

# Open Circle

YULE 2014

ISSUE 1



Geometry is one and eternal shining in the mind of God  
*Johannes Kepler*

# Greetings!

Hello and welcome to the inaugural copy of the Open Circle.

The purpose behind this magazine is to give you, good reader, a chance to become a participant in the local pagan community. For some of us it's a bit of a passion to get pagans to get out there and be creative and supportive of each other.

I have been around the South Wales Pagan scene for around 20 years. During that time I have seen the culture change from one Moot which was held in the Borough in Neath where we were the weird people who stayed in the back room to a culture where there are many, many moots and many different ways of working throughout the area. I personally believe that we are in the best area in the UK for the development of open and free thinking people who are not afraid to investigate what it is to be a modern pagan. More and more of us are coming forward to be recognised as pagans, witches, druids, heathens and other occultists. I hope that this magazine will develop into a publication where we can celebrate the diversity and depth of our wonderful pagan community.

We were considering the best way to get the magazine out to the public and to try and give people enough time to contribute on a regular basis. With this in mind a magazine will be available at the Equinoxes and Solstices over the course of the next year.

I hope that people take an interest in our little endeavour and that we go from strength to strength both as a community and as a publication.

Big Hugs and Bright Blessings

Siany DragonOak



*Winter Solstice sunrise Newgrange © The Guardian*

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*Cover image: Photograph of a Snowflake National Geographic*

# Winter Solstice and the Solstice Shaman

**I hate Xmas.** It's a festival of the grossest consumerism, over-eating and greed in general. It ought to be different. Midwinter (in this part of the world anyway) is a great time for a festival, celebration and general orgy really. It's cold and wet outside, dark for much of the day, nothing growing. We've lots of food harvested that needs eating before it goes off. May as well have a party, tell stories and so on.

How has it all gone wrong? Firstly of course, virtually no one actually believes in the 'Nativity of Christ' fantasy, despite its merciless bombardment upon infant minds. The date of December 25th was simply borrowed from ancient Roman midwinter festivities. Christianity has no documentation at all – however otherwise unsupported - as to the date of the supposed events. Nature abhors a vacuum, psychically as well as physically, so as 'belief' has disappeared, so Xmas has colonized the space like a malignant tumour.

It certainly doesn't help that Xmas is very much the primary pseudo-religious festival in UK 'contemporary culture'. So it becomes over-hyped to a point close to insanity. The NeoPagan tradition of eight festivals spaced through the year is far healthier, though that isn't enough festivity by any means. In ancient Rome even the slaves had around 140 days a year off work for religious festivals. They didn't



have 'weekends' but that still puts them ahead of employed folk today.

So what can Pagans do to reconnect? Most important is simply to celebrate Winter Solstice as our festival at this time of year, at its proper date, and as far as possible ignore the goings-on elsewhere. Try beans on toast as your actual Xmas day diet. As suggested above, we can still have a good party, give each other presents and enjoy the usual seasonal goodies that are available for purchase even before Samhain. (Nothing Christian about mince pies and stollen – bad for the waistline but not for the soul.) It can feel somewhat strange to hit the day after Solstice, realising that we've done it all while the rest of the world is still 'getting ready for Xmas'. You may take the chance to hide out for a bit! Would be nice if we could all volunteer for shifts in hospitals or whatever, allowing other folk time with their families, but that's not possible for many of us.

It's particularly difficult for those with younger children, overwhelmed by propaganda and commercial pressure. Even though no one takes Nativity seriously, the kids are still battered by Santa and his freebie-bringing Elves. Most of the spiritual content of our Pagan festivals is adult-oriented, full of subtle psychological stuff for personal transformation and all that, but in no way child-centred. I've just seen some US material comparing the vibe at this time of year to 'Gas-lighting' – a form of mental abuse in which false information is presented with the intent of making victims doubt their own memory, perception, and sanity. The general falseness of this time of year is bad enough for adults so actually our young ones need extra support at this time as a counter to that. Most Pagans seem to go for a mythic perspective of Yule based on that of Robert Graves & Wicca - that is, the idea of the 'Rebirth of the Sun God', in a structure where the solar year and its festivals match the complete lifecycle of the syncretic God. (Except that it only works for us – quite different in the tropics, and simultaneously reversed in the southern hemisphere). Things are often a bit confused. Many like to merge this theme, a bit inconsistently, with that of Samhain as 'Pagan New Year'. Others throw in some more inconsistency by adding Holly Kings and Oak Kings (whose light/dark dualism can be celebrated at any of the festivals – I'm a bit suspicious of celebrating the idea of blokes fighting over ownership of a woman, as the usual Welsh version would have it...)

Over the years I've moved away from most of the above theology. The physical turning of the year seems sufficient for me. I do feel though that Winter Solstice seems like the right point for the solar calendar start point – it is a momentary 'fixed point' (Samhain is more of a season), and the solstice is reasonably possible to identify with low-level technology (whereas the perihelion, for example, is

not so easy). Seems to me that for the Ogham Calendar, the 'extra day' should be that of Solstice celebration (that is, the day of the dawn after the astronomical Solstice moment). In the UK, this is almost always December 22<sup>nd</sup>. So I move my Ogham dates 1 day earlier than most versions. Otherwise, I tend to take the Simple Country Pagan perspective that what matters about Paganism is not so much what we 'believe' as what we do. Children are likewise not very interested in theology I suspect.

Years ago, when my children were young, I was inspired with a perspective and tradition for Winter Solstice that we still follow. Feels reasonably complete and coherent, and also expansible as required. Just as meaningful for adults. My partner of those days, Nicola Beechsqirrel, produced "Mother Earth's Winter Solstice Colouring Book" to illustrate the ideas. Published in 1989, this is now long out of print, but I have a scanned copy on the [Centre of Pandora](#) Facebook page that Pagan parents are welcome to download and use.

Our celebrations span the period from before sunset on Solstice Eve to after sunrise on Solstice Day, and onwards. Never been the sort to stay up all night by a bonfire! You'd be surprised how much wood is required to keep an adequate fire going all night. In the UK, the actual Solstice moment is usually in the dark between sunset on December 21<sup>st</sup> and sunrise on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Basically works like this:

1. On Solstice Eve, before sunset, everyone finds a stone (any size not larger than they can easily carry) and tells the stone the story of the year that has gone. They 'give-away' the old year that they have lived, both the good things and the bad things. We cannot healthily hold on to either. Both must be transformed into wisdom. We must give away before we can hope to receive.

2. Small children put their stones into their 'stockings' when put to bed.

3. One of the adults of the house takes upon themselves the role / duty of 'Solstice Shaman'. It is explained to the kids that this is a human, not a supernatural being, and what their job is (as below). The biggest single Xmas issue for children seems to me to be 'The Santa Question'. Just think what it means to children that their first experiences of the mystical / numinous / spiritual world are revealed as lies. No wonder our society is so bereft of inner meaning! So what's happening here is that rather than lying to our children, we are presenting ourselves as capable of handling spiritual transformation.

4. After dark, adults / older kids do whatever meditation / ceremony they wish. Part of this is that the Solstice Shaman collects all the stones (including - quietly! - those of the sleeping kids) and goes off with them in his/her sack, whilst the adults wait in silence and as much dark as manageable (all lights extinguished, though it's amazing how much light there is everywhere these days, leds and so on). You may think in terms of the SS climbing the ladder of smoke to the spirit world. The burden of the past years for Shaman and her / his household can be heavier than you expect. In the material sense, the SS goes out(side), journeys to the Spirits (in the manner they think appropriate) and gives the stones to the Spirits, asking (and hopefully receiving) a gift of 'crystal' in exchange. You should realise of course that ice / snow / frost is definitely crystal, just as much as quartz etc, and generally available on midwinter night.

5. When SS returns, free of spiritual burden, positively skipping in fact, they press the crystal to the foreheads of each adult to 'absorb' the new year's gift from the Spirits. Then the lights / fires are re-lit and adult feasting begins

(quite possibly including nice booze and chocolate). Shamans do traditionally employ the odd 'trick' to help the process. For example, it's not easy to relight a fire when you can't find the matches in the dark... So I leave a glowing charcoal in the incense burner and two matches in a known place beneath it. Then I can put them to the ember and get a flare. (I suppose flint, ironstone and proper 'tinder' would be more authentic, but you need serious practice to get a result with those) A small present of some sort is put into the little kids' stockings (hopefully enough to keep them from waking you too early!)

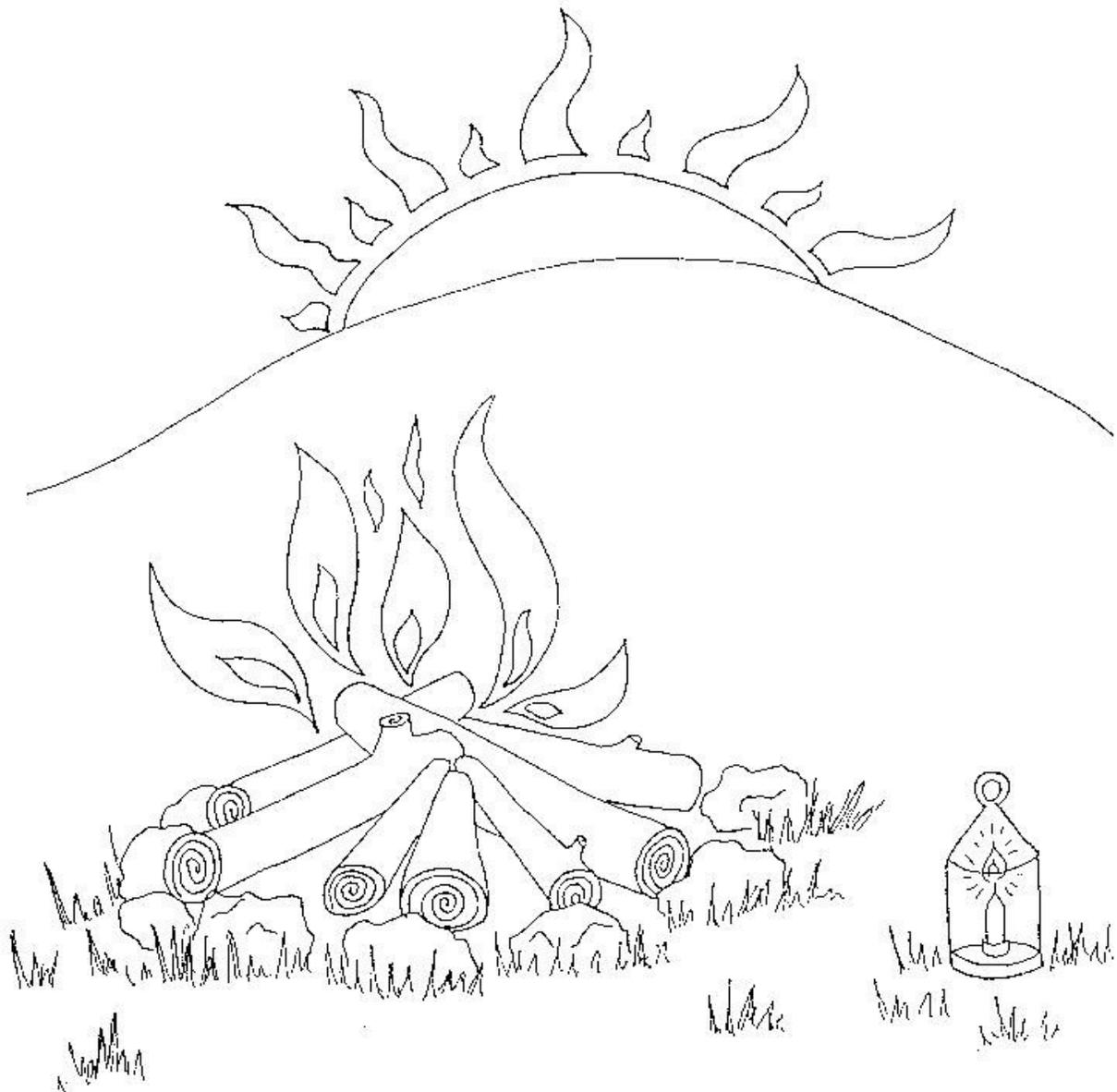
6. On Solstice morning, everyone gets up before dawn, so as to light the Fire of Welcome and greet the New Sun with whatever level of ritual feels right. This often involves lots of noise (that's the joy of being a drummer and bagpiper!) Make sure you keep your kindling, matches and dry wood indoors a few days before hand or you'll have the embarrassment and psychic disruption of failing to get a flame. If you plaited a Wreath of Remembrance at Samhain, this is a good time for its atoms to be dispersed into the world. New Year Oaths, accompanied by incense offerings are appropriate, as long as you really do intend to keep them. Further pressies and feasting follow as per usual goings on, again with additional ritual as you desire, but three days before everyone else. If you don't say a grace blessing on your meals normally, you surely should for this one. You can tell whatever stories suit you as to the 'meaning' of Solstice itself.

If you like this tradition, you are most welcome to adopt it!

## Merry Solstice

Rufus Brock Maychild

# WELCOMING THE WINTER SOLSTICE SUNRISE WITH FIRE



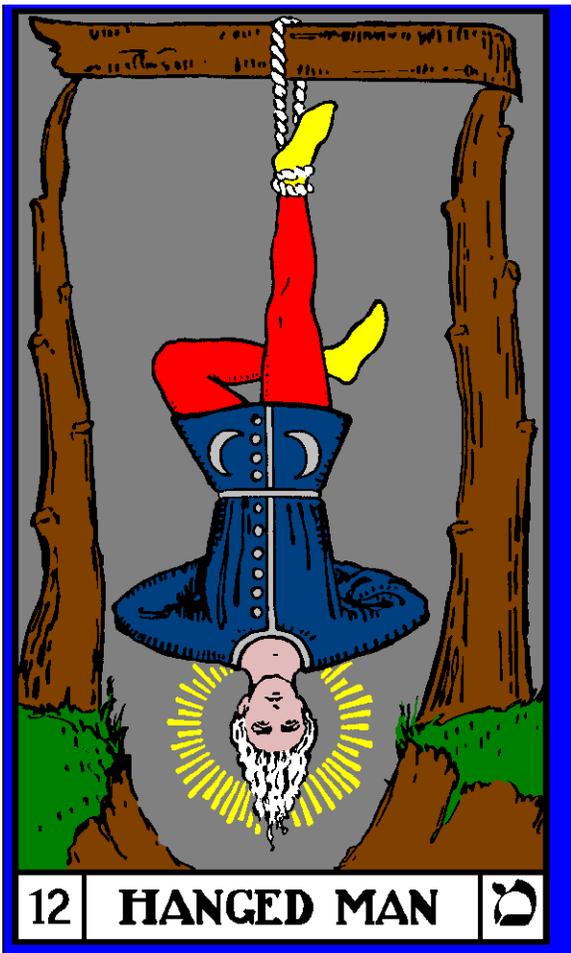
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# Tarot Studies.

Siany DragonOak

One of my favourite tarot cards is **The Hanged Man**. The deck that I use for meditational purposes is the tarot deck from the Builders of the Adytum and I would recommend these cards if you are interested in using the Tarot for non divinatory purposes.

Initially when you look at this card what you see is a man hanging upside down from a gallows. He is tied by one foot and his head is in a ditch. It's not really a very nice card on the surface. But when you dig deeper into the symbolism of the card it is actually the card of the illuminated one.



The gallows is a **Tau**, the last letter in the Hebrew Alephbeit and it signifies all of manifest creation, in other words the universe that we live in. When you look at the hanged man he is suspended from an almost umbilical cord which is wrapped around his left leg. His legs are in the shape of a reversed 4 and four is the symbol of logic and reason. His hose are red and his jacket is blue symbolising the opposites of Mars (Gevurah) and Jupiter (Gedulah) on the Tree of Life. Mars is the driving force, the constrictor, the Sword of Justice in the hand of the Great Judge of the World. It symbolises the ability to constrain the Martian nature and apply that drive in a constructive or in some cases destructive manner. Jupiter on the other hand is the great expander, the opener of the heart and spirit, the Joy of the World. These two forces swing us back and forth in cycles and allow creation to take place both on the Microcosmic (our world) and Macrocosmic (universal world) levels.

The grey background of card indicates the balance between the black and white pillars of the Tree of life. It is the balance achieved when one achieves a knowledge of Self and of Divinity as one Being.

The illuminated man hangs down in the central pillar of the tree of life. He is in line with the great balance of the universe. But he hangs upside down. To the illuminated man there is no such thing as the material; all things are spiritual

things given a material form. All things are sacred and are the focus of the divine. To the ordinary unilluminated man matter is all that there is. Nothing is sacred and the material world is the only world that is real. To the ordinary man the notions of the illuminated man are seen to be foolish, weird, avant-garde and unacceptable to the social norm.

But the Illuminated man is also known as the happy fool. He does not care what others thinks, he **KNOWS** what he is and where he comes from, He **DARES** to see the world in the way that others are unable to do. He **KEEPS SILENT** about that world because to others he will appear to be a mad man and it is not his work to help others know what is; that is their work to do.

The hanged man looks like an outlaw being hung for his offences and in one sense he is outside the law because once he achieves knowledge of himself the law as we know it no longer applies to him. Pity not the hanged man, pay him honour, for he has hung himself and shows you the way to follow his footsteps.

# The Old Religion

PRETENSIONS to great antiquity — as if age testifies to something more than sheer endurance — are a hallmark of many esoteric organisations. The Freemasons, their earliest Grand Lodge dating from 1717, trace their origins back to King Solomon, if not before, while their down-market imitators, the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, imply in their title that they pre-date Noah and the Flood. Others happily stick the word “Ancient” in front of their name, as does the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC), though its beginnings go back no further than 1915. (Rosicrucianism, as such, dates from 1614 when pamphlets chronicling the life of Christian Rosenkreuz began to circulate in Germany, their author a Lutheran pastor named Johann Valentin Andreae. This inconvenient detail did not deter Harvey Spencer Lewis, founder of AMORC, from claiming the movement began in 1489 BCE under the enlightened patronage of Pharaoh Thutmose III.) Meanwhile Madame Blavatsky, a hard act to follow, tirelessly maintained that the “Ancient Wisdom” she purveyed came from *The Stanzas of Dzyan*, the oldest book in the world, its teachings written on palm leaves in a long forgotten language. The Mormon revelation is modern by comparison, with Madame spared the bother of digging up gold plates like poor Joseph Smith.

All of which entitles us to treat with skepticism the claims made by early defenders of witchcraft that what they practiced was a continuation of (and thus more or less the same as) what our ancestors got up to centuries, even millennia, ago. Why do such things matter? Well, the answer is they don't. Or, rather, the historical credentials of witchcraft are of minor importance compared with the spiritual benefit it brings to those involved in it. The trouble is that a number of them, albeit fewer than before, still persist in harping on about the “old” religion, boasting how theirs is the last authentic remnant of a magical tradition scrupulously kept under wraps until now.

## ***Putting the oomph into witchcraft***

Well, not quite until now. Those of us growing up in the nineteen-fifties will remember how, by the middle of that decade, witchcraft was shedding its much-vaunted secrecy. Not only did Gerald Gardner publish two books on the subject, but, with scant regard for his own reputation or that of witchcraft, exposed himself, often literally, to the scurrilous attentions of the Sunday press. At school, I remember being shown a copy of *The People* — my parents were too high-minded to buy it — which spoke of a “repulsive pagan sect” and, as if to prove the point, displayed a picture of Gardner with two younger companions, all three naked, but with none of the oomph we boys expected. It would be Maxine and Alex Sanders who put the oomph into witchcraft. But that was years later.

Whether our ancestors possessed it, we shall never know. Come to that, we don't even know if they took their clothes off when performing the rituals ascribed to them by Gardner. Still, most experts agree that the ancient Celts did probably go into battle wearing no more than a quick dab of woad, so it's not inconceivable that they stripped off on other occasions as well. (Literary and archaeological evidence suggests that for most of the time they stayed covered up, the women in tunics and men in trousers, with both sharing a fondness for plaid and lots of costume jewelry.) As Gerald Gardner was a dedicated naturist, even joint owner of a nudist club, it is reasonable to suppose that his personal preferences account in part for the nudity he required of his followers. I say “in part” because arguments in favour of nudity certainly exist, though this is not the place to explore them.

## **“Wiccan” religion**

A bigger challenge is the job of assessing whether Gardner’s claims about the antiquity of witchcraft or, rather, his version of it, are justified. Today few people, witches included, would fully endorse the claim in his book *Modern Witchcraft*, (1954), that what he described in it was the remnant of an old religion secretly practiced for centuries. Certainly there is no support for that view among historians and folklorists, apart from Margaret Murray, who at the age of ninety was persuaded to write the book’s introduction. The paucity of historical evidence is in contrast to the plentiful reports we have of ceremonial magicians and what they believed or got up to centuries ago. Here, it is permissible to speak of a “tradition” even if it was no more than a hotchpotch of Neo-Platonism, Kabbalah, astrology, numerology and material brought back from the East by merchants and Crusaders.

By contrast nowhere in the historical record, apart from some disputed sources in Italy, do we find evidence of a Wiccan “religion,” by which I mean a set of beliefs and cultic practices preserved within small communities and secretly handed down over the centuries. Of course those who defend its existence might point out, not unreasonably, that the absence of hard evidence is unsurprising, given the element of secrecy involved. True enough, but still not proof it ever existed. On top of which it seems improbable that a clandestine religion, especially one of more than local significance, would have evaded the attention of diligent researchers and historians. It is noteworthy, too, that not even their most ruthless persecutors accused witches of belonging to a religion of their own or even subscribing to a consistent set of beliefs. True, they were held to have sold their souls to the devil, even worshipped him on occasion, just as the Knights Templar allegedly worshipped Baphomet — who, like the arch fiend Satan, bears more than a passing resemblance to the Horned God — but this was viewed as a repudiation of Christianity, rather than allegiance to a completely different religion.

## **One curious detail**

What is also indisputable is that historical scholarship tells us little about what witches actually believed, if indeed they shared a common belief, and this despite an abundance of information about what they did or, more often the case, what they were accused of doing. That the majority were simple country folk, most of them illiterate, further deprives us of the kind of information their more erudite contemporaries, writers on magic like Pietro d’Abano, Trithemius, Agrippa, and Johannes Wierus were only too willing to impart. Still, one curious detail does merit attention, even though it involves only hearsay evidence and is nowadays encountered less often than it was.

It concerns the number of individuals who claim to have been introduced to witchcraft by family members, more often than not by their grandmother. Known as “hereditary” witches, a badge of pride for many, some talk of a formal initiation, as did Alex Sanders, for example, while others, among them Robert Cochrane, claim to have learned of their heritage by chance or been informed of it by a parent or other close relation. Few can match Ruth Wynn Owen, sometime actress and friend of the poet, Dylan Thomas, whose father came from Anglesey. She proclaimed herself heir to a tradition stretching back all the way to Brân, alias Bendigeidfran or Brân the Blessed, a superhuman character in the *Mabinogion*, whose head supposedly lies buried at the White Mount in London. Today her teachings, much influenced by the books of Margaret Murray and Sir James Fraser’s *Golden Bough*, as well as Welsh mythology, are still cherished – she died in 2001 – by a group calling itself (with disregard for correct Welsh usage) Y Plant Bran.

## ***Hereditary witches***

Another hereditary witch was Eleanor Bone, one of Gardner's High Priestesses and an influential figure in her own right, who maintained that prior to her introduction to Gardner she had belonged to a group of witches in Cumbria. Perhaps she had, yet no matter how persuasive such claims may be, they remain impossible to verify and do little to convince the impartial observer that the Craft existed prior to (and thus independently of) individuals like Gardner, with knowledge of it passed from one generation to the next. Still, as I said earlier, with witches increasingly self-confident and the Craft judged, quite rightly, for what it is, not by where it came from, fewer such claims are heard nowadays.

For me what is striking about such anecdotes is how many involve women reputed to be Welsh. Of these none is more notorious than the Mrs. Bibby, who, according to his biographer, initiated a bemused Alex Sanders in her kitchen one afternoon, the two of them stark naked and he just seven years old. That happened not far from the village of Betws-y-Coed, claimed by some, usually visitors charmed by its waterfall and sylvan landscape, to be the final refuge of the *tylwyth tēg* or fairy folk. From a village close by, also named Betws, came the unfortunate Gwen Ferch Elis, tried for witchcraft at Chester assizes in 1594 and subsequently hanged, one of only five people in Wales executed for that offence. Betws-y-Coed is also where the founder of an American organization, the Dynion Mwyn, claims to have learned "The Old Ways" from a local wise man named (improbably) Taliesin Einion Vawr. Calling himself Rhuddlwm Gwawr, he went on to establish the Church of *Y Tylwyth Tēg* or Church of the Fairies in Maryland. Oh yes, and the village was home also to Dr. Edward Bach, famous for his Flower Remedies. Personally, I've never much cared for the place.

## ***Popular consciousness***

Reports of this kind have persuaded me that far from inventing the whole Wiccan package, as his critics never tire of maintaining, Gerald Gardner, originally a member of a New Forest coven, did indeed have access to remnants of a tradition of remarkable antiquity. From these sparse resources he drew whatever he could, but felt no qualms about embellishing it to suit his taste. Certainly there seem grounds for accepting that an attachment to the sanctity of the natural world, something typically Pagan, did survive for two thousand years, in what the Germans (who have a knack for such things) call the *Volksseele* or popular consciousness. Seldom, if ever, did it consolidate into a coherent religious system, but among country dwellers or at least a minority of them, it continued to find expression in rituals like those I heard of as a boy growing up in Wales, as well as in ancient practices, deemed superstitious, that survive to this day. Typical of them is the reverence shown towards places formerly sacred to the old gods but long "Christianized" by the Church, even endowed with a new saintly patron, though old god and new saint often turn out to be one and the same.

One example familiar to me lies within easy walking distance of my home, though "easy" may be the wrong word, as it is reached only after an arduous climb. It involves what is held to be the grave of Taliesin, the 6th century Welsh poet, but is, in fact, a Bronze Age monument dating from at least 1000 BCE. Such was the poet's reputation that, over the years, people began attributing to him supernatural powers, the fate also of the Roman poet Virgil, turning him into a powerful wizard and prophet. Taliesin even appears on a list of Celtic deities published on an American website for Wiccans, though, in fairness, acknowledgement is made of his historical existence as well. Meanwhile, a century ago, again in America, the architect Frank Lloyd Wright paid his own tribute to the poet by naming his home in Wisconsin after him, as well as a second resi

dence, Taliesin West, which he later built near Scottsdale, Arizona. (Lloyd Wright was no stranger to esoteric matters, having studied the works of Blavatsky and been a friend of the Russian guru, George Gurdjieff, while also sharing with Rudolf Steiner, founder of Anthroposophy, a commitment to what both called “organic” architecture.) It seems fitting therefore that on the dozen or so occasions I have visited the poet’s reputed burial place high above the village that today bears his name, I have found votive offerings reverently placed there.

### ***Pagan tendencies***

Such behaviour is indicative of the Pagan tendency to invest natural objects or features of the landscape with supernatural meaning, just as the ancient Celts held certain places sacred and left there votive offerings like those found in abundance at Llyn Cerrig Bach on Anglesey. This sense of “place” was profoundly important to them, as it still is to many country folk. Certain animals, too, were venerated, doubtless because they typified virtues which, because admirable in human beings, have necessarily to be common to the gods as well. Thus the bear, admired for its strength, tenacity and courage, was linked to the goddess Artio, a name related to the Celtic word for bear (Welsh *arth*, as found in the derivative Arthur, “the once and future king”), while Epona, derived from the word for horse (modern Welsh: *ebol* = colt or foal) was associated with fertility and healing, especially healing springs. Noteworthy, too, is that Epona, one of the few Celtic deities formally adopted by Rome – her feast day was 18 December – was often identified with the Mother Goddess herself.

What is undeniable is that in modern witchcraft, as in every other religion, there are elements begged, borrowed, or stolen from somewhere else. That critics of modern witchcraft point to elements attributable to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, to Aleister Crowley and even, purportedly, to the Scottish Presbyterian Hymn Book, should cause us no unease whatever. The only question we need ask is – do they work? If they do, then so much the better.

### ***Mirror of our ancestors***

What is undeniable is that because of its Pagan commitment, witchcraft may justifiably claim to represent the Old Religion, traces of it discernible in folklore and, indeed, in the heart of anyone who has ever paused to gaze up at the moon and suddenly — mysteriously — felt loved. Whether its practices exactly mirror those of our primitive ancestors is uncertain, even disputable, but also sublimely irrelevant. These after all are but the expression of a religious or spiritual commitment and, as such, they may, indeed *should*, be adapted to satisfy current preferences. If in order to accomplish this, witches have borrowed bits and pieces from the Golden Dawn, from Freemasonry, from Aleister Crowley, from Charles Leland’s *Aradia*, from Robert Graves or from anywhere else, then so what? All that counts is the effect such disparate elements have on us individually, on our fellow celebrants and on those supra-sensible realities we aspire to work with.

Above all, do they bring us closer to the gods? Or, this being witchcraft, do they bring the gods closer to us? If the answer is yes, then the rest doesn’t matter. Neither do the foibles and all-too-human weaknesses, far outweighed by their strengths, of those pioneers who revived or reinvented witchcraft over half a century ago.

***David Conway***

# Godda

## *A Shropshire Goddess*

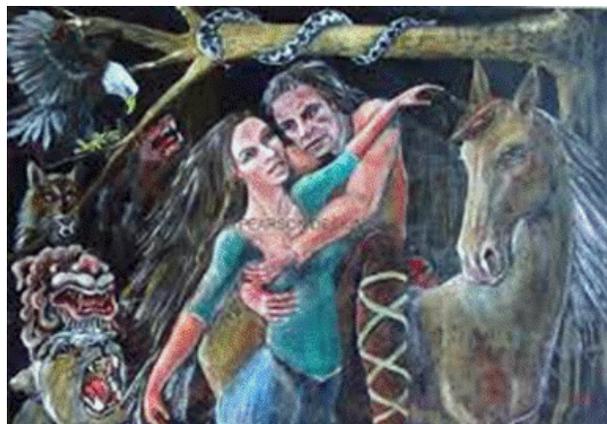
### *G. StM. Nottingham*

Very few people have heard of Godda (sometimes spelt Goda), including sadly the indigenous population of Shropshire, yet she is of paramount importance to their folklore and history. Legend tells us that she is buried with her husband, the Saxon nobleman Eadric, also known as 'Wild Eadric,' beneath the lead mines of the Stiperstone area of west Shropshire, where it runs into mid Wales. Eadric is a historical person who held extensive lands at the time of the Norman Conquest and is somebody who is also recorded in the Domesday book. Local legend says that when the country is in danger or when great events are about to happen Eadric and his faery wife Godda will ride out with their retinue of faery folk from their abode beneath the Stiperstones, with its summit known locally as the 'Devil's Chair,' Shropshire's Holy Hill.

Tradition has it that they are always dressed in the faery colour of green and ride white horses. They are also accompanied by a pack of hounds and as Eadric passes by with a great blast of his horn people cover their eyes; Shropshire's own Wild Hunt.

Of course it is never easy to separate facts from fiction with such stories and the need for a hero and for legends are an important part of mankind's psychic wellbeing. Yet tradition has it that shortly before the Norman Conquest, Eadric was riding in the Clun Forest area of South West Shropshire, where the boundary with Wales is often vague; even today this is an area that is scarcely known. However he rides into a clearing, although some accounts

say he saw a house in the woods, and he sees a beautiful girl who is dancing with six other girls. Eadric grabs her whilst the others then shape shift into ferocious beasts which he manages to fight off as he escapes. He rides off with his prize and the girl remains silent for three months; then one day she speaks and says, ' Good luck to you for I will remain true to you and bring you prosperity on the one condition that you never mention my sisters.'



*Image from <http://shropshirehistory.com>*

And so Eadric flourishes for some years and his wife is noted for her great beauty, yet one day coming back from the hunt, tired and hungry, his wife is slow in coming to greet him and with this he asks her if her sisters have been keeping her and having mentioned her sisters she simply disappears. Eadric is distraught and spends the rest of his life looking for her, sadly to no avail. Such is the story.

Firstly the interaction with faery folk and mortals is not unknown; the Plantagenet kings were descended from a faery woman who was

the mother of the father of Henry II. The doctors of Myddfai in South West Wales were also descended from faery folk. The inter breeding with the fey seems to be an important point of ingress into the world of humans for other worldly beings who bring various gifts with them.

It is known from recorded history that Eadric held vast areas of land in south-west Shropshire, predominantly around the Clun Forest area. Today this an area that is secretive and still has some of its ancient treescapes which survived. It is rich in hill-forts, ancient sites, castles and solar alignments laid out in the landscape, and yet it is by and large simply unknown. The name Godda, which is sometimes spelt Goda suggests that it is a Welsh name as the double D would grant a 'th' sound, thus pronounced Gotha. Therefore I would suggest that Godda was Welsh and the Welsh were and still are highly prevalent in the locality. The Clun Forest area, where she came from, is to the west of Clun where it is also part of the forgotten Welsh kingdom of Maelienydd, whose royal house was directly descended from Vortigen. As Eadric was a man of note he would have been expected to have married someone of equal status, thus it begs the question was Godda of equal rank? If so then she would have been (if she was Welsh) probably from the royal house of Maelienydd.

Eadric's connections with his Welsh neighbours are also demonstrated by history as historical sources survive which show how Eadric joins with Cadwgan (Cadoogan) Ap Blethyn, the Welsh Prince of Powys, (which was north of Maelienydd at the time) in his attacks on the Normans. The Doomsday book shows that at the time of the conquest Clun had land for sixty ploughs. This suggests that a lot of corn was being grown and thus the area was

wealthy as there would have been surpluses to trade, and yet it wasn't attacked by Welsh raiders. This is unusual as Welsh society prided itself on its ability to steal from the English and indeed their economy at the time needed the extra resources that raiding could provide. In the Welsh wars with the 11<sup>th</sup> century King Gruffydd Ap Llewellyn much of the border was so badly destroyed that it took generations for the communities to recover, all except Clun. If there was an alliance through marriage between Eadric and Welsh lords then this may very be the key to why Clun seems to have been spared such destruction.

Thus history can give us some clues to the background of the legend. However Godda is not the only historical personage to shape shift into legend and to be incorporated into the mythos of the land. This can be seen with saints who become guardians of a given locality, as with St Milburga, the forgotten saint of south Shropshire who with her geese promote the fertility of the land. This I find suggestive of the Goddess Holda; a goddess that the people of the time no doubt would have still been familiar with. That the people of the area had not forgotten their folklore is apparent as the 12c Herefordshire historian and monk Walter Mapp first recorded the story of Eadric and Godda but he reminded his readers of the other local story of the pygmy King Herla who rode through the night sky with his faery retinue similar to the Welsh accounts of Gwyn Ap Nudd. Therefore how did the story of Eadric and Godda become grafted on to the myths of the Wild Hunt and why? Whilst indigenous pagan beliefs didn't die out automatically as Christianity became the dominant belief system, something of a pagan priest/esshood would have survived and the rites which they worked accordingly would have done too. Therefore the dancing that Eadric saw the sev-

en women performing in the Clun Forest, when he kidnapped Godda, could easily have been a rite which they were performing. The sisters that Godda refers to could have been sisters in a religious context rather than of blood. The strength of the story suggests that belief in the Wild Hunt and faery folk was obviously common place at the time, and thus figures who are seen in some priestly capacity could quite easily in the minds of the people go on to become identified with the deities. Thus with Godda being robed in the faery colour green and riding upon a white horse she becomes a personification of the Queen of Elfame; Eadric is also attired as such too. The hounds that ride with them are often, but not in all accounts, described as being white with red tipped ears; such also is the description of the hounds that ride with Gwyn Ap Nudd.

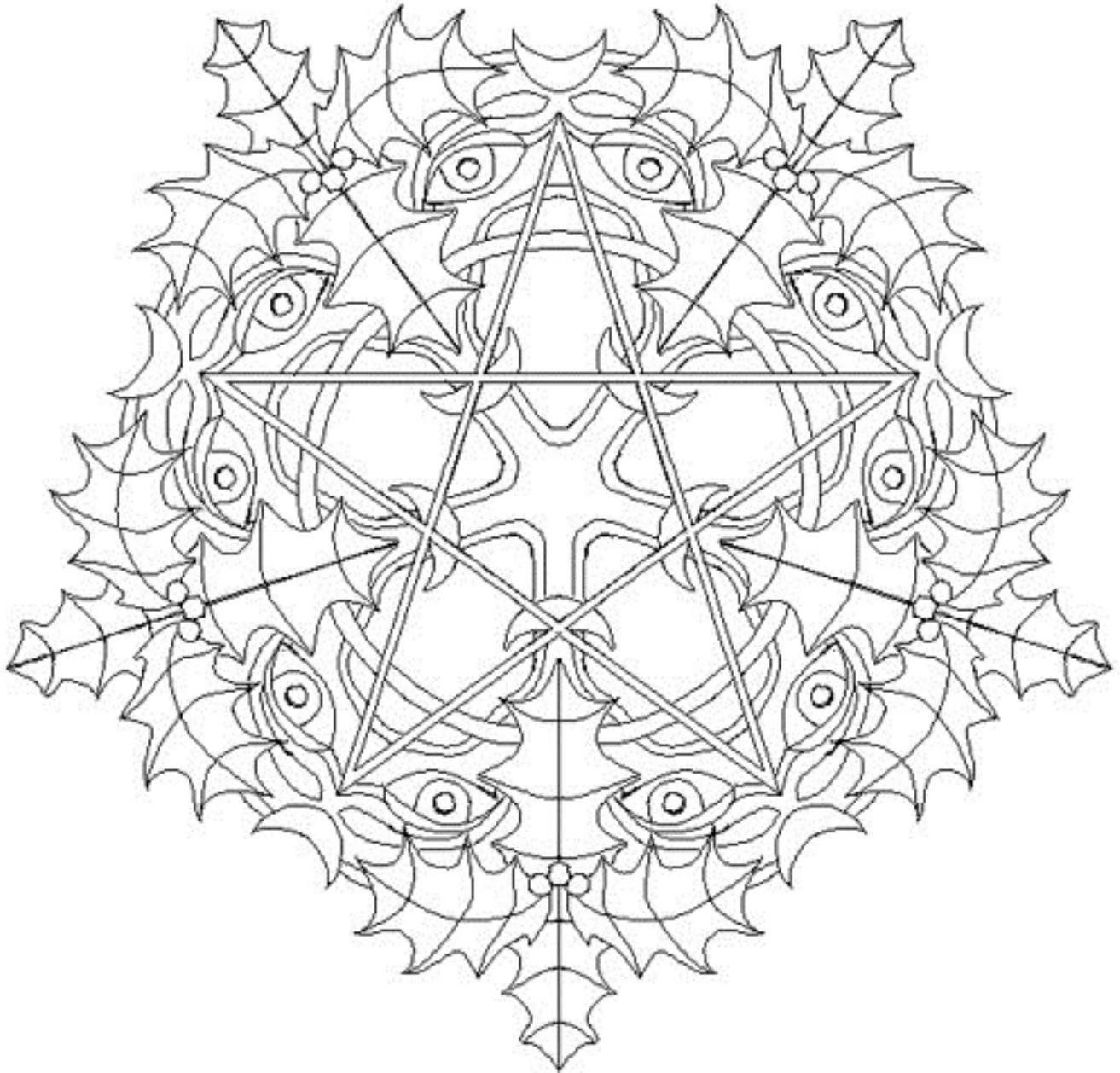
Several years ago I had a series of conversations regarding the pagan/witchcraft group known as 'The Regency' with a long time member of the group John of Monmouth. These conversations took place at his business premises and his home in the West Country. I asked particularly about Doreen Valiente's reference to Roy Bowers, who originally started the grouping and his referring to themselves as being the Children of Goda; being from Shropshire I recognised the name. John told me that when the group moved to Shropshire during the mid 1970's they adopted Godda as a deity. So if you find yourself next mid summer's eve (24<sup>th</sup> June) on the slopes of the Stiperstones offer gifts of milk and honey and if you knock upon the ground three times with your left hand, perhaps Godda will grant you a boon.



A View from Cranberry Rock, The Stiperstones, Shropshire. [www.thetreethatfellinthewoods.wordpress.com](http://www.thetreethatfellinthewoods.wordpress.com)

# Yule Mandala

to colour and enjoy



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# Tamika Tiger & the Tale of Taliesin

**T**amika Tiger was six years old. She loved stories, ice cream, bike riding and her little ink-pot black kitten called Narla. She lived with her Mammy in South Wales at the weekend she would sometimes sleep over at her Nanny and Bampi's house. Tamika's Nanny had a little camper van called Rosie. At the weekends they would pack up a picnic and their walking boots and head off over to explore on the Gower.

This particular day they parked Rosie on the field just by King Arthur's stone. Then off they went, Tamika swinging Nanny's basket looking for wild mushrooms, garlic and herbs. Nanny had a little book and Tamika loved to find the mushrooms and herbs in the book to see if they were safe to eat. They would find wild garlic and herbs often growing by the stream in the woods. Then after a long walk they would climb into the back of Rosie and make the most delicious omelettes!

As I said earlier Tamika Tiger loved stories and whilst they walked they would tell stories of magic, fairies, dragons and witches! Tamika loved any stories about magic!

One day after their walk Tamika lay on the camper van bed whilst Nan chopped mushrooms for their omelette. 'Tell me the story Nan about Cerridwen collecting herbs in her basket.'

Nanny smiled. 'You could tell me the story; you know it as well as I do!'

Tamika propped herself up on a pile of cushions. 'Once upon a time Nanny began....'  
Because everyone knows that is the way that all the best stories start.

'There was a beautiful witch called Cerridwen who lived by the side of a beautiful lake in Wales with her husband Tegid Foel and their twins; a beautiful daughter Creirfyw, meaning fair one, and her brother Morfran Afagddu who was so ugly his name meant utter darkness.'

'That's so sad' said Tamika looking up at Nan who was now standing outside the door of the van.

Standing beside Nanny stood a beautiful lady with long black hair eyes so dark they were almost black. The lady smiled down at Tamika. She was wearing a long flowing sky blue dress and she was carrying a wicker basket just like Nanny's.

Tamika got up and went to join Nanny outside.

'Hello Tamika' the lady said in almost a whisper.

'Hello' said Tamika.

There standing next to Rosie was the most beautiful white horse.

'Is that your horse?' asked Tamika excitedly.

The lady smiled again, her jet-black hair blowing in the breeze. 'It is. Do you like her?'

Tamika reached out. The horse bent her head down and Tamika felt the warmth of the horse's breath on her face. She giggled. 'What's your name?' she asked the mysterious lady.

'Don't you recognise me from the story Tamika? I am Cerridwen'

Tamika looked at Nanny who smiled and nodded. 'Wow' said Tamika. 'I know how much you love my story would you like to come and see where I live by the lake?' she asked.

'Yes please!' said Tamika. 'Is that okay Nanny?' she quickly asked as she climbed up beside Cerridwen onto the beautiful white mare.

Nanny laughed. 'Of course you can! Hold on tight and be back for dinner.'

Tamika felt Cerridwen's arms around her as the horse began to run. Tamika felt as though they were flying. 'Look down Tamika and wave to Nanny.' Cerridwen whispered behind her. 'We ARE flying!' exclaimed Tamika.

Tamika waved to Nanny who was standing next to Rosie, waving up to them. 'Wow', she thought, 'this really is magic. Wait until I tell my friends in school about this adventure!' Soon they were passing over snow-capped mountains.

'That's Snowdonia' Cerridwen pointed over to the mountains. 'And that is my home.' A huge lake came into sight. 'They now call it Lake Tegid after my husband.' Cerridwen tells Tamika.

The horse descends slowly and gently down until they are beside the lake. Cerridwen lifts Tamika down from the horse and they walk over to the edge of the lake. It truly is a beautiful place. Birds sing. The breeze blows gently. Tamika sits on the grass beside the beautiful witch Cerridwen. 'Will you tell me the rest of your story please?' asked Tamika.

Cerridwen stands and begins to walk slowly holding her basket. She stopped to pick some wild garlic, placing it gently into her basket. She begins to tell her story as they walked along the lake, stopping to collect herbs as they walk.

'My son Morfran Afagddu was born so ugly but grew into such a lovely boy but people can be so cruel. They often see just what is visible on the outside and miss the beauty within. So knowing this I decided to ride up into the mountains to consult the Pheryllt and ask for their help.' 'Who?' asked Tamika Tiger.

'The Pheryllt. They were very powerful magicians, alchemists. I think now in your time Tamika you would call them chemists. They knew of medicines and the power of plants, herbs and flowers. I wanted a special potion that would help my son become accepted by the noble men. My plan was after having the potion he would become a bard, poet, writer, knowing all things. The noble men would then see past his ugliness and he would be accepted. As the beautiful soul he is.'

'It took three days to ride up into the mountains to the secret city where the Pheryllt lived. I stayed until I had searched their books and had the recipe for a potion that would take a year and a day to make.'

'A whole year? asked Tamika Tiger.  
'Yes!' smiled Cerridwen. 'And a day!'

'What happened next?' asked Tamika, picking sprigs of Rosemary and putting them into Cerridwen's basket.

'I rode back to my husband and my children then set up my cauldron here beside the lake and began to collect the herbs and plants needed for this special potion. It was very important to get it right and collecting them took a long time. Some had to be picked on a full moon. Others on a dark moon. Some when the sun was shining'

'I bet that was hard work? Did anyone help you?'

'It was,' smiled Cerridwen, 'but it was for the love of my son. I have always loved to pick herbs just like you do. But in the next part of my story I get some help.'

'Morda & Gwion Bach' smiled Tamika.

'You do know my story well' said Cerridwen, 'Yes Morda, the old blind man from the village I employed him to tend the fire beneath the cauldron - a special job as it had to be kept burning for a whole year and a day. He had to work really hard. Gwion Bach was a little boy whose job was to stir the cauldron keeping it topped up with water from the lake. This too was a special job as this was a very important and magical potion.'

'After I had collected the herbs and set the cauldron onto the fire they were left to tend it. I would come and go looking after my children and husband but never far from my magical brew. Now everything was going as it should and it was almost time for the potion to be ready. Gwion Bach stirred and fetched water. Morda collected wood and stoked the fire. 'The special part of the potion was that only the first three drops were magic the rest of the brew would turn to poison and would be no good to anyone.'

Tamika walked closer; she didn't want to miss a word.

'It was almost midnight a year after the cauldron had been lit. I walked over with my son and we sat beside the cauldron. The stars shone it was a warm night the moons reflection on the lake was beautiful. I must have drifted off to sleep. I was woken by a deep rumble and a cracking noise. Then I heard a shout - it was Gwion Bach. I opened my eyes and there was the cauldron split in two. The potion was running into the lake! Gwion Bach standing before me holding his thumb in his mouth!'

'The precious three drops of the potion had splashed from the cauldron onto his thumb scalding and burning his skin. Without thinking he had quickly sucked his thumb to stop the burn, drinking the precious three drops of the magical brew as he did so!'

Tamika Tiger gasped 'Was you mad?'

'I was furious!' answered Cerridwen swinging her basket. 'Gwion Bach suddenly realized he has all of the knowledge in the universe! With this he knew just how angry I was! Gwion Bach knew he had to escape so quick as a flash he turned into a hare and began to run! Not quite quick enough' she smiled, 'for I turned into a greyhound bitch and before long I was right behind him. I almost had him but for getting to the river bank. Gwion, seeing the river, quickly turned into a salmon and began to swim up the raging river. I followed, turning into an otter, and quickly splashed in behind him.'

Tamika held her breath!

'At the opposite side river bank Gwion Bach leapt onto the bank. As he did so he turned into a bird, taking flight, thinking he could escape me by flying into the air.' I leapt out behind him turning into a beautiful hawk, quickly soaring into the sky and swooping down behind him. Gwion feels the breeze of air from my wings behind him, looks to the ground and spots a huge pile of wheat. He sees his chance of escape and plummets back down to the ground, changing into a grain of wheat! Soon I've turned into a black crested hen and I peck at the wheat until I eventually find him and swallow him!'

'Do you turn back into a beautiful witch after that?'

'Well what do you think?' Cerridwen smiles at Tamika.

'Yes I think you do and I know what happens next! You have a baby.'

'Yes that's right I do.'

'Are you still mad with Gwion Bach?'

'Yes I am but when I had the baby he is so beautiful I no longer wish him harm. I put him safely into a coracle woven of leather and put him safely into the lake. Do you know what a coracle is?'

'Yes it's sort of like a small basket boat isn't it? They had them in the olden days.'

'Yes that's right. Well this coracle was magic! The baby was safely inside and floated off on the lake for forty years.'

'Forty years?' gasped Tamika. 'Was he okay for that long?'

'Of course he was! This is a magical story. Now forty years later a young man called Elphin who loved to fish, went out to the weir on Samhain, the last harvest, to fish for salmon. He was there with friends and spotted the coracle. He fished it out of the water and cut open to see what was inside. He lifted out the most beautiful baby. As he lifted it out the baby's forehead began to glow! Elphin exclaims to his friends. 'Look he has a shining brow!' The baby, having all the knowledge, says 'I am Taliesin.' Taliesin means the one with the shining brow.'

'What happens to him next?'

'Well Tamika, I think that really is another story don't you? I think your Nanny will be wondering where you are.'

Cerridwen smiles her beautiful smile, takes some of her herbs - the rosemary Tamika had found - stoops down and picks a beautiful yellow flower and puts it along with the herbs into Tamika's basket.

Together they walk back over to the horse that is standing, munching grass by the shore of the lake.

'It's really beautiful here.' says Tamika. 'Can I come back?'

'Of course you can.' says Cerridwen, as she lifts Tamika up onto the horse's back.

'Will I see you here again?'

'I'm sure you will' she says as the horse gallops off up and over the lake.

Tamika rests her head back and feels the warmth of Cerridwen's cloak around her. She is so tired. It's been a long day and a wonderful adventure. She is woken by Nanny calling her. She is back on the bed in the camper van cwtched up under a warm blanket. It feels just like Cerridwen's cloak.

'Dinner is ready, sleepy head.' Nanny says sitting beside her.

'Where is Cerridwen?' she asks Nan. 'Did she go without saying goodbye?'

Nanny smiles hands Tamika her lunch. 'Go and sit outside in the sun.'

Tamika gets up and goes to sit at the table outside with her lunch.

As she sits down there beside the table is her basket, and in it are the herbs given to her by Cerridwen and a single beautiful yellow flower. What a magical day this has been!



# Healing and Wicca

By Peter Nash

Healing work has always and will always be a very important aspect of the work of the witch, more so if he/she is a member of a coven. Years ago when I was HP of a coven at least 50% of the petitions put to us for help were for healing. We know that many of the ancient magical traditions employed healer priests e.g. Osiris in Ancient Egypt; the Druids were also gifted healers (even allegedly discovering an early form of aspirin from tree bark). Let us not forget that Jesus was credited with many acts of healing. Centuries later in Britain and Europe virtually every village had a Wise-woman or Cunning Man; i.e. the forerunners of the modern "Hedgewitch".

In my own tradition of the Craft, the ability to heal was therefore of vital importance; indeed two proofs or testimonies had to be produced from patients confirming successful healings before applying to be upgraded to the second degree. The actual mode didn't matter i.e. whether a complaint was effectively treated by herbalism, hands on healing or by auric healing. In other words it was of no importance whether the candidate used practical knowledge such as a herbal remedy or whether they used spiritual forces such as the "power" as we refer to that cosmic energy raised by the working coven. This energy is known by many other names around the world e.g. Chi in China, Ki in Japan, Mana in Hawaii and Prana in India. There are many ways of applying the energy - whatever you wish to call it - and we will discuss some of these in the course of this article.

The correct channelling and focus of this universal energy is therefore of great importance in some forms of spiritual healing e.g. Reiki. In this and in other forms of physical contact healing, the healer is the channel or medium between the energy and the patient; he or she is simply the bridge or point of contact between the two. From the hands of the healer the energy will then go to the affected part of the body. Some healers believe that it is necessary to physically place the hands on the afflicted area. The obvious difficulty here would be instances of for example breast or testicular cancer; many healers probably wisely believe that the healing force will automatically go where it is needed - all that is required is for the healer to gently place the hands on the patient's shoulder. This will usually make them feel comfortable and reassured.

With the previously described method, there is no physical or psychic depletion to the healer because as stated he/she is simply the conduit for the energy channelled; in fact the healer should also feel the benefit of the healing force. Healing can however be transferred to another person physically using one's own energy. This is known as magnetic healing. Because this mode can definitely cause depletion to the healer I rarely use it, although occasionally I will use it to "kick start" a healing session so to speak especially if it is a difficult case, but even then only for a few seconds.

It is not, however, completely necessary to have physical contact with the patient. Many healers indeed work "hands off" - this is called auric healing, and as its name implies here the energy is transferred to the patient's aura rather than to the physical body. The aura is a natural magnetic field around the body of all living things, whether human, plant or animal. Even buildings accumulate them over the years, and it can be viewed either psychically or physically by the process

known as Kirlian Photography named after the Russian inventor Semyon Kirlian. The nature of the aura would be a separate article; briefly however there are said to be three main zones. The first is a narrow band next to the skin, about 1/4 of an inch wide which is called the "Ethereic double". The second zone he called the "Inner aura" between 1-3 inches wide and which follows the outline of the physical body and is the easiest to see. The third zone he called the "Outer aura" - this extends beyond the Inner aura and has a finer outline; it is said to be more highly concentrated around the head area. Gifted psychics may be able to diagnose ailments in the physical body by seeing gaps or unusual colours within the aura, while others say that the aura of a sick person may be completely grey, brown, or other dull colour.

The process for auric healing is similar to the method described earlier; the difference being that the healer's hands do not make contact with the patient (some people in any case do not like physical contact). Here the channelled energy goes straight into the aura and from there to the afflicted part of the patient's body. This form of non contact healing can be just as effective as the traditional hands-on approach. Some healers may also pass their hands over the chakras, i.e. natural energy centres of the body, namely the crown of the head, the forehead or so-called "third eye", the throat, the heart, the solar plexus, the abdomen and the sexual organs. Chakra, like Prana, is also a Sanskrit word.

I am sometimes asked about so-called "absent healing" or distant healing as it is usually known these days. This is where the patient is not actually physically present but where healing energy is sent out to him or her. Every coven member will know that distant healing is not only possible (as stated earlier, in my experience at least, the majority of appeals for help to the coven were for healing) but works as well if not better than the regular hands-on healing approach even if the patient is many miles away.

For best results it is helpful if you have a photograph of the patient or if you know them you may at least visualise them. Some healers simply visualise a beautiful light descending from the universe and onto the photograph until they feel that enough energy has been transmitted (although just like regular healing, distant healing works better and is more effective if the sessions are regular).

For myself, I begin the session by sitting quietly for a few moments, breathing deeply, and I say a quick prayer to a god or goddess associated with healing, e.g. Brighid. I then visualise the person's aura as "flooded" with healing colours, usually blue or green, although I may use for example red to revitalise if the patient is suffering from exhaustion. I conclude the session with a prayer to the same god or goddess giving thanks for the healing energy sent.

Another method I have witnessed in the past was where I was a guest at a coven not far from where I lived at the time. During the working part of the evening, the coven danced and chanted to raise the power whilst the High Priestess stood in the middle of the circle pointing her wand upwards as if acting as a sort of "lightning conductor". When the power raising was completed the High Priest knelt in front of her; she then touched his palms with the wand and "transmitted" the power into his hands which he then held over a photograph of the patient and in turn "willed" the power into the photograph.

This in my opinion showed good initiative and helps to illustrate the many ways in which healing may be tapped and transmitted. It could even be used if the patient were physically present. One problem with distant healing however that can arise is when the healer has no photograph of

the patient and does not know him/her. A High Priestess I used to know used to get round this by obtaining as much information as possible about the physical appearance of the patient; she would then select a Tarot court card i.e. a page, knight, queen or king to represent them, rather like the practice of some Tarot readers who use a 'significator' card to represent the questioner or subject of the reading. This card was then placed on the pentacle on the altar and used as a 'substitute' for the patient, i.e. the raised energy of the coven would then be directed to, and focused on, the Tarot card.

Once again this showed good initiative and makes a good alternative to perhaps using poppets, i.e. dolls constructed to look like the patient and usually made of wax or plasticine, perhaps incorporating nail or hair clippings, or even with the patient's astrological sign symbol engraved on the forehead or chest of the poppet. Their use certainly helps to create a psychic link with the patient and may help to create a more powerful image. However, even if the spell using them fails, the poppet **MUST** be destroyed by being broken up and thrown into running water one full lunar cycle after the spell has been performed. Personally I find them slightly sinister and do not feel comfortable with them so I avoid their use.

Self-healing is of course also possible and is very useful in combatting the stress of everyday living, especially if in a demanding or high pressure job. Of course if one is skilled in Reiki or any other form of spiritual healing, this is very easy to administer. I give myself a Reiki session before rising in the morning to start off and help me prepare for the day. Meditation can also be another useful tool, indeed it has been scientifically proved to reduce stress, induce a greater sense of wellbeing and some studies suggest that it can be highly beneficial in reducing high blood pressure.

A method I sometimes use is to receive healing from trees. The method is very simple; I select a tree that seems to be giving positive energy (nearly all do!). I then silently ask the tree's permission to receive healing from it (the answer is rarely no - however if you get a refusal respect the tree's wishes, and leave it to find another one). I then sit beneath it with my back against the trunk. Eventually you will feel a connection with the tree's natural energy field. I have even experienced a very pleasant sensation of my back sort of merging with the trunk. You may even hear or perceive a tiny "heart beat" or pulse from the tree's trunk. However, when you achieve this union with the tree's energy, then ask the tree to share its energy with you. You will know intuitively when the session is complete. Before you leave be sure to thank the tree for its healing, if you can, and leave a coin or other small gift as a way of saying thanks.

This article has examined just a few methods of healing which may be used solely or in conjunction with modern day Wiccan practice. It is fair to say that there are many others, including herbalism described earlier, crystal healing and colour therapy; these however require a great deal of training to be practised properly and lie outside the scope of this article, however I mention them only to point the way for those that may wish to study them in greater depth.

Whichever method of healing you employ **ALWAYS** keep a positive attitude - don't just believe that what you are doing will be effective; **KNOW** that it will.

And never forget that also that at this time in the Earth's history - when war is raging all over the planet, where there is pollution, exploitation of the Earth's resources, famine, uncertainty, child abuse, cruelty to animals to name a few - that Earth healing too is all important.

Good Healing.

**PN**

# Snowflake Mandala

to colour and enjoy



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# Two Kings

*Crystalline snowflakes descend gently, swaying in the crisp night sky, snow capped conifers glimmer under full moon. The forest stands quiet, still. Tiny legs scurry over frozen leaves searching, all the while keeping ears open for airborne predators echoing in the distance. In the deepest part of the forest stands a stone barn, amber warmth radiating defiantly from windows as curling wood smoke ascends into the winter night. Inside, heavily laden tables creak under a banquet fit for kings. A great fire roars happily, hissing, crackling and laughing along with the smiles huddled around it. A story telling has begun....*

This forest once had a King; proud, loyal, fair but fierce. King Genam ruled for many years fighting and sacrificing, protecting it and his people. But all mourned this day for King Genam was dead and a prophecy fulfilled.

His death was foretold by the wise woman from the darkest parts of the forest. Some feared her, called her "demon". Some called her the All Mother of the old ways. But no matter the inclination, everyone respected her. The prophecy foretold that King Genam would pass into the next world after three decades of rule and that the day of his death be the same as his birth. King Genam respected the wise woman, as it was she who had professed that the land had chosen him as king, and that he must follow and protect its code. The prophecy had also foretold the birth of two sons, brothers. This also came to pass...

Queen Ashan, his love since they were young, had born him twins. King Genam rejoiced the moment, but fell deathly silent. The Queen's most precious gift had come with a price. King Genam mourned deeply but vowed he would not let harm come to their sons till they came of age and stood as men, a promise he kept. The brothers grew and learned from their father and his closest confidants, all methods of combat, morality, ethics and the code of the land. But above all, they learned to respect the kingdom that was theirs to rule one day. Now that day had come....

Princes Holen and Oanam stood in the great hall their father had built. Standing either side of the throne their father had once filled. Neither took the seat as one problem stood in their way: the King had not chosen which of them to rule. Holen believed he was the older of the two so his was the right, but neither truly knew for certain. Their father's men gathered, telling them there is only one solution - find the wise woman and let her decide....

Somehow she still lived, but how could this be? Was she the same wise old woman who had prophesied to their father when he was young? They dared not question her as all knew every word she spoke was law. Gathered around her hearth she spoke to them. She told them of a second prophecy that only the King knew, kept secret under oath. It spoke of the time of Two Kings.

A great ruler would have twin sons, and on his passing not one but two kings would be crowned. Rather than divide a kingdom they would rule half a year. One would rule from the darkest day to the brightest, the other would take the throne and rule till the darkest day came again. This was the will of the land. King Genam's crown was split, remoulded with oak and holly, half making a crown for Oanam, the other for Holen. Both swore an oath to the wise woman. Oanam would rule first until the longest day where Holen would take his place until the darkest.

The cycle continued peacefully for many years, the kingdom had never been so strong. But upon the twentieth year of their reign something went wrong...

The grand procession began as always, a week before the Yule festival just as it had at Midsummer to mark the coronation of the new King. The tradition had ingrained itself on the people's way of life, becoming as natural as the changing seasons. The festival had grown to a huge event. Singing, dancing and feasting would continue for days, with the coronation on the second day and the celebrations would continue on the third to welcome in the new King and bless his rule. Holen knew his time was up once again, but over the years his heart had grown colder and darker. It waned like the half of the year he ruled over. Half a crown wasn't enough anymore.

Festival morning had begun. Everything was laid out around the great hall ready to be consumed, drunk or played but nothing happened. People were stuck in their homes as icy winter winds rushed over the land freezing everything in its path. Oanam, seeing what was happening, went to his brother's aid but the doors to the inner throne room would not open. He knocked loudly and waited but no answer came from within. It began to get dark and still there was no answer from inside. Oanam stared out from the castle's main entrance onto the path before it, watching as the blizzard grew closer and stronger. Something moved in the dark, a black shadow growing larger and larger. A huddled form wrapped in thick black fur trudged towards him. As it drew closer it released its shelter to reveal the wise woman. Her voice, ghostly and hollow, made Oanam's skin crawl.

*"A curse holds the land, an oath has been broken. The time of change is here but it cannot happen without two brothers. If the passing of the crown does not take place there will be no new crops, no spring or summer. This land will forever be held in the icy grip of winter."*

Oanam told the wise woman his brother had locked himself away inside the throne room where the ceremony would take place. Exhausted guards stood defeated, as the doors remained defiant. Seeing the wise woman they stood back as she walked up to the doors. Slowly raising her right hand she touched the doors with a single finger. The explosion reverberated around the great halls echoing out into the woods. Splinters floated in the air as she continued inside finding Holen, sword drawn standing before the throne... petrified.

*"You must perform the ceremony or you will curse this land forever"* she spoke slowly staring, unflinching.

"NEVER! I'll never hand over the throne! I WILL RULE ALONE!" he spat, trying to stop his sword shaking loose from his fingers.

She moved closer, unfazed by the sword pointed at her *"There is only one way you can rule alone and that is to kill your brother. Are you willing to curse your own kingdom forever?"*

"Anything! I want what I deserve!" Holen cried back.

Oanam had listened to his brother's words. Walking through the doorless archway he stood there for Holen to see. "So be it, Brother." Sadness dripped from each word.

*"Then you must fight, but be warned it must be done by sunrise. Arm yourselves and heed my words, there is only one way this will end!"*

Wind whipped into the throne room as the blizzard penetrated inside spinning into a blinding vortex. As quickly as it appeared it vanished along with the wise woman, and both brothers were left alone to their fate.

Both men chose their weapons.

Stepping outside they stared amazed. The blizzard had ceased leaving a star lit sky, the full moon shining off the blades on their belts and the bows in their hands. All was silent and still, even the air dare not disturb the moment as brother faced brother.

A grin grew on Holen's face, and in a blur he unsheathed an arrow and sent it soaring towards empty footprints. Holen gazed where his brother had been then jumped away as an arrow landed where he had been standing.

They raced into the forest like shimmers of moonlight bouncing off trees, arrows flying in all directions. Coming to a clearing each had a single arrow left. Like coiled statues, both searched for fear in the eye of the other, finding none. Arrows loosed, bows dropped to the snow and drawn swords gleamed as the brothers met blade to blade before the arrows even touched the ground. They fought savagely, equally skilled, strong and as fast as the other. Sparks flew from furious blades and blood stained the icy snow. Standing back to catch their breath each wondered if they would out last the other, then screaming in unison they charged but before connecting Holen caught his foot on a hidden root and slid face first toward his brother.

Gazing upwards his eyes met the tip of Oanam's sword.

"You've failed, Holen; I don't wish to kill you. Will you yield, brother?"

"I... I... I yield, you win" Holen hung his head low.

Turning away, Oanam walked over to where Holen's sword lay in the snow. As he leaned down to pick it up Holen jumped to his feet, unsheathed a hidden dagger and launched towards his brothers back, failing to notice the large oak branch falling towards him. Turning quickly Oanam saw his brother trapped under the huge limb, the dagger stuck in his chest.

"Brother you disappoint me, after all that we've been taught about the land; did you think its spirit would allow you to defy the prophecy?"

Through ragged breaths and tears Holen looked up at his brother. "Leave me Oanam. I deserve my fate, forgive me" his voice faded. Holen went limp as claret red seeped into the white snow.

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Bright light shone through windows, crisp snow falling through the air. The sounds of laughter, song and dance echoed from outside the walls. Holen opened his eyes slowly, the bright morning sunlight making them ache. Something in the corner of his eye stirred. He tried to turn to the fireplace to see the hunched form of the wise woman watching over a small pot on the boil. Without turning she spoke *"Good you're awake, you must be quite resilient to have survived your wounds but know that you had one thing on your side... your brother. He could have left you there, but he loves you Holen despite what you tried to do. I did what I could but you were in the hands of the spirits, and lucky for you they decided it wasn't your time just yet"*

He stared at her speechless. The wise woman walked over to him. *"Here, drink this, it tastes like cats urine and smells worse, but it will help you heal and get through what you've got to do today."*

He took the pot and nodded to her. He understood what she meant; the ceremony was still to be held. That night the brothers stood side by side once more before the throne. Holen smiled at his brother and motioned him to kneel; when Oanam had complied he took the oak crown and placed it upon his brother's head. Oanam stood, bowed to Holen and then took the throne. The moment he sat down a warmth came over the room, the sense of fear amongst the people vanished, they all knew inside that things were as they should be.

The celebrations were like no other that night and continued into the next day. In the distance a small dark form trudged through the snow towards the heart of the forest. Stopping to tighten the black fur skin wrapped around her, the wise woman looked up at an owl staring back down at her from high above. *"That was close this time; lucky for us a brother's love was stronger than his head or we might all be dead or worse by now. The old place will be in good hands for a few centuries... till they need me again."* The owl hooted in reply and took flight; the wise woman vanished, and all that remained were two fading, snowy footprints.

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*You see the thing is some local people reckon this story is actually true. Well you can decide for yourself. Either way this land's got power and we'd all better respect it.*

# Platonic Influence

**T**HE Renaissance embraced the Classical culture that hadn't existed for over a millennium. Alongside art, music, and sculptural nudity, one thing that epitomized the Classical Age was the practice of philosophical inquiry.

As classical works of the Graeco-Roman era were translated and disseminated, many Renaissance Christians were surprised to find that the writings of ancient Pagans contained hints of monotheism. In addition, morals and virtues were discovered within these works — many written centuries before the death of Christ — that were considered by the Church and its adherents to be “Christian” in nature. The more they researched and read, the more these Christians agreed with many of the ideas and postulates of ancient philosophy. As an added bonus, they found that many Church fathers of late antiquity had also agreed with these ancient authors. This gave many students of the occult loopholes, which could, at least, theoretically, justify their mystical and magical practices.

“So concerning the whole Heaven or World — let us call it whatsoever name may be most acceptable to it — we must ask the question which, it is agreed, must be asked at the outset if inquiry concerning anything: Has it always been, without any source of beginning or has it come to be, starting from some beginning? It has come to be, for it can be seen and touched and it has body, and all such things are sensible and as we saw, sensible thing, that are to be apprehended by belief together with sensation, are things that become and can be generated. But again, that which becomes, we say, must necessarily become by the agency of some cause. The maker and father of this universe it is a hard task to find, and having found him it would be impossible to declare him to all mankind.” — Plato, *Timaeus*.

The above passage comes from the most influential and important of Plato's dialogues, at least where Renaissance occultism is concerned. *Timaeus* not only bespoke of a grand architect of the universe — the Demiurge, who Christians would immediately deem to be none other than God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth in the Book of Genesis, but also laid out an entire celestial cosmology, which could be, to the Renaissance magician, manipulated through the implementation of mystical formulae.

“Let us rather say that the world is like, above all things, to that Living Creature of which all other creatures, severally and in their families, are parts. For that embraces and contains within itself all the intelligible living creatures, just as this world contains ourselves and all other creatures that have been formed as things visible. For the god, wishing to make this world most nearly like that intelligible thing which is best and in every way complete, fashioned it as a single visible living creature, containing within itself all living things whose nature is of the same order.” — *Timaeus*

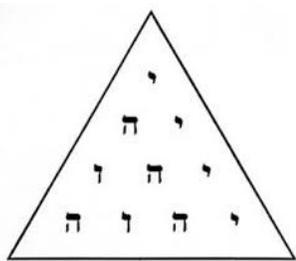
Thus, God, the grand architect of the universe, created the world to be singular and perfect, a true representation of divinity itself or so Renaissance Christians interpreted this text, as Plato, a polytheist, had a different attitude concerning this “god.” The world of *Timaeus* and ostensibly that of the Christians interpreting the text was perfect and good, being fashioned by this mighty divine creator God found within the pages of Genesis.

*Timaeus* held many gems of wisdom for the more practical occultists of the Renaissance. For example, the number four, holding many secrets and nuances to the mystically-minded, revealed itself most importantly (at first), as the four classical elements of antiquity, which Plato made certain to include in his cosmogony.

“Now that which comes to be must be bodily, and so visible and tangible; and nothing can be visible without fire, or tangible without something solid, and nothing is solid without earth. Hence the god, when he began to put together the body of the universe, set about making it of fire and earth. But two things alone cannot be satisfactorily united without a third; for there must be some bond between them drawing together... Now if it had been required that the body of the universe should be a plane surface with no depth, a single mean would have been enough to connect its companions and itself; but in fact the world was to be solid in form, and solids are always conjoined, not by one mean, but by two. Accordingly the god set water and air between fire and earth, and made them so far as was possible, proportional to one another, so that as fire is to air, so is air to water, and as air is to water, so is water to earth, and thus he bound together the frame of a world visible and tangible.” – *Timaeus*

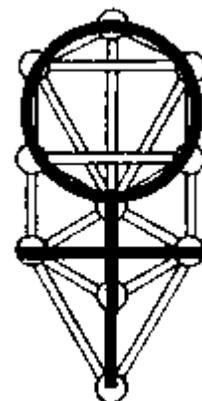
Thus, not only did Plato make the four elements correspond to a geometrical format, he also established a descending order that spoke of their inherent theoretical density: Fire Air Water Earth, with Fire being the least dense of the elements and Earth being the heaviest. The four-fold nature of the world was also expounded upon by mystics in other mathematical manners. For example, the addition of the numbers one through four equal ten ( $1+2+3+4=10$ ), the decad or perfect number, thus further proving, to the minds of the Hermeticists, the inherent harmony found within Plato’s cosmology and subsequently, the world itself. Of course, this harmony was considered old news by the time of Plato’s writing, having been professed by Pythagorean mystics centuries earlier, as the mysteries of the tetractys and decad. However, to the Hermeticists rediscovering ancient wisdom, these were profound mysteries indeed.

It should be noted that these concepts had already been adapted by Kabbalists centuries before. As Kabbalistic theory also began to penetrate the writings of the Renaissance occultists, the number four was found to correspond with the Tetragrammaton, the ineffable four-fold Hebraic name of God: YHVH (the Hebrew letters Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh, rendered by Renaissance writers as “Jehovah” and by many modern authors as “Yahweh”). Each of the four elements was associated with a letter of the Tetragrammaton, as well as one of the four theoretical Kabbalistic worlds. The additional permutations of the four that yield ten would then correspond to the ten Sephirot of the Tree of Life — essentially a blueprint representation of the theoretical universe.



As Plato further spoke of the four elements as approached geometrically in the double and triple geometric proportions, yet another “sacred” number embraced by the later Hermeticists emerged: seven. If taken in order, the proportions yielded seven specific numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 27, respectively. Also, if we take the “perfect” number 10 of any particular thing (rocks, grapes, sticks, etc.) and arrange them in an ascending shape pyramid, (following yet again the  $1+2+3+4=10$  arrangement), four rows result (think beer pong, for example).

Three sides and four rows thus yielded both seven and ten, further “proving” their numerical sanctity (as well as the perceived genius inherent to the ordered universe, as described by Plato) to the Renaissance occultist. The number seven was placed in an even more prominent position by Plato and the later Hermeticists, because of its correspondence to the Seven Holy Planets: Sol, Luna, Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn. In addition, the glyph of Venus, also associated with the number seven, is the sole planetary glyph that can encompass all of the Sephirot on the diagram of the Tree of Life, thus giving even more gravitas to the concept.



“...but the inner revolution he split in six places into seven unequal circles, severally corresponding with the double and triple intervals, of each of which there were three.” – *Timaeus*

As Hermetic knowledge grew, expanded, and combined with the era's Christian mysticism, specific correspondences were attributed to the numbers. Henry Cornelius Agrippa, writing in the early 16th century, in his *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, corresponded the number 7 with particular angels, days of the week, musical notes, body parts, holes of the head (nostrils, for example), stars of the Pleiades, metals, birds, fish, mammals, stones, Roman kings, Roman hills, infernal habitations, wise men of Greece, and so forth.

This system of correspondence would not only be utilized as a mnemonic technique, but would become an integral part of Hermetic spell-casting, during the Renaissance, whether through ritual incantations, the construction of magical talismans, the summoning of spirits to perform tasks for the magician, or just about any other magical endeavor.

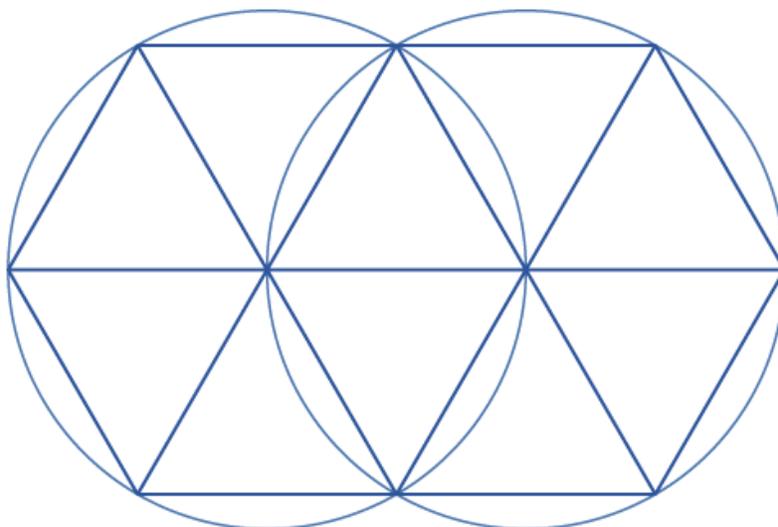
During the Renaissance, the practice of astrology was considered a necessity to the practitioners of Hermetic magic, in part because of the importance Plato placed upon the power of celestial bodies. This emphasis was perpetuated by the Platonists, Neo-Platonists, Kabbalists, and Hermeticists who came after. As Agrippa quipped:

“There is therefore such a kind of Spirit required to be, as it were the medium, whereby celestial souls are joined to gross bodies, and bestow upon them wonderful gifts... By this Spirit therefore every occult property is conveyed into herbs, stones, metals, and animals, through the Sun, Moon, planets, and through stars higher than the planets.” –Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*

Each planet would subsequently have multiple terrestrial representations naturally occurring upon Earth, each one imbued to a certain extent with the “essence” of the corresponding planet in question. For example, things such as iron, jasper, garlic, wolfsbane, nettles, a crow's feather, and snakeskin would be considered to be under the dominion of Mars. Therefore, if a magician wished to cast a spell in order to succeed at a particularly martial endeavor — let's say, to emerge triumphant from a duel — he would use components that were under Mars' celestial jurisdiction. Astrological charts would likely also be implemented, in order to determine the most advantageous time for spell-casting.

“We have spoken in the foregoing chapters of the divers kinds of divinations: but this is to be noted, that all these require the use and rules of astrology, as a key most necessary for the knowledge of all secrets; and that all kinds of divinations whatsoever have their root and foundation in astrology, so as that without it they are of little or no use...” –Agrippa

Teth Mysterium



# ART and Poetry



## Greenman by Seren, 15

# Memory

How many times great,  
The grandfather lying in the barrow.  
He is your ancestor,  
And mine.

How distant is the forebear  
That you dishonour,  
When you level the barrow  
Where lay your ancestor,  
And mine.

The bones now in a glass case laid,  
His dignity ignored.  
This Warrior Chief  
Once proud,  
Now the idle curiosity  
Of gawpers.

Surely, the Gods  
that watched over his people  
Have not forgot?  
Though they themselves  
Are seldom remembered.  
Now I too will remember,  
For he and I have met.

When my body's time,  
Upon this Earth is done,  
Lay my remains  
To feed the trees.  
I will go to walk with the Warrior,  
Remembering.



*Sutton Hoo burial mask replica*

Kit /I\

# BOPA

Squatted outside her house in the terraced street waiting expectantly, ready for the next emergency broken bone, help with a delivery no doubt or some poor dead soul needing laying out, death was a frequent visitor to the village where most of the men were connected to the mining industry. Of indeterminate age, with a square head, dark hair almost covered by a cloth Dai-cap, sharp eyes and even sharper ears, lips thin in an unsmiling though not unpleasant face. A fresh pinny each day and an old leather bag bursting at the seams containing tools, herbs, disinfectant and towels at the ready; to cope with any crisis.

Mrs Dorothy Davies, a courtesy title? Because no-one could recall just what Mr Davies had looked like, but Bopa had been there for ever.

Although she baked bread, made bread pudding from left overs, toffee apples and fudge, she remained a mystery to the younger element that never quite formed any affinity with her, but to the adults she was a Godsend.

Organisational skills were legend and panic was not a word in her vocabulary. Never appeared to be ill, not even a sniffle and an attribute that amazed all, she did not suffer from arthritis! Not a trace of the screws! 'Honey' said the witch doctor. I believe villages to be poorer without a 'Bopa'.

Bill Monington

Inspriations Awen, 2013

*I came across this piece published in Inspirations Awen, an annual collection of poetry and creative writing organised by our local Council Library Services. The gentleman who wrote it read his poem at the book launch event and, of course, I recognised this lady! Bopa is a Welsh word meaning Aunt, but not in a strict familial sense. In small Welsh village communities, ladies such as this were everyone's Aunty. The author of this poem is in his 90s, and I agree with his closing sentiment.*

*Lutea*

# Kitchen Witch

Making things, all sorts of things, is a passion of mine, and I have to admit that I'm a bit of a hobby collector. I love going to craft markets and fairs, not to buy particularly but to just see what other people make, can I do that and what twist can I put on it.

One of my favoured things is to be able to use things I find in my garden or hedgerows to make goodies for Yule gifts, or just rummage around my cupboards and chuck it in a pot and see what I get. Last Yule I had a gift from my sister of a bottle of Mince Pie Vodka; not only did this taste fab it was also sparkly! So being the crafty Witch I am I set about trying to make my own version. I love to make my own Sloe Gin and other funny tipples that I might pop into later editions, so I had an idea on where to start. I make it very hard for other people to buy for me!

Now I don't know about anyone else but I like to make a good old fashioned (Victorian I think) Christmas cake, albeit with a more Yule or Solstice decoration, and there is always a bit of dried fruit mix left over, so this is what I did.

## Yuletide Tipple

Add the following ingredients to a 2lb jar:

- 1 cup of mixed fruit
- 6 dried apricots chopped
- 6 dried prunes chopped
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- Grated rind and juice of 1 lemon
- Grated rind and juice of 1 orange
- Pinch of cinnamon
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Half a cup of dark brown sugar (or any sugar you have)
- Big splash of rum
- Finally, fill to the top with vodka

*Basically this is my Yule cake mix before flour and eggs. That's what it smells and tastes like!*

Then shake it all up, being careful as it's heavy. Give it a shake every day to make sure the sugar is dissolved. If you can leave it as long as possible the better it will be. I always try to put a small bottle away for next year. Age it and it gets even better. (Label it!)

After at least a week, 2 or more if you can, taste it and add more sugar or sugar syrup if it needs to be sweeter, then you can strain the liquid off into nice sterilised glass bottles.

These make brilliant Yule gifts, with nice labels. Definitely one for the grown ups!

To add a bit of sparkle, I found that edible glitter for cup cakes works brilliantly. Add about a quarter of a teaspoon to a 200ml bottle to start with. Give it a shake and add more if you think it needs it.

If you have run out of time then a quick alternative is my **Cherry Vodka Sparkle**. This can work with lots of spirits.



In a 200ml sterilised glass bottle, put in a quarter of a teaspoon of edible cake glitter, add approximately 20ml of cherry syrup, or other flavour if you can't get it, even a good honey works well, then top up with Vodka. Make sure the lid is on tight and shake.

Sweeten with sugar syrup if you need to—place 1 cup of white sugar and 1 cup of cooled boiled water in a jam jar and shake until dissolved.

# South Wales Moots

## **Abergavenny Moot**

Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm, Hen and Chickens pub, Abergavenny  
Contact: the.shadows.light@hotmail.com or Facebook [South Wales Pagans](#)

## **Cardiff Moot**

Second Monday of the month, 7.30 pm, Rummer Tavern (upstairs), Cardiff  
Contact: Facebook [Cardiff Pagan Moot](#)

## **Cardiff, "Coffee-n-Craft"**

Third Saturday of the month, 9.30 am, Pipi's, 31-32 Caroline Street, Cardiff  
Contact: coffee-n-craft@midnightofcardiff.com

## **Cowbridge Moot**

First Saturday of the month 11 am -1 pm, The Little Shop of Calm, (upstairs), Cowbridge  
Contact: sianyh@aol.com or Facebook [Cowbridge Moot](#)

## **Hereford Moot**

First Wednesday of the month 7.30 pm, The Black Lion pub (upstairs), Hereford  
Contact: annemarielifairbairn@gmail.com or Facebook [Herefordshire Pagan Moot](#)

## **Llanelli Moot**

Second Wednesday of the month, 11 am, Lakefield Community Centre, Llanelli  
Contact: Facebook [Llanelli Pagan Moot](#)

## **Market Moot**

First Saturday of every other month, 1 pm, Bettws in Bloom, Newport  
Contact: Facebook [Market Moot](#) (on break until summer)

## **Newport Coffee Morning**

Last Saturday of the month, 11 am, Coffee#1, Commercial Street, Newport  
Contact: the.shadows.light@hotmail.com or Facebook [South Wales Pagans](#)

## **Neath Moot**

Last Monday of the month, 7 pm, The Highlander, Lewis Road, Neath  
Contact: Facebook [Neath Pagan Moot](#)

## **Y Garreg a'r Crochan Moot, Pontardawe**

First Monday of the month, 7.30 pm, Pontardawe Inn (Y Gwachel), Pontardawe  
Contact: Facebook [Y Garreg A'r Crochan - Swansea Valley Pagan Moot](#)

## **Swansea Moot**

Third Tuesday of the month, 7.30 pm, Mozart's on Walter Road, Swansea  
Contact: Facebook [Swansea Pagan Moot](#)

## **Usk Moot**

Third Tuesday in the month, 7.30 pm, The New Court Inn, Usk  
Contact: tazwelsh5@hotmail.com

## **Valleys Moot**

First Wednesday of the month ,7.30, The Griffin Inn, Gilfach Goch  
Contact: krishak2099@hotmail.com or Facebook [Valleys Moot](#)

# DragonOak Workshops 2015

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Sunday 18th January	Mythology in the Craft
Sunday 22nd February	Goddess workshop
Saturday 14th March	God workshop
Saturday 18th April	Drumming and dancing workshop including an introduction to Morris dancing
Saturday 16th May	Chant and song in the craft
Sunday 14th June	What is magick and how to use it
Saturday 18th July	An introduction to Quabbalah
Sunday 16th August	Planetary magick
Saturday 19th September	How to honour your ancestors

*Each workshop will last for two hours and will include refreshments*

*The cost of the workshop is £10*

*Please book in advance so that we can work numbers out*

*Please email [Sianyh@aol.com](mailto:Sianyh@aol.com) for further details*





*Winter Solstice sunrise Karnak © The Cairo Post*

If you have any events, functions or workshops you would like advertised here please let me know and we can include them.

I am going to put a full moot listing in each copy so that we can advertise the moots in the area. Please check that the details are correct and keep us updated. Any camps or upcoming open rituals would be great to know about as well.

I would also like to start a births, handfastings and obituaries page from the next edition.

Finally, if you have any comments or contributions (articles, poetry, art, etc) that will help us to continue to improve please email them to me at **[Sianyh@aol.com](mailto:Sianyh@aol.com)**



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