

The Controversial Cauldron

Beltane/May Eve 2010

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Welcome Beltane

Written and compiled by George Knowles

Beltane is one of the greater Sabbats of the Witch's annual calendar, and in the northern hemisphere is celebrated on the 30th April (May Eve). In the southern hemisphere the equivalent Sabbat is Samhain. Beltane is a fertility festival, and marks the courtship of the Goddess and God in a renewal of the ancient marriage of polarity. As the young God emerges into manhood, he desires the Goddess and they fall in love. They meet together in fields and forests, and spurred on by the energies at work in nature, they unite and the Goddess again becomes pregnant of the God.

This is the time of year when crops are planted and begin to grow, when animals produce their young, and when people came out of their homes after the long dark months of winter. The coming of Spring with its fairer weather and longer daylight hours was a most welcome change and cause for much celebration. Many of the traditions associated with Beltane are believed to have originated from the Celtic peoples of Western Europe, who in turn reinvented them from an even older Roman festival called Floralia, in which Flora the Goddess of Spring was celebrated.

Depending on location and tradition, Beltane is known by many alternative names: Bealtinne (Caledonii or the Druids), Floralia, Tana's Day (Aridian Strega), May Day, Roodmas, La Baal Tinne (Faery Wicca), Walburga (Teutonic), Walpurgisnacht (German) and Whitsun. Similar practises then spread to the British Isles and continue to be celebrated all across England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and the Isle of Man. Beltane in Ireland it is known as "Bealtaine", in Scotland "Bealtunn", in Wales as "Galan Mae" and in the Isle of Man as "Shenn do Boaldyn".

Beltane is one of the four great Fire Festivals that quarter the seasonal turning points of the year. In preparation for the festival it was customary to build two large bonfires called "Bel-fires", named after and dedicated to the Celtic Sun God "Bel" or "Belinus". Traditionally the fires were built using wood from nine of the sacred trees of the Druids: Birch, Rowan, Ash, Alder, Willow, Hawthorn, Oak, Holly and Hazel. The Willow in particular was sacred, for according to the Celtic tree calendar (15th April - 12th May), the Willow is the tree most associated with Beltane.

The Bel-fires were considered sacred for their healing and purifying powers, and were lit to celebrate the return of life and fruitfulness to the earth while burning away the cold of winter. On the Eve of Beltane, Druids would ritually light the two Bel-fires

leaving enough room between them so that cattle and other livestock could be led through, an act that purified and protected the animals from disease during the coming year. While the cattle and other livestock were led away to their summer grazing, torches would also be lit and carried around their barns and stables in another act of purification. All across the country household fires would be extinguished and re-lit afresh from the Bel-Fires. Later the ashes from the fires would be scattered in the fields.

Once the fires had been lit on Beltane Eve, and children put to bed, in the late hours before sunrise adult activities would take place. Wedded couples would dance and jump over the fires to enhance their fertility. Single men and women would also join in and later wander off into fields or forests to let nature take its course. Such unions were seen as good and proper, even though not sanctified by marriage (a Christian notion). These were referred to as "Greenwood marriages", and are the origin of the handfasting customs observed by modern witches and pagans today. However, there is an old belief that May is an unlucky month in which to get married, and that lovers should wait until the month of June for their official handfasting. If a marriage did not work, or produced no children, couples could easily split and end their union without the messy and complicated procedures of a divorce (another Christian notion).

Water also has a strong association with Beltane, but more specifically Morning Dew, which was seen as sacred and magical. Women would bathe in dew gathered before dawn on Beltane morning in the belief it would enhance her beauty throughout the year, and if she chanted an appropriate charm while doing so, she might even entice a future husband. Another custom was to drink from a well before sunrise on Beltane morning to insure good health and good fortune. This led to the tradition of "Well Dressing", particularly in Ireland where many wells are considered Holy.

Another popular custom associated with Beltane is "Bringing in the May", when people from the villages went out into the fields and forests to gather seasonal flowers. These would be used to decorate their homes and later to dress themselves in readiness for the festivities. On their return home laden with flowers, they would stop at houses along the way singing songs of Spring and leaving gifts of flowers. For this they would be greeted and treated with whatever food and drink the house had to offer. From this came the common custom of leaving gift baskets of flowers and fruit on the doorsteps of not just friends and family, but also old and infirm neighbours.

One of the principal characters associated with the Beltane festivities is the "Queen of May". The May Queen is usually a young maiden selected from the

previous year's "Maidens in Waiting" and crowned with a ring of fresh flowers. Many old accounts mention both a May Queen and King being chosen, and that they reigned together from sunset on the Eve of Beltane to sunset on the following day. Among their duties was to lead the Beltane procession around the village, start the day's festivities and games, and later present prizes to the victors.

Perhaps the most recognised symbol associated with Beltane is the Maypole. The Maypole is a powerful phallic symbol representing fertility, and symbolised the union of the Goddess and God. Just before Beltane, the men of the village would go out into the woods and cut down a tall tree. Stripped of all its branches, the resulting tall pole would be erected in the village square and decorated with long brightly colored ribbons, leaves, flowers and wreaths.

During the festivities an even number of young men and maidens would be selected to dance the May pole, each alternately holding the end of a ribbon. The circle of dancers would start as far out from the pole as the length of ribbon allowed, men facing clockwise

on the outside and maidens facing counterclockwise on the inside. Once the dance began, each would move in the direction they faced, those on the inside ducking under the ribbons of those on the outside, then alternately stepping to the outside. As the dance progressed the ribbons weaved into a pattern down the pole. The maypole itself represented a male phallus thrust into Mother Earth, while the ribbons as they weaved around it represented the enveloping nature of the woman's womb. The successful weaving of the ribbons down the pole was symbolic of the successful mating of the Goddess and God, and a blessing on the following years harvest.

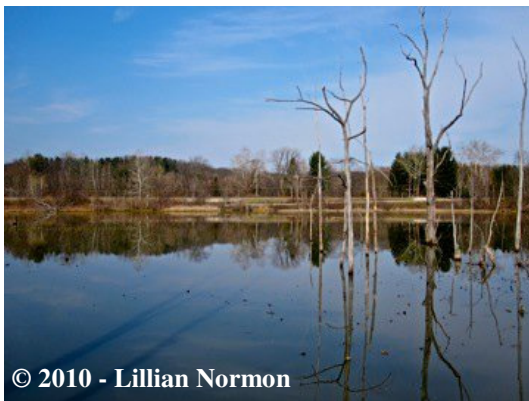
Beltane then marks the height of Spring and the beginning of Summer. It should be a day full of laughter and gaiety, fun and frolicking, games and feasting. As was the way of our ancestors who thought that the Wheel of the Year wouldn't turn without human interaction, at Beltane they did all they could to mimic and encourage the Sun's growth. Therefore, Fires, Rituals and Celebrations were an important part of the old ways to insure the Sun's light would continue to support the fertility of the earth.

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Nature's Glory Pics from our Members



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Beltane Ritual 2010

The altar should be a riot of bright colors—altar cloth, flowers, candles, all in joyous colors. Include the usual adornments: goddess and god figures, corner candles, wand, athame, etc. Adorn yourself also in bright colors, a bright smile, and a crown of flowers and ribbons. You and your altar should look like a celebration!

Grounding:

*Joy to the world!
All the boys and girls.
Joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea!
Joy to you and me!**

Cast your Circle by scattering flower petals or new green leaves with this chant:

*Joyous Beltane; joyous spring!
I feel joy in everything!*

Face each direction as you invoke the spirits.

Join me spirits of the East, bringing the dawning of a new and happy time. Let me be always mindful of the beauty and abundance in this season.

Join me spirits of the South, bringing the warmth of the sun as we move toward summer. Let me be passionate in the pleasure you bring.

Join me spirits of the West, bringing splashing waters of delight and celebration. Let me feel the depths of joy as I move forth.

Join me spirits of the North, bringing forth the glorious growth of all. Let me be nurtured by your bounty and nurturing to all.

Invoke the Goddess and the God:

*She walks in beauty like the night
She is all that is known in dark and light
She comes with flowers in her hair
She is our goddess bright and fair.
Goddess bright, be with me here.
May I feel your presence near.
Join me on this special day
To celebrate the start of May.*

*God, today is your time, too.
As I welcome spring anew.
God so strong, be with me here.
May I feel your presence near.
Join me on this special day
To celebrate the start of May.*

Proclamation:

*Now between the worlds I stand
Bless the Lady, bless the Land
As above, so below
Bright sun that all my dreams may grow.
Bless the Lord, and bless the Skies
Bless the Power that never dies!*

Magickal Working:

Fertility can be of the body, or of the mind, or of the spirit. Identify area/s of fertility for yourself for the coming year. On a piece of paper write down your top three plans, dreams, visions for your future. Read them aloud and meditate upon them. Holding the paper in your hands, chant these words.

*I ask that your fertility
Come to the land and come to me.*

When you are ready, fold that paper thrice, sliding it beneath your altar cloth. Later, as you put away your ritual tools, put that paper under your pillow. Sleep on it tonight, and tomorrow morning put it in a hidden place to take out and view at Beltane next year.

Dismissal of directions:

*Earth and Water, Fire and Air
I thank you for this moment rare.
South and North, East and West
Thank you. Now I feel most blest.
Go you now, if you will.
Your memory is with me still.*

Dismissal of Goddess & God:

*Oh, great goddess of joy
I have been here in praise.
Guide me along my path.
I'll honor you all of my days.
Thank you for being with me.
In my heart you will always be.*

*Oh great god of hope
I have been here in praise.
Guide me along my path.
I'll honor you all of my days.
Thank you for being with me.
In my heart you will always be.*

Open your Circle by walking, skipping, or dancing around the Circle widdershens (counter clockwise) holding high a wand, athame or long stem of flowers.

*Joy to the world
All the boys and girls
Joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea
Joy to you and me! **

***Three Dog Night (c) Copyright 1970 by Lady Jane Music**

Legacy: Handfasting Traditions

By *Ardriana Cahill*

In my tradition, the three flower festivals took on the following definitions. Imbolg represents new love, the introduction of young lovers. Vernal Equinox represents fertility and new life. Bealtaine then, is the formal union of the young lovers about to bring another life into the world. Handfastings were believed to be a trial marriage (for a year and a day) to verify compatibility and the fertility of the bride before the marriage was made formal. Today, a handfasting can be an engagement or betrothal ceremony or a ceremony done within a wedding ceremony. And for many, the term handfasting is interchangeable with the word wedding and is used to distinguish a pagan wedding from non-pagan weddings.



So, in the spirit of the season, an ancient time of year for making wedding plans, I thought I'd share some of the traditions I've used in the handfasting ceremonies that I've officiated as Priestess of my clan, as well as my own handfasting.

"When sweet desire weds wild

Two of the more common known traditions in modern pagan weddings are jumping the besom and binding the hands with a handfasting cord. Thresholds and threshold crossings are magickal times. To mark the threshold that divides two lives that will now become one we use a besom over which the couple steps or jumps over. This gesture is a physical representation of the transformation that is taking place.



The handfasting cord is the object that gives definition to the handfasting ceremony; to bind or fasten the hands of the couple. It is another interpretation of "tying the knot". Our handfasting cord was woven with three colors: burgundy for love, forest green for life and ivory for light, plus gold and silver to represent the sun and moon. The cord is wound thrice around the couple's joined hands.

Before Christianity came to Ireland, the ancient Kelts had at one time an interesting system of government that balanced the powers between both men and women. Only men could rule the land, but only women could own the land. So, if the king liked that chair upon which he sat, he'd better make wise decisions or he couldn't even claim his horse as his own. We wanted to include a Sword and Broach ceremony in our wedding as it is very old. When simple folk stole into the night to marry each other without witness or priest, they would give each other symbolic tokens. A broach or pin that was pinned to her shoulder and that she gave to him was a symbol of her property, but it also held her dress on, so when she offers it to him and the dress falls, he sees for the first time all that she is offering him. The sword that he offers her was the only property he was permitted to own and a symbol of his nobility, loyalty and protection. We did the Sword and Broach ceremony symbolically (the dress stayed put). He knelt to offer his sword to me, I knelt to offer my broach to him. My husband, at first, opposed my seeming subservient by kneeling to him. In today's society, a man maintains his stature as a man, whether he kneels or not. So I claimed the same right. I am who I am in any posture and to kneel to him was not a reflection of my status. It was a reflection of his.



Sword & Broach: My Irish Wolf Pin "Bona na Croin" means "Neither Collar Nor Crown". The warrior spirit that accepts no master, a gift from the groom to the bride.

To a pagan it is often confusing as to what kind of oath we can take if we do not "swear to god." There is an ancient oath...to swear on one's "hope of heaven." Tir Na nOg (Pronounced: Tear-nan-oak) is what the ancients named heaven...The Land of Youth. A land of beauty, magick and wonder ~ found beyond the sea, "a league out and a foot over a tall man's head". And so, we swore on our hope of Tir Na nOg.

The Swept Hilt Rapier, a nobleman's weapon and a gift from the bride to the groom. Combined into a symbol used on our napkins.

Irish tradition mandates something braided is needed to ward off mischievous spirits and usually, we do braided hair. There is an ancient belief that woven and braided patterns entangle the evil eye causing it to lose its power to blight the day or the revelers.

Sharing a “loving cup” of wine is a centuries old German wedding tradition, but in pagan philosophy the cup is the sacred symbol of the goddess and specifically a Moon goddess. Modern pagan interpretation of the chalice can be used in the handfasting as the couple taking a blessing from the goddess. In a mixed audience of pagans and non-pagans, this goddess symbolism need not even be spoken of. We disguised it in poetic language. “For thousands of years the Chalice has been symbol of renewal, regeneration, and rebirth. The sweet wine within is a sacred image of life. As this vessel of Moonlight reflects the hope of this moment, may your life be a reflection of the love you bear each other. Drink now, and may the cup of your lives be full to overflowing.”



Similarly, we chose to reverse the standard candle ceremony used in almost every American wedding. Instead of a pair of lit bridal candles lighting together a single wedding candle to represent two lives fusing into one, we began with the single lit candle that was carried into the ceremony. That lit candle represented the Sun and we lit our bridal candles from that single flame as a blessing of the god. Saying, “This flame is a symbol of creation, the glowing, living, force that gives us breath. The flame is our passion and our deepest connection to the soul. As this tiny beacon of the Sun illuminates this moment, may your love always shine brightest for each other.” Earlier, as the guests first arrived to the wedding, we had handed out thin tapers with paper wax protectors around them. After we lit our candles from the Sun candle, we handed them to two attendants who used them to light each guest’s candle who sat in the isle seats. Then those guests were instructed to light the candle next to them, and so on until every guest was holding a lit candle. We said our wedding vows to each other to all that glowing candlelight. When we were done, the priestess asked each guest to make a wish for the bride and groom for long life, good fortune, or any special intention, then to gently blow out their candles.

I took the opportunity to create two sacred talismans for my husband and I to wear, at least, through our first year of marriage. I placed a silver chalice charm in the Moonlight chalice that was filled with wine and from which we drank (being careful to not swallow it!) Placed under the Sun candle, was silver charm in the shape of a flame. Thus, we had symbols of the Sun and Moon, god and goddess blessing our marriage. I wore the chalice charm and my husband wore the flame charm. I take them out of the jewelry box each year as our anniversary gets close and we wear them again.



I chose to incorporate a grain ceremony into a handfasting where an Anglo-Celtic bride married a groom who identified largely with his Chinese heritage.

The mothers of both the bride and groom each carried a basket filled with grain. Her mother carried wheat. His mother carried rice. The priest had a third, empty bowl wherein the mothers poured the grain. The bride and groom then mixed the grains together as the priest said, “As these two baskets of grain are mixed together, let the best of both families, both cultures blend to make a rich life filled with joy.”

For those of you who are planning your handfasting, I encourage you to research cultural traditions that can be incorporated into your ceremony, but do not limit your imagination to find modern nature-based, pagan expressions to bless your special day. And with that I will leave you with this blessing...

May you live in peace and joy.
And may you grow old together on one pillow.

On The Rocks *By Patricia J. Martin*

Silver & Gold

For Beltane, I chose to concentrate on two very precious metals with which we have had an ongoing love affair throughout time. And while they each compliment the other, each are entwined in our most ancient psyche as true representations of the masculine and feminine ~ Gold and Silver. It is no wonder our ancestors chose these two long-lasting, valuable and highly-prized precious metals to associate with the Lord and Lady. They *are* the Lord and Lady of the metallic mineral kingdom!

As I unmask and entwine these two even further within this text, for their full effect please allow their essences to permeate and meld with your own, for this is merely a glimpse into their world.



For purity, riches and divine courtship, I call upon the powers of Gold, Au, born with untarnished boldness and vitality everlasting, and who cleaves unto none other than his most beloved.

❧

And to whom he does adore for her gifts of insight, magick and mystical wisdom, I call upon the powers of Silver, Ag, born to sensuous expression and curvaceous form, through which she invokes the attention of her consort.

Yes, Gold has long been associated with the projective solar masculine and its properties connected to the attributes of the God and the life-giving Sun. Its Element is Fire, and it is connected to the astrological sign of Leo. Chemically, Gold is a Native Element - meaning it is one of the 118 found in the Periodic Table of Elements where its symbol is "Au", and one of only a very few solid minerals found *in* a native state - making it highly attractive, valuable and the most prized of all metals. A rich, golden-yellow color, these dazzlers occur in nugget, grain, flake, massive, or occasionally octahedral or dodecahedral form, but often in veins within Quartz. Gold is extremely soft and malleable (registering only 2.5 on the Mohs Scale) and is remarkably pure, along with being remarkably inert; this means it does not react nor bond with most other chemicals and thus will not tarnish or rust. Because of this, in alchemy, Gold is called a "noble" metal. But to increase Gold's hardness, it is alloyed with Silver (transforming Gold to White Gold), Copper (to Pink or Rose Gold) or other metals so that it may become the adornments we so desire. Here, the percentage of alloy is measured in karats (K, Kt); 24 karats equals 100% gold (no jewelry is made of 24 K gold), whereas 14 karat gold is 14 parts out of 24 (or 58%) pure gold.



Also a Native Element and highly prized, Silver occurs in wiry, curvy form, or dendritic, scaly or massive habits and occasionally, but rarely, in octahedrals or dodecahedrals. It is also a very soft metal, registering only 2.5-3.0 on the Mohs Scale - and like Gold, too soft to be able to be worn well so it too enjoys commingling with another. (Sterling Silver is 92.5% Silver with the other 7.5 usually Copper.) As a beautiful silvery-white metal, Silver has long been associated with the Moon and the sacred receptive lunar feminine, its



properties connected with the same attributes of the Goddess - divine inner wisdom, magick, mystery, insight, psychic powers and perception, and of course, connection with Deity. Its Element is Water, and it is associated to the astrological sign of Cancer. Silver's symbol "Ag" derives from the Latin word "argentum" which in turn derives from the Sanskrit word meaning "white and shining". But when oxidized, Silver will tarnish.

Both Gold and Silver stand for purify and have the ability to purify, and both provide a direct channel to Deity. Hot, fiery Gold is known to attract wealth, success and power, so much so that it also comes with a warning against greed. The term "gold fever" did not enter our vocabulary for no reason and is indicative of just how much power Gold has and of how much feverish fire it can bestow. Those working with Gold do best by adding Silver to their studies and use for its Water Element essence, for Silver's greatest role is in its gifts of insight, intuition and wisdom which will balance and bring awareness to the strength of Gold and counteract any ensuing leanings toward greed. Silver opens a strong connection to the spirit world, from deity to the elementals to the fae, and promotes all things spiritual. It is a mirror to the soul. It enhances Astral travel or tapping into the subconscious along with offering its protection. Many believe there is a "silver cord" or "life thread" that is connected to the etheric and physical body that guides us back from dream state and ethereal journeys.

Behold Au! He who has scattered his desirous golden seed over the lands on and within every forest, mountain and hillside. We rejoice in your presence!

Heal us! Purify us! Shower us in your warmth and bathe us in your light.

Rise up and attend - the Goddess awaits you.

✕

Behold Ag! She who brings forth every bud, leaf and blossom of insight, over every forest, mountain and hillside, with electrifying allure. We rejoice in your presence!

Nurture us! Guide us! Plant and grant us your deep wisdom.

Open all hearts - Receive your lover.

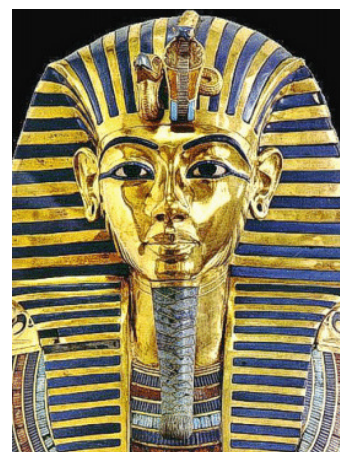
Who first discovered Gold remains a mystery, as there is much myth and legend surrounding this royal metal. What we do know is that Gold has been mined for at least 6000 years. Ancient sources of Gold were in the Upper Nile region of Egypt and Nubia ("Nub" being the Egyptian word for "gold") and the lands of ancient Mesopotamia, but during the Middle Ages the main sources were the mines of Saxony and Austria. Today, half the world's Gold comes out of South Africa, with other notable sources being Australia, Russia, Canada and the U.S.. Rare small crystals of Gold have been found in California, U.S., while giant nuggets over 200 pounds have been discovered in Australia. In the past, most Gold was recovered from river and stream gravels, called "placer deposits" where small flakes or particles of the mineral concentrated after being weathered away from its host rock. The ancients also mined veins of Gold by using tools of the day - bone picks, stone hammers, wooden trowels, and some say even a melting process where they would set the vein aflame. Later in time came the use of special pans for panning for Gold near alluvial deposits, a process where extraneous gravels are slowly washed away through the swirling and shaking of the pan in the water, leaving the gold flakes, scales or nuggets in the bottom of the pan since Gold is heavier than most other minerals. Other forms of mining include dredging, sluicing and the typical hard rock mining where Gold is extracted from hydrothermal veins within Quartz or even Pyrite. Pyrite has being nicknamed "Fool's Gold" because of its similar color and for the fact that it's been often mistaken for Gold even though Pyrite is generally a more silvery-gold hue.



Silver is widely distributed throughout the world and yet is considered rare compared to other metals. Most Silver comes from Mexico, U.S., Canada, Australia, Peru and Russia, and while native Silver can be found, most of it is mined as a byproduct in the refining of lead, copper and zinc. And oddly, or maybe not so oddly, Silver and Gold are often found nestled together within certain deposits. As if added proof of Silver and Gold's love for each other, a naturally occurring gold-silver alloy called "Electrum" exists, and it is thought that the earliest coins in history were made from this amalgam in the ancient kingdom of Lydia (modern day Turkey) c. 600 BC. The lands of Lydia and nearby Ionia were rich and prosperous and noted for their wealth which could be attributed to Lydia's King Alyattes' minting of these Electrum coins. They are often considered the first true commercial currency whose earliest issues featured a roaring lion.



Throughout history in both fact and legend, a whole host of sacred images, icons, amulets, jewelry, adornments and artifacts were fashioned out of either Gold or Silver and many an altar has been adorned with them. There are so many beautiful and interesting things these precious metals were used for, that I will only name a few of the most notable here - for instance, the burial effigy mask and coffin of the Egyptian child-king Tutankhamen. Early Egyptians were enamored of Gold and the royal blue stone Lapis Lazuli and emerald green Malachite. They constructed elaborate burial adornments with these minerals to signify wealth or to denote the nobility of the deceased. The ancient Mayans and Aztecs prized Silver as highly as they did Gold and used it to mold images of their gods. In legend, it is said the Druids collected mistletoe with sickles made of Gold. And in Irish myth, when King Nuada lost his arm in battle, the god of healing, Dian Cécht, made him an artificial arm of Silver so that he would be able to return to his throne. Within Hinduism, the ancient Vedas expound upon the virtues of Silver and other pure metals for healing. Tibetan Bonpo shamanism tell of the waters of "a river filled with silver sands that will make anyone who drinks from it as lovely as a peacock". Yes, the love affair goes on and on. And as Gold is indestructible, it is a fact that all the Gold ever mined is nearly equal to all the Gold in use today, so it is not inconceivable that what Gold we wear today may have once belonged to some ancient King, Queen or nobleman...perhaps even our own ancestors!



Gold has been nicknamed "The Master Healer" and is noted for its aid in purification of the physical body, whereas Silver is our "Master Conductor" and opens the channels of our mind and spirit. Silver's conductivity of heat and electricity is second to none; it is used extensively in electrical applications. The largest single use of Silver was in the pre-digital photographic industry, and without which it would have made early photography impossible. Silver is highly reactive to light. And with Gold as the Sun, need I say more? ;)

In the realm of healing, Silver and Gold can be very helpful. Use Gold as an aid in purification of all forms, for added vitality, in combating depression, rejuvenating the Nervous System, enhancing mental faculties, improving digestion, circulation or heart disease...just to name a few. It truly is a versatile mineral. And use Silver as an aid for emotional distress, anxiety, sleep disorders, to eliminate toxins at a cellular level, reduce fevers, balance hormones, or help rectify poor vision. A fine elixir can be made from either of our sparkling beauties. To make the elixir, take 3 Gold or Silver coins, cleanse them well and then place them into a lidded glass container to which you have added fresh spring water. Place it in full sunlight and moonlight for a full 24-72 hours (the longer the stronger) and the resulting mineral water may then be consumed. For additional amplification, surround the glass container with 7 Quartz



crystal points - the terminated ends facing the water and coins throughout the process. Gold has a warming and rejuvenating tendency, whereas Silver has a cooling and soothing tendency. Together they create a balancing effect. In magick, both Gold and Silver can be used with great accuracy in money spells. But no matter what you use them for, they both assist greatly in the bending of energies and the directing of magick's flow. Silver is excellent for use in any Moon magick; Gold is excellent for use in any Sun magick. Combine the two and you have a dynamite powerhouse effect!

Although there is much, much more to say about Gold and Silver, and even though I could go on and on about these two lofty lovers - more than I could ever put down within this small article - I cannot close without simply adding a few words about two other all-important aspects of Gold and Silver - their intense sexuality and sensuality. With Gold projective and Silver receptive, we have both virile strength and tender submission. We have passionate movement and sensuous abandon. We have assertive love and inserted sentence. Our own love of Gold and Silver has transcended Time. From Mount Olympus to modern day Olympics, they are the metals of the gods and the medals of our heroes, both signifying royalty, honor, success, spirituality, life and love.

*As the veil now is thin as it is at high Samhain,
grant us your gold visions and silvery tongue
that we may see through your eyes and speak of your glory
and dance to the songs our ancestors once sung.
We will revel this night and bask in love's story,
as the fire grows high and the silver bell's rung.*

<bows to the Two who are One>



Happy Beltane!

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<http://www.silvermedicine.org/history.html>

Gold himself & Silver herself.



© Patricia J. Martin (a.k.a. Pari), April, 2010

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<http://www.peacefulpaths.com>

Metaphysics

A Most Powerful Force

By Tamra L. Consbruck

"We all need to look into the dark side of our nature - that's where the energy is, the passion. People are afraid of that because it holds pieces of us we're busy denying."

Sue Grafton

What is it about passion that can make someone risk almost anything to attain it? Even in the face of reason, we must work to stay the course of simple logic. One person can physically have everything he ever thought he wanted, but be unable to enjoy it in the absence of that one emotion which reminds us we are indeed, living, breathing human animals.

Intellectually don't we know the consequences of chasing this emotion? Shouldn't we simply be rational and continue to tend to our homes, marriages, families, jobs, and various toys, than to actively seek something that can so easily destroy everything we've worked so hard for?

Like fear, rage, and love, Passion wakes us up, makes us feel alive. It heats the blood, stirs the soul, and feeds us. Yes, feeds us. It's like jumping off a steep cliff into cold dark waters. We may know it's not a good idea. Perhaps we may not even survive it. But when we suck in that first breath of air after breaking the surface of the water, the experience makes us realize that we indeed live and breathe. And would we not be more aware of this fact now than during the moments or even years before we jumped?

And what of the few of us who spend our entire lives creating a safe manageable, comfortable existence simply by denying passion, locking it away along with all those other pesky emotions? Perhaps in childhood the twisted passions of others caused us harm, leaving jagged scars to remind us of old dangers and pain.

Control of one's life, both physical and emotional is for most of us, a difficult state to achieve and maintain. Passion may seem a justifiable sacrifice for safety, stability and comfort. Is it worth the lack thereof for a roof above our heads, food on our child's

plate, clothes to keep us warm and all the little things that make life tolerable?

It can be a very simple answer to a parent. The child comes first, right? Parents are used to sacrifice. The average human being will more than agree that anything else would be going against our nature.

But what about when the child has grown and moves away, when he rushes off to build his own life? Do we continue to sacrifice passion for our obligations, loyalties and connection with family members, friends, and partners? Who are we willing to hurt? What are we willing to destroy? How many might suffer for this one intense, empowering life-affirming Jolt of exhilaration?

It is one of the most all-consuming sensations we have the ability to experience. But not every passion is equal in its power. Almost everyone has some amount of passion for something in their individual existences; specific subjects, causes, hobbies and deep spiritual beliefs can all spark passion into flame.

But only one wakens us to blaze in all our glory, good or bad, soaring beyond all others. When mixed with a few choice lesser ingredients, we can't help but fall under its powerful spell, and we often damn all consequences in our quest to capture it.

This monster in mind as well as in body is the carnal passion. Ah, an animal unto itself, wild and unrestrained in its intense and molten hunger; frantic and desperate in its need; an overwhelming, uncontrollable desire to consume and to be consumed by another. This most powerful of forces devours all reason and practicality. Like a black hole, it sucks into it all desires of physical sensation and pleasure and even pain. It purges all extrinsic objectivity from our minds.

Above all it is the emotion in itself that we risk all calm and comfort for. It enables us to submerge, to meld our life energies, not only with the one we touch and who touches us, but with all energy. For one very instant in time we are no longer one. We are everything.

*"Death is not the biggest fear we have;
our biggest fear is taking the risk to be alive;
the risk to be alive and express what we
really are."*

Don Miguel Ruiz

**June 08th 2009 © by Tamra L. Consbruck
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been an EW member since 2003.**

The Pagan Kitchen

By OwlOak

MM Folks...well, another Beltane is upon us. A time to revel in the return of the Goddess and frolic in the woods 'sowing our wild oats'. Heck...even this old guy, with snow on what is left of his roof, still has a fire in the hearth.

However, after the day's festivities of dancing around the May Pole, jousting with the wreath, and riding the hobby-horses, we do need to recharge our batteries for the evening's festivities of chasing all those nubile ladies through the woods...and the stamina to deal with catching them, or being caught.

Now, I don't know about the rest of you folks, but a Beltane celebration to me always includes a 'Pot Luck' dinner. That means a grill, steaks, hot dogs, burgers, sausage, the specialties of the ladies and gents, and the rest of the food associated with a good time and gathering of folks.

So, with all of this in mind, here are a few tempting dishes you might like to bring to the table:

Laura's Sweet and Sour Chicken by: *Laura (aurorarose67)*



Ingredients:

3-4 cups cooked chicken, cubed
1 pkg. onion soup mix
8 oz. (227 gms.) Catalina salad dressing
1 can chunk pineapple, drained
1 green or red sweet bell pepper, cut into chunks
1 jar maraschino cherries, drained

Directions:

Put the chicken in a slow cooker, top with the salad dressing and onion soup mix, and cook on low for 5 hours.

In the last hour or so, add the rest of the fruit and veggies as wanted, then serve over rice.

Note: This can cook longer without burning...it just gets better.

And, as a side:

Spicy Noodle and Cheese Casserole by: *OwlOak*

Ingredients

1 pkg. wide egg noodles
1/4-cup (1/2 stick) butter, cubed
2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
1/2 tsp. onion salt
1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper, or to taste

1 jalapeño pepper, seeded, de-veined, and finely minced (optional)
2 3/4-cups milk
1 lb. (454 gms.) Pasteurized Prepared Cheese Product (such as Velveeta®), cubed

Topping:

1/4-cup dry bread crumbs
1 tbsp. butter, melted

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350° F (177°C).



Cook the noodles according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

Melt the butter in a large pot. Add the jalapeño, then stir in the flour, garlic salt and onion salt until well mixed. Then gradually stir in the milk until smooth. Bring to a boil; and stir until it's thickened. *

Add the cheese and stir until it's melted, then stir in the drained noodles.

Transfer the mixture to a greased shallow 2-qt. baking dish.

Combine the bread crumbs and melted butter until crumbly and sprinkle them over the casserole.

Bake, uncovered, for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly.

*You can tell when it is the right consistency when it coats the stirring spoon without dripping off.

Note: To "kick-it-up a notch", your favorite vegetable, a can of drained tuna, or some diced meat may be added. Put them in the pot with the butter and cook until tender before you add the flour, jalapeño, spices, and milk.

For those of you who would prefer a lighter dish:

Tropical Grilled Tilapia *by: OwlOak*

Ingredients:

4 Tilapia fillets, or as many as needed

Marinade:

3/4-cup light olive oil
2 tbsp. lime juice (1/2 fresh lime)
1 tbsp. oregano
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/4-cup balsamic vinegar
1/2-cup broad-leaf parsley, finely chopped



And:

Grilled-Potato Salad with Balsamic Dressing

by: OwlOak

Ingredients:



2 lb. (900 gms.) whole and unpeeled, red or white new potatoes

5 lean bacon slices

Light olive oil, or peanut oil, for brushing*

For the Balsamic dressing:

1/4-cup olive oil
1/4-cup balsamic vinegar
2 tsp. spicy mustard
1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper (optional, and to taste)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 cup chopped red or green bell pepper
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1/3-cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Paprika, as needed (optional)

Directions:

For the potatoes:

2 cloves garlic, minced
2 pinches of cayenne pepper (optional)

Directions:

Combine all the marinade ingredients in a large plastic freezer bag. Seal and shake well to mix them.

Add the Tilapia fillets to the marinade, seal the bag, and allow it to sit in the fridge for at least 30 minutes. Turn the bag after 15 minutes to insure that the fillets are all covered with the marinade.

Remove the fillets from the marinade and place on a hot greased grill. Cook 2-3 minutes per side.

Note: If you're pressed for time, use Italian Salad Dressing in place of the mentioned marinade. It works well for all fish, meat, and poultry.

Bring a saucepan three-fourths full of water to a boil over high heat. Add the potatoes and cook until they can just be pierced with a fork but are not completely tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Do not overcook. Drain, pat dry, and brush with the olive oil.

Prepare a charcoal or gas grill for direct grilling over medium-high heat.

Place the bacon in a cast-iron fry pan over the hottest part of a charcoal fire, or directly over the burners of a grill. Cook the bacon until crisp, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

Oil the grill rack. Place the potatoes on the grill and grill them over the hottest part of a charcoal fire, or directly over the burners of a gas grill. Turn once or twice until lightly browned and tender when pierced with a fork; 15 to 20 minutes total, depending on the size of the potatoes.

Transfer the potatoes to a cutting board and let cool until they can just be handled, then cut them into 1 in. (2.5 cm.) pieces...skin and all.

To make the balsamic dressing:

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, spicy mustard, cayenne pepper, salt, and black pepper.

In a large serving bowl, toss the warm potatoes, bell pepper and onion with the dressing until all the ingredients are evenly coated; let stand for up to 30 minutes to blend the flavors. Crumble the bacon and mix it into the salad, and garnish with the paprika and parsley. Serve at room temperature.

*Olive and peanut oils will accept higher temperatures without burning.
For the beefeaters out there...you have not been forgotten:

Beef and Fluffy Dumpling Casserole by: OwlOak

Ingredients:

Filling:

1/2-cup chopped onion
1/2-cup chopped celery
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/4-cup butter, cubed
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2 in. (1.3 cm.) cubes.
1/2-cup all-purpose flour
2 tsp. sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. dried basil
1/2 tsp. pepper
4 cups beef broth
1-10 oz. (284 gms.) package frozen green peas and carrots
4 cups sautéed beef, cubed



Dumplings:

2 cups baking mix (such as Bisquick ®)*
2 tsp. dried basil
2/3-cup milk

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C).

For the filling:

In a large saucepan, sauté the onion, celery and garlic in the butter until tender. Stir in the flour, sugar, salt, basil and pepper until blended.

Gradually add the beef broth and bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 1 minute then reduce the heat. Add the peas and carrots, and diced potatoes. Continue to cook for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in the beef, then pour the mixture into a greased 9 x 13 x 2 in. (23 x 33 x 5 cm.) baking dish.

For the dumplings:

In a small bowl, combine the baking mix and basil. Stir in the milk with a fork until moistened. Drop by tablespoonfuls into 12 mounds over the beef mixture.

Bake, uncovered for 30 minutes. Cover and bake for an additional 10 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in a dumpling comes out clean.

*If you wish to make your own "homemade" baking mix, see the following recipe:

Bis-Quick-As-A-Wink Baking Mix **Source:**

Mastercook (<http://mastercook.cdktichen.com/>)

8 cups flour
1-1/4 cup nonfat dry milk
1/4 cup baking powder
1 tbsp. salt
2 cups solid vegetable shortening

In a large bowl, combine flour, milk, baking powder, and salt. With a pastry blender or two knives, cut in shortening until the mixture looks like coarse cornmeal and the shortening is evenly distributed. Store in tightly closed covered container in a dark, cool place. Use in place of Bisquick ® in any recipe.

For dessert we have a couple that are sure to please everyone:

Connie's Strawberry Crisp by: Connie (Flukefishing2000)

Ingredients:

1 cup uncooked oatmeal
1 cup all purpose flour
1 cup brown sugar
1/4-cup chopped walnuts
1/2-cup butter or margarine
1/2-cup sugar
3 cups sliced fresh or frozen strawberries



Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C)

Mix together the oatmeal, flour, and brown sugar. Add the nuts, then cut in the butter or margarine until crumbly.

In another bowl mix strawberries and white sugar together.

Grease an 8" (20 cm.) square pan. Spread half the crumb mixture on the bottom and cover with the strawberries, then spread the remaining crumb mixture over the top.

Bake in the oven for 45 minutes.

Serve Warm or Cold and topped with whipped cream or non-dairy topping.....(I prefer the real thing. lol)

ENJOY!!!!!!

BB Connie

And, last but not least:

Rhubarb and Sour Cream Squares by: OwlOak

Ingredients:

1/2-cup packed brown sugar
1 tbs. unsalted butter, melted
1 1/2-cups white sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. baking soda
1 cup sour cream
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground allspice
1/2-cup vegetable shortening
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
2 cups chopped rhubarb stalks



Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C).
Grease and flour a 9 x 13 x 2 in. (23 x 33 x 5 cm.) pan.

Topping:

Mix the brown sugar, melted butter, cinnamon, and allspice until crumbly and set aside.

Squares:

In a separate bowl, cream together the white sugar, vegetable shortening and egg.

Sift the flour, baking soda and salt together then slowly add, alternately with the sour cream, to the creamed mixture. When it is all incorporated, stir in the rhubarb.

Pour the mixture into the greased pan and sprinkle with the reserved topping.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes.

Remove from the oven and allow to cool a bit, then cut into squares and serve warm or cool.

Note: For a real treat, serve them warm, topped with a whipped cream non-dairy topping or your favorite ice cream (vanilla works great).

And, to wash it all down with, this delightful punch:

May Day Punch by: OwlOak



Ingredients:

1/4-cup fresh mint leaves, bruised
1-16 oz. (5 liter) can pineapple juice
1 small can frozen orange juice concentrate
1 pkg. frozen sliced strawberries, thawed
4 cans lemon-lime soda
1 lemon, cut into rings
1 lime, cut into rings
1 orange, cut into rings
Mead, or your favorite alcoholic beverage, optional and to taste
Ice cubes, as needed

Directions:

Combine all the ingredients in a large punch bowl. Stir to mix thoroughly.

Well, folks, there we have it...a delicious repast to energize and bolster the body for the evening's festivities to come.

Until the next issue... From my Circle to yours...a very Merry Beltane!!!

Huggs & B*B ~ OwlOak

This article contains recipes of my own, and/or other credited individuals. Mine are either original or adapted from those I've acquired over the years, along with family recipes that have been handed down to me by dearly departed family members. Any duplication of recipes created by others is accidental and unintentional.

Responsibility for the source and content of any submitted and published recipe is strictly the responsibility of the originator.

If anyone wishes to comment or make suggestions on the Pagan Kitchen please feel free to write me <jrr147@yahoo.com>. Please mention "Pagan Kitchen" in the subject line so it doesn't go into the "Spam" file.

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OwlOak lives in New England, USA and is a Wiccan High Priest.
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The Herb Garden. The Passion Vine.



by Lyric Moonshadow

As the wheel turns to Beltane we celebrate the union of the young God and the Maiden, Flora, Bona Dea and Maia Goddess of increase whose name is the root of May. The theme of Beltane is without a doubt passion. Sensuality and sexuality abound. Vibrant colors, flamboyant fragrances, and the greening all around us bring forth passion; the Maiden's passion, our own passion, and the passion of the earth to bloom and reproduce. What better time to celebrate the beautiful, adaptable and prolific Passion Vine.

History and Folklore: Although the Passion Vine (*Passiflora*) is believed to originate in Asia, Australia, Polynesian Islands and tropical Americas, it was first discovered in South America and brought to Europe by Spanish explorers in Peru. The distinctive white and purple flower was named the Passion Flower by Spanish Missionaries who thought it reflected the crucifixion of Christ – the 10 leaves represent the 10 faithful apostles, the five anthers symbolize the five wounds inflicted on Jesus, and the purple corolla represent the crown of the thorns. Other names for the Passion Vine include Maypop, Sweet Granadilla, Maracuja, Maracoc and Tumbos.

Characteristics and Growing:

The Passion Vine is a prolific perennial. Many of the 400 or more species can grow in colder climates and varieties of the vine appear in every continent except Antarctica. The Passion Vine has a woody vine which can grow up to ½ an inch in thickness. It is extremely strong and in keeping with its origins, easily grows over other foliage to make its way through to the canopy of the Amazon forest. In addition to its striking flowers, it also produces a fruit which starts out green and turns yellow as it ripens, growing to the size of a large lemon. The Passion Fruit is eaten

straight off the vine, or used in drinks, jams, jellies and salad dressings. In the United States, Passion Vine grows as far north as Ohio, where I first grew it. It will die back in the winter but returns in full force in the Spring and will bloom in late May/early June – and yes I even had fruit. Here in the Caribbean, where I live now, it is everywhere. The fruit is sold in the grocery stores, the Iguanas eat the leaves, and the hummingbirds love the flowers. It does well if it has a fence to climb on, as it loves to climb. I've heard it will start springing up in unwanted spots if it doesn't have enough room to climb, so beware where you plant it. Apart from this, it is very easy to grow.

Medicinal Uses:

A Spanish physician by the name of Monardes discovered the Passion Flower's medicinal properties in the Andes in 1569 and brought the dried leaves back to the Old World where it became a very popular sedative herbal tea. The Spanish conquerors of Mexico learned of the Passion Flowers' medicinal properties. They introduced it to the Europeans as an infusion to be used as a nerve tonic and antispasmodic. In the 1800s it was brought to North America by slaves in the South where the crushed leaves were placed on lacerations and bruises to encourage healing and relieve pain. Passion Flower has been used in the United States and Europe as a homeopathic treatment and herbal supplement for more than 200 years. Today it is used to treat colic, diarrhea, dysentery, PMS and menstrual pain, neuralgia, insomnia and eye disorders. Standard dosage is: as a simple infusion one cup two to three times a day; or 2-3 grams in tablet form two to three times a day. Passion Flower leaves are classified as "Generally Regarded as Safe" by the FDA, however use by pregnant or nursing Moms or children is discouraged without consulting a healthcare professional. As always, let your physician know of any over the counter supplements you take. Recently there has been interesting research conducted using the Passion Flower. Traditionally, Passion Flower was also used as an aphrodisiac and a cough suppressant. In 2003 there was a study conducted in mice using the leaves of the Passion Flower. The study found that the mice had improved sex and reproductive function as well as litter size. Another study done with mice in 2002 found that Passion Flower leaves had the same effect as codeine as a cough suppressant. Maybe someday men may be using Passion Flowers instead of Viagra!!

Magickal Uses and Characteristics:

Gender: Feminine, Planet: Venus, Element: Water, Powers: peace, sleep, attracting friends and lovers, increasing libido. According to Cunningham, carry Passion Flower to attract friends and great popularity. Placed under your pillow it aids in sleep, and the flowers placed in the home will help calm problems

and troubles and bring peace to the home. Cat Yronwode agrees in "Hoodoo Herb and Root Magic". She states that Passion Vine will bring peace to the home when grown on the front fence. She also suggests that carrying dried Passion Flowers or Passion Vine root in a red flannel bag dressed with a love oil and a metal figure of a hummingbird will bring you luck in love.

Spell for Peace and Harmony

This spell is very good if there is a lot of turmoil or stress in the household.

Do the following spell, and while doing so, remember to focus on your intent for a peaceful household.

Sew a small pouch of lavender cloth leaving enough fabric on the top so you can tie it with a lavender ribbon.

Place a small trinket in the pouch to represent each member of your household.

Add to this a pinch each of dried lavender, rose and Passion Flower. Before placing each pinch in the pouch, remember to hold it for a moment and REALLY focus. Finally, add a small amethyst or celestite to the pouch and tie it with a lavender ribbon.

Now, anoint a lavender or pink candle with lavender oil and then light it and place it on your altar.

Sit in front of the candle and hold the pouch in your hands and whisper the following chant over it softly 3 times

"Blessed Goddess, most gentle one, calm my home. Relieve all tension, send it far, so from stress we shall be free.

Touch my family with peace and calm, and the sweetest softest bliss.

Bless my home, Great Gentle Goddess, with your calming kiss. So mote it be."

Put the pouch on your altar with the candle and allow the candle to burn down completely while you visualize your home and family filled with peace and harmony. Hang the pouch in your home, preferably in



Original Art by Lyric

the room where everyone gathers the most. Whenever tension seems to build, repeat the above chant 3 times and envision peace and tranquility radiating from the pouch and the Goddess.

Beltane is one of the most beautiful and joyful of all the Sabbats. We can feel the warm breezes and the flowers popping up all around us and the grass is turning that wonderful springtime emerald green and the smell of spring and early summer is everywhere. Just as the ancient Romans celebrated the Goddess Flora as protector of the spring flowers; and ancient Celts drove the cattle on Beltane Eve between the Beltane fires to ensure their fertility and to protect them for another season; so we

continue these rites as we celebrate and honor the God by dancing the Maypole and pay homage to the Goddesses of Spring by making circlets and wearing flowers in our hair. The circle of life continues and we are all part of it. It is said that just as the veil is thinnest at Samhain, it is intermingled and intersected at Beltane and anything can happen. May your Beltane be full of flowers and passion. I promise you mine will!

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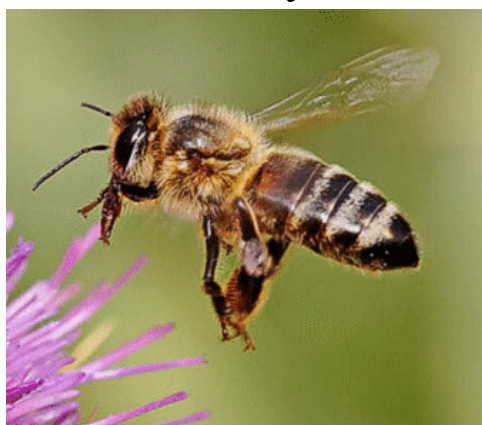
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The Honey Bee



Written and compiled by George Knowles

The common Honeybee is a subset of bees belonging to the insect order *Hymenoptera* (of the genus group *Apis mellifera*) and represents just a small fraction of approximately 20,000 known species of bees. Honeybees are distinguished from other bees by their production of honey and the construction of colony nests (hives) out of beeswax. While there are other types of bees that also produce honey, only members of the genus group *Apis* are true Honeybees.

The Honeybee is a highly social insect that survives only as a member of a colony. A colony is typically made up of three types of bees called castes, which include: Queen bees (the reproductive females), Worker bees (sterile female bees) and Drones (the male bees). Each caste or type of bee is associated with a different function within the colony, and each possesses unique differences geared to maintaining the needs and structure of the colony.

The Queen bee is the only sexually productive female in the colony. After mating with the Drones, sperm finds its way into a small sac-like organ located in her abdomen called the '*spermatheca*'. From this her capacity for laying eggs becomes quite prolific, producing in excess of 1,500 eggs in a day. She can also control the sex of her offspring, for when an egg passes from the ovary to the oviduct, depending on the needs of the colony, she may or may not choose to fertilise it with sperm. Those that do get fertilised develop into female bees, either as Queen bees or Workers bees, while unfertilised eggs develop as the male Drone bees.

Eggs are laid in individual cells of the hive and hatch within three days, after which the larvae is fed on 'royal jelly' for two days (a substance secreted by the worker bees that is high in protein), and then on pollen, nectar or honey. Each of the hundreds of larvae must be fed many times a day, and to achieve this the Queen bee and her Worker bees operate as a team. The development of Queen bees from egg to

larvae to adult, takes 16 days, while Worker bees take 21 days, and Drones 24 days.

The Queen bee has a longer body and larger abdomen than other bees in the colony and can measure up to 20mm. She also has a curved, smooth stinger that can be used repeatedly throughout her life. In contrast, the Worker bees have a straight, barbed stinger that when used remains firmly anchored in the flesh of its victim. When trying to withdraw the stinger from its victim, the Worker bee in effect tears away part of its abdomen and as a result dies shortly afterwards.

Within the colony, Worker bees far outnumber the Drones, which typically during the spring can number from 8,000 to 15,000, by the early summer however, this number can grow to as many as 80,000. Worker bees born early in the spring season usually live for about 6 weeks, while those born in the late autumn will survive through the winter until the following spring. Unlike many other species of bees, Honeybees do not hibernate through the winter. The average lifespan of a Queen bee can range from one to eight years.

Young Worker bees are called 'house bees' and are employed mainly in constructing the hive. While lacking the ability to mate and reproduce, they secrete wax, which is used to build and maintain the honeycomb structure of the hive. They are also kept busy converting nectar and pollen into honey, rearing the brood, tending to the Queen and Drones, cleaning and when necessary defending the hive.

As the young develop, the older Worker bees become known as 'field bees', and leave the hive to forage outside gathering nectar, pollen and water needed to sustain the colony. Worker bees measure up to about 12 mm and are highly adapted for the work they do. They have a structure called a pollen basket (or *corbiculum*) on each hind leg, an extra stomach for storing and transporting nectar and pollen, and four pairs of special glands that secrete wax on the underside of their abdomen.

The field bees bring in nectar from many flowers and on entering the hive with a full honey sac, regurgitate the contents into the mouths of the young Worker bees who then deposit the nectar in a cell and carry out the tasks necessary to convert it to honey. When the honey is fully ripened or thickened, the cell is sealed with an airtight wax capping and stored for winter supplies.

Pollen is the principal source of protein, fat, minerals and vitamins, and is essential for the growth and development of the colony. Besides gathering and storing food for the colony, the Worker bees are also responsible for maintaining the hive at 34° C (93° F), the optimum temperature required for hatching the Queen's eggs and rearing the brood. When a hive

becomes too hot they collectively ventilate it by fanning their wings, and during cool weather will cluster tightly together in the hive to generate heat.

The Drone bee has only one function in the colony, and that is to mate with the new Queen bees. Mating takes place out in the open air away from the hive, after which the Drone bee dies. Recent studies of their mating habits have established that the Queen bee usually mates with six or more Drones in the course of a few days. Drones are active in the colony during the spring and summer months, but as autumn and the colder weather approaches they are driven out of the hive by the Worker bees and left to die.

The importance of Honeybees to agriculture is now well established, as more than 50 cultivated food crops require them for pollination. Crops that are either entirely dependent on insect pollination, or produce more abundantly because of them, include: fruit crops (such as - almonds, apples, apricots etc.); and seed crops (such as - alfalfa, asparagus, broccoli etc.). It is estimated that the value of the pollinating service rendered by Honeybees far outweighs that of the Honey and Beeswax they produce.

Mythology and Symbolism.

In Egyptian mythology Honeybees were born from the tears of *Râ*, the Sun God. When he cried his tears fell onto the soil of the earth and were transformed into bees that built honeycombs and produced honey. Bees were also associated with the Egyptian Great Mother Goddess *Neith* who ruled over hunting and warfare. Her cult was centred in the town of Sais (modern Sa al-Hajar) where her temple was known as *per-bit* - meaning "the house of bees".

Similarly the rulers of ancient Egypt were associated with bees. Before the union of Upper and Lower Egypt (circa 3200 BC), the ruling Kings of Lower Egypt used the title *bit* - meaning "he of the bee", whereby the Kings of Upper Egypt used the title *nesw* - meaning "he of the sedge". Later after the union, the new rulers used the title *nesw-bit* - meaning "he of the sedge and the bee", which has been translated as "King of Upper and Lower Egypt".

To the Egyptians bees were of great importance. In domestic use, Honey, the main product of bees, was a principal sweetener in their diets and used as a base for medicinal ointments. Honey was also regarded as a symbol of resurrection, and thought to give protection against evil spirits. Small pottery flasks found in the tomb of the boy-king Tutankhamun contained hieroglyphic inscriptions indicating that they originally contained honey. They also collected beeswax, which was used to make decorative moulds,

as well as a paint-varnish.

In ancient Greece situated on the southern slopes of Mount Parnassus, Delphi was the location of the famous oracle temple of Apollo. Inside the temple is the "Omphalos", a decorated beehive shaped stone covered with what look like sculpted engravings of Honeybees.

This was used as a symbol indicating that Delphi in Greece was the centre of the world. Pythia, Apollo's chief oracle priestess was also known as the Delphic Bee.

In many ancient cultures, Mead made from honey was believed to be the immortal drink of the Gods. In Greek mythology it was associated with the Gods of Olympus, and a symbol of Knowledge, Learning and Wisdom. As a food resource, it was reserved only for the elected, the initiated and exceptional people. It has been reported that Pythagoras ate nothing but honey throughout his entire life.

Because of their industrious and organized behaviour, Honeybees are seen as a symbol of Perseverance, Unity and Teamwork. They are also seen as a symbol of sacredness, being associated with the Mother Goddess or Divine Feminine. Ruled by the Queen bee, the hive is likened to the womb of the Great Mother.

In Celtic myths, Honeybees are endowed with great wisdom, and thought to be spirit messengers between worlds. Honey was treated as a magical substance and used in many ancient rituals. As the food of the Gods, the use of honey, royal jelly, bee pollen and beeswax in ritual was seen as a sacred and magical act connected to the divine blessings of the Goddess and God.

Today the common term "Blessed Be" can also be written as "Blessed Bee", which has a strong connection to the ancient Craft of the Wise, and therefore the divine blessing of love, protection and abundance.

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Mysteries of the Great Pyramid (Part 1)

by Graham D. Furnell

The Great Pyramid at Giza, Egypt, is the oldest and only survivor of the famous Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Even in today's world, complete with its range of sophisticated technologies, the construction of such a structure would surely stretch resources to the limit. The logistics alone are mind boggling – for example, calculations show that the material in this pyramid (more than two million blocks of stone, many precision cut, and all weighing no less than 2 tons) would fill an end-to-end queue of semi-trailer trucks spanning one quarter of the Earth's circumference! The Great Pyramid is an amazing enduring testament to the achievements of the ancient Egyptians - achievements that would hardly be believed today had not this pyramid, and other antiquities, survived to provide silent witness. However, apart from its immense size, are there any other features of the Great Pyramid that can provide us with insight into its origins, purpose, and legacy? Of course the answer is yes – and in this article I would like to share these with you, hoping that the discussion may lead us to a better understanding of this incredible monument and the civilization that produced it. So join me on a short journey as we explore the mysteries of the Great Pyramid – and be prepared to be amazed!



The pyramids at Giza: The Great Pyramid of Khufu is the one furthest to the right, central is the pyramid of Khafre and leftmost is the pyramid of Menkaure. In the foreground are three smaller pyramids dedicated to Queens.

The so-called Great Pyramid is the largest of the pyramids at the Giza site - these days located on the outskirts of Cairo. It is thought to have been built as a tomb for the pharaoh Khufu (Greek name Cheops), who reigned approximately 4,500 years ago. There are two other significant yet smaller pyramids at the Giza site - these are the pyramids of Khafre (Greek name Chephren) and Menkaure (Greek name Mykerinus),

who were respectively the son and grandson of Khufu. Note that the pyramid of Khafre, which still has some of its higher capping stones in tact, often appears in photographs to be the largest of the pyramids at the Giza site. This is due to the fact that it is built on higher ground.

Pyramid building in ancient Egypt began in the Third Dynasty (2,686-2,613 BCE) with its second pharaoh Djoser (also called Zoser) and the high priest at Heliopolis, Imhotep. Together they pursued the pyramid concept, and were responsible for constructing the world's first monumental building made entirely of stone – the Step Pyramid at Saqqara. This pyramid was a symbolic “stairway to the stars”, and the durability of its materials was meant to ensure eternal life for Djoser's *ba* (soul). The subsequent Third Dynasty pharaohs Sekhemkhet, Khaba and Huni all commenced the construction of their own stepped pyramids, but none were able to be completed. It was not until the Fourth Dynasty (2613-2494 BCE), and the rule of its powerful and prosperous first pharaoh Sneferu, that successful pyramid building returned to Egypt. Sneferu was the father of Khufu, and was responsible for the construction of a number of pyramids, including the famous Bent Pyramid at Dahshur, and the transformation of an earlier partially constructed Step Pyramid into the first true (i.e. flat-sided) pyramid. In fact, the total volume of stone used by Sneferu was more than that used by any other pharaoh. Such was the lineage of the Great Pyramid.



Djoser's Step Pyramid at Saqqara

The first significant feature of the Great Pyramid that we will consider (apart from its sheer size alone!) is the precision with which it has been constructed. Measurements have determined that its height was originally 280 Egyptian royal cubits (146.6m) and each of the four base sides were 440 cubits (231m) long – making the area covered by the pyramid approximately 53,000 square m (13 acres) – to put that into perspective, that's roughly the area covered by 200 modern-day houses. Despite this, the base is level and flat to within 15mm, and the sides have a mean error of only 58mm in length. Also, the sides are

square to within 1 minute of arc ($1/60^{\text{th}}$ of a degree) and are aligned to the cardinal directions more accurately than any modern-day structure, including the Meridian Building at Greenwich Observatory in London. Originally, the Great Pyramid was covered by polished white limestone casing stones, so that the monument shone brilliantly in the sun and could be seen from far away. The ravages of time, earthquakes and human intervention have caused many of these casing stones to disappear, but some still remain around the base. These remaining stones show that they were cut with optical precision to be flat to within 0.5mm over the surface of the pyramid. They were also fitted together so perfectly that the tip of a knife cannot be inserted between the joints, even to this day.

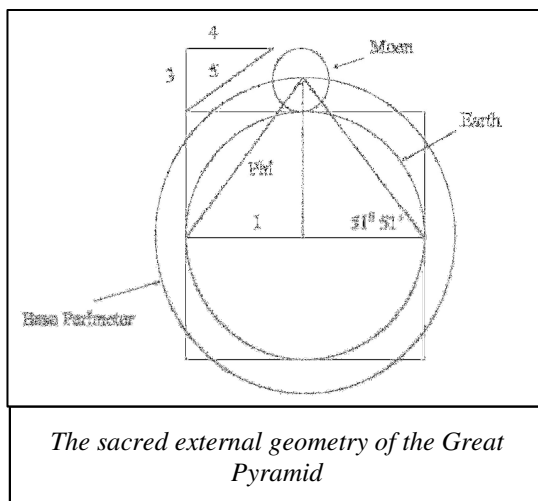
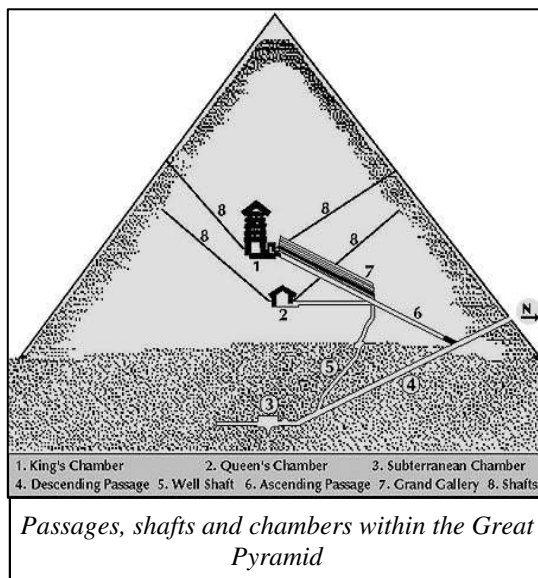
As shown in the following diagram, within the pyramid are a number of passages, shafts and chambers. Many of these were precision cut. For example, the longest passage is 107m long, yet deviates from being perfectly straight to within 6mm. Another passage 15m long is straight to within an amazingly fine 0.5mm - that's comparable to the accuracy of the best laser-controlled drilling that can be done today! Of particular interest are the narrow "breathing shafts", about 20 cm in diameter leading from the so-called King's and Queen's chambers (just a short note here - the terms "King's" and "Queen's" chambers were coined by Arabian explorers about 1,200 years ago because these chambers were found to have flat and gabled roofs respectively - which happened to be the burial custom for Arabian men and women of the time). It has been suggested that the breathing shafts were designed with specific alignments in mind, so that the *ka* (spirit) of a buried royal would be properly directed for its journey to the stars. Calculations making allowance for the precession of the equinoxes have shown that at the time of construction of the Great Pyramid, these shafts would indeed have had specific alignments to

particular stars. For the King's chamber, to the North, the then "North Pole Star" Alpha Draconis (or Thuban); and to the South, Zeta Orionis (or Alnitak) - the brightest star in Orion's Belt, which had an important association with the ancient Egyptian God of resurrection and rebirth, Osiris. For the Queen's chamber, to the North, Beta Ursa Minor (or Kochab); and to the South, Sirius - which had an important association with the ancient Egyptian Mother Goddess, Isis, and the birth of her divine child, Horus - an event that was commemorated at the start of every year in the world's first calendar, with the beginning of the Nile floods and the dawn rising of Sirius.

We have seen that the Great Pyramid was constructed with incredible precision, but what about its actual dimensions and geometry? There are numerous examples showing the incorporation of sacred geometrical dimensions within the inner structure of the Great Pyramid - particularly in features such as the Grand Gallery, and the King's and Queen's chambers. However for the sake of brevity in this article, let's limit our considerations to the pyramid's external dimensions, whose amazing properties can be appreciated with the aid of the following diagram.

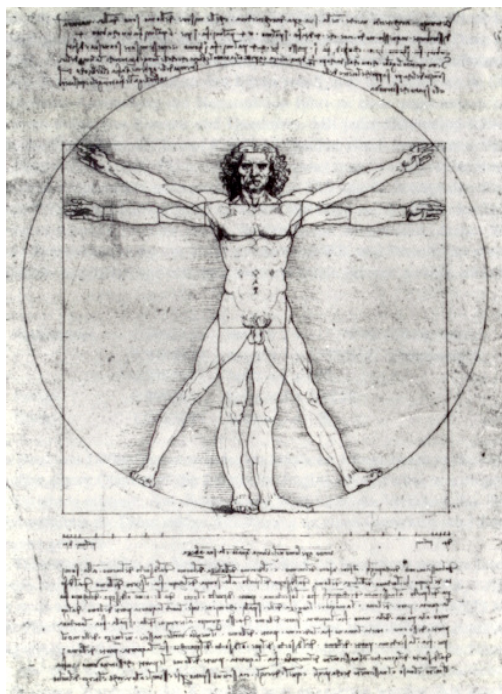
The large triangle in this diagram represents a side profile view of the Great Pyramid, with the lower horizontal edge representing its base length, 440 cubits. The slope angle of the sides of the pyramid is $51^{\circ}51'$, which accurately sets the ratio of the slant-height of the pyramid to half its base length to be the so-called "Golden Ratio" or

"Phi" $\Phi = 1.61803...$ How could such a significant geometrical ratio have been so accurately incorporated into the design of the Great Pyramid? Some scholars think that it was nothing more than a coincidence, as the ancient Egyptians were not credited with being



able to accurately solve the necessary mathematical equations to do so (they would have at least needed to know Pythagoras' theorem - which was presumably not discovered until some 2,000 years later by the ancient Greeks). We will probably never know the answer to this question, but rather than dwelling on it, let's consider another feature of the pyramid's amazing external geometry. Again looking at the side profile of the Great Pyramid as shown in the diagram, if one draws a circle centered at the middle of the base and passing through the apex of the pyramid, then the circumference of that circle will accurately match the perimeter distance around the square base of the Great Pyramid (1760 cubits). Geometrically, this is known as "squaring the circle", and performing the necessary calculations for planning to do this would have required an accurate determination of the value of "Pi" $\Pi = 3.14159...$ the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter (again, something that was not considered possible until the age of the ancient Greeks some 2,000 years later).

It is worth mentioning here that solving the geometrical problem of squaring the circle, though sounding as if it might be fairly straight forward, is a problem that has challenged scholars throughout the ages - including Leonardo da Vinci, who was fascinated by its relation to the dimensions of the human body, as alluded to in his famous drawing of the Vitruvian Man which featured in his notes.



Leonardo da Vinci's famous drawing of the Vitruvian Man

So it seems that the ancient Egyptians may have known considerably more mathematics than the history books tell us. But are there any other

indications that they may have had a more advanced knowledge of our world and indeed the universe around us? The answer is yes, and to me, the following is the most amazing feature of the sacred geometry of the Great Pyramid. If a circle is drawn centered as above but having a diameter equal to the base length of the pyramid, and another smaller circle is drawn so that it is centered at the apex of the pyramid, so that it just touches the larger circle, then these two circles accurately model the relative sizes of the Earth and Moon! That's right, our modern technology shows us that the radius of the Moon is 1,738 km and the polar radius of the Earth is 6,357 km – divide the two and you get a ratio of Moon to Earth size = 0.273. Incredibly, mathematical calculations show that this is the same ratio formed by the sizes of the above two geometrical circles obtained from the dimensions of the Great Pyramid.

At this point, I would like to pause and reflect a little on the possible significance of this amazing fact. Firstly, from the perspective of the ancient Egyptian's – if this was intentionally incorporated into the design of the pyramid, then how could they have had access to such "high tech" astronomical knowledge of our Earth-Moon system? This is an amazing question to ponder – particularly if one considers that over the millennia since the construction of the Great Pyramid, human knowledge may have waxed and waned as significantly as the many civilizations that have also risen and fallen within the same time period. Secondly, from the perspective of contemplating the possibility of a sacred underlying order in our solar system, it is tempting to ask - what are the chances that the Earth-Moon system would accurately satisfy such a significant geometrical relationship? Not great I would suggest. Personally, I place such phenomena in the same category of "coincidences" as the fact that in the current age, the Sun and Moon sizes/distances just happen to be such that we see the Moon perfectly covering the Sun's disc during a total solar eclipse – to me an amazingly powerful and seemingly divinely inspired demonstration of the sacred balance between feminine and masculine polarities in Nature.

Finally, one more observation before we leave the topic of sacred geometry and the Great Pyramid. Consider the small right-angled triangle with sides of length 3-4-5 shown at the top left of the diagram illustrating the pyramid's external dimensions. A 3-4-5 triangle is the most fundamental representation of Pythagoras' theorem, and its presence confirms it as yet another piece in the truly amazing, sacred geometrical jig-saw puzzle that is manifested in the form of the Great Pyramid.

In Part 2 of this article, we will consider the fascinating links between the Great Pyramid and other megalithic sites around the world, possible uses that the Great Pyramid may have had other than being

purely a burial shrine for a deceased pharaoh, some mysterious experiences that have occurred within the pyramid over the centuries, some metaphysical properties of pyramids, and for the craft-inclined, instructions for constructing your own perfectly scaled model of the Great Pyramid. Until then, wishing you well and suggesting that if you have the time and inclination, try getting your calculator out and confirming the sacred geometrical ratios that have

been discussed above – you will find that they are remarkably accurate!

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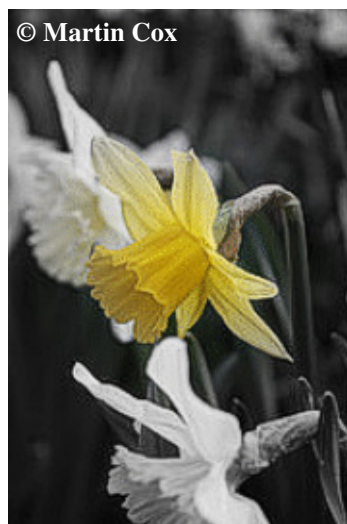
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Graham lives in South Australia and is a student of Wicca. He has been a member of EW since 2006.

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Rune Reading:



Gebo

Last month's rune urged us to be protective; to protect ourselves as well as others. For our efforts we are rewarded with a gift (Gebo).

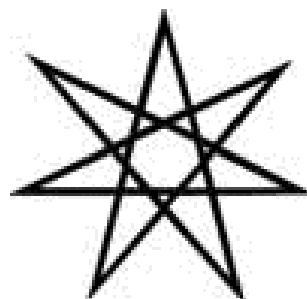
Drawing back from the September 2009 reading, this rune suggests gift, or exchange. Moreover, it is a rune of partnership (i.e. business, romantic, and sacrificial). This month's draw suggests that we are up for forging new opportunities, and the bonds which were strengthened by protection (last month's reading) may evolve into new prospective ventures.

We deserve this gift; we worked hard for it and with it we will better ourselves and the world which we live in. Enjoy the fruits of your labor!

Rune Reading by: Diancécht Óndulfr Pálsson - aka Rune Man

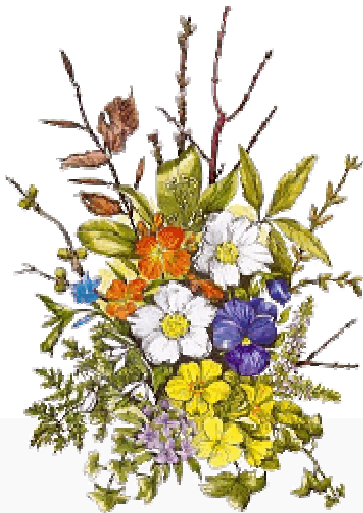
Rune Man has been a member of Email Witches since the 17th Aug 2009

Pagan Symbolism *Septagram / Fairy Star*



The seven pointed star is also known as the: Septagram, Septacle, Elven Star or Fairy Star. The number seven corresponds to the spirit realm, which is why this symbol is associated with Elves and Fairies. When used in ritual the seven points of the star represent: earth, air, fire, water, above, below and within. It is also associated with astrology because the classical view of the sky contained seven planets

Bards Corner



Bring May Flowers

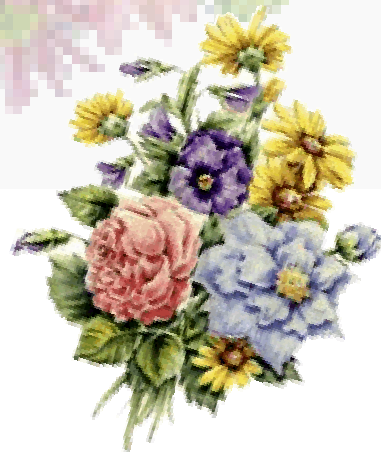
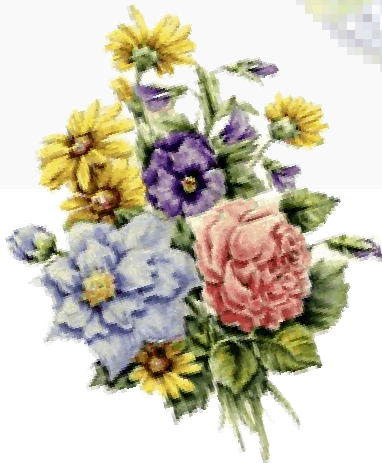
By Robert Louis Stevenson

All the names I know from verse:
Gardener's garters, Shepherd's purse,
Bachelor's buttons, Lady's smock,
And the Lady Hollyhock.

Fairy places, fairy things,
Fairy woods where the wild bee stings,
Tiny trees for tiny dames--
These must all be fairy names!

Tiny woods below whose boughs
Shady fairies weave a house;
Tiny tree-tops, rose or thyme,
Where the braver fairies climb!

Fair are grown-up people's trees,
But the fairest woods are these;
Where if I were not so tall,
I should live for good and all.





Email Witches is a pagan friendly email group attracting people from all walks of life, from all spectrums of society and from all around the world. Most are individuals seeking a personal practical religion that can be adapted to their own needs and criteria, and Wicca is a wonderfully diverse religion that meets these needs. Email Witches, a Yahoo! Group, is set up as a place where those of same interest can meet, discuss, share and gain more information about their chosen paths. All visitors to my website Controverscial.com are welcome, so feel free to join us and make new friends.

The Controversial Cauldron is published each Sabbat

October (Samhain)
December (Yule)
February (Imbolc)
March (Ostara)

May (Beltane)
June (Litha)
August (Lammas)
September (Mabon)

Next Issue:
Litha
June

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