

Dark Mirror



Litha (Summer Solstice) 2015

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Behind the Mirror

Dear readers,

Welcome to the Dark Mirror Summer Solstice Issue - this edition celebrates the period between Beltane and Lughnasadh. The cover shows our dark mirror surrounded by summer bounty. This issue includes the final part of Michele's article on the herbs and trees of the sacred year.

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 PF DCI, Torcroft, Commons Lane, Shaldon, TQ14 OHN.

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

A Few Words from Your District Manager - Maia

This turn of the wheel is the most fabulous one for family joy and sunlit ceremony. The number of handfastings our district Celebrants now conduct for people directly or indirectly pagan has risen rapidly. I witness more and more requests for personalised ceremony with old ways spiritual belief at the heart of it, and that gives us all great joy. We are working hard to be more fully recognised for the other end of life in despatches; so often it is either the church minister or a humanist (non-spiritual) choice. There are many spiritual paths and we provide for a much needed desire.



Handfasting on Midsummer Day 2015

After the Beltane - Midsummer love frenzy comes the Lammas grain harvest and traditional fairs with busy trading times. Our August 16th Picnic (see page 8) celebrates 25 yrs. of our gathering together as Devon, Cornwall and Isles Pagans to eat, play, share and be merry. All Pagans (from all paths) are very welcome. PF hosts it, but like our conference, it is for the pleasure of all local pagans – not just members.

As the wheel turns to Lammas and the Autumn Equinox it is hard to know that summer is closing and shorter days are already upon us. Write to the editor about your autumn and winter group plans and we can share it for you. Enjoy this wonderful local magazine, and enjoy the long days while you can.

Blessed Be

Maia

PF DCI District Manager Email: dc.dm@paganfederation.co.uk

Calling all moots and readers

The Dark Mirror is written by members for members. It is here to let members know what is going on in their region, as no-one can be everywhere at once. It is here to let everyone share in the diversity of pagan activities that take place.

So I need to ask every moot leader and anyone leading a pagan event to let me know, and send in a short note to the Dark Mirror. If you have an active moot, let others know so that they can choose to join in if they wish. If you've led an event or a course that you think others will enjoy, then use this forum to let others know. If you've attended something of interest, again, here is the place to tell others.

It does not have to be much, a paragraph of a few sentences can be all that's needed. A newsletter is only as useful as the 'news' and 'information' it holds. And that is up to all our members.

Harvey (DM editor)

News and events

Museum Of Witchcraft and Magic - Day of Talks - May 16th 2015

On May the 16th the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle (note the addition of Magic to the name) held the traditional May 'Day of Talks'. It was a beautiful summer's day and probably one of the most interesting set of talks ever presented by the museum. The event was, as usual, held upstairs in the Wellington Hotel, with some book and craft stalls in the reception room. I particularly liked a newcomer to the craft stalls, Paul Atlas-Saunders with his 'Sparkly Spiral Pyrography' and I bought several small pieces from him.

The talks were introduced by Jason Karl and the first speaker was Jonathan Hughes, author of among others: *Arthurian Myths and Alchemy: The Kingship of Edward IV* (2002) and *The Rise of Alchemy in Fourteenth-Century England: Plantagenet Kings and the Search for the Philosopher's Stone* (2011). Jonathan produced his interesting theories on the alchemical nature of the houses of York and Lancaster, which mirror the white and red of their respective roses. For Jonathan the alchemical white Mercury also represents symbolically the intellectual, the reflective in nature, like the moon, and which is epitomised in such kings as Richard II but has its opposite in the impulsive, extrovert and martial King Edward III who 'used alchemical theories to ratify a reign of military and sexual conquest and to celebrate the life-giving force of nature and the sun that could be extracted from sulphur' (p.142 of *Rise of Alchemy*). This was an interesting talk for when Jonathan suggested that royal interest in alchemists as court advisors was prevalent at this time it did make one think about the fact that the church did not prosecute or persecute alchemists when in every other branch of the occult the church was rather repressive. I found the talk most enjoyable and stimulating.

Paul Weston of Glastonbury was our next speaker (replacing Dr Justin Woodman) and Paul gave us a fascinating talk entitled 'Cthulhu in Cornwall'. Paul is an expert on Aleister Crowley with numerous books on Aleister Crowley, and Glastonbury. His talk came up with some useful parallels between Crowley and H.P. Lovecraft their shared childhood experiences and their use of the creative and magical imagination. He then went on to give us a whistle-stop tour of the 'moth man' and the 'monster of Morgawr' and various other strange inhabitants from a *Fortean Times* universe. I loved this enthralling talk, delivered with Paul's typical droll humour. It transported me right back to the mid 1970s, for I lived in Cornwall then, and knew Tony 'Doc' Shiels quite well. Tony Shiels photograph of Nessie was world famous and his antics of raising up the sea monster Morgawr with the aid of naked coven members by Mawnan beach had us all in fits of laughter back then. Paul also told us about a few of his own paranormal experiences in Cornwall, and given the setting, within the old Wellington Hotel and in sight of the harbour, it was hauntingly atmospheric.

After lunch we were introduced to the artist and illustrator Jos A. Smith by Simon Costin. Simon had managed to get some of Jos's original illustrations created for Erica Jung's book *Witches* for a

temporary exhibition at the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic. By the way the temporary exhibition is on for the whole summer, until October 31st, and is an **absolute do not miss event**. We found out that Erica Jong's name is pronounced with the J as in 'jumping' and not as a Y. Jos told us that he was given free rein when it came to the illustrations for *Witches* and Erica fitted her text to his paintings most of the time instead of him having to create artwork to suit her words. 'Bathory' a heavy metal band pinched "their" trademark "Bathory goat" from one of Jos's illustrations for *Witches*. Other illustrations from the book have also become cult objects for the heavy metal fans too. Jos has led an interesting, well travelled life and is a Shaman, his art being influenced by his shamanic altered states of consciousness, it was great to be able to chat to such a famous artist.

Alex Langstone then gave us a splendid talk with slides showing some of the hidden gems of Cornwall, its Holy Wells and springs. Alex explained that the three criteria to distinguish a holy well or spring from an ordinary one are: does the well have a saintly dedication? Is the well associated with a nearby church? Are there any folkloric tales linked specifically to the spring? The 1890s book 'Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall' by Mabel and Lilian Quiller-Couch provided the original sketches of the Holy Wells made by their father Thomas Quiller-Couch, and Alex had taken modern photos to make comparisons with the state of the wells today. Jowds (Cornish for rags) were tied to overhanging trees at some wells and we were reminded of the problems when modern fabrics are used instead of small ribbons of rags from biodegradable material. At other wells coins would be inserted into niches at the well there is still an oral memory of this practice at Jesus Well, St. Minver. Another old custom was to throw bent pins into wells; one example given by Thomas Quiller-Couch was at the Fairy Well at Lelant. However, one of the most interesting customs Alex told us about was called 'dunking dollies' where girls would baptise their toy dolls at a Holy Well. This custom has recently been revived and takes place every Good Friday at Fenton Bebibell, on the Penwith Moors. We were also told of total immersion in the sacred wells to help cure madness this was known as bowsenning. The legends that have grown up and surround the wells and springs show that they were, and hopefully still are, protected by the spirits of the land and water but vigilance is needed, by us in the pagan community, to ensure that they are not allowed to be neglected, fall into ruin, or worse still be part of some redevelopment scheme. To follow this talk there was a 'show and tell' when Joyce and Hannah showed us some of the more intriguing objects from the museum and ideas for what they were and what their purpose was were debated, but I'm afraid no firm conclusions were drawn for any of these strange objects.

The day ended with the museum being opened for a candle-lit tour which added hugely to the atmosphere within the museum, then back to the Wellington's main bar for music from Jane Cox and Mark Norman to end one of the most enjoyable 'Museum Days' I have ever attended.

Elaine Bailey

Cornwall

RC report for Cornwall.....and about walking and thinking - Eve

Since the last DM I have visited Pagan Paths Moot in Bodmin and will be visiting the Liskeard Moot next month. I have been enjoying the Facebook posts about all the varied and exciting things that Cornish Moots have been getting up to, and hope to see more of you in the near future. Please do remember you can email or phone me if there is anything you would like to share.

I thought I might share with you my thoughts during a walk I took recently.

In the run up to the Midsummer Solstice, I visited Avebury, and in the course of one sweltering hot day, walked part of the Wessex and National Ridgeways. Up on the ridge, with the land falling away on either side, the vast summer-baked blueness of the sky filling my vision, and the beaten white chalk of the path reflecting back the rays of the sun, the power of the sun and the element of fire were very much in evidence.

The path in places is bordered by large boulders of flint and chalk; travellers have placed stones on

these, building little cairns of rocks. I found myself, as on previous visits, placing my own stones there. It reminded me of other places where I have seen this: near to where I used to live, Rosewall Hill by St Ives, people have built quite elaborate cairns out of the mine spoil heaps. A lot of effort has gone into these. The spoil heaps are not easy places to clamber across. A couple of years ago, someone created a beautiful mandala from stones on the coastal path near Geevor Mine. Along many places of the Cornish Coast Path in the far west, cairns of little rocks can be found where the path meanders close to spoil heaps.

What is it that prompts people to make these? Why this urge to pick up stones and pile them up, or place them on a rock beside a path? Is it an urge to mark our journey, to leave our mark, say "I was here"? Did those people on Rosewall Hill or walking the Coast path look at those great expanses of broken discarded rock piled beside mine engine houses and want to make something ordered and beautiful out of chaos? Or is it that we want to be part of the story of a place, part of the company that has passed that way?

As I walked along the path and added my own stone, I said yes, I was here. I passed this way. I am part of you who walked this way, who saw the beauty and the wonder of this place. I honour those who walked this way before me. I contribute in my own small way to mark the way, the Path, for those who follow after.

At this season of Solstice, when the world is clothed in beauty and all of Nature rejoices, when we are reminded most vividly of those who honoured and celebrated this time before us, may we all contribute something of our own to the joy and beauty of the Path.

Blessed be
Eve – RC Cornwall

Devon

RC Devon - Spring Equinox 2015 – Michele

A reminder that the Devon and Cornwall PF Lammas picnic will be celebrating twenty-five years of our Pagan community meeting to celebrate the harvest. The 'Silver Jubilee' PF Lammas Picnic and games will be on Sunday 16th August from 2pm at The Hurlers on Bodmin Moor. Hope to see you there (see advert in this issue)!

South West Devon Moot. Moots have been on the subject of organising rituals for the festivals, film evenings and book studies. The Plymouth moot hold regular rituals.

There are also rumblings of a new moot for the Plymouth area run by Pagans with children for Pagans with children. For details of this new moot, see below.

Tavistock West Moor Moot. Is taking some time out but we will still be holding some rituals.

The New **Tavistock Moot.** Is run by Al and is on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Arrive from 7.30 but please don't arrive after 8pm. Ritual, meditation and journey work will be followed by discussion on a topic. There will be time for tea and chat and will finish by 10pm. Al is open for others to lead or share anything with the group. Bring poems, songs, stories and pictures or anything you would like to put on an altar. Bring snacks for afterwards, there will be a donations jar to cover costs such as wood and tea. Email myfaerieking@btinternet.com

Torbay/South Devon Pagan Moot, are moving the moot to a more conducive space in the Noble Tree in Torre Torquay. The owner is welcoming and offers tasty organic coffee and teas, and a selection of cakes. There is free street parking after 6pm. Tania looks forward to seeing you there to share in their program of talks.

Three Moors Pagan Moot. Three Fold Pagans offer a warm social moot in the most wonderful Highwayman Inn in Sourton. They also hold seasonal rituals. Further information can be found on

Facebook 'Threefold Pagans Okehampton Coa Gathering'.

Teignbridge Pagans Has been holding discussions on Beltaine and what does mean to you, Sacred Space, where is it and how to find it, and how to organise rituals for different spaces and seasons. Many from both Torbay and Teignbridge moots are off to Glastonbury Tor to watch the Sun rise on Solstice morning, while a more local event is a planned watching the solstice Sun rise from Anstey's Cove in Torquay.

Bright Blessings
Michele RC Devon

Forthcoming events

Museum of Witchcraft and Magic (MWM)

The Museum of Witchcraft and Magic (MWM) will be open from March 28th this year so we will be open over the Easter holidays. They will be open every day until October 31st. Monday to Saturday 10.30am-6pm and Sunday 11.30am-6pm. Last entry is always half an hour before we close (5.30pm).

Jos. A. Smith 'Witches and Witchlore' - an exhibition of original artworks from Erica Jong's 1980 book, 'Witches' illustrated by Jos. A. Smith. The exhibition runs until November 2015.

For further detail and events check out the MWM Blog www.museumofwitchcraft.blogspot.co.uk





Devon and Cornwall Pagan Federation Lammas Picnic

Sunday the 16th of August 2015 from 2pm

Join us for the Fifth 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!)

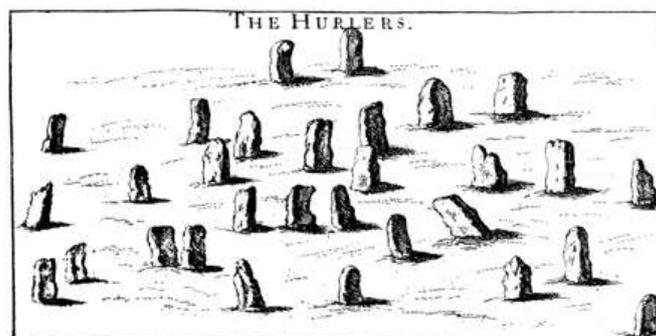
Join us as we
Honour the Champion of the Goddess
& Celebrate the Lammas Harvest.

Families and well-behaved dogs welcome! Bring food to share and leave no trace.
FFI: dcf.devon@paganfederation.co.uk

Meet at the Hurlers SX258 713. Good access, good parking.

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

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.



Organized by the Pagan Federation BM Box 7097 London WC1N 3XX, a company limited by guarantee number 04056879; registered office NLD Accountancy, Suite 1, The Werks, 45 Church Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 2BE

Articles

The Thaumaturgist's Hut - Plant Teachers of the Sacred Year (Michele)

Enchanting and intoxicating is the song of the Great Goddess. Her song-spell beckons this spirit to fare forth to a silver lake in the green foothills of a towering Welsh mountainside. Here a bright green wooden hut appears to be magically growing up from the earth. This abundantly stemmed building literally is pushing towards the sky from red-brown roots deep in the soil. A luminous quality empowers the swift flourishing of bright, lush leaves. A huge five-petal dog rose blossoms in exquisite magenta above the open doorway. Inside I can see Cerridwen dancing like a fecund young woman, her full green skirts flowing as She circles Her cauldron and scatters a rich cacophony of herbs and flowers into its voluminous belly. Her enthralling voice disarms and charms all existence into the universal force of being.

Around me I can feel the warmth of countless creatures pressing against my body, urging me to move forwards as I hesitate outside. I have met the Goddess in many guises but this time She completely overawes me and takes my breath away. Beautiful Cerridwen laughs and beckons me inside. She makes me dance Her miraculous dance of growth and join Her wonderful song of empowerment until it saturates the very core of my essence.

"I am pleased you have followed my request and met the magic of plants. You must realise this is only the beginning. What you have learned is merely the key that unlocks the mysteries and shows you the coursing power and energy in these sacred beings of growth and medicine. I have shown you the way and I shall be watching."

December

13th **Jera**- Turning Year, Cycles of Time, Harvest. Sacred plants are Rosemary, Oak, Holly.

This rune shape shows the Teutonic year divided into two seasons, of summer fire and winter ice, interacting and complementary. Demonstrating the essence of the yearly cycle Jera is a rune of patience and of spiritual awareness. Jera signifies the long-term nurturing of ideas to a bountiful harvest occurring naturally and in its own time. This process cannot be rushed.

Rosemary (Dew of the Sea, Elf-Leaf) is ruled by the Sun and fire. Rosemary is a Mediterranean herb that 'likes to be kissed by the Sea'. It makes a fragrant tea and be used to flavour stews, biscuits and jellies. As a stimulant, it is grown as a remedy as a tonic for mental tiredness, nervousness and for headaches. Rosemary helps students study, and old people with diminishing memory as it improves memory, mental power, healing and sleep. Rosemary repels insects, this makes it an excellent hair wash, growing plants repel insects from the flowerbed, and sachets of leaves placed in stored clothes keep the moths away.

As purifier, Rosemary can be used to cleanse hands before performing magical work. As protector, hang at doorways or threshold to thwart thieves and troublesome spirits. As keeper of memory and love, it is used in love and lust magic, but it is also a reminder of our highest consciousness and conscience. At the end of days it is placed on the coffin to show the soul of the departed will be kept in our hearts though the bond of souls.

21st-23rd **Idho**- Nameless Day, Crack between the Worlds. Sacred plants is Yew.

Ogham phrases. Oldest of woods, oldest tree, oldest letter, older than letters, fairest of ancients. Idho concerns the concept of age and memory and challenges us to look at our past as we lay foundations for the future. Magically use Idho to link with ancestor spirits and for past life exploration. For healing work it is especially good for the elderly and aids those with failing memory.

Key words are Rebirth, Death and Mastery. Yew symbolizes rebirth or a life change. Let go of things that no longer serve you and nothing lasts forever. Let this concept bring comfort. (Yew is discussed under **Hagel** 28th Oct).

24th **Beith**- New Beginnings. Sacred plants are Birch, Mullein

Ogham phrases. *'Faded truck and fair hair', 'most silvery of skin the birch of the forest', 'beauty of the eyebrow'*. Generally the colour of birch bark ranges from white to a pale grey and can be described as withered and a silvery grey. Birch leaves turn a beautiful light yellow-gold colour in autumn giving the fair haired appearance of Beith. The word Beith has two interpretations in Irish, 'being' in the sense of 'to be' and 'a being' in the sense of a life-force.



Long known as the 'Lady of the woods' birch is sacred to many Goddesses including Freya, Venus, Bridget and Cerridwen. Birch and Brigid derive from the Indo-European that means 'shining white'. Connected with Venus, birch draws out the beauty in us. Numerous Goddesses have connection to childbirth and because of the birch's quality of new beginnings, children's cradles were habitually made of this tree.

Birch bark has been used by people from the earliest of times and is found in prehistoric archaeological excavations. Its flexible bark has contained offerings, wrapped the dead, formed a vessel for carrying items and liquids, and formed the

hull of boats. As a parchment, early versions of the Indian Vedas (Leaves of the Tree of Knowledge) were recorded on birch bark. In Siberian shamanism birch is 'udesi-burchan' the 'deity of the door' to the spirit worlds. Birch gives birth to the entire forest by being the first tree to colonise bare soil therefore is allied with rebirth and regeneration, and is symbolic of summer-returning.

Burn birch to drive out malevolent energies, especially those that beset livestock. It burns with a blue flame and perfumes the air. The whiteness of birch indicates cleanliness and innocence, wrong doers were often 'birched' to cast off negativity and to open up a more positive flow of energy to mind and body. Beating the bounds with birch protects and establishes boundaries. Brooms were made from birch twigs, and used to clear debris and negative energies. Birch inner bark has long been used as a pain reliever, its leaves treat arthritis, and is sedative as a leaf tea.

Beith's appearance in meditative states could signify a need to purify yourself or your intentions before commencement on a fresh project. Concentrate on the whiteness of birch, see how it shines and cleanses obstructions from your focus.

28th **Eoh**- Surrender. Sacred plants are Mandrake, Yew, Poplar, Bryony, Hemlock.

The Poetic Edda tells of how Odin rode to the gate of Hel to seek wise augury with the long dead Völva and how he chanted her forth from within the mound. Both the riding and the calling forth are ruled by Eoh the rune of the death-initiation. Eoh governs deep, mighty and sudden transformation on all levels.

Mandrake (other names, Love Apples, Satan's Apple, Herb of Circe, Witches Manikin, Sorcerer's Root). In ancient Babylon, Egypt and Greece, the fruits of the mandrake were prized as an aphrodisiac and was honoured as a sacred love plant. Germanic Seers, known for their psychic abilities far outside of Europe, used mandrake as an ally. Mandrake is called 'Alraune' in German connected to the ancient name 'Alrun', meaning 'all knowing' or '(s)he who knows the runes'. As a significant herb of European witchcraft, Mandrake features in various versions of the legendary Flying Ointment, and undoubtedly the most potent ingredient of the brew. Mandrake ingested induces a state of oblivion, and was an early anaesthetic in surgical procedures.

Mandrake is a member of the Nightshade family; the roots contain a powerful alkaloid known to cause delirium and coma in larger doses. All parts are poisonous, do not use!

Other Sacred plants of December include; .Ivy, Mistletoe, Ash, Holly and Rosehips.

January

13th **Peorth**- Dice cup. Fate, Chance & Birth. Sacred plants are Beech, Aspen, Aconite, Yew, Elder, Hornbeam.

Perthro is the rune of divination.. Both dice and runes are cast from a cup, which represents the 'Well of Urd' the oldest of the Norns who first carved the runes. Perthro can be used for perceiving how wryd works in all the worlds. This gives a direct insight into the mysteries of synchronicity and an eye for the pattern underlying universal evolution. Peorth is the opening though which the unborn comes into being.

Beech is Queen of the Woods, the Twisting Earth Dragon, and Tree of the Norns. It is (of course) ideal for carving runes. Beech grants access to ancient knowledge and guidance from the past used to gain protective insight and provide a solid base that can be relied upon. The past is rich in experience and holds understanding to make the necessary change. Experience gained is valuable and has come at a price. 'What was' is not simply 'old fashioned'.

21st **Luis**- Tree of Protection. Sacred plants are Rowan, Rue.

Ogham phrases 'friend of cattle', 'attraction of cattle', 'sustenance of cattle'. 'Bridget's crosses' are traditionally rowan twigs made into equal-armed crosses and bound with red thread. Thus hung in the barn grant supernatural protection for the cattle against illness and harm. Luis indicates 'a swarm' or 'great many' this may suggest warriors assembling under rowan trees. Luis also means 'quicken tree, the flame' and is associated with fire, protection from negativity and used to seek inspiration. Rowan is the tree of psychic vision, the delightful Witch wood of hidden knowledge, and so is 'delight of eye'. Lugh was said to have defeated Balor of the Evil Eye using a rowan spear, demonstrating that rowan helps us retain control of the senses and so repels enchantment.



Rowan is said to have come from the lands of faery, the red berries grow a pentagram on them, recognised as the ancient symbol of protection. The tree is used for protection from enchantment and beguiling, it is also associated with witchcraft, astral travel and healing. Both leaf and berry are used in incense to increase psychic powers.

Rowan will focus your senses clearly so help you distinguish good from bad, and not be influenced, tricked or mesmerized. This strength will repel negativity that threatens your purpose. Rowan branches have been used as protective rune staves or to make magic wands. Rowan has been planted in cemeteries to thwart the dead from lingering too long. Winter berries feed the birds and can be made into jam; the fruit is very high in vitamin C and is used for sore throats and tonsillitis.

28th **Elhaz**- Protection. Sacred plants are Aconite, Yew, Service Tree, Sedge, Rowan, Angelica.

The word elhaz is probably derived from the words for elk or protection, it is a rune of warding, of defence, and it embodies the might of spirit. Elhaz is used to empower a space or an item with the energy of the higher realms and make it both whole and holy. Elhaz provides guidance to spiritual growth, evolution of the consciousness, and cleansing of the spirit. Ritually, it often can be used where a pentagram would be.

Aconite (Monkshood/Wolfsbane), Hemlock and Deadly Nightshade (belladonna) are the three most poisonous plants growing freely in Europe. Aconite offers magical protection and invisibility. Sacred to Hecate, it has long been used as a poison for arrows and is a supposed cure for lycanthropy. It is a poison may prove fatal if ingested. Aconite was widely used by poisoners in ancient Rome that a law was passed making its cultivation a capital offence. The drug has little effect upon the consciousness.

Other Sacred plants of January include; Celandine, Anemone, Primrose and Snowdrop.

February

12th **Sigel**- Success. Sacred plants are Mistletoe, Juniper, Bay.

Sigel is the runic symbol of our nearest star and represents the invincible power of the sun. The sun-wheel or swastika is formed by two Sigel runes, an ancient sign of honour, holiness, willpower and source of energy. 'To fare forth' is a expression concerning death or for the death trance journey taken by many spiritual seekers using magical will that guides you through the dark night of the soul. Sigel is a rune by which you can strengthen yourself.

In Nordic tales a dart of Mistletoe felled the sun god Baldur despite the best efforts of his mother the goddess Frigga to protect him from a prophesised death. The trickster god Loki discovered that mistletoe was the only plant Frigga had overlooked and so engineered the sun god's demise. Some versions of the story say that the plant became a tree-dweller after the distressed goddess flung it there.

In Celtic sun worship mistletoe is a most sacred magical plant. Growing amongst the branches of sacred trees without obvious sustenance, without roots and connection to the Earth, therefore Mistletoe was especially sacred to the Sun. Mistletoe takes on the qualities essence and power of its host tree, the most powerful mistletoe, grows upon the sacred oak. The medieval name for this plant was 'allheal', it was used medicinally for disorders including epilepsy and cancer. Old English superstition says as long as a sprig was kept in the home love would stay. Kissing beneath a fresh sprig was brought in to the house was thought to bring marriage and aid conception.

18th **Nuin**- Ancient knowledge, protection, connection and healing. Sacred plants are Ash.

Ogham phrases. 'Checking of peace,' spears and weapon shafts were often made of ash as it is strong and flexible and can be straightened by warming over a campfire. As a weapon made by practical application of materials infused with magical properties, the thrown ash spear could demonstrate the protective sphere of a community.

Ash is associated with the cunning Celtic magician Gwyddyon. He governs spiritual evolution and removes harmful blocks in the internal processes of transformation, shape shifting and times of change. Through his energetic will, he helps to arm us with the weapons of the Goddess; strength and courage. Gwyddyon's wand is made of ash; it has the power to attract lightning, and has power over fire and water. Ash wands, staffs and besom handles have the properties of magical protection, healing and cleansing; hang over a doorway to ward off malevolent energies.

'The maw of a weaver's beam as applied to wood: a sign of peace is that.' Weaving is the magic of Nuin, both physically and socially. This cooperation also checks peace, creates friendships, aligns energies, forges connections and creates adhesion in the community for a common cause. Ash is one of the guardian trees (Oak, Ash and Thorn) and symbolizes the aligning of the inner and outer worlds. Ash protects sacred knowledge; it supports you in the search for deeper meanings and shows you the



interconnection of all things.

Hippocrates used ash as an infusion for gout and rheumatism. Ash leaf has a detoxifying effect on the body. Put ash leaves under your pillow to induce intuitive dreams, keep in your pocket for luck and good fortune. Scatter the leaves in the four directions to protect a house from fire and lightning. If you would like your new-born to become a fine singer, bury their nail trimmings beneath an ash tree.

In Nordic mythology the Ash represents 'Yggdrasil' the World Tree, it provides an axis around which the universal worlds find harmony and balance. Odin hung from the tree, for nine days and nights so that he might divine hidden wisdom, knowledge and inspiration. The name of the ash tree is reputed to come from a Saxon word meaning 'spear'.

In the Poetic Edda, stanza 19, the völva says:

*An ash I know there stands, Yggdrasill is its name, a tall tree, showered with shining loam.
From there come the dews that drop in the valleys. It stands forever green over Urðr's well.*

27th Tyr- God, Spear. Sacred plants are Oak, Purple Sage, Rowan, Garlic.

The shape of Tyr is the spear of the Skyfather, lord of victory, law, courage and war. Tyr is associated with assemblies at which justice was administered and community decisions made. The integrity of the sky god Tyr demanded that he personally dealt with his paramount enemy the Fenris-Wolf who was the embodiment of chaos. Tyr develops courage, strength and honour, it makes you aware of your responsibilities to others. Tyr is used to bring about and maintain social order.

Garlic protects and is a useful healer and promoter of courage. It has a plethora of magical uses including exorcism, passion, protection, spell-breaking, strength, clairvoyance, divination, longevity, overcoming opposition, prevents nightmares, purification, stopping gossip, and success in name a few. The power of Garlic is has survived into popular culture where it gives protection against vampires (and psychic vampires). Its recorded use goes back as far as the Sumerians. The Greeks considered it sacred to the Goddess Hecate, its primary use was in magic and psychic protection.

Other Sacred plants of February include; Gorse, Chickweed, jack-by-the-Hedge and Nettle.

Blessed be - Michele

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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, 7.30pm, 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: Karen tel: 07411 177 185

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 Thursday at the Cowick Barton 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/>

North Devon FFI email the Local Coordinator Minerva on oldcrone24@gmail.com

New Plymouth Pagan Moot

Held on the first Saturday every month, it is not regimented and aims to get back to nature and to have fun. Family orientated so children welcome, as is any one from any spiritual path. Moots will be held outside weather permitting and will move into a hall in the winter months. Sabbat activities and guest speakers to be included at a later date.

FFI Sarah email plymouthpaganmoot@outlook.com

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 07964565338 or 01752 338292 (evenings) email pdq.mears@virgin.net or find us on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/paganfedplymouth/>

New Tavistock Moot

Held on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Arrive from 7.30 but please don't arrive after 8pm. Ritual, meditation and journey work will be followed by discussion on a topic. Finish by 10pm. FFI Al email myfaerieking@btinternet.com

Tavistock West Moor Moot

Contact us for information on planned seasonal rituals. Michele email westmoormoot@gmail.com

Teignbridge Pagans

Meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Old Rydon Inn, Kingsteignton, 7.30pm.

FFI check out the Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/203242459794674/> or email Elaine leiane@hotmail.co.uk

Three Moors Pagan Moot

Three Fold Pagans meets every 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 Noble Tree in Torre Torquay 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
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/370597919466/>



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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

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 and Magic

Details of opening times, online shop and other interesting info can be found on the Museum website.

www.museumofwitchcraft.com

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

Cornwall School of Mystery and Magick

The latest newsletter from the Cornish School of Mystery and Magick lists current activities and future events. It can be downloaded here

<https://gallery.mailchimp.com/8b4deb991eb99baf86ccce211/files/SummerSolstice2015.pdf>



Who is who locally

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National Website: www.paganfed.org

Local Contacts are listed under 'Moots' (section above).



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