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# *Dark Mirror*



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*Mabon (Autumn Equinox) 2015*

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## Behind the Mirror

**Welcome to the Dark Mirror Autumn Equinox Issue** - this edition celebrates the period between Lughnasadh and Samhain. The cover shows our dark mirror surrounded by heather in bloom, with autumnal offerings to Vixana, Mother of the Moor. This issue includes details of our 25<sup>th</sup> annual picnic, local events, and an article about Vixen Tor.

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

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### 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](mailto:DarkMirrorMagazine@gmail.com) or by mail to:  
Dark Mirror c/o PF 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

### A Few Words from Your District Manager - Maia

As we enter Autumn I get very happy. We are so blessed at this latitude with the changing seasons, and the late cool sun of September/October in the South West is just about perfect. The harvest is still coming in and my neighbours' surplus crops appear magically on my doorstep. Summer evenings mean longer hours to work on the land, so I love the packing down of the outdoors in readiness for the warm nights indoors.

One of my autumn tasks is local contract hedgerow management. The date for rural hedgerow trimming has been recently moved from August 1<sup>st</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>; this is progress, but this is not nearly enough for the wildlife. I subscribe to RSPB and there was a fascinating article in the latest issue about bird migration. As the local council voluntary Tree Warden, I have a passion for trees, but I have greater passion for hedgerows and it is one of the delights of living in the South West. We are so blessed with our miles of old lanes, but the news is sad.

Habitats are being destroyed everywhere. Migrating birds die for many reasons, oil spills, predators including Mediterranean human ones (5 million die each year in Malta alone), bad weather, tall buildings (especially lighthouses and oil rigs apparently) but the most significant reason for death is hunger and exhaustion related to habitat loss. The RSPB estimate for our Turtle Dove population has had 88% drop in numbers since 1995. Bad news for the classic Yule Carol for the second day of Christmas, and we will have some explaining to do to the next generation of Pagans.

Seriously though, we cannot easily stop (for example) overgrazing in the African desert, but we ALL can make sure that any bird either starting their epic journeying from the UK or passing through at this time of year can eat well. I know many of you have bird tables, but one very simple thing to do is NOT

cut your hedgerows back yet. How simple is that? Just put your feet up and let the hedge feed the wildlife with fruits, berries and vital insects, and let it die back naturally. Then, when all is done, your hedge trimmer will have a much easier job, and there is less garden waste due to the natural autumn processes. New recycling rules in some South West county areas now have a levy on garden waste disposal, so this is a win-win situation.



## News from the PF.

At a recent meeting in London of the PF Council, I learned that you may well be receiving six issues of Pagan Dawn per annum soon, at no extra cost to members. Personally I am delighted as this is a truly great magazine. Locally, we have agreed to support PAGANAID this year with a donation; this is a new charity with all Pagan trustees. See <https://www.paganaid.org/> to find out more.

We have also agreed to place our archives of the PF Devon Cornwall and Isles into the care of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, Cornwall. General PF archives are also being added. In addition we are donating a sum of money to help cover the cost of protecting and preserving this amazing historical resource. Donations are going to MWM from PF Council and PF DCI. Thanks are due to Levannah for keeping the files in order for posterity for many years.

Now is the time to consider booking for our conference on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and we have another impressive line-up for you – and yet the price remains the same. How do we do it? Because you have an amazing team of people working voluntarily and tirelessly behind the scenes to make it happen for you. See page 11 for details. Booking online will be available from Samhain:

<http://www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk/pages/conference2016.htm> .

Come and enjoy yourselves in the knowledge you are amongst real Pagan friends.

Blessed Be

Maia

PF DCI District Manager Email: [dcidm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dcidm@paganfederation.co.uk)

## Seasonal thoughts

### Catching your attention

The office where I work much of the time is on an industrial estate. It is a place of concrete and tarmac, of empty pavements and faceless buildings. Lining the roads are rowan trees. Stunted and unregarded most of the year, for these few weeks of August they are glorious clothed in scarlet berries. Today I parked beneath one sorry little tree, clutching the slope in the retaining wall above, with just a couple of spindly branches and a handful of dry green leaves. Unseen and unappreciated most of the year, but for these few days, a queen of trees, bejewelled with scarlet berries. An extravagance of harvest, a royal feast for the local birds.

At this time of harvest, Nature is not doing things by halves. Every roadside verge is engulfed in dusty green. In every gutter, in every crevice in a wall, humble plants cling, and bloom. In the dustiest layby, mugwort raises silver spikes. In tarmac fields outside supermarkets and retail parks, grey trees and scrubby bushes bloom. No place seems too arid, or too polluted, that some life has not found a foothold and produced a harvest, whether the tiniest seeds and flowers or the crowning scarlet glory of the rowan. There is a sense of urgency in this great rush and profusion. Now, Nature is saying, now is the time!

Summer passes, now is the time of harvest. This is a time for all of Nature – for all of us - to be wholehearted, joyful, and extravagant in the harvest we offer.

Has Nature caught your attention yet?

Eve

## News and events

### The 25<sup>th</sup> Devon and Cornwall Pagan Lamma Picnic

Sunday 16th August saw the annual gathering of pagans from Devon and Cornwall to celebrate the 2015 Lamma harvest with a picnic, games and ritual. This year was rather special as it marked the 25th anniversary of the gathering. The first picnic was organised by Levannah Morgan in 1990 and the event has taken place every year since.

For many years, the Devon and Cornwall picnics were held separately to avoid people having to travel too far. The Hurlers standing stones by the Minions Village near Liskeard in Cornwall was chosen as a mid-way location in 2012 to enable pagans from both counties to come together for the celebration. It is a beautiful, atmospheric site and well worth a visit if you haven't yet been.

For the past 5 years, the event has been fantastically organised by Michele and Harvey who always make sure everything runs smoothly. For this special 25th anniversary, Michele created a stunning Lughnasadh horse which served as a beautiful mascot for the day.

The festivities started around 2pm with people sharing food and conversation, followed by the Cornish tradition of 'crying the neck' in celebration of the first corn harvest of the year.



The first 'welli' is thrown



Who threw furthest?

Historically, games were traditionally played at Lughnasadh, and this custom was re-introduced to our gathering by the Michele and Harvey in 2011. This year, although the sky was overcast, the day stayed dry and much fun was had by all who took part in or just watched the activities. These included the Welly Boot Hurl, Discus Challenge and Skilful Coits. Winners of the games were chosen to represent the Goddess and her Champion in the closing ritual.

Queen of Discs



The Guru of Coits?



Champion of the Goddess, Colette, and the Speaker for the Goddess, Jo!





Picnic by the Stones

After the games, everyone then took a handful of oats as we entered the stone circle and processed around in an ever decreasing spiral. As we walked we tossed the oats on the ground in quiet contemplation of the turning of the wheel of the year and harvest to come. In this way our circle was drawn, and we then performed the Lamma's ritual to honour the Goddess; we shared a Lamma's loaf and some delicious ale.

After the ritual we said our final farewells, and set off home, making sure we left no trace on the beautiful landscape. This annual gathering is a lovely occasion to get together with pagans from different moots from the South West - to chat to old friends and make new ones. It is a joyful event and I look forward to the next 25!

Chantal



End to a lovely day

## Cornwall

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### RC report for Cornwall - Eve

Anyone following Cornwall social media will know what a wonderful variety of events our local Moots have been offering.

Pagan Paths in Bodmin have had talks and workshops about crystals, CASPN, and Mandalas. The Moot also climbed Helman Tor to celebrate the Blue Moon and went on a trip of exploration to find the beautiful St Bryvyth Well near Lanlivery. Wendy describes it as an enchanting spot, near a beautiful little stream. For those of you, like me, who may feel inspired to find it for themselves, directions are in Cheryl Straffon's book "Fentyngow Kernow in search of Cornwall's Holy Wells". Derek Gane from the Healing Tree is visiting next month with a Peace Pipe that has been travelling around the world. Pagan Paths have changed their venue and now meet at the Lanivet Inn just outside of Bodmin – easy to find and very welcoming.

Liskeard Moot recently spent a lovely summer evening at the Roundhouse at Pentiddy Natural Burial Woodland. The Moot will be making Samhain the focus for their October Moot. Jane, who has done such wonderful things in leading the Moot, is regretfully handing on the baton after more than three years of organising the Moot.

The Dolmen Grove Ivy Moon Moot explored Zennor in the far west for their Lammas celebration, and went to Duloe Stone circle in September.

The Bude Moot have some very exciting special occasions planned, with Julian Vayne giving a talk on Shamanism in October, a Sacred Pipe Ceremony with Derek Gane in November, and a Yule ceremony, Mummings Play and other merriment in December. Get in touch with Lisa for more details, on [budemoot@lchambers.co.uk](mailto:budemoot@lchambers.co.uk)

Two new Moots have also started. At Penhale Round, the new Fraddon Moot meets on the first Tuesday of the month. Penhale Round is that big place right beside the A30 at Fraddon, making it possibly the easiest Moot in Cornwall to find! Contact Loulou on [Fraddoncoven@hotmail.com](mailto:Fraddoncoven@hotmail.com) if you are interested in going along. Pagans of all paths are very welcome.

In Camborne, a group of us met up last month to talk about a new Moot in our area. This will be called Ros Pagan (Cornish for Pagan Wheel) and is going to meet the second Tuesday of the month at the Camborne Community Centre. The Community Centre is easy to find, within walking distance of the train station and bus routes, with a large car park and has full disabled access. Contact me at [dcj.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dcj.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk) for more details.

Eve – RC Cornwall

## Devon

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### RC Devon Autumn Equinox 2015

Devon and Cornwall PF Lammas picnic celebrated its Silver Jubilee on Sunday 16th August at The Hurlers on Bodmin Moor.

Again we gathered together to honour the Lammas Spirit and to compete to honour the Golden Harvest Gods. The Picnic and games are held close to the date of old Lammas so people can attend their own private celebrations then come together to celebrate later with the wider community.

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Forty people attended the event this year, the winners of the games were as follows. Welly Boot Hurl; Tarqual for the Men and Shelly for the Women. Discus Challenge; joint 1<sup>st</sup> Clive & Colette. Skilful Quoits; Jo.

Therefore our Lughnasadh Champion was Colette who also took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Skilful Quoits. The Speaker for the Goddess was Jo who also took 3<sup>rd</sup> place for the women in the Welly Boot Hurl.

A big thanks to all who attended and became a community for the afternoon, especially those kind souls who stepped in to help, especially Phill for the 'Crying of the Neck' in Cornish and helping with the games, Jim for taking such atmospheric portraits of the day, Chantel for her report on the event, my fellow RC Eve for her support and ability to adapt to the situation, and to Harvey without whom I wouldn't be able to last the day.

It is said Lugh's foster-mother the Great One of the Earth, died from her servitude of clearing the land for cultivation. Lugh the many skilled was born from two lands and two cultures, He easily crosses boundaries and His intervention releases the harvest from the spirits of the land to make it available to the people.

I thank everyone for their presence, for every act of kindness, every word of empowerment, everything you have done to foster harmony, for every time you have joined us in celebration and for the times to come.



Recently I have joined a social media discussion group called PF Disabilities Team. It is early days as yet but the group aims to help the PF, event organisers, and the disabled come to a better understanding. If anyone is interested in this or would want to bring something to the notice of the PF DCI please let us or myself know. Contact information is at the end of this issue.

Finally here are some suggested reflections for the inward spiral on the labyrinth:

What are the fruits of your labours? What desires have come to fruition?

What seeds will you nurture until the spring?

What is the nature of sacrifice? What must I let go of?

Mabon Blessings

Michele - RC Devon

## Forthcoming events

PF DCJ Spring Conference 2015



**Pagan Federation - Devon, Cornwall & Isles**

### **Spring Conference 2016**

**Saturday 5th March, Penstowe Manor, Bude**

**Ronald Hutton ★ Minerva**

**Win Scutt ★ Penny Billington**

**Pagan stalls and Raffle - Closing ritual - Dance with Merv Davey, Cornish Piper**

Music from **Damh the Bard, & Kate & Corwen** plus DJ till midnight

**Advance tickets - £18 (PF members) £22 (non-members) - Door tickets £25**

Tickets online via PayPal (charges apply)

[www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk](http://www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk)

OR Send SSAE to "PF DCI (Regional Conference)

1 Richmond Street, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 2PP"

Cheques payable to 'Pagan Federation Devon & Cornwall'.

Please state PF membership numbers where applicable

FFI dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk

Friday night Fiendish Pagan Quiz and Social

Penstowe Manor chalet accommodation

(special rates available) contact 01288 312354 or

[www.penstoweholidays.co.uk](http://www.penstoweholidays.co.uk)

Penstowe, Kilkhampton, Bude, Cornwall, EX23 9QY

Sponsored by the Museum of Witchcraft

## 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](http://www.museumofwitchcraft.blogspot.co.uk)



## Articles

### In search of Vixana: Mother of the Moor by Michele

Dartmoor is a passion of mine, its greenness comforts the mind, the changing seasons mark the passage of time, and countless plants and animals share this wilderness home. Dartmoor weather both warms and chills, the rivers sing and the granite holds fast and the land brims over with traces of our ancestors. Alone on the moor it can feel like spirits watch from every rock and tree, and the landscape is very much alive and at times unpredictable.

In my personal search for the powerful Goddess of Vixen Tor, I have been often frustrated as definite information is exceedingly elusive. Versions of an extremely anti-old woman tale hides hints in its twisted words, as it describes the fearful and hideous witch who murders travellers in her bog. A more romantic eye and poetic vision compares the mysterious Dartmoor tor to the riddling sacred Sphinx of Egypt or an ancient temple of the Druids. Vixen Tor also represented a tempting challenge to modern day climbers, adventures that sometimes ended up with the air ambulance being called to land upon the moor.

Several years ago when Vixen Tor changed ownership, this site beloved by a variety of people who walk the moor became meanly mired in tar and barbwire. It was later blood stained by senseless and sensationalised sheep slaughter. Despite many protests and legal disputes, the tor stays jealously guarded and off limits.

There are several factors to consider in my quest for Vixana: historical, archaeological or folklore records; the general environment of the Dartmoor landscape over time; and then the potent mix of magical gifts, enveloping mists, consuming bog, foxes, pixies and gnomes. Living relatively near to the site, over the years I have been privy to whispers (and conformations) of modern Witchcraft initiations taking place at the tor. In addition, there have been occasional hushed stories of prehistoric artefacts found in rock fissures being illegally removed in secret.



## **The tor**

Physically the granite stack remains a prominent landmark in spite of quarrying and subsequent tree plantation below in the river Walkham valley. The tor is sited 317m (1040 feet) above sea level; unusually it is not on the top of a mound like the majority of Dartmoor tors but rises abruptly from ground level to around 30m (100 feet) in height. It is well placed in the landscape and can be seen from several sides each suggesting a different aspect of its shifting character making it harder to define. Hawthorn trees grow well in her shadow and in turn give shade to the livestock and the birds who seek the shelter of the tor. It is not hard to understand that this landmark stood out as special and important to our forebears.

Similar to many Dartmoor walls, Vixen Tor's enclosure is undoubtedly part constructed from robbed out prehistoric monuments. Some Bronze Age archaeology does survive as a burial cist within the enclosure to the northeast of the tor and one just outside it to the north. Wider ancient sites in the area include the large Bronze Age complex at Merrivale, whose southernmost double row stone settings align on Vixen Tor; and the cists at Barn Hill. The enclosures and hut circles of Pork Hill date to the Iron Age when Dartmoor's slopes were purely summer pastures.

## **The moor**

Here is a brief summary of the Dartmoor environment over time, archaeological dates are expressed as BP meaning Before Present. The climate had been cooling since Neolithic times and forests had slowly been cleared from the land to grow crops. Farming practices first opened up the moor leading to erosion by the weather and was an aspect of the accumulation of peat and bog. The British Bronze Age spans roughly between 4,500 to 2,800 BP, during which occurred a severe eruption of Iceland's volcano Hekla (3) in 3,000 BP. This lowered northern European temperatures and obstructed sunlight for eighteen years afterwards as evidenced by tree ring analysis. By the time of the British Iron Age (2,800 BP), the moor had become cold and acidic. The ancestors in their earth and stone barrows alone held sway over the Dartmoor tors. People had deserted the moor for coastal resources, only visiting for summer grazing.

The bog holds a special place in European prehistoric memory, being neither land nor water, it was a liminal place and a direct way to communicate with the gods. Bog-land is deceptive and perilous, it is a boundary between life and death, growth and decay. Dartmoor soil is normally too acidic to preserve any objects but countless offerings of purposely broken artefacts have been recovered from bogs and bodies of water across Britain. Sacrifices of special objects, foods and more were offered to the gods, by rendering the objects useless or 'killed' and placed into the sacred waters. Human bog body finds are rarer in Britain than in Iron Age Europe where Rome was busy conquering the Germanic tribes.

Dartmoor weather can be savage and change with little warning making the moor a place of potential danger. Wind, water and temperature all reshape the moor over time. The mists rise; they shroud the landscape rendering it beyond all recognition. Mists shimmer and spiral and cloak all from sight, this deadens the sounds from the air, and brings the chill confusion of fear to the senses. Unless you have a path to guide you, it is extremely easy to lose your way no matter how long you may have lived on the moor.

## **Written sources**

Searching online for Vixen Tor and I came across a wonderful historical resource; 'A Description of the Part of Devonshire Bordering on the Tamar and the Tavy' by Mrs Anna Eliza

Bray, published in 1836. On page 275, Mrs Bray likened the 'majesty' of Vixen Tor in the golden light of the setting sun to a royal castle and fancied that:

"The last Princes of Dunhevid may have held his court there, or, in the worship of his false gods, have poured forth the cruel libations of human blood, and have acted worse deeds than did the most ferocious of the old Saxons when they took possession, and made offerings to Frea or Odin in the very heart of the moor."

Dunhevid (Swelling Hill) is the original name of Launceston castle and associated settlement, an early royal Cornish seat of the Norman Conquest. The 'ferocious' Saxons is possibly a reference to the Viking raids on the Tamar Valley in 997 AD. On the following page Mrs Bray mentions an encounter with two old peasant women, one she describes as "ill-humoured", who reminded her of "Otway's Hag" and "had she lived in the days of witch-hunting her face might have endangered her life".

Mrs Bray records in a later book (pages 274-9) meeting a man who had been granted the lands around Merrivale by a Mr Lopez. He had been taking stones from the barrows as they were "very handy" for him and "did not know what use they were now of". This man had lived near Vixen Tor all his life and she had asked him if he had seen the (natural cut) rock basins at the top of the tor. He simply replied that it was impossible to climb. Mrs Bray also records a large number of barrows in the area, the biggest measuring 48 paces round and six feet in height. A rich ancestral past now probably all lost to quarrying and wall building in the valley.

It becomes obvious that the intrepid Mrs Bray held a great curiosity concerning the magical practice of ancient druid ritual. Riding out on her horse, she had a good view of and was very acquainted with the Vixen Tor landscape. She was an inquisitive woman of education and privilege and did not fear to investigate tales and flights of the imagination in the search for clues. Mrs Bray does write about various encounters with witches, none directly concerning a witch at Vixen Tor but of offerings to the chief Scandinavian gods.

'The Witchcraft and Folklore of Dartmoor' published in 1965 by Ruth St.Leger-Gordon talks at length about witchcraft, the paths of the dead, hairy hands, folk customs, and other strange events upon the moor. William Crossing (1847-1928), also produced an amazing plethora of Dartmoor legends in his books. Again, I have found no entry concerning a witch at Vixen Tor, nor mention of Vixana herself. As the only other available resource, it was time to consider the insidious tale of Vixana the Witch of Vixen Tor.

### **Tale of Vixana the witch**

As a Pagan, I am quite horrified that 'dartmoor.gov' has this tale of hatred and suspicion in its learning section. It begins with a fairy tale self-validation of authenticity but I have found no evidence so far that suggests the tale itself is very old. Obviously, I prefer the recent retelling called 'Witch's Tor' by Trish Reynolds (see references).

"Many, many years ago Vixen Tor was the home of a wicked old witch named Vixana....."

Basically, the story goes, the petty and sadistic Vixana lived in a cave under the tor "constructed at her command" by gnomes. Her body is described as filthy and ill-shaped and her features repulsive and wolfish with yellow eyes. From the top of the tor she would spy travellers, bring down the magical mists so they would become disorientated and then drown in the bog. Then a handsome young man turns up, who had "performed a service for the Pixies" and had received the gifts of *clear sight* and a ring of invisibility. He creeps up on the old woman and pushes her violently to her death from the top of the tor.

We are told Vixana lived in a cave, was wolfish with yellow eyes. Vixen Tor is one of several sites that once provided a favoured breeding ground for foxes. The name 'Vixen' is related to the Middle English 'fixen', or the Old English 'fixen/fyxen/fyxe' meaning, of course, female fox.

Bede in the 8th Century AD compares foxes with "the ways...of heretics, for they are exceeding deceitful creatures who lay hidden in dens and caves,....they never run on a straight course but follow devious paths."

Adult foxes are strikingly red and white animals with a large bushy tail, their eyes are indeed yellow in the darkness. A fox crying out in the winter darkness sounds like a human female shrieking in terror. Foxes are considered Underworld creatures, as they are generally nocturnal and spend much of the winter sheltering in earth dens. Foxes have numerous celebrated skills such as being cunning and evasive, having keen instincts and stalking abilities. They are charismatically charming and display great intelligence. Their coloured coat allows them the skill of camouflage, as the fox appears unexpectedly out of the night. Or in magical thinking foxes have the ability to become invisible at will. The tricky feral fox could have been thought of as witches' familiars, or shape-shifted witches, or the true spirit power of the tor.

Gnome comes from a Greek word meaning 'earth dweller' and is magically connected with the treasures of the earth. Gnomes are silent, heavy beings and live within the land itself. Perhaps the Gnomes in some way reflect the dead in their barrows living beneath the earth. It is often reported that the Pixies will confuse travellers and lead them into misfortune and danger. Strangely enough, I have been up to my knees in a bog during my exploration of the moor and have only blamed the 'foolish human'. Pisky is the proper term in the West Country. They are connected with the souls of the ancestors and tend to be territorial, at times aggressive and apparently will take horses. I think of the Pisky or Pixie as aspects of the wild landscape, the awareness and vitality residing in the cracks in the rock or within the trees, waiting to show us something magical even if that entails an element of chaos!

To see or not to see? That is the question. Does the youth in this tale see old age as the bringer of the mists of confusion that wait to descend and cast us into oblivion? The uninformed often suffer from the problem of being stupidly brave, in their fear of death and what is 'other' they destroy in order to be saved. An enlightened approach is to cultivate awareness and the ability to see clearly. To be able to go about unnoticed has fantastic benefits, but try as you might you cannot conceal yourself from old age nor ignore its wisdom without consequence. Fear of old age and especially old women is a more modern concern. Elders are seen by the prevalent culture as beyond use and spiteful, their wisdom unwanted and unvalued. This dark tale keeps alive a suspicion of deep nature powers and a warring upon the old gods. It perpetuates a zealous resentment that still attempts to devalue the Pagan past using a mistrusting modern mind-set.

### **Other tales**

Have you met the red haired beauty from the bog? Patricia Monaghan in writing of her search for her Irish roots speaks of Clifden in County Connemara, of the Old Bog Road and the gentle faery dells. In pages 50-51 she describes the enthralling faery mistress, the Leanan Sidhe (beautiful woman of the barrow people). She is dressed in green, her hair is wild and red and her face milky white. She is sensuous and untamed, and "leads her fated lovers to Tir na Og".

In Celtic tradition, anything portrayed as white and red is akin to the faeries, such as the foxes of Vixen Tor. At the end of the tale of the Leanan Sidhe, the misty morning reveals her cosy

cottage as a pile of rocks at the bend in the Old Bog Road and the young man is never seen again. This could easily describe Vixen Tor on the bend of the Tavistock to Princetown road.

Historian Bettany Hughes in her BBC2 program titled 'Divine Women', journeyed to the mountainous region of central Turkey. Here she spoke about a feared and revered mother goddess called Kibele (Mountain Mother) who was worshiped at a sacred rock around 9,000 BP. From Her mountain sanctuary, Kibele emerged to protect the people from conflict from neighbouring lands, to control nature and wild animals in the vast landscape, and to take responsibility for life and the afterlife. Goddesses have existed as forces of wild nature in the landscape that could be petitioned to protect and nourish the people for countless millennia. Even mighty Rome sought the protection of the ancient Turkish Mother Kibele as 'Magna Mater' around 218 BC.

### So who is Vixana?

Stripping back the mystery of Vixen Tor, the magical elements revealed in the story demonstrate a deep connection with magic, the ancestral spirits of the earth, and of the wider landscape. The main powers include the ability to conjure a swirling mist that is neither water nor air, to give entry to the consuming bog that is neither land nor water, the power of clear sight, and to become invisible at will. Does it in some way describe a mythic encounter with the Mother Goddess of Dartmoor, evoking fear in those who have lost their connection with the land?

Such a multifaceted granite mass sited in this unusual manner at the head of a river valley was bound to be an alluring landmark for early peoples on the moor. So much so, they entrusted their dead to its care and (perhaps) the underworld night guardian, the faery blessed fox. Vixana herself is similarly multifaceted in the human imagination; a dangerous ill-tempered old woman who tricks travellers, an ancient and honoured cousin of the Saxon Gods, an enchanting faery lover who will take you in ecstasy to the Lands of the Ever Young, and a primal Earth Goddess of the Granite and the Bog.

It is reasonable to surmise that the ancient power now known as Vixana fulfilled the function of a sacred nature goddess of life and the afterlife for our Prehistoric forebears. She offers protection, entices the unwary, enchants the willing, offers entry to the Otherworld, and grants merciless compassion to the lost. Modern Pagans could call upon the Mother of the Moor and ask Vixana to be their initiatory goddess too. Would you allow this Otherworldly magnificence to lead you along the faery paths and between the worlds, to a place where temporal reality dissolves? Vixana enthral us still.

Honour to you Ancient Witch of the Sacred Tor,  
Watchful Sphinx of the Shifting Soils, Cunning Fox who sees clearly in darkness.  
Vixana, Spirit of Fox, Wise-Woman of Magical Mists,  
Open the portal to the lands beyond and receive what needs to be transformed.  
Way Showing, Pale Enchantress, Mist Enveloping, Witch-Fox of this land,  
Ancient Goddess of the Vixen's Tor and the Star Filled Night, keep us safe upon the path.

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<http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=29932> (images of Vixen Tor and archaeology)



## Moots

### Cornwall (Kernow)

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#### 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 Lisa at [budemoot@lchambers.co.uk](mailto:budemoot@lchambers.co.uk) or [Debbie@specialdaysinspecialways.co.uk](mailto:Debbie@specialdaysinspecialways.co.uk)

#### 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: Karen tel: 077411 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 email: [liskeardmoot@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:liskeardmoot@yahoo.co.uk)

Facebook group: [www.facebook.com/groups/271716272934061](https://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 email: [paganpaths05@aol.com](mailto:paganpaths05@aol.com)

#### Ros Pagan (Pagan Wheel)

Camborne based Moot. Meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm, at the Camborne Community Centre, (South Tce, TR14 8SU). Pagans of all paths – or those just interested in finding out more – very welcome. Meets for talks, discussions, rituals and outings. We ask for a donation of £2 to help cover the cost of room hire. Refreshments provided. The Community Centre is close to bus and train links, has a large car park and full disabled access.

FFI contact Eve on [dcj.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dcj.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk) for more details.

#### Fraddon Moot

First Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm... Meets at Penhale Round, Fraddon, directly off the A30. Pagans (and seekers) of all paths very welcome. FFI contact Loulou on:

[fraddoncoven@hotmail.com](mailto:fraddoncoven@hotmail.com)

#### Penwith Pagan Moot

In hibernation at present. FFI contact – Sarah on [vivianatfarwest@supanet.com](mailto:vivianatfarwest@supanet.com)

Website: [www.penwithpaganmoot.co.uk](http://www.penwithpaganmoot.co.uk)

## Devon (Dumnonia)

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### 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](mailto:oldcrone24@gmail.com)

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:pdq.mears@virgin.net) or find us on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/paganfedplymouth/>

### Tavistock Moot

Held monthly from 7.30. Ritual, meditation and journey work, followed by discussion on a topic. FFI Al email [myfaerieking@btinternet.com](mailto:myfaerieking@btinternet.com)

### Tavistock West Moor Moot

The West Moor moot is on a break at present. A Samhain ritual is planned, together with w Yule gathering. So contact us for information on planned seasonal rituals. Michele email [westmoormoot@gmail.com](mailto: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 Highwayman's 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 email [taniakennedy67@hotmail.com](mailto:taniakennedy67@hotmail.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/370597919466/>

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### Handfasting & Ceremony

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**West Moor Celebrants:** Contact us for bespoke Handfastings, celebrations of life and rites of passage, Michele and Harvey, [westmoormoot@gmail.com](mailto:westmoormoot@gmail.com).

### 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](http://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](http://www.facebook.com/wiseoldcrow) . Sue Clarke [www.sueclarkereadings.co.uk](http://www.sueclarkereadings.co.uk)  
[www.wiseoldcrow.com](http://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](http://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/Lammas2015.pdf>



## Who is who locally

### Pagan Federation Devon, Cornwall & Isles

District Website [www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk](http://www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk)

District Enquiries [dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk)

District address for All Postal correspondence PF DCI c/o, Torcroft, Commons Lane, Shaldon, TQ14 0HN.

### Your PF District Officers

#### District Manager:

Maia Miller: [dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk) 07747016220

#### Regional Co-ordinators:

Devon: Michele [dci.devon@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.devon@paganfederation.co.uk)

Cornwall: Eve [dci.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.cornwall@paganfederation.co.uk)

Isles: Oak Leaf [dci.isles@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.isles@paganfederation.co.uk)

#### Newsletter Editor

Contact Harvey [DarkMirrorMagazine@gmail.com](mailto:DarkMirrorMagazine@gmail.com)

#### District Conference

Contact the organizer [dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk)

#### Interfaith officers

All areas [dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk](mailto:dci.dm@paganfederation.co.uk)

#### District webmaster

Contact Charles [charles@cadgwith.com](mailto:charles@cadgwith.com) 0800 787 9208  
<http://www.cadgwith.com/>

National Website: [www.paganfed.org](http://www.paganfed.org)

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



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