intriguing birds, animals, and plants to see in winter, some right from your window. Getting to know more about them is fun and keeps you connected to nature – even when we're stuck inside.

Check out the [Woodland Trust](#) for more information on UK animals and plants. Follow our blog, [Thoughts from the Aether](#), for more articles on flora and fauna in Paganism. Article by Mabh Savage, written in loving memory of Crowley the Crow.

MABH SAVAGE

A MODERN CELT

SEEKING THE ANCESTORS



“It would be a particularly good read for teenage Pagans...” Nimue Brown, author of Spirituality without Structure

Available from all good book retailers



Magical Cooking

With Rachel Patterson

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 was kind enough to donate some of her extraordinary magical recipes. Have a go at making Fat Rascals or a Magic Custard Cake!

Fat Apple Rascals

With a name like that I had to make these - and they are delicious. Traditionally just 'fat rascals' which date back to Elizabethan times, they are also called Yorkshire tea biscuits. This recipe adds in apple to make them extra yummy. Apples have a long history of magic and in particular bring love, healing, clarity, knowledge, abundance and help with spirit work.

225g (8oz) self raising flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
110g (4oz) butter, cold and diced
75g (2 1/2 oz) soft light brown sugar
100g (4oz) cooking apple, diced
50g (2oz) sultanas
3 tablespoons milk
2 tablespoons demerara sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon



Pop the flour and salt into a bowl and rub in the butter until it resembles breadcrumbs.

Add in the soft light brown sugar, apples, sultanas and milk and bring together to form a dough.

Using two sheets of greased paper or cling wrap place the dough between and squash it into a flat disc. Wrap and chill for half an hour.

Preheat the oven to 350F/180C/Gas 4 and line two baking trays with baking parchment.

Flour a work surface and roll out the chilled dough as thinly as the chopped apples will allow (approx 5-10cm). Cut into squares using a sharp knife and lift them carefully onto the prepared trays, spacing them a couple of cms apart.

Mix the demerara sugar and cinnamon together and sprinkle over the squares.

Bake for about 20 minutes, until golden.



More on next page...

Rachel Patterson
Witch & Author

www.rachelpatterson.co.uk





Magic Custard Cake



This really is a magic cake, magic when you bake it as it turns into custard, and magic when you eat it because it is delicious! Milk and butter are associated with the spring and particularly the festival of Imbolc. Milk brings the magic of feminine power, goddess energy, moon magic, nurturing, offerings, love, spirituality, and Fairy magic. Butter brings peace, spirituality and is also linked to Fairy magic.

4 eggs (whites separated from yolks), room temp
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
150g/5.3 oz sugar
120g/4.2 oz butter, melted
100g/3.5 oz plain/all purpose flour
500ml/17 fl oz milk lukewarm
Icing/powdered sugar for dusting cake



Preheat oven to 325F/170C/Gas 3.

Grease and line an 8" square baking tin with parchment.

Separate the eggs and add the egg whites to a mixer and beat until stiff. Set aside.

In a separate bowl beat the egg yolks & sugar until light.

Add butter and vanilla. Beat for a couple of minutes.

Add the flour and mix it in until fully incorporated.

Slowly start adding the milk and beat until everything is well mixed together.

Add the egg whites, a third at a time and gently fold them in using a spatula, repeat until all egg whites are folded in.

Pour batter into baking dish and bake for approximately one hour or until the top is lightly golden. Cool and dust with icing sugar.



A Very Merry, Completely Unconventional, Not Quite Christmas...



One thing that many people struggle with is how to celebrate the holiday season in a household with so many diverse needs.



In our home we have one Pagan, one pre-teen who is leaning heavily towards Paganism, a humbug of an agnostic and two kids who are just happy with the extra food and gifts... But the biggest issue with the holiday season is celebrating both the Solstice and the cultural Christmas with such a neurodiverse household.

My husband has ADHD, our oldest has ADD and various learning difficulties as well as physical disabilities, our pre-teen is autistic with severe sensory modulation difficulties and defiance disorder and our baby has ADHD, not to mention my own cocktail of autism, learning difficulties and physical and mental health issues... Life is pretty overwhelming even when you don't throw in excitement, twinkling lights, changes to the house with decorations and trees and more clutter because of presents!

The only way I personally manage to get through it is by concentrating on the spiritual aspects, interweaving them into our celebrations to ensure we get a chance to wind down and regulate the sensory input.

So, if you're in need of some tips on how to enjoy the holiday season without getting overwhelmed by sensory needs and whatnot, this is the article for you!



1 - Boundaries - Don't be afraid to put your foot down with family and friends about visiting. What's better for your family? Everyone visiting in one day and getting it over with, or spreading them out over the holiday season? This may be a difficult one this year but even if you're doing it over video chats, it's still emotional labour and sensory input and can often be harder for those with additional needs.



As much as you'll want to take into consideration the needs and comfort of others, it's not selfish of you to put your family first. If you or the children are getting overwhelmed (which can look like anything from withdrawing to being so overly excited that they become unmanageable), it's ok to say so and to draw visits to a close.



2 - Spread things out - Just as with the visits, don't be afraid to go unconventional! So what if everyone else has their presents, big dinner and games all in one day? If it makes it easier for you to spread it all out over a few days, do it! In fact, younger children may find this more of an adventure.

We spread the fun over five or six days, from the Solstice to Boxing Day and beyond, depending on extended family and their schedules.

We have present hunts, log burnings, present clue games, big feasts and all sorts, in a big schedule that's pre-agreed by the whole family and written in beautiful leaflets so no one has to worry about what is going to happen and when. Regimented fun can be even more fun for some than the chaos we're socially bullied into thinking is the norm...

3 - Decorations - If twinkling lights are too much; ditch them. If tinsel and garlands are too much; ditch them. Decorations are all festive and whatnot but making too many changes in an environment so abruptly that are clearly only going to be temporary can be distressing to some and they (and you, if it's you) shouldn't be made to feel like they have to put up with being uncomfortable just to satisfy a social convention. It's still the season to be jolly, even without choking on endless glitter showers! 😊

4 - Food - This can be a serious issue for many folk. The dietary and sensory needs of the neurodiverse and disabled can make the feasting expected at this time of year a minefield!



This is the part of the holiday season that I tend to go a little overboard. I'm a feeder and I don't mind admitting it!

But once again, don't feel pressured into eating socially designated foods. If this is the season to be jolly then jolly well be jolly with the food of your choice!... And get some Gaviscon (other brands are available but I couldn't remember the name of any and this is in no way an endorsement!), just in case!

5 - 'Tis the season! - Remember above all: social conventions aren't fast rules to be followed no matter what. This time of year should be about celebrating the return of the Sun, love, family and fun, not about making yourselves uncomfortable and distressed as you fight to fit into a postcard image of what a family at Christmas looks like... You do you!



So... I know this may seem very self explanatory to many of you but you never know when someone needs to hear that it's ok to go against convention and that their needs matter... So allow me to do what I've been doing for this community for over half a decade... And tell you that it's ok to put your needs and the needs of your family first and to heck with convention!

DECK THE HALLS, WITCHES!

xXx Debi xXx

Debi Gregory is a founder of [Pagans Care UK](#) and the Social Media Manager for environmental charity, [Pagan Aid](#). She is also the creator of [The Elemenpals](#) and author of the exciting upcoming children's book, [The Elemenpals: Meet the Pals](#). More on this later in the magazine!

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PaganAid



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EARTH...**



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EVERYTHING**

Fighting poverty & protecting Mother Earth
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Pagan Aid needs your help

Our beautiful Mother Earth is being ravaged. Forests being torn up, minerals mined to excess, seas and rivers poisoned and animals being driven to extinction through destruction of their habitats and a fast changing climate. In the middle of all this are people who are living in poverty either caused by the decimation of their environment or forced to exploit their environment to survive.

Pagan Aid was established to play a part in breaking this cycle of destitution and destruction. It's aims are to help people to break the cycle of poverty through living in harmony with nature. We achieve this by helping to fund small scale projects designed to help poor and marginalised communities to develop their own livelihoods while protecting and assisting



their environment to flourish and thrive. All the projects we support put an equal value on ending poverty and protecting Mother Earth.

Our aims are:

- 1/ To promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public by:
 - A) The preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;
 - B) The relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities;
 - C) The promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration.
- 2/ To advance the education of the public in subjects relating to sustainable development and the protection, enhancement and rehabilitation of the environment and to promote study and research in such subjects provided that the useful results of such study are disseminated to the public at large.

Over the last few years we have helped to support permaculture in the Himalayas, helped victims of a hurricane in Puerto Rico and worked to support the Women's Forest Livelihoods Project in the Passoré province of central Burkina Faso organised by Tree Aid.

Most recently, we have been collaborating with the new organisation Pagans Care UK in raising money to donate to UK community organisations who are co-ordinating support to those in poverty due to Covid.

Now we're looking for our next project to support and so we're asking for your help to find it. The beneficiaries of our support can belong to any religion or none, and be anywhere in the world so long as it meets our aims and those we help are wanting to live in harmony with nature. If you have any suggestions, then please contact us through our [website](#) or our [Facebook page](#)

www.paganaid.org

www.facebook.com/paganaid





Reviews from the Community

We usually have a selection of reviews from the community here, thinking about local celebrants, groups, moots and the like. However, as this year has been completely turned upside down by COVID-19, we've not been able to interact with our communities in quite the same way. Festivals have gone online, or been held in small, select groups or bubbles. And, sadly, many folks have had to put their plans on hold until such a time as we can all come together safely again.

With that in mind, once we're all able to get out and about again, we would **love** to hear from you about the Pagan products and services you interact with. Please send us family-appropriate reviews for things like:

- Celebrants or other Pagan officials
- Organisations
- Websites
- Books, magazines, or ezines
- Groups
- Moots
- Spiritual or Pagan gatherings
- Festivals
- Music



And anything else you can think of! This is your magazine, and we'd love to share with the community the things you enjoy. Send any reviews to aether@paganfederation.co.uk.

With thanks!

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

Win a set of elements Aether Patches



Have you been enjoying the Aether Patch quests? Well, the 4 elements quest patches are now available to purchase from our shop!

<https://www.pfcommunity.org.uk/store/>



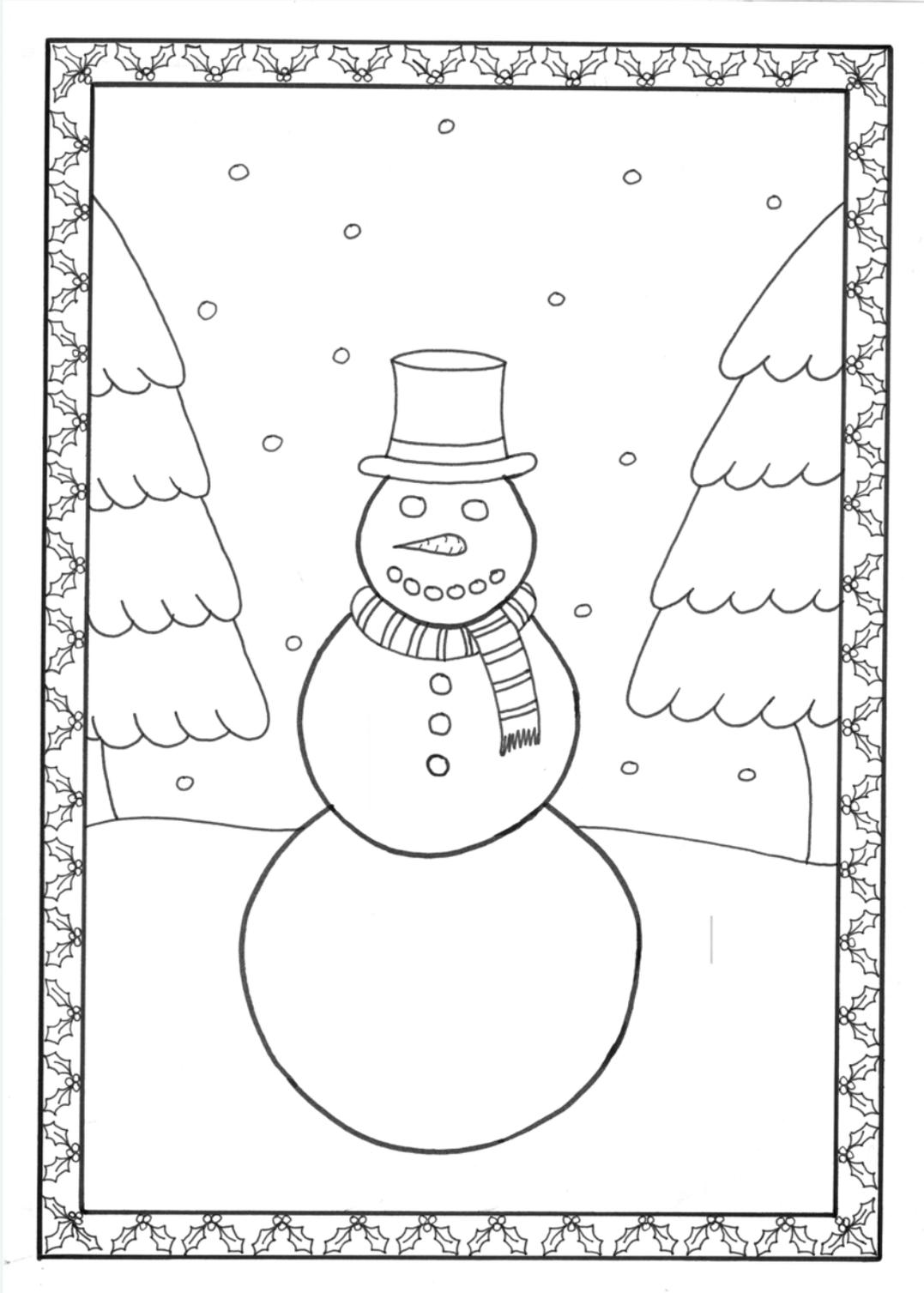
If you'd like to win a set of them, all you have to do to enter is show us something you've done as part of the challenges. This could be a piece of artwork, a photo of you completing a quest, or even a recording of a chant or a piece of music. Share them on our Facebook Group or send to aether@paganfederation.co.uk

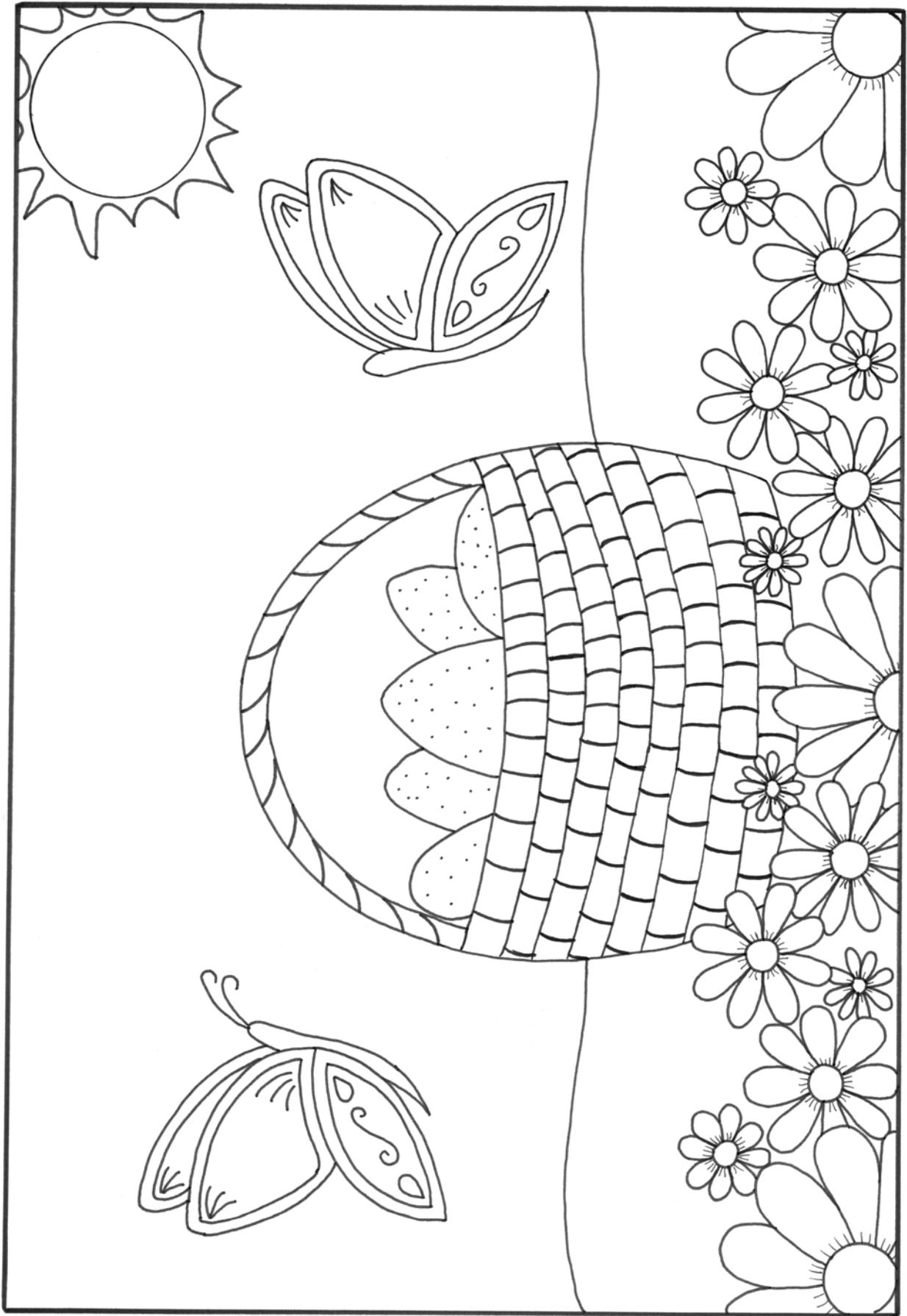
Only one entry per child, deadline for entries Jan 26th 2021 and the winner will be chosen at random and announced during our Imbolc online festival on January 31st .



Seasonal Colouring

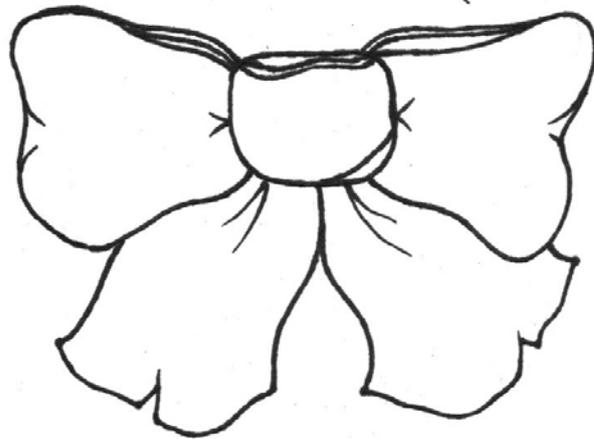
Indulge your artistic side with these printable colouring sheets! Many thanks to Kay Savage for their creative and seasonal wreaths, and to our President Sarah Kerr for her jolly snowman and delightful spring scene. Simply right click the images and print, or save them to your device for later.















Kay Savage is a successful musician and artist, with credits including the cover artwork for Pagan Portals: Celtic Witchcraft and their awesome track Nightmare Club. If you'd like to see more of Kay's work, had over to their [Facebook page](#) or check out their music on [Spotify](#).



As well as being the President of the Pagan Federation, which definitely keeps her very busy, Sarah Kerr is one third of [Witch Path Forward](#), a fantastic website packed with resources for Pagans of all levels and experiences. Services include readings, an upcoming online school, and "Ask a Question". Plus, it's where you can meet The Elemenpals, Debi Gregory's fantastic creation which helps teach younger children about the Earth and everything on Her. More on that later...



Imbolc Aether Patch!

For those of you who are new to Aether Patches, they are a scheme similar to Guides and Scouts, where you complete challenges to earn the patch. Each quest pack is full of challenges suitable for a variety of ages. Simply choose a gem level from the front of the pack, complete that number of challenges from the across the five senses, then either download a free certificate or purchase a physical patch from our shop.

Our new Imbolc Patch has lots of activities and ideas to help children from 3 to 103 understand more about the festival, get involved and connect as a family. Download the Imbolc quest pack and all our other patches here..

<https://www.pfcommunity.org.uk/aether-patches/>



We'd love for you to share with us your thoughts and creations here and in our Facebook group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PaganFederationFamilies>



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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



Is your child a budding poet? Get them to submit their creations to the below email address.



Children's Poetry Book

Pagan Federation are after submissions for an anthology of poetry by the children in our community.

The themes are:

Moon and Stars

Animals

Weather

Woodland

Myth and Magic

Send your poems along with name and age of the child who wrote it, to

ne-disabilities@paganfederation.co.uk

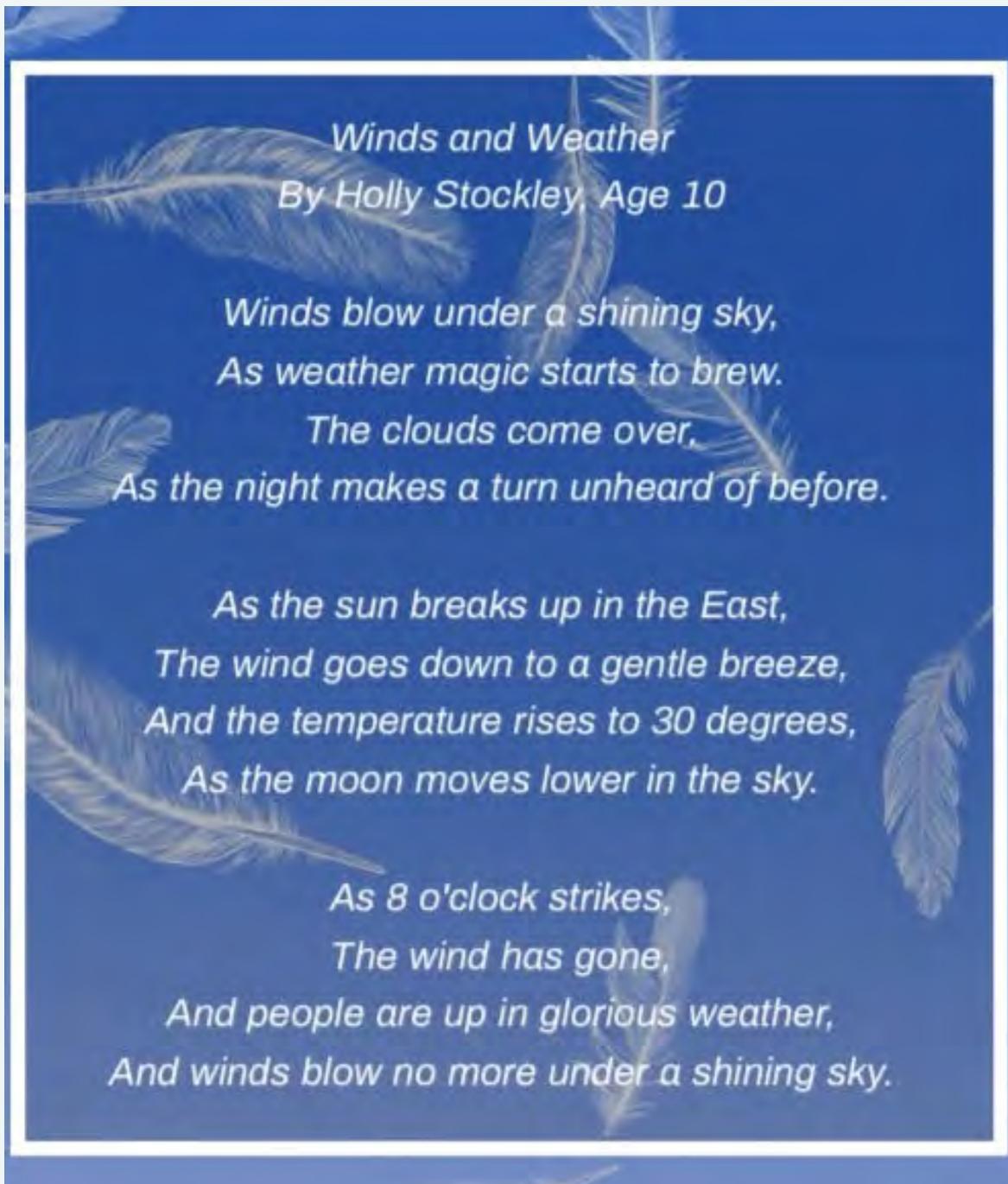
Illustrations to accompany the poems are also welcome

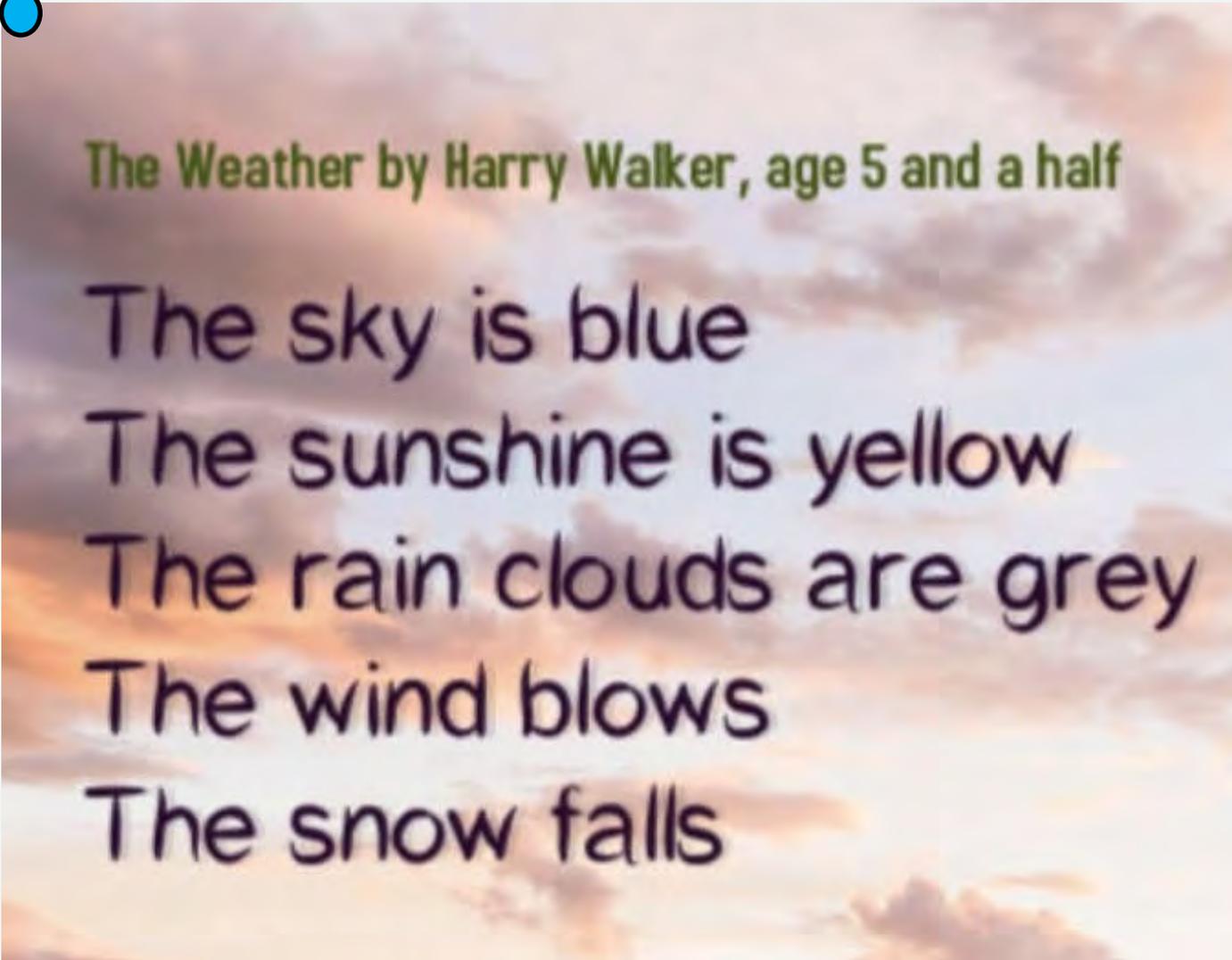


★ Your Poems ★



We're so delighted to be compiling poems from children in the Pagan community, with the aim of publishing a whole volume. The Pagan Federation already published a [volume of poetry from adults](#), so we thought it was time to give the kids a voice! Here are some of the poems we've already received, shared with kind permission. Send poems to ne-disabilities@paganfederation.co.uk. The only proviso is that the author is under 18, and that they match one of our topics of Moon and Stars, Animals, Weather, Woodland, or Myth and Magic. We can't wait to read them!





The Weather by Harry Walker, age 5 and a half

The sky is blue

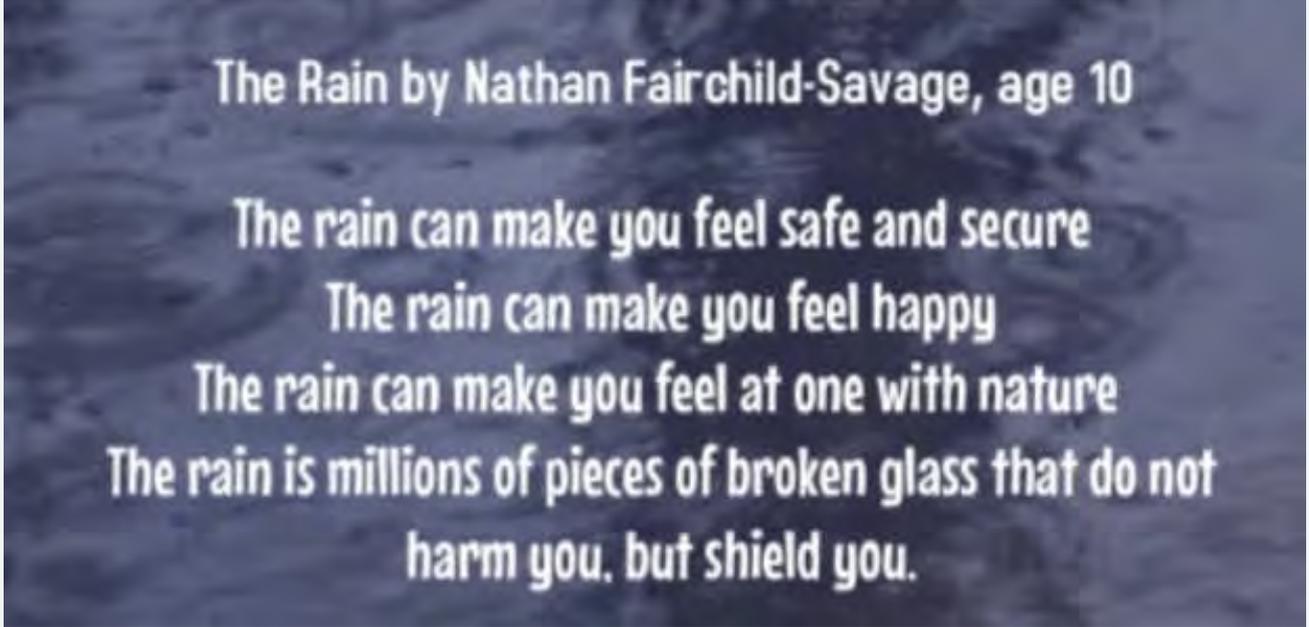
The sunshine is yellow

The rain clouds are grey

The wind blows

The snow falls

Harry's mummy Kelly noted that all she had to do was give Harry the word, "Sky", and he came up with the rest all by himself. A real talent in the making, here!



The Rain by Nathan Fairchild-Savage, age 10

The rain can make you feel safe and secure

The rain can make you feel happy

The rain can make you feel at one with nature

The rain is millions of pieces of broken glass that do not harm you, but shield you.

Magic to Mundane
A Diamanté, by Christopher Myers, Age 13



Magic
Beautiful, Spiritual
Flying, Casting, Creating
Cats, Cauldrons, Cars, Cubicles
Working, Shopping, Driving
Tragic, Troublesome
Mundane

Community Poems—These poems are created in our [Facebook group](#) each Wednesday.

Moon and Stars, by Elise, aged 7; Persephone, aged 5; Raven, aged 3; Nathan, aged 10; Evelyynn, aged 10 and Rachel, aged 7.

The moon is bright and the stars are far
I want to go to a star
When sky dark, stars go bash and smash
And when you see a shooting star, it's gone in a flash!
So make a wish and make it fast
A wish is what you get to do
If you're lucky, it will come true





Weather, currently by Has, aged 10; Raven, aged 3, and Nathan, aged 10.

When it's hot, I like it a lot

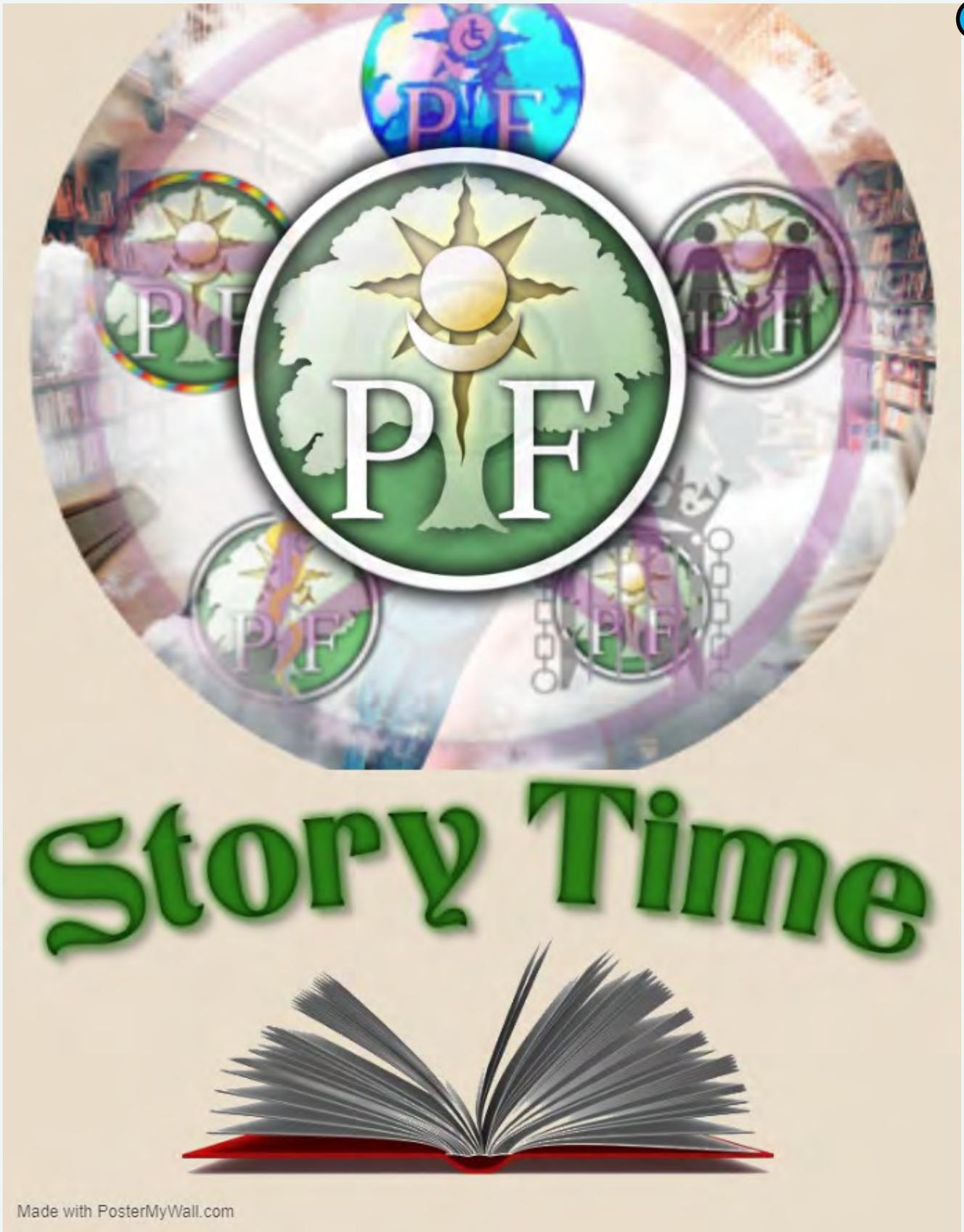
Snow is cold, I like to play in the snow

The rain is wet; it makes my cat fret



*This poem needs more lines! Can you help us complete it?
Join in at our [Facebook Group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/PaganFederationFamilies) on Poetic Wednesdays.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PaganFederationFamilies>*





Made with PosterMyWall.com

This issue we have Story Time with a difference. We've got two stories written by a young member of the Pagan community. Nathan wrote the first story when he was just six, and it's suitable for all ages. The second story he wrote at 10 years old, and it's not for the faint-hearted! Parental discretion required, but we're marking it as "Red", due to some spooky bits and mentions of swearing.

● The Grass God, The Fire God and The Wind

Once upon a time there lived a boy. His mother was very poor. He was very poor as well. They had no food. The boy had to go hunting for his mother and father. He didn't like hunting but he had to do it otherwise his parents and him would die.

One day, he saw a special mark on himself. It was a special circle with a line through and a circle inside. He didn't know that his mark would glow, but the next day it did!

He was changing into grass! He was all green like the forest and he could talk to animals.

There was another boy; his big brother. He was very rich, and very mean. He got a mark as well, but this mark was a circle with a fire inside. It started to glow as well, and he started turning into fire!

'Now', he said to himself, 'I will be the most cool guy. Or rather I will be so hot!'

The grass brother had more strength than the fire brother had, but the fire brother had the power to make things set on fire. But the grass brother, whatever his brother tried to do to the forest and the land, he could fix it.

He summoned the wind. He had more power than anything. The wind could bring anything back to life and it blew the flames out. The forest was peaceful again.



The Attic

Have you ever heard the story of the Alamoto and where it came from? No? Then I will tell you. But beware, this tale is not for the faint hearted. You have been warned, and do not blame me when you have nightmares tonight. will You? Good, you better not. Anyway, on with the story.

It was Tuesday night, 5th of January 2007 in Cloverdale, England. The hail was so fast anyone could mistake the noise of it hitting the window for gunfire. Literally, it was SO loud. Anyway, inside the Archer house, the whole family were playing snap together. “Mum, why do we have to play this boring trashy game? I want to play street fighter!” said Steve, the son in the family.

“Because it’s a fun activity that we can all do together. That silly little game of your is only two players, hmmm?” said Steve’s mother, Rebecka.

“Well yeah, but...”

“No buts.”

“Ha, you just said b-”

“Michael, you are NOT helping.”

“Sorry...”

Michael was Steve’s best friend from University. They swore at each other quite a bit, but they didn’t mean it. They were always only messing. After it was James’ turn, Steve’s Dad, it was Steve’s turn.

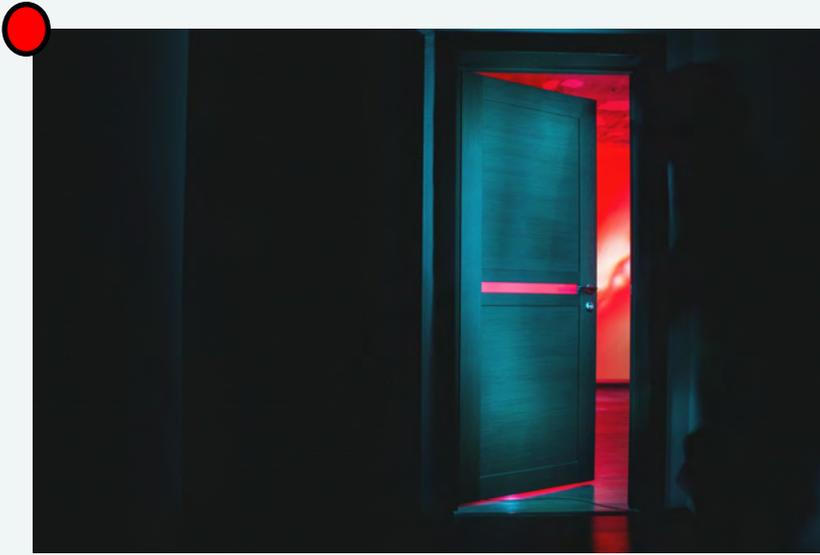
“SNAP!” Steve shouted in excitement.

“ Well done Steve!” said Rebecka.

“Thanks...please can me and Michael go play street fighter in my room now? Please?” Begged Steve.

“Aww go on then...but DO NOT go in the attic, ok?”





“Ok! Come on Mike!” He shouted down as he charged up the stairs.

“Coming!”

When Mike *finally* arrived at the top of the stairs, he thought to himself ‘Hey, why don’t me and Steve go secretly check out the **attic** for fun?’

He decided to go tell Steve about his awesome idea.

“Hey! Steve!”

“Yeah?”

“How about we go check out the **attic**?” Michael whispered to him.

“Umm... I’m not sure that’s a good idea...”

“Aww come on! It’ll be fun!”

“FINE! But if they catch us and ask why we are in the **attic**, I’m telling them that this was YOUR idea, ok?”

“Ok, ok. Anyway, what are you waiting for? Let us go to the **attic**!”

“Alright, I’m coming! Oh, and please stop talking like Shakespeare,” Steve answered.

“Aww, ok.”

As they made their way through the dark hallway to the **attic**, Steve felt a strange feeling that something was watching them very, very closely. “Welp, this is it. After you, Steve.” Michael said politely, once they had both reached the top of the stairs.

“No, no after you.”

“No, please, after you.”

“NO. After you.”

“NO! AFTER YOU!”

“Bro! Shut up! They’re going to hear us!”

As Michael and Steve climbed up the stairs to the old, mysterious, wooden door that led into the **attic**, neither of them could see a thing. “Bro, where are you?! My torch battery died! I can’t see a thing!”

“I’VE COME TO TAKE YOUR SOUL.” Michael said, shining his torch at his face from under his chin.

“AHH! Aww, Michael, that was NOT funny!”

“Ha! You should have seen the look on your face! It was absolutely priceless! Ha! That is NEVER going to get old. Anyway, fortunately for you Steve, I have a spare torch on me.”

“Thank goodness!”

“Here you go pal.”

“Thanks. Anyway, we have to keep moving.”

“Agreed.”

As Steve snooped about the room, he used his torch to light the way. Finally, he came across something different from all the cardboard boxes full of Halloween and Christmas decorations from last year. It was a book of some sort. “Hey Michael, come check this out.”

“What you got there?”

“I don’t know, some sort of book.”

“Cool, what does it say?”

“Let’s find out,” Steve said as he opened the book.

“It just says some weird jumble of letters,” Steve said disappointedly.

“Just read it.”

“Ok, ok. It says alokono amanza oreeba enano.”

Suddenly, the book started to shake uncontrollably and then rose above the ground on its own.

“Umm, Steve...”

“Yeah?”



● “What’s it doing?”

“How should I know, huh?!”

“Fair point.”

The book started to rise higher into the air and there was a sudden burst of light. With it came a huge force that sent Michael and Steve flying backwards into the wall.

Two floors down:

“Darling, what was that noise?” asked Rebecka suspiciously.

“It’s probably just the neighbours,” replied James.

“Ok.”

15 mins later back in the **attic**:

“Ugh, my head....what happened? Michael, you good bro?” Steve said, worriedly.

“Yeah, I’m good.”

“Cool.”

As Steve looked around the room to see if anything was different, he heard a noise come from downstairs. “Uhh, Michael, did you hear that?”

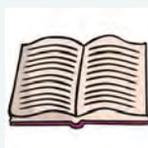
“I sure did.”

“Let’s go check it out.”

“O-ok.” Said Steve with a tremble in his voice.

As Steve and Michael made their way back through the hallway leading to the ominous door of the **attic**, another noise came from downstairs. “Umm, Michael, maybe this isn’t such a good idea...”

What happens next in The Attic? Something supernatural is afoot... but what? Come along to our [Facebook group](#) and share your ideas! We hope you enjoyed these stories and if you’d like to submit any fiction for our magazine, please send it to aether@paganeferation.co.uk



WINTER SOLSTICE AROUND THE WORLD



The Solstices and Equinoxes are often celebrated in different ways around the world, and in different cultures. Solstice means “Sun Stands Still” and refers to the way the seasonal movement of the sun in the sky seems to pause, before changing.

Because anyone can experience a Solstice, as it’s an astronomical fact, there have been celebrations of these remarkable events since before written history began. Midwinter or the Winter Solstice is particularly poignant as it reminds us that the sun is returning, and that the dark and cold of winter will end. Winter Solstice is the shortest day and longest night, but soon the days will get longer, and eventually warmer. When it is Winter Solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, it is Summer Solstice in the Southern Hemisphere.

Check the date and time of the Winter Solstice where you are via [This Link](#).

Stonehenge, England

In the UK, many people visit Stonehenge to watch the sun rise on Solstice morning. The sun rises in the northeast, behind the Heel stone, and the rays shine directly into the stone circle. This year, as it’s not safe for folks to gather, [English Heritage](#) are streaming the event online via a [Facebook Event](#).





Jul, Norway



In Norway, presents are often shared on Christmas Eve, but it's called *julaften* instead. Gifts might be brought by the *julenisse*, a house spirit in a red hat, who needs porridge with a pat of butter on top to stay happy. Nisse are similar to the Swedish tomte, and are currently popular in the UK in the shape of gonks.

Toji, Japan

In Japan, balance and harmony are celebrated at the Winter Solstice, and the coming return of the spring. One Winter Solstice custom is yuzu-yu, which means taking a warm bath with yuzu fruit. It's thought that surrounding yourself in the fragrance of citrus fruit lifts your mood.



Yalda, Iran

Iranians celebrate the longest night of the year, Yalda night, with family gatherings and food. Feasts include pomegranates, watermelons, and nuts. The red colour of the fruits represents the coming sunrise.

Icy Swimming, Antarctica

Researchers at Davis, a permanent outpost in Antarctica, have been known to strip off and dive into ice holes to celebrate the solstice. That sounds just a little too cold for me!

How will you be celebrating this year? ~ Mabh





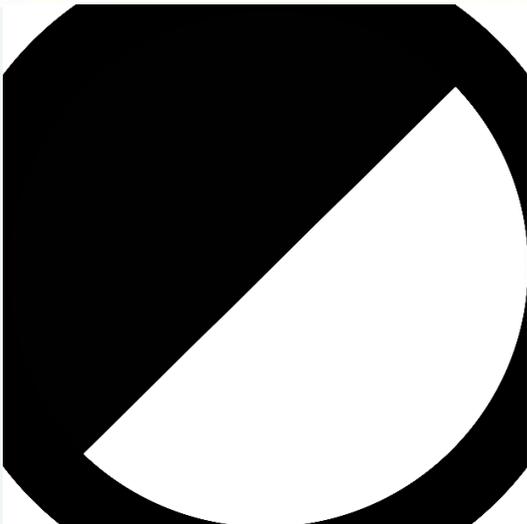
Greenmantle

A Pagan Journal

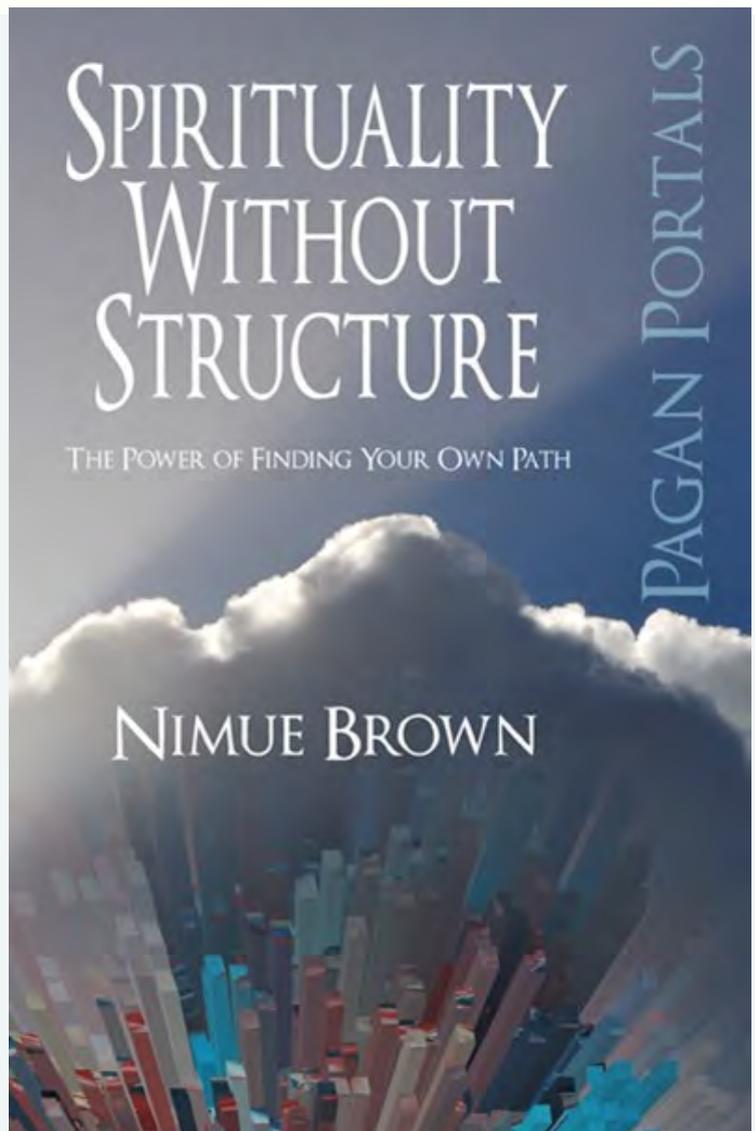
<http://www.greenmantle.org.uk/>



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.



Moon Books is a publisher exploring Paganism and spirituality, with books covering a diverse range of topics and paths. Find out more at their website, <https://www.johnhuntpublishing.com/moon-books/>.



PRACTICALLY PAGAN **AN** **ALTERNATIVE** **GUIDE TO...**

Practically Pagan is a new series of books from Moon Books, designed to give a spiritual twist to everyday things like gardening and cooking. The series focuses on simple ways to introduce magic into your lives, and makes you realise you may already be living a more spiritual life than you realise! Current titles include:

Practically Pagan: An Alternative Guide to Cooking by Rachel Patterson

Practically Pagan: An Alternative Guide to Gardening by Elen Sentier

Practically Pagan: An Alternative Guide to Health and Wellbeing by Irisanya Moon

Practically Pagan: Magical Living by Maria DeBlassie

Future titles include volumes on Pagan Parenting, and the next one coming out is by our very own Mabh Savage, and is **An Alternative Guide to Planet Friendly Living**. This book focuses on ways to practice your spirituality in a way that's kind to the planet, thinking about the offerings you use, the way you practice ritual, and how you interact with nature.

We've got an exclusive peek at this book, which is yet to be released! In keeping with our magazine, Mabh has released a small section from her chapter on **Raising the Next Generation**, where she thinks about how best to encourage our children to take up the challenge of looking after Planet Earth.





In the Garden

If you have a garden, even if it's only tiny, this is a wonderful starting point for getting your kids interested in nature. According to the National Geographic, you're just as likely to discover a new species in your garden as in a tropical rainforest how exciting is that?!? Taking photos of the plants, bugs, birds, and other creatures in your garden can become a fascinating project; not just a fun exploration but intensely educational on many levels. Kids learn about biodiversity, and enjoy the surprise factor of just how many species can survive right there in their yard. They learn that lifting a stone gently can reveal a home for tiny families, different to theirs yet similar in many respects. They learn about being gentle in order to preserve these creatures and their habitats; a gentleness which, if nurtured, could stay with them their entire lives.



If you don't have a garden or yard, you could grow some plants on a windowsill, or try making a terrarium. You could learn how to craft a bird box or bat box, and involve your children in that project. You might have somewhere to hang a basket of flowers, or trailing fruit like strawberries or some species of raspberry or tomato. Watch for pests like aphids, then watch for their predators like ladybirds, and explain what's happening and why. Explain why, thanks to the ladybird, you don't have to use harmful chemicals like pesticides. Plant flowers that attract bees, and talk about pollination and how as well as pollinating the flowers, the bees also pollinate our food crops, so looking after them is looking after ourselves. This can start conversations about how everything is connected, and the beginnings of an understanding of ecosystems.

You can even insert some aspects of your own spirituality into your garden ecology. Talk about the turn of the seasons and how that relates to your faith. Speak of plants and trees and which deities or beings they're connected to. Tell stories, share folklore and superstitions, and show how looking after the things we hold sacred is about looking after the planet itself.

Find out more about Practically Pagan at [Moon Books](#) and please come and join the [Facebook group](#) where the authors share insights, tips and more every day.



Meet the Team!

Say hello to some of the Children and Families Team members who are here for you if you need them.

Lisa

I am the PF Families Liaison for London and I run a sporadic house moot for pagan families to gather, share experiences and celebrate the seasons. I live in north London where I hang out in the park with my kids a lot, work as an astrologer, and volunteer at a local nature reserve. Being part of the PF Families team is brilliant because we make things happen which make a difference and have fun while we're doing it.



Jenny

I'm Jenny, I am a Druid, and I am the new Education and Youth Manager for the Pagan Federation. I spent around 20 years as an RE teacher and still carry out some tasks for the religious education council including as an assessor for the Religious Education Quality Mark, I am involved in the public examination process (GCSE and A level in Religious Studies) and I am currently studying for a PhD at Durham University looking at modern British Druidry. My partner and I also run a progressive funeral home. The Children and Families Team has obvious connections with Education and Youth, and I am excited to be involved with both!





Lyn

My name is Lyn O'Callaghan and I am the Deputy Manager for the Pagan Federation Children & Families Team. I have worked with children and their carers for most of my career, as a Nursery Nurse, Family Worker and a Community Support Officer. It is the skills I learnt from these roles that I want to bring to the team. I am looking forward to a time when we can all meet again and the team will be arranging trips or real life get togethers. Until then, I will be keeping in touch with you all through our [Facebook page](#), Kitty's Kidz Korner and all the other online events we are organising. I am very excited at how we are able to grow the [Aether Patch Quests](#) and hope you are enjoying them as much as we are. I believe I have a wealth of knowledge about raising Pagan children which I hope to bring to the team so we are better able to support all of you.



Mabh

I'm the secretary for the Children and Families team, and the editor of Aether, so if there's something you want more of in this magazine, I'm the one to talk to! I love that even during lockdown our team has held online festivals and a number of community initiatives like Kidz Korner, and I'm very excited about the kids' poetry book we're putting together.



If you need to contact a member of the team, head to the [Pagan Federation Community Support page](#) on Facebook and drop us a message. A member of our team will be happy to help you or point you in the right direction!

<https://www.facebook.com/PFCommunitySupport>

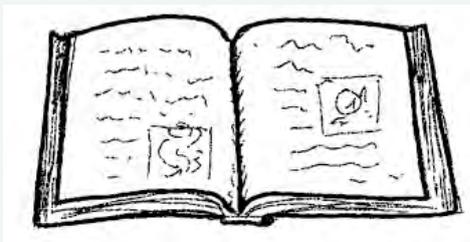


Kitty's Young Pagan's Quick Guide to...

Pagan Tools

The first thing to remember with tools is not all Pagans use them. You don't need a wand; you can just use your finger to point. However, for many Pagans their tools help to focus their minds and therefore their magic, making it more powerful and precise.

Here are some of the more common tools for some Pagan paths.

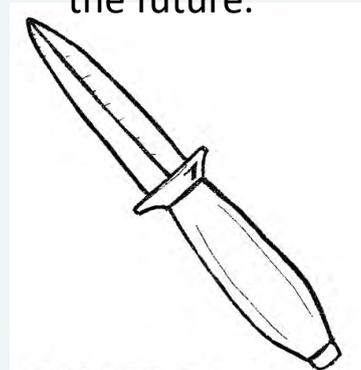


Book of Shadows/Grimoire

This can be used as a journal or a place to collect spells, observations, correspondences and anything else you feel might support your practice now and in the future.

Athame/Ceremonial Knife

This is traditionally a black handled knife and is often used to draw the magical circles that makes sacred space. Some Pagans use salt, cord or their imagination to draw their circles

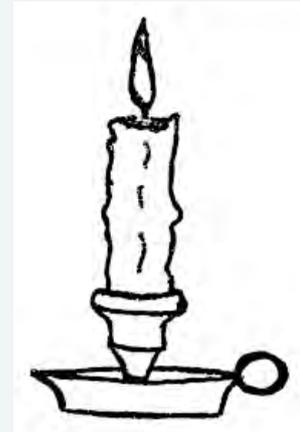


Broom

Many Pagans use their broom to clear unwanted energy away.

Candles

Candles can be a focus for spells and their importance is in the colour, shape and size that is used.

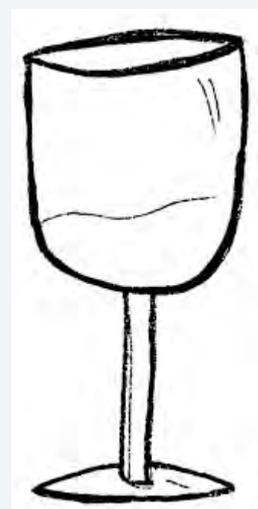


Cauldron

Many Pagans use a three-legged pot to cook food or mix potions; it can also be used to burn parts of a spell in a contained place.

Chalice

The chalice is often used to hold a sacred drink during a ritual. It can be the symbol of Water within a ritual.





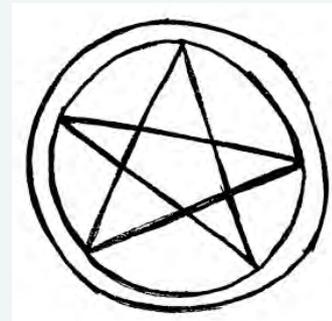
Incense



Incense is burnt to create different scents for a variety of uses, from ritual to meditation, and even spell casting. It can come in many forms, including sticks, loose herbs and resins, and little cones.

Pentacle

A pentacle is not used by all Pagans. It is a disc with designs on it, used within ritual. It usually has a pentagram (5-pointed star) on it, and other symbols, such as those representing a God & Goddess



Wand

The wand is used by some Pagans to channel and direct their energy. Wands are usually made of wood, can be made of metal or crystal and can be plain or decorated.

Look out for more resources for young pagans on our [website!](https://www.pfcommunity.org.uk/children-and-families-team/)
<https://www.pfcommunity.org.uk/children-and-families-team/>

Family Deities - Chantico

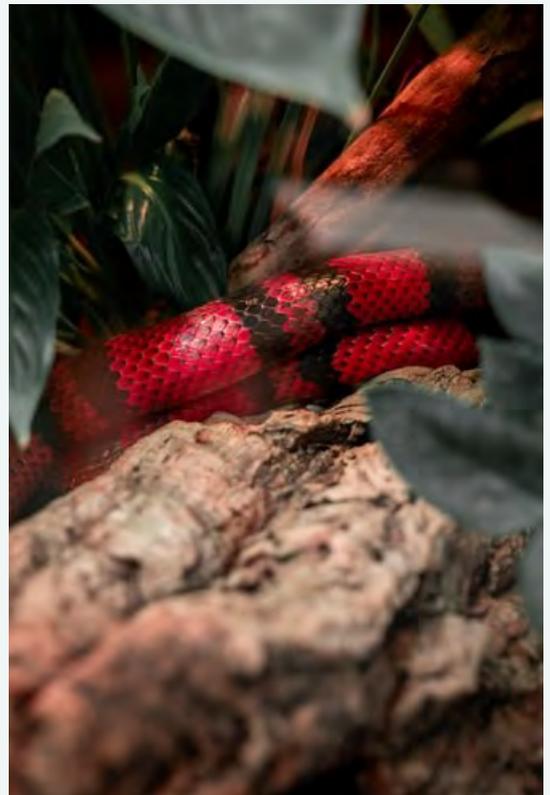


Taken from our blog, [Thoughts from the Aether](#), and written by Ursula who is the Children and Families Liaison for the West Midlands.

Chantico (pronounced chan-TEE-ko) is the Aztec Goddess of the family hearth and home and a very comforting Goddess to have around. She is a domestic deity who lives in your fire and keeps your home safe and cosy. Being a fiercely protective Goddess of fire, it's not surprising that she is also Goddess of Volcanoes!

According to many Aztec myths, Chantico brings wealth and stability to the home. So it's no wonder that the meaning of her name is 'in the house' as that's where she lives. She also protects the home from thieves – and losing things! So if you are prone to losing your favourite toy, she's a great Goddess to know! Chantico is very protective of all special and precious things (like your favourite teddy, blanket or toy) and it's a great idea to let her look after your favourite items to keep them safe and sound.

So, what did Chantico look like? Well, she is shown in a variety of images. Sometimes Chantico wears a gown of cactus spikes and red snakes. I suppose that doesn't sound very friendly, but if you think about it, it's a great deterrent to anyone who might be thinking about coming into the home and stealing things! She's also been known as the 'lady of the chili pepper' and you'll find that she's sometimes holding a pod or two of red chillies. This Goddess loves fire in any and every form, it would seem!



More on the next page...

One spice you don't want to mention to her however is paprika. Paprika was one of Chantico's favourite spices – it looks and tastes like fire! However, Chantico once angered the food God Tonacatecuhtli because she couldn't resist eating



roasted fish with paprika on it on a fast day when paprika was banned. He turned her into a dog to show his displeasure. Being a lover of the hearth fire, some people have said that this is why dogs so love to cosy up on the hearth by the fire.

Chantico's themes are kinship, communication, divination, protection, unity and cooperation. She's a great Goddess to pray to if you are going away on holiday and want to come back to your home safe and sound. Arguments can be settled by calling on Chantico's wisdom and asking her to aid you in communication, unity and cooperation. Chantico also has a particular fondness of children, and Children can petition her to know the future.

At a time when families are feeling less connected to one another than ever, Chantico is a fantastic Goddess to ask for help in rekindling the fires of kinship, connection, communication, unity and cooperation. Gather your family together, light a candle (the flame represents Chantico's presence) and rededicate yourselves to oneness.

Now, Chantico loves all precious and beautiful things with a hint of fire in them. This includes silver, copper, red-toned agate, amethyst or jade. Wearing or carrying some of these items is said to draw Chantico's presence and encourage the warmth of kinship no matter where you might be. Another idea might be to take a piece of paper with the word 'KINSHIP' or 'FAMILY' or 'HEARTH' written on it and write 3 things you are grateful and want more of about the word you have chosen. Now wrap it around one of these metals or stones. Carry it with you, or place it somewhere that feels right in your home and share Chantico's unifying energy with all of your family, friends and your home.

To wrap it up, Chantico is an Aztec Goddess who fiercely protects whatever is valuable and precious. The more we study about Chantico, the more we see that whilst she's associated with 'precious' things like jewellery, at her core, her main focus is on



protecting families and homes. She understands that homes are precious places where families live, grow, love and laugh together and she's invested in keeping the fire of connection and love burning in our homes and family lives. This is why her themes are strongly associated with communication, connection, kinship, unity and cooperation. Protecting our families, and the threads that weave our families together come from a place of strong communication, unity, cooperation and kinship. It is here where Chantico really shines.

This being said it is unsurprising that Chantico is also associated with fertility, wealth and abundance. As a Goddess who strongly believes in family, fertility is a natural ability for her. In fact, whilst we wouldn't want to gossip, some people say that Chantico leads a secret double life as the Fertility Goddess Cuaxoloti. Wealth (which does not always translate to material wealth) and abundance are ways that Chantico secures the protection of homes and families.

Fun Historical Fact:

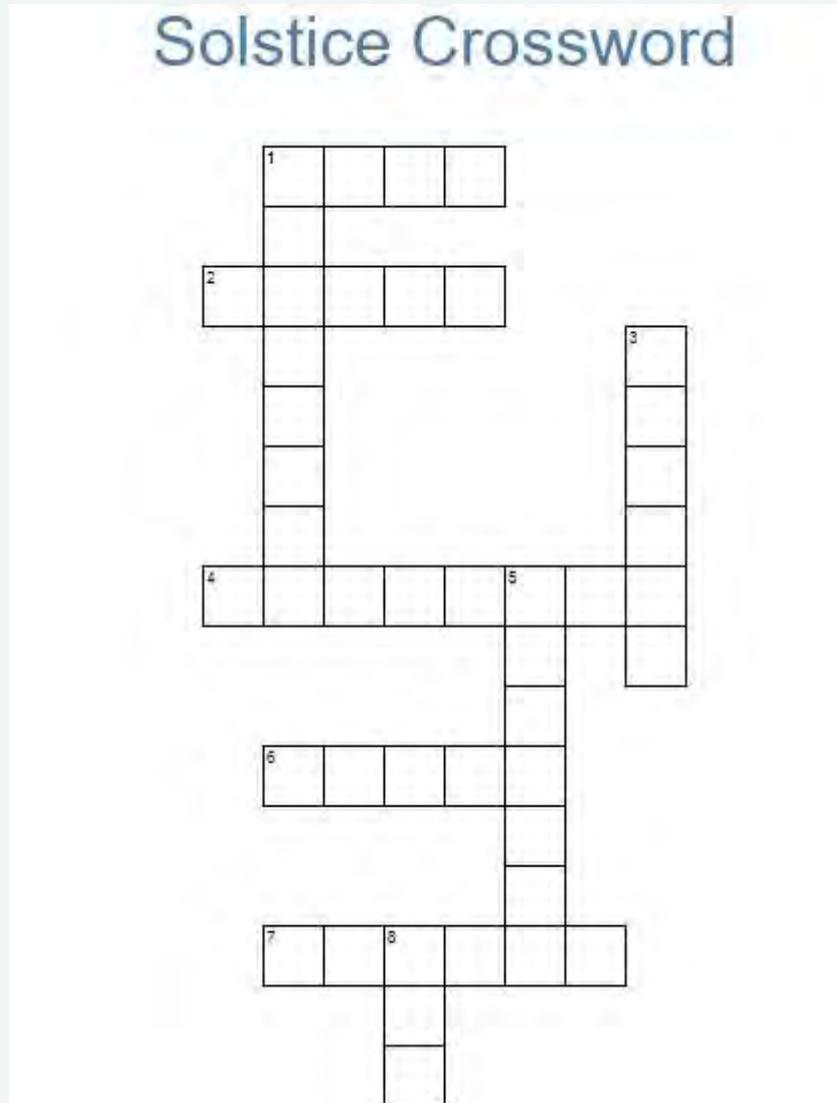
In 1519, after the arrival of the Conquistadores and their accompanying missionaries, Chantico's primary votive image was secretly buried to keep it safe and sound.

What deities do you associate with family and home?



Pagan Puzzler

Can you solve our crossword? All the answers can be found earlier in the magazine!



Across

1. A large bird visible all year round
2. The longest night in Iran
4. Means Sun Stands Still
6. A house spirit that loves porridge
7. A green space attached to your home

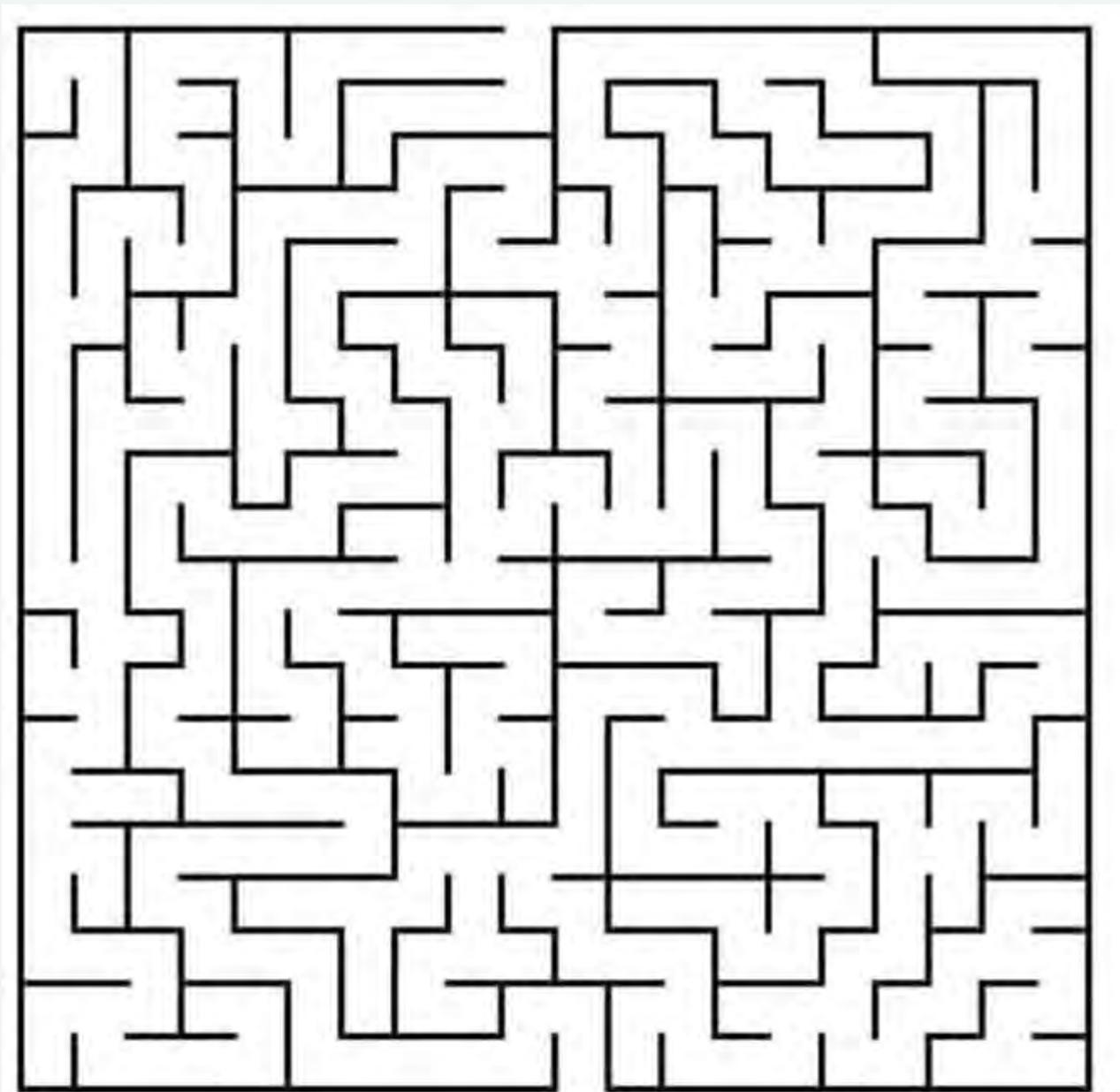
Down

1. An Aztec family goddess
3. The coldest season
5. Burn this for fragrance and maybe magic
8. Bright colour associated with sunrise

Answers in the back of the magazine.. No cheating!



Help the House Spirit find their porridge!





From the Window

Another excerpt from our blog, [Thoughts from the Aether](#). This series was designed to help readers connect with nature, even when they were stuck at home.



The Fox

Whether you live out in the country or in the heart of the city, you've got a pretty good chance of seeing a fox at some point in your life. *Vulpes Vulpes* is the Latin name for our Red Fox, the largest of the true fox species. Because of this name, when something is fox-like we often say it is vulpine. Fox-like traits traditionally include:

- Cunning
- Intelligence
- Tricking others and mischief
- Sneakiness

It's a bit of a shame, really, that these negative connotations are found in stories about foxes all over the world. Foxes are scavengers, which means they eat whatever they can find. This means they *are* sneaky as they steal, from time to time. They steal food from our bins, and small animals from unprotected hutches, and even hens from some hen houses. But that's their nature, and mostly, they prefer food that is easy to find, such as animals that have already died or easy to catch protein like insects and small mammals.

Foxes are also amazing family animals. When they breed, which they do once a year, mum-fox (the vixen) can have between one and eleven (yes, eleven!) babies which are called kits. Dad-fox, or the dog, goes out to find food for the family,



and they all stick together until the young kits are old enough to fend for themselves. If you think you may have foxes nearby, look out of your window after dark. Even in brightly lit areas, at this time of year (spring to early summer) you may see a male fox wandering the streets looking for food for his family.

If you're very lucky, you may see the whole family come out to play, especially as the kits get older. This is more likely in very quiet areas. Often, the vixen will move into the area first, then her kits will approach, cautiously at first but then with more confidence as they become aware there is no danger. At this point, they will often start to play and pounce as they enjoy the freedom away from their underground den, which is similar to a burrow. Playing foxes are often very funny to watch, especially as they bounce up and down.

From what we know of fox behaviour, we could make a whole new list of associations. Keep the cunning and the intellect- those are often good traits! But add in:

- Family love
- Playfulness
- Making the most of what you have
- Caution, but never letting that caution stop you

Can you see any of the traits of the fox in yourself?

Myths about the fox range from them being omens of war (China) to being skilled warriors or the mind (Peru). In Irish folklore, the Onchú or waterdog is a supernatural creature that's part wolf, part eagle, part lion, but with the head of a fox, further enforcing the idea that the fox is all about the mind and intellect.

Probably the most famous European folk tale about foxes is that of Reynard. Reynard was an anthropomorphic fox, which means he was given the characteristics of a human. Reynard was a wily trickster, and often outwitted a wolf called Ysengrim, highlighting the power of brains over brawn.



I think one of the most breath-taking and positive fox myths is from Finland. There's a story that a fox created the Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights, by dashing through the snow. As the fox swept its tail through the snow, the cold, white flakes were swept back up into the sky to become the glowing phenomenon. The word given for this is "revontulet", which translates as "Fox Fires". How beautiful is that?

Can you find a story about foxes from your own path, tradition, or heritage, or linked to a path that you're interested in?





Debi Gregory is the author of *The Elemenpals*, a “family of elemental imps who are learning all about Mother Earth and her children so that one day they can be grown up Elements and take care of the Earth. They're helped by woodland creatures, older elements and Mother Earth as they discover, play, watch and learn about the world around them.” (From the [Witch Path Forward website](#), home of *The Elemenpals*.)

The Elemenpals: Meet the Pals! is a wonderful book for young readers, encouraging them to find ways to connect to the Earth. Cleverly, the author has left out descriptions of colour, gender, or ability, so there is nothing stopping a child from relating to whichever Elemenpal they feel closest to.

Our own Mabh Savage was lucky enough to read the book before it went off to the publishers. Here's what she had to say:

Quality books for Pagan children or children growing up in Pagan families are a little thin on the ground, especially when it comes to early readers. This imaginative and adorable creation fills that gap beautifully, with a gang of elemental beings who spark the desire to learn about the world and nature. I showed this book to my nine-year-old and my one-year-old, and they both loved it. The nine-year-old related to the emotions displayed by the Elemenpals, and was immediately excited to know what further adventures they would be embarking on. My one-year-old found it soothing and was very interested in the pictures; it was a lovely way for us to bond together. This beautifully illustrated and engagingly written book is for any parent who wants to gently introduce the ideas of the elements, nature, reverence for our planet and even healthy expression of emotions.

[Pre order](#) your copy now!

<https://bit.ly/2WcyxPe>

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Red snake: https://unsplash.com/photos/BgD_dfg_4D0 by Chris Reyem

Organic chilli on a local market: <https://unsplash.com/photos/11VU8ydkbiA> by Artem Beliaikin

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Sleepy Trails fox: <https://unsplash.com/photos/7LzKELgdzzl> by Scott Walsh

Fox in a spring forest: <https://unsplash.com/photos/w3lQVmuK8fw> by Andreas Rønningen

Aurorae overhead, Jerisjärvi, Finland: <https://unsplash.com/photos/C-Y7AwlEPCc> by Jaanus Jagomägi



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Original Aether design and concept by Debi Gregory. Legacy content including glossary and useful links by Debi Gregory.

Corrections and suggestions to aether@paganfederation.co.uk

We try to be as inclusive as possible in our magazine. All articles are written by individuals with their own paths and beliefs, and those may be very different to yours, and we always try to be respectful of that. If you found anything within our magazine that was problematic or personally offensive, please let us know at the above email address. After all, it's only when we know better, that we can do better.



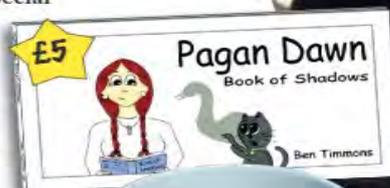
Pagan Federation Shop

Did you know we currently have LOTS of special promotions happening in the PF products shop online?

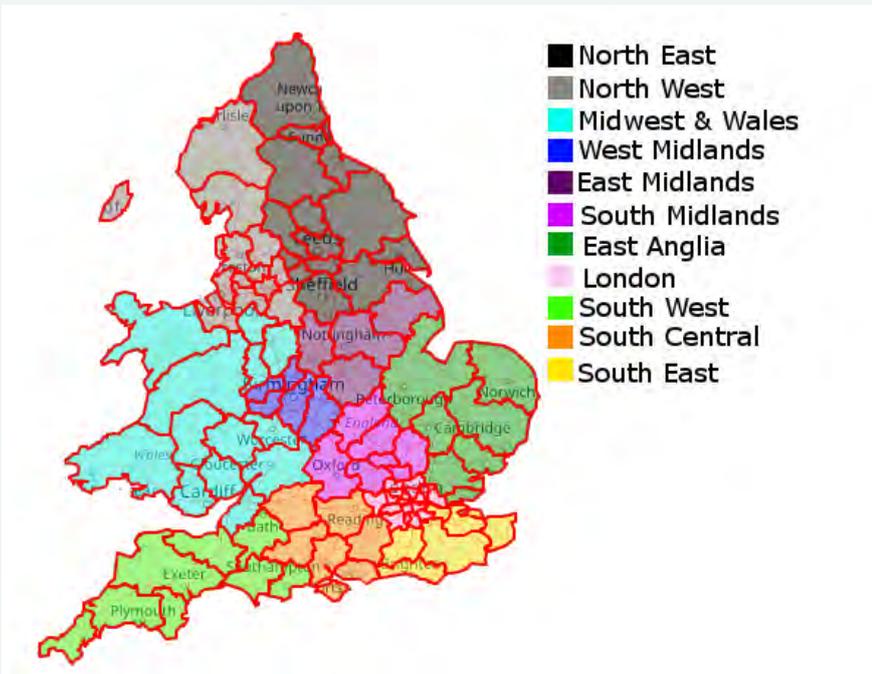
Grab yourself a super value goody bag for just £12, containing items worth over £30. Or perhaps indulge yourself with a huge bumper box of 120 mixed scents incense sticks for only £2.

Pagan Federation Products – the perfect way to show your support for the work of the PF with a lovely gift for all seasonal celebrations. Badges, patches, calendars, T-shirts, mugs and more. Visit <https://paganfed.org/shop/paganfederation-products>

Check the shop or social media for announcements to keep updated with offers and discounts. For queries please contact Jo on products@paganfederation.co.uk



www.paganfed.org/shop



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

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 beliefs 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>

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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!

