

Dark Mirror



Litha (Summer Solstice) 2014

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Behind the Mirror

Dear readers,

Welcome to the Dark Mirror Spring Conference Issue - this edition celebrates Beltane and Litha. The cover shows our dark mirror surrounded by oak, holly and seasonal flowers, reminding us that the Oak King is in the ascendant. Our main article looks at the plant spirits of the season. Enjoy!

The editor welcomes news from local moots about their events and activities, directly or via their RC. News from our local moots encourages others to join and demonstrates just how active the pagan community is in this region, so please share your news.

Thanks to all contributors to this issue.

Blessed Be

Harvey – DM Editor

Dark Mirror submissions

Dark Mirror (DM) is read by Pagan Federation District Members and most likely many other Pagans. The aim of the Dark Mirror continues to be to reflect the work of the local PF (PFDCI) and its members, illuminate news and events in our area, and to provide a platform for local pagans to share their thoughts, poems, prose, stories, recipes, craft items, views, and articles of general pagan interest. Articles can be ca 3-4 pages of A4 (inc. images). The editors decision is final.

Send your submissions in any digital format to the DM editor via email

DarkMirrorMagazine@gmail.com or by mail to:

Dark Mirror c/o Pagan Federation DCI, Torcroft, Commons Lane, Shaldon, TQ14 0HN.

Copy deadlines

Please get your articles in by the deadline and the editor will do their best to get them into the newsletter that aims to be with members by the relevant festival.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
Spring Equinox (Ostara)	21st February
Summer Solstice (Litha)	21st May
Autumn Equinox (Mabon)	21st August
Winter Solstice (Yule)	21st November

PF Members only advertising

Please note that we now offer FREE THREE LINE advertising entries to members

Disclaimer

Dark Mirror is the District Newsletter of the Pagan Federation - Devon, Cornwall and the Isles (PFDCJ) and is only available to members of the Pagan Federation. The views and/or opinions expressed within this publication are not necessarily those of the editor, printers, PFDCI or the Pagan Federation. Mention within this publication should not be seen as an endorsement of any events, meetings, moots or products, and no responsibility can be accepted by us for such items.

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District managers report

This edition of the Dark Mirror comes at the turn of the year when it feels like summer has just begun, but we know it is the turn of the wheel to the dark days of winter and the Holly King wins. Sad as that is, all is still bright on the horizon for us a while yet, with summer activities, festivals and celebrations to come.

Of course, one calendar item for you all to come is the PF Picnic on August 17th 2014 at the Hurlers (see details in this newsletter). It is in a great central location for the District and always well attended. I am hoping to bring my 5 year old granddaughter this time; I have told her about welly-wanging for a God called Lugh, and from her face I know she did not believe me about gods of 'water closets'.

The articles included in Dark Mirror are again to an excellent standard, thank you contributors. Please keep them coming in to the Editor. On the matter of entertaining YOU as a member, I have been thinking deeply about future District Conference speakers. I am wondering if we cover the areas of Paganism that YOU want to hear about. We are already ahead on planning for Conference 2015, but long-term planning is always useful. Please feel able to email me and share your thoughts on subjects or speakers to recommend. I think we do a great job, particularly in magic and history, but it is always wise to ask the members once in a while. Your thoughts can currently go to maiamessenger@yahoo.com. A new email for officers will be confirmed soon, but this one is safe for now.

I have visited a few of the pagan moot activities local to me, and I am delighted to report that wonderful meetings are abound, providing excellent thought provoking discussion on Pagan matters, and they are holding beautiful ceremony. We are here to support members who want to promote paganism. Any member can ask me about how we can do that. At the last District Meeting, your District Officers committed themselves to actively supporting local organisers of events that promote paganism, so all you need to do is ask. One paid up member in your team is enough to get you heard.

So with blessings for Litha and Lughnasadh and onwards to Mabon – my goddess this wheel turns fast! I am reminded of the poems of Emily Dickinson (C19th), a pagan poet swimming through her life to make sense of a Christian world; born before her time I feel. May your Summer vigils feel like this:

*A something in a summer's Day
As slow her flambeaux burn away
Which solemnises me.*

*A something in a summer's noon
A depth – an Azure – a perfume,
Transcending ecstasy.*

*And still within a summer's night
A something so transporting bright
I clap my hands to see
Then veil my too inspecting face
Lets such a subtle – shimmering grace
Flutter too far for me*

*The wizard fingers never rest
The purple brook within the breast*

*Still chafes it narrow bed
Still rears the East her amber Flag
Guides still the sun along the Crag
His Caravan of Red
So looking on – the night – the morn
Conclude the wonder gay
And I meet coming thro' the dews
Another summer's Day!*

Maia

District Manager, Pagan Federation, Devon Cornwall & Isles

Messages of the season

Take a walk 'on the wild side'

Take a walk 'on the wild side',
Along the wild wood track,
Follow His dancing hoof prints,
Walk with the majestic Oak King, Lord of the Forest, ascendant in this summer time.

Walk by His side, and let the heady musk of His coat fill your nostrils,
Be empowered to match His pace.
Shelter beneath His resplendent crown of many horns, intertwined with boughs of oaken leaf.
As the burning sun rises, radiant across His brow.

His mighty hooves till and plough the soil,
And bright flowers open as he passes, ready to accept His seed,
Doe, cow, and hen, quick to his side, ready to receive His gifts,
Stag, bull, and boar follow in his hoof steps, to gain of His vigour.

Together enter a verdant grove, the court of the Green Lady,
He joins with Her, hand in hand, and deep embrace.

Now walk beside them both,
In Her footsteps the flowers bloom, the grasses and trees green,
Take in Her breath, a gift of life and energy to all, scent of May-a-fading, and flowers never-
ending,
Drink of Her milk drops, that nurture and comfort all that thirst.

Her smile warms the heart, and Her eyes shine with both Sun and Moon light,
Her touch, brings love to those heavy in fruit, and quiet release to those whose time has come,
Her pregnant womb holds the promise of futures yet to be.

And together walk with the Lord and Lady, animals and the gentle cascade of growth,
Follow them all, seen and unseen, across the seasons of time, ever on and evermore, from the
Suns full rise to the Suns full set.
And together take the eternal walk 'on the wild side'.

By PenDragon

News and events

Cornwall

RC Cornwall - Eve

I am the new RC for the PF in Cornwall. Hopefully most of you will already have had an email or letter from me, introducing myself. If not, oops! Please let me know so that you will not escape in the future!

Fiona, whom many of you will know, has handed on the RC baton after three years of sterling work. She will be a hard act to follow, and I'm sure you will join with me in thanking her for her hard work and commitment. She didn't escape entirely scot-free though, as she was still the Mistress of All Things 'Tickety' for this year's excellent DC and I Conference in March.

I am a Druid, (OBODie), and a solitary witch, although many of you in the far west will know me in my much less solitary mode at Penwith Moot's open rituals. I am a Trustee of the Cornish Faith Forum, and also a Trustee of CASPN, (the Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network), and the Membership Secretary for its daughter organisation FOCAS, (Friends of Cornwall's Ancient Sites), so spend a lot of time involved in interfaith and in caring for our wonderful ancient sites.

I hope to be visiting all the Cornish Moots once the weather improves and the days lengthen, to meet more of you. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at this email address, or on 07927 671 612, if you have any queries or comments.

Penwith Pagan Moot

Many of you will have heard that one of the longest running Moots in the country, Penwith, went into hibernation over the winter. Sarah Vivian, whom most of you will know, has run the Moot for many years but now due to ill health needs to step down. Although I would still be able to organise Moots myself, due to work commitments I cannot commit to doing it alone and therefore would need support. Although a beautiful Imbolc ritual was celebrated, at a meeting a few weeks it later it was decided that with no-one able to step forward to offer help with organising, our monthly moots would stop. But it is not all bad news! Unusually, the Moot membership has decided that our open rituals celebrating the Wheel of the Year are the most important thing for them, and therefore the Penwith Pagan Moot will continue, for the present, as a Moot that meets for seasonal celebrations. In a landscape so filled with sacred sites that deserve cherishing and honouring it is perhaps very fitting that our "Moots" have evolved into this form. Our Facebook group continues, as well as our group email list, so that members are still able to keep in touch and up to date about news and events.

On behalf of the Penwith Moot, but also personally, I would like to say a big thank you to Sarah for all her hard work and commitment to our local Pagan community. She has been here for us for very many years – selfless, indefatigable, wise and loving, and without her our very special land and community would be the poorer. Sarah of course still continues to be part of our rituals and our lives, but it is up to us to carry on her work. Thank you Sarah, for your wisdom, your kindness and common sense, and for putting up with us for so long!

Devon

RC Devon - Michele

Great news we now have a Local Coordinator for the North Devon area! So do get in contact with Minerva on oldcrone24@gmail.com. Minerva is happy to share her experience in Paganism with the local community and to help support the PF in our district.

This RC report is mostly a brief roundup of the Devon Pagan Facebook Community. If any PF members reading this have been to any of these moots, we would love to share some first-hand feedback!

Devon, Cornwall & Isles Pagans

Devon, Cornwall & Isles Pagans Facebook group is a major networking opportunity for the regions community, and for posting news of interest to the Pagan community. Any Pagan Moots/Groups are welcome to advertise their gatherings on this group. In addition, any event of Pagan interest can be shared so the local community can choose to support these 'happenings'. We also encourage Pagan crafts people to advertise their handmade wares.

Exeter & Devon Pagan Circles

Meet very regularly and have been holding both social and discussion moots. Subjects covered include divination, crystals, cleansing, odd stories, Beltane, trees and plants, and Granny magic. A few posts concerned the Exeter Respect Festival held on 31st May-1st June. One post was about a production of Gawain and the Green Knight and described as 'very Pagan'.

Plymouth and South West Devon

February Moot had a talk from Sylvia on the subject 'Do deities need gender?' This topic is also featured in the latest edition of Pagan Dawn (191). See Sylvia's blog, January post, at <http://www.fuzzymunchkin.com/sylvia>.

The March Moot was about 'Samsara', a nonverbal, film guided meditation illuminating the links between humanity and nature, life cycle and the rhythm of the planet. In April, Patrick spoke about the primal Greek mother goddess Gaia.

Tavistock West Moor Moot

For the last few moots we have been holding discussions on native plant teachers using the Ogham and runic calendars. Moots begin with an attunement and a tree grounding, then a meditation on the plants to close the evening. I have been posting links to various sites so moot members who cannot make the evening can see the plant energies we are investigating.

Teignbridge Pagans

This monthly moot supports the Pagan community between the Moors, Exeter and Torbay. Teignbridge has only been active for a year or so and shares rituals with the older and more established Torbay Moot. As such, the opportunity is there for the local members to shape it through everyone bringing their experience and energies.

Torbay Pagans/South Devon

Torbay Moot group is a long established eclectic group, they meet at on the first Thursday of the month. They hold open celebrations, study groups and have an invite only women's moon group. A recent talk was given on herbs and herbalism for magickal and ritual purpose by Frances Wright.

Hope you all have a bright Midsummer Solstice and look forward to seeing as many pagans as possible at the Lammas Picnic and Games on the 17th August. Bright Blessings, Michele

Response to letter addressed to Editor of the Pagan Dawn.

Levannah Morgan (PF Devon, Cornwall and the Isles Conference organiser)

I read with interest Rob Maye's letter in PD 191. In summary, Rob raised concerns about the cost of his local conference and, in particular, the lack of cheaper tickets and concessions for our Elders, or those who are unwaged and perhaps unable to meet the full cost.

I have been the organiser of the Devon, Cornwall and the Isles Conference since it started in 1999. It is one of the longest running district conferences and it is the one Rob is referring to in his letter.

We pride ourselves on running a high quality, friendly event for people of all pagan paths or none, at a reasonable price. For the ticket price, people get a day event with four speakers of national or international standing, a closing ceremony with circle dancing accompanied by traditional Cornish piping, and an evening gig by leading pagan musicians. There is also a social event and quiz the night before (many people come and stay the weekend) and stalls, a raffle for charity, competitions and all sorts of extras. Ticket sales have recovered well since the recession and are increasing year on year, and many of our audience come back every year, so we must be doing something right.

We offer two ticket prices, £18 for members and £22 for non-members, but £25 on the door. Over the years, we have looked many times at offering concessionary tickets for people on low incomes, but the brutal truth is that we cannot afford to.

We have kept prices constant for the last five years by very careful budgeting. We have to hire the venue (which gives us a cut-price rate) and pay for accommodation for speakers and musicians. We pay our speakers a small fee, in recognition of their knowledge and expertise. Everyone gets the same fee, regardless of fame and reputation. We also pay their travelling costs, which can be considerable.

We also pay the wonderful pagan musicians who are such an important part of the event, and who also are very generous to us. Then there are the costs of publicity materials that have to be distributed over a wide geographic area and various small organisational costs. It all adds up. None of the organizing team of 15 people, who work incredibly hard, are paid anything.

We think our conference is very good value for money. Even local, grassroots gigs charge upwards of £10 admission these days, so to get a day of speakers, participation, plus general fun and a good time with lots of other Pagans, plus an evening gig with dancing into the early hours, is quite a bargain.

There is no subsidy available for the conference. It has to cover its costs. We have to make enough each year to know that we can afford to run the next year's conference. The PF at national level is, quite reasonably, not able to subsidise district activities. Any extra money we make from our conference is used to pay for our District activities and services, which benefit our members. These include our newsletter, Dark Mirror. We continue to print and post it to those mainly elderly members who cannot access it by email. We also use our funds to cover the costs of vital interfaith, education and campaigning, which are part of the PF's core purpose, and from which we all benefit. The budget indicates that if we were to offer concessionary Conference ticket rates, we would not be able to afford the conference in its current form. It would have to become a much smaller event, which would be less attractive to members. We would also not be able to support other District activities.

We completely understand that some of our members live on very limited incomes, and we always remember that we are a community. We have a great network of local organisers in the District. If we hear that a member who has been active in the PF has fallen on hard times and cannot afford a conference ticket, then we do our best to help quietly, and without making a fuss and embarrassing anyone. We can also sometimes offer reduced price or free tickets to people who are prepared to do some work for the conference. Members are most welcome to talk to their local organiser or me about these issues.

I hope members will understand that organizing a large District Conference means balancing financial issues with other concerns, and that it is an expensive operation that requires very careful budgeting. We are determined to keep offering a friendly and top quality event to the many members and friends from all over the country and beyond that we welcome to Penstowe Manor every year.

The 2015 Conference will be held on Saturday 7th March; as I write this in May, I am just finalising the programme. Tickets will go on sale as usual at Samhain. Next year, we will be offering "early bird" tickets for the first time. I would like to extend a very warm invitation to everyone to join us next year at Penstowe.

Bright Blessings,

Levannah Morgan (PF Devon, Cornwall and the Isles conference organiser).

Museum of Witchcraft

A Day of the Departed

On 10th May 2014, the Friends of the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle offered 'A Day of the Departed'. It was aptly named, as we given the opportunity to meet the new managers employed by the Director of The Museum of British Folklore, and to thank the departing team of wondrous souls.

This day of talks on 'Death, Dogs and Ghouls' was efficiently arranged, as always, with an excellent choice of speakers set within the consistently good facilities at the Wellington Hotel, with sufficient breaks to mingle with like minds and purchase from the stalls. The house was full, and the company most pleasant.

The opening speaker was Kristoffer Hughes, who offered us his views on 'The Other Side of Sadness'. He is admirably well qualified to comment being a practicing Druid and a professional Anatomical Pathology Technologist. He focussed on 'Death, Dying and Bereavement' combining the emotional and scientific fact with ease. We learned about the biology of the dying process as well as his view of the afterlife. Quoting from Taliesin, he rode roughshod through our human tendency to visceral isolation with a sense of humour that is universal. His last piece of advice was: "So, do epic s!*t and don't take life so seriously; it's not like you are going to get out of here alive!" I love this guy!

Mark Norman followed with his talk on 'Saucer-eyed Harbingers'. He has been researching 'Black Dogs in the Folklore of Death', which has taken him far from our shores, but he shared stories from our District, some very familiar, but many of which we did not know. He has recorded accounts of dogs haunting places, people and graves, also dogs on revenge missions and appearing as portends of death, or escorts to the next world. A good study that is ongoing and was enjoyed by us all.

After lunch, Jason Karl started a talk entitle 'Boscastle Haunted'. Jason is a Paranormal

Investigator and he told us that contrary to his anticipation, he could find little contemporary stories of ghosts in the village. He went on to share his conclusions on the paranormal phenomena, which enlightened us. Did you know that 84% of ghostly reports are in daylight? 10% of us will report a sighting within our lifetime. I see him as an interesting young man with a great attitude to exploring the spiritual world and I look forward to his next publication.

Simon Costin of the Museum of British Folklore, concluded the talks by describing how to have a 'Dinner With Death'. He has held these events several times in the past, including brilliant public performances in a London Museum. From the slides we could see that his enthusiastic friends and dinner companions are truly talented people. He shared his research with us into worldwide traditions around death involving 'corpse cakes', 'battered coins' and the use of 'sin eaters'. We were told of a new idea of a wearing a bacteria filled onesie – so you will rot away faster in the ground. I really like that idea, but I can hear some of you cringing at the thought!

The day ended with a short speech from Simon Costin, tracing the path of the Museum of British Folklore from 'the caravan' to the acquisition of the Museum of Witchcraft, then we met the new managers, Judith and Peter Hewitt. They are a remarkable young couple with a range of talents including a PhD on Ritual Magic, experienced educationalist and museum management. They are a really lucky find, and although we said a really sad and heartfelt farewell to Kerriann and the whole team, I think I can say from the warmth of the audience response, we look forward to seeing where Peter and Judith take the Museum of Witchcraft. It has already, in their care, bounded into the public domain being shortlisted to the 'Best Museum Award 2014', voted by the public for 'Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence 2014', plus Judith recently starred in the Paul O'Grady show on ITV, where the subject was taken seriously – a tough call for O'Grady. If these three events are not portends of the future, then we are not Witches! A great and momentous day for our District, and may we have many more.

Maia

Useful links:

<http://www.museumofwitchcraft.com/index.php>

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

<http://museumofwitchcraftfriends.blogspot.co.uk/>

<http://www.kristofferhughes.co.uk/>

<https://www.itv.com/itvplayer/the-paul-o-grady-show/series-1/episode-48>

http://www.museumofbritishfolklore.com/about_the_museum/our_people/

Interfaith

Interfaith in Cornwall - Education

There have been many exciting developments on the interfaith scene in Cornwall over the past few months. An Interfaith Conference was held in November called "Sharing and Shaping: Doing Interfaith in a Rural Setting". It was held at the Shire Hall in Bodmin and had speakers from "upcountry". This was a major undertaking for us, and quite scary, as it was both a totally new venture for us, and involved committing to expenditure on a large scale. We were worried that there might not be sufficient interest in such a conference but as it turned out it was well attended, with Cornwall Council booking thirty delegate places straight off, and lots of interest by other agencies such as housing and community associations, the police, as well as faith organisations. As well as speakers, there were also workshops offered. Interestingly, the

workshop on religious hate crime was particularly popular.

We have been very successful with funding bids and have secured funding for our part-time interfaith development worker, Rita, to continue in post for another two years. The funding has also enabled us to extend our educational programme from primary schools into secondary and tertiary colleges. We have taught workshops at Callington College, Roseland College, Cornwall College in Camborne and St Austell College. The Pagan workshops are always very popular and get very positive feedback from the students. Not so from everyone else, however, as some of you may have seen the very negative article in the West Briton following the PSHE day at Roseland College. Representatives from the Faith Forum, including myself as the workshop leader for the Pagan sessions, are meeting with the West Briton editor to discuss our concerns over the way this was reported. But this is at least getting interfaith issues into the public eye, and the positive feedback has overwhelmingly outweighed the negative comments.

A particularly exciting new development is a Health and Social Care joint training initiative between Cornwall Council's Learning and Development Department and the Cornwall Faith Forum. Two pilot workshops have already been held, the first for the whole staff team at Littleharbour House, the Cornwall Children's Hospice, and the second one for social care community workers. Both pilots were over-subscribed, with very positive feedback and more are now being planned, the next one in June.

As a result, of this success and increasing demand, we are now actively looking for volunteers to help with our education commitments. We have advice and support from the Cornwall's RE Advisor and from Cornwall Council's Learning and Development department to ensure that the training we deliver is good quality and appropriate.

And coming in the next Dark Mirror – beginning the construction of the new interfaith building, Dor Kemmyn.

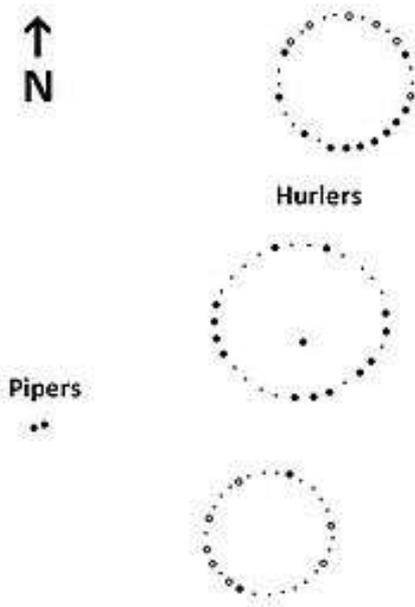
If you would like to find out more, see the Dor Kemmyn website at www.dorkemmyn.org.uk.



Forthcoming events

Devon and Cornwall PFI Lammas Picnic 2014

Sunday the 17th of August from 2pm



Join us for the Fourth Annual
Lughnasadh Games!

Games include the **Welly Boot Hurl**,
Discus Challenge, **Skilful Quoits**,
& **Creative Crafts**.

(Creative Craft skill points can be won
by entering a Corn Dolly, a Lammas loaf,
a Lammas poem/song or by making us laugh!)

Join us as we
Honour the Champion of the Goddess
& Celebrate the Lammas Harvest.

Families and well-behaved dogs welcome!
Bring food to share and leave no trace.

FFI westmoormoot@gmail.com

Meet at the Hurlers SX258 713

The Hurlers are sited at Minions village, the nearest town is Liskeard, Cornwall.

Good access, good parking.

The Hurlers are a scheduled monument on Minions Moor.

They date to the later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age (4100-3500 Before Present).

According to English Heritage, the central circle is aligned with a processional way that runs from a stone circle on Craddock Moor. This crosses at right angles a second pathway that runs along the chief alignment of the Hurlers to a Neolithic enclosure on Stowe's Hill.



Gawain and the Green Knight.

If you are interested, the 'Four of Swords' theatre company are performing on the 7th-9th August at POLTIMORE HOUSE & GARDENS near Exeter. 'Four of Swords is proud to present a new adaptation of this classic Arthurian tale, featuring film projection, parkour, live music, Middle English rapping and one awesome puppet!' <http://four-of-swords.com/>

Grand Witches Tea Party

Jackie Juno, the Grand Bard of Exeter and friends are attempting to break the record for a Witches tea party (31 August at 12:00–16:00, Rougemont Gardens Exeter, Devon).

This is in commemoration of the anniversary of the deaths of the Bideford Witches, who were the last women in England to be hanged for witchcraft in 1682. They plan to gather at twelve noon by the plaque in the ruined tower (behind the library) for a short ceremony and wreath-laying, before commencing the Grand Tea Party. To qualify for the official record you must wear a black pointy witches' hat, black cloak and carry a broom! You can find details on Facebook.



Articles

Tending Cerridwen's Cauldron - Plant Teachers of the Sacred Year (by Michele)

Cerridwen spoke as I stood in the shallows of the serene Lake Tegid, moon light gleamed off an island dwelling in the waters. The Goddess bade me to spend a year seeking the teachings of the sacred plants and to share this knowledge with others. Such luminous experiences compel us to move forwards on our path and connect with our community and anyway I did ask.

In the old tales, Cerridwen took a year and a day to collect the necessary herbs and brew the potion of Inspiration in Her cauldron. The recipe and ingredients of the potion remain a mystery but it is said Cerridwen added herbs to the cauldron by moonlight whilst chanting incantations. As the cauldron was stirred, Cerridwen kept guard against wandering spirits, tended the currents of life and heeded the cosmic rhythms of Sun and Moon.

A Goddess's seemingly simple request is always a rite of passage attained by trial, service and endurance. Gathering herbs and information is but only the outer Earth path of magical alchemy. The inner Spiritual path demands an act of surrender in order to transform the darkness within ourselves into the illumination of awareness and grasp the knowledge of what it means to exist. No matter how much we are inspired by the divine, we alone are responsible for our own progress.

The art of alchemy is often contained within the guise of a magical child who symbolises the potential of life condensed into one precious moment. Through the magic of the cauldron, Cerridwen guides a serving boy to magical rebirth as the Bard Taliesin, for the poetic arts were deeply valued by the Celts. Pagans are richly blessed with the inspired work of such folk who have gone before. These keys and traces of ancient prophecy can guide the soul's path to enlightenment under the auspices of the Goddess of Transformation. Drink deep of Cerridwen's cauldron and know the mysteries of the world, the secrets of the past, present and future; and understanding of the universe. You will never be the same.

In spite of perennial disputes over the value of personal gnosis, channelled inspiration and of just 'when' the Celtic year starts; I too have to start this quest somewhere. We have the choice to reject or work with mystery teachings and discover where they lead. This is the conundrum but also the boon of a vibrant living tradition with no or very little doctrine.

For this spark of inspiration to manifest into being, I have sought the divine guidance and eloquent communication of the Celtic Ogma and the Norse Odin. Both Gods understand how a symbolic and abstract language can enable humans to access everything but most importantly for this undertaking is access to a comprehensive calendar of plants. Enter now upon the paths of the Otherworldly Forest, read the ancient Signs and connect with the Plant Teachers.

MARCH

14th **Beorc** - New Beginnings. Sacred plants are Birch & Lady's Mantle

Berkano, birch, is the rune of the Great Mother of manifestation and of birth and rebirth. Birch is the path of the mother, lover, seeress and healer. She brings life after death, just as birch brings the first leaves after winter. Berkano receives the seed and holds it within herself, guarding and nourishing it until it is time to return to the world. It brings new life, fresh starts and second chances. Berkano may be used for matters of birth, female fertility magic and women's mysteries.

18th **Fearn** - Defence. Sacred plants are Alder & Bluebell.

Ogham phrases; '*Shield of Warriors*', when first cut Alder appears red like blood, it protects the heart and can protect one from the warlike emotions of others. Alder is described as '*the very battle witch of all woods, tree that is hottest in the fight*'; it makes poor firewood but is prized by charcoal burners, and favoured by smiths and metalworkers.

Alder symbolises the warm fire of the sun at the spring equinox, reclaiming the land from winter and awakening life. At this time Bran the Alder god, carries alder twigs in his hand, on which the buds grow spirally, the universal symbol of rebirth.

Alder is potent magical protection against drowning or tragedy incurred by storm or flood. Alder is oily and survives well in water, making it an excellent wood for making aqueducts and piles for bridges. Bran himself becomes a bridge, by laying across the river his army cross on his body, a half submerged bridge between worlds, conscious and unconscious, the obvious and the hidden.

An old name for alder is 'whistlewood'. Bran instructed his companions to cut off his head and it continued to sing and make prophecies. The singing head is the topmost branch of the alder, used to make magical flutes and whistles to invoke the Sun God and through which the god could speak.

A decoction of the bark is used for bathing swellings and inflammations. The pulverised bark may be used in hot poultices for rheumatism. Alder is used as a mouth wash and gargle for tooth, gum and throat problems. A decoction may be used to staunch bleeding and to heal wounds.

30th **Ehwaz** - Action. Sacred plants are Oak, Ash, Ragwort & Alder.

Ehwaz is used in energetic extensions of your own power and is effective with any vehicle of motion. The World Ash is the runic Shamans horse between the worlds. Oak fulfilled a similar function for the Celts. Ragwort is refuted to be a makeshift horse for faerie and witches, it is especially poisonous to horses. Alder was the chosen charcoal of metalworkers who provide fittings for horses and chariots and the weapons for warriors.

Other sacred plants of March include; Blackthorn, Willow & Hazel.

APRIL

14th **Mannaz** - Humanity. Sacred plants are Ash, Elm, Holly, Madder, Maple & Alder.

Fundamental rune of humans, its shape evokes the idea of mutual support. Positive human qualities are associated with Mannaz, friendship, kindness and generosity. Mannaz also represents the social order necessary to reach our potential. In Scandinavian legend, Askr, the first man, arose from an ash tree and Embla, the first woman, came from the transformation of an elm. Odin gave them spirit and life. Vili gave them understanding and the power of movement. Vé gave them clothing and names.

In Celtic myth the Ash was sacred to Gwydion as a tree of enchantment. Ash links the three



circles of existence, temporal existence and continued rebirth; and from whose twigs Gwydion makes his wands.

Elm is associated with the Earth Goddess and was said to be the abode of fairies. Elm trees were connected with the underworld, they have a special affinity with the guardians of burial mounds and the passage into the Underworld.

15th **Saille** - Intuition. Sacred plants are Willow, Primrose, Moonwort & Mistletoe.

Ogham phrases; *'hue of the lifeless'* & *'beginning of loss'*. There comes a moment in life when material things lose their importance. To gain connection with the Otherworld, we must relax connection with this world, including giving up unhealthy habits, attitudes, relationships and beliefs. *'Strength of Bees'*, is for the mighty springtime buzzing in Willow blossoms and catkins.

Sacred to the Moon Goddess, Willow is a tree of emotion, love, intuition, and poetic inspiration. Willow governs the female and lunar rhythms of life, cycles, rhythms, the ebb, and the flux. It is said that the willow tree has a healing aura that blesses all that it touches. Feelings of friendship and joy, tranquillity and safety can be experienced when standing beneath her peaceful canopy.

Willow branches are said to be best for divining Water, channelling Earth energy and to find lost objects. It can bestow seership through night visions, dreaming and scrying; it can restore balance to female/male energies. Wood, bark and leaves can be placed in a Dream Pillow; this is also very healing and can also calm feelings of powerlessness. Willow can assist you when experiencing grief and to aid in the healing process of release. Willow teaches us to move with life rather than resisting it.

As the source of salicylic acid (aspirin) willow is also a wood appropriate for spells intended to remove pain in soul and mind and bring comfort. Bach Willow Flower Essence is a remedy for bitterness and resentment; people who are stuck in a position of blaming others and feeling unfairly treated by life.

Willow bark used in combination with sandalwood during the Waning Moon, can be effective in contacting the spirits of ancestors and beloved dead.

29th **Lagu** - Clarity. Sacred plants are Osier Willow & Leek.

Lagu represents water in all its states, river, ice, rain, the power of tides and the strength of waterfalls. Lagu is the rune of intuitions, sensitivity, dreams, empathy, love and feelings; and the idea that we evolve constantly. Its main teaching is allowing matters to settle and going with the flow.

In ancient times the leek was highly regarded as a cure for the common cold, alleviating the pains of childbirth and as a healthy ingredient in broth. It could seemingly offer protection against battle wounds or being struck by lightning.

Young maidens placed a leek under their pillow at night could see the features of their future



husbands; amusingly it was also used to keep away evil spirits!

Other sacred plants of April include; Blackthorn flowers, Apple blossom & Cowslip.

MAY

9th **Huathé** - Opening the Door to the Heart. Sacred plants are Hawthorn & Wood Sorrel.

Ogham phrases; Huathé forewarns of a *'pack of wolves/hounds/warriors'*. A *'difficult night'* indicates tension or worries. *'Whitening of face'*, Huathé means frightful or horror, suggesting fear or irritable energies. A message from Hawthorn suggests fear of something is holding you back.

Wild, uncompromising and alluring, Hawthorn is most sacred to the Fey and to the Mysteries of the Goddess. Any thorn can be regarded as hostile or protective as it is an enchanted barrier. Magical use of thorns can turn negative forces against themselves; (do take care in this practice). Solitary hawthorn trees growing on hills or near sacred wells can indicate thresholds to the Otherworld. Sitting beneath the Hawthorn especially on May Eve, Samhain Eve and Midsummer Eve, you can connect with the Fey folk.



Hawthorn wood burns the hottest, leaves and blossoms make a tea for anxiety, appetite loss and poor circulation, and the berry is an excellent heart tonic. These brilliant red fruits are called Pixie Pears or Cuckoo's Beads. The cuckoo sang when Thomas the Rhymer kissed the elf queen under a hawthorn tree.

Hawthorn symbolises purification, sacred marriage, unity, fertility, laughter, sexuality and destruction. Magically assisting the fertility and growth of the Earth Goddess and the Vegetation Spirit at Beltane encouraged a certain amount of sexual abandon. Any children born of 'Greenwood marriages' would be given the God's name such as Robin-son and Hod-son.

Hawthorn is a great cleanser, it eases stress, opens your heart to love, releases blocked energy, and assists in letting go of fear. Hawthorn embodies the transformation of anguish through facing difficulty.

14th **Inguz** - Fertility. Sacred plants are Apple, Self Heal & Barley.

Apple is a also thorn bearing tree, its sweet smelling blossom attracts bees. For both the Norse and Celts the Apple is the tree of immortality, wisdom, rebirth, healing and love. It keeps the Norse Gods young and is the symbol of Celtic Otherworld isle of Avalon, Land of the Ever Young. The apple gave shelter to Merlin in his madness and the gift of prophecy from the Faerie Queen through consuming her magic apple.

Apple may invite you to work with 'divine madness' in the Otherworld. Apple also represents the spiritual warrior who travels beyond mortal realms in order to benefit their people. Bach Flower Remedies recommend Crab apple as a cure for self-dislike, despondency, obsessions,

fussiness, and anxiety.

29th **Odal** - Homeland. Sacred plants are Clover, Hawthorn, Oak & Goldthread.

Ancient Greeks and Romans associated clover with the triple Goddesses and Celts thought it sacred to the Sun. Red Clover can be used in a ritual bath to attract money and prosperity, and as a floor-wash to chase out unwanted ghosts. White Clover is said to break curses and can be placed in the four corners of a property. The clover is an excellent good luck charm believed to protect from evil spirits, disease, and the evil eye. Clover is a shamanic plant allowing interaction with the Otherworld, and a talisman of protection and power for travelling out of body.

Clovers are very rich in nutrients and vitamins and the leaves and flowers can be added to salads or wilted in stir-fries. Red Clover tea can be used to treat liver and gallbladder, stomach and digestion, and women's fertility issues.

Other sacred plants of May include; Buttercup, Cow Parsley, Bluebell, Horse Chestnut, Cherry and Field Maple.



Moots

Cornwall (Kernow)

Betwixt Moot (Redruth, Camborne, Truro, Falmouth)

Meets on the 1st & 3rd Mondays of the month.

FFI contact Ann: 01872 863970

Bude Moot

Meets the 1st Tuesday of the month in the Conference Room at the Parkhouse Centre, Ergue Gaberic Way, Bude, EX23 8LD. Tea or coffee provided or vending machine. We ask for a £2 per person donation to cover room hire. Meet from 7pm to start talks/ceremonies at 7.30pm.

FFI Contact Debbie@specialdaysinspecialways.co.uk or call 01409 254144

The Dolmen Grove Ivy Moon Moot

Meets on the 1st Wed of every month, 7.30 pm, St Austell area. We hold talks, workshops, have outings and celebrate the Sabbats. Options to attend Camps, Larger Rituals, Stonehenge access & Samhain/Yule Ball. Friendly like-minded people, all spiritual paths welcome.

FFI contact: Lucy & Karen tel: 07754165193m Fb page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ivy-Moon-Group>

Liskeard Moot

Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 7 for 7.30pm, The Long Room, The Public Hall, West Street, Liskeard PL14 6BW.

FFI Contact Jane 01579 340796 email: liskeardmoot@yahoo.co.uk

Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/271716272934061

Pagan Paths

Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm, Bodmin area. Warm and friendly group. Sabbat celebrations, sacred sites outings, workshops and talks.

FFI contact Wendy on 01208 832977 or email: paganpaths05@aol.com

Penwith Pagan Moot

Currently meets for seasonal rituals celebrating the Wheel of the Year. In between we keep in touch via our Facebook page. We also assist the Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network with clear-ups at Ancient Sites in Penwith.

FFI contact – Eve email: meadowsweeteve@googlemail.com or 07927671612

Website www.penwithpaganmoot.co.uk



Devon (Dumnonia)

Exeter & Devon Pagan Circles

Exeter & Devon Pagan Circles hold regular moots every Wednesday at the Mill on the Exe pub some themed, some purely social. We will still hold occasional moots and events at Ye Olde White Lion, Bradninch. Please come and join us. See you there. Check our Facebook page for details and updates: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/EUPAGANCIRCLE/>

South West Devon Moot

Meets in the Stoke area of Plymouth, held on 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm. We are a friendly moot run in a private house in the Stoke area of Plymouth.

FFI contact Patrick on 01752 562769 (answer phone) 01752 338292 (evenings) email pdq.mears@virgin.net

Tavistock West Moor Moot

Meets on 2nd Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. A place to share news and topical Pagan discussion. Simple ritual, Wheel of the Sacred Year, meditations and interaction with the Spirits of the Land. Occasional visits to sacred sites and ancient spaces of Dartmoor and beyond.

FFI Michele 01822 617903, or email westmoormoot@gmail.com

Teignbridge Pagans

Meets on the 1st Monday of the month at the Old Rydon Inn, Kingsteignton, 7.30pm.

FFI Tania 07812724213 email taniakennedy67@hotmail.com

Three Moors Pagan Moot

Meets 3rd Thursday of the month, at The Highwaymans Inn, Sourton, nr Okehampton, all are welcome.

FFI please call Shadowlea on 01837 659656

Torbay/South Devon Pagan Moot

The Torbay Moot group is a long established eclectic group of like minded pagan people. We meet at the Manor Inn Preston Paignton on the first Thursday of the month, 7.30 -9.30 pm.

We meet for open celebration, study and have an invite only women's moon group.

FFI Tania 07812724213 email taniakennedy67@hotmail.com

Dorset (Dorset Wessex)

Bridport Pagan Moot

Meets on the 1st Thursday of every month at The Ropemakers Pub (at the back of the pub) West Street, Bridport, from 8pm. People of all paths are welcome.

FFI Ben 07539316595 email - bridportpaganmoot@yahoo.co.uk See

www.bridportpaganmoot.moonfruit.com



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Handfasting & Ceremony

Handfastings, Funerals or Celebration? A celebrant is available for your special ceremony, designed for you, with you, every step of the way.

Maia Messenger – 07747016220 email: maiamessenger@yahoo.com

Devon Handfasting Network: If you would like to find out more, or arrange a Handfasting, then please contact Levannah Morgan by writing to: Devon Handfasting Network PO Box 314, Exeter EX4 6YR

Special Days in Special Ways: Debbie and Steve are experienced celebrants for whichever type of ceremony you require. We have an eclectic style, and all ceremonies are tailor made for you. Please visit www.specialdaysinspecialways.co.uk or call 01409 254144 for more information.

West Moor Celebrants: Contact us for bespoke Handfastings, celebrations of life and rites of passage, Michele and Harvey, westmoormoot@gmail.com or 01822 617903.

Counselling

Tamar Counselling. Help and support with many of life's problems from a counsellor with a pagan perspective. Based in Bude/Holsworthy. Contact Steve Merritt on 07855 998890, email me via website, www.tamarcounselling.co.uk where you can find further information.

Retail

Mystical Crafts & Gifts - A great selection of pagan & wiccan items including essentials and an exciting choice of gifts including lots of fair trade items.

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Wise Old Crow, Bude, Cornwall for all things wicca, pagan and esoteric
www.facebook.com/wiseoldcrow . Sue Clarke www.sueclarkereadings.co.uk
www.wiseoldcrow.com

Museum of Witchcraft

Opens again for visitors on 29th March 2013 until 3rd Nov.2013 Details of opening times, online shop + other interesting info can be found on the Museum website.

www.museumofwitchcraft.com

The Harbour, Boscastle, Cornwall PL35 OHD Tel: 01840 250111



Who is who locally

Pagan Federation Devon, Cornwall & Isles

District Website: www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk
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