

Welcome to the Yule edition of the Whitewicca Newsletter. This issue is chock full of wonderful crafts to entertain you and fascinating tales and mythology to keep you intrigued on cosy winter nights.

The Whitewicca Healing Ritual that we held at the beginning of November is being followed by a second on the 30th November and Vita will be arranging another in December, so if you have anyone you want added to the ritual, please post in the Health & Healing forum.

Members of the Whitewicca forum got involved in lobbying Government in the UK to try to prevent the spread of GM crops and we look forward to getting a draft letter from Kenaz that we can send to the major supermarkets. This is in the hope that they will not want their lucrative organic trade damaged by such flagrant carelessness and cowering by our leaders to the pressure of international conglomerates.

The Whitewicca 2007 calendar hasn't hit the presses yet and I take full responsibility for the delay. We have some wonderful pictures, Sabbat information and gardening tips from Shimma to fill each page, so watch the site for updates and information on how to order your copy.

To each and every one of you, I wish a very happy Yule, a peaceful holiday and much happiness. Here's looking forward to seeing you again in the New Year!

Bright blessings, Hedge

Yule Time by Cherpatsy

Come join us in celebration,
Of the coming change and transformation.
Hang up the mistletoe, bring the holly,
It's the season for love, let's be jolly.
The Winter Solstice is coming near,
With it comes the shortest day of the year.
Put up the evergreen tree, so grand,
Bring the ornaments, garland, and stand.
Festive colours of ruby red, green and yellow,
Icy blue, snowy white, silver and gold so mellow.
It's time to gather loved ones far and near,
Time to celebrate and be of good cheer.
Midwinter approaches, it's rebirth of the sun,
Days start to lengthen, time to have fun.
Enjoy the festivities of the Yule season,
Kiss under the mistletoe, who needs a reason?
Yule only comes once a year,
So live, love, laugh, be of good cheer.



A Day of Spiritual Adventure by LavenderBlue

Occasionally, I get to attend development courses. There always seems to be one or another going on somewhere. I don't know if Shropshire is odd that way, but someone is always holding some kind of learning opportunity.

Last weekend was no exception; a spiritual development course. We were to learn how to communicate with the spirit world.

I'm not too sure what I expected, but I was surprised at how business-like the atmosphere was, when we arrived; a circle of chairs, an agenda for each of us, and a welcoming mug of coffee. It all seemed very mundane for such a subject.

The group was a mixture, but we really seemed very ordinary; some Craft, some just interested. Our teacher was a spirit medium, and a good friend. We got the introductions over with, and began with a brief meditation to get us in the mood.

We are taught how to expand our auras, and then we open our Chakras with flower visualisation. I have never done that one before, and I quite enjoy it. I must try it again if I can remember it. To break the ice further, we do energy brushing, and stare into each other's eyes. This is a difficult exercise for anyone who is not used to opening up their aura to another person. A couple in the group find it hard to maintain eye contact, and get a bit giggly. I hope that this will pass, and they will settle down.

We then do a meditation to contact our Clairsentient guide. This is one of the ways that spirit communicates, and they do so by giving you feelings. If the spirit that wishes to communicate felt that they could assist communication by giving you some kind of physical feeling, then the Clairsentient guide channels that feeling through. For instance, if the spirit has died of a heart attack, you might experience a pain in the chest.

We pair up, and try to get a communication for the other person. I tune in, and suddenly get the urge to move my feet about. I feel as if I want to dance, and that I am wearing a knee length flounced skirt. I also feel as though my hair is piled up in some kind of elaborate arrangement. It feels tight, and the balance of my head has subtly altered. For a minute, I wonder if I might have been a ballerina or something similar. My sitter says that his late mother loved to dance when she was young. She liked to jive. I guess that is a bit how I was feeling. Personally, I do not like dancing so this feeling that I want to is a bit odd. I also am getting a slight tight sensation across my chest, but that could just be indigestion!

When we stop for a break, the leader asks us to secretly choose a crystal from a selection she has placed on the table. We must not allow anybody else to see our choice. Then we must breathe onto it, and try to imprint our personality into the stone. Then, slip it onto a covered tray to await an experiment later. I get the feeling I know what is coming next!!!

Hey! I'm not wrong. After coffee, we have to choose a stone, and tune into the person who handled it. We are to ask our guides to communicate pictures about that person. The woman that gets mine proves to be amazingly accurate. A little bit too accurate for my own comfort. My reading is fair, but not spectacular.



We move on to Clairvoyance, and are set a number of tasks, involving reading another person or situation. I am asked to get information about somewhere that the other person lived. I get some puzzling pictures. A large open room, very open-plan, with a black pot-bellied stove. I do not really know what to make of it, until I discuss it with my subject. She confirms that she used to live in an old school, which was just one big open space, before they converted it. However, the stove puzzles both of us, until I mention, that we used to have one just like it in my old junior school. Apparently, I was being told that the building was a school, and spirit was showing me something that indicated that from my past. Very odd, the way of spirit.

On the whole, it was a very good day. I learnt a lot, and made a few new friends. I wonder if I have a new talent. I am not too sure, but time will tell if I choose to continue with the study.

Thoughts on Yule/Christmas by Solaire

No 'Dear Aunty Zelda' this month; instead I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on the coming Yule and Christmas Holidays in December. Why would a Pagan be thinking of Christmas you might ask?

Well, I like Christmas!!! I also know Jewish people and other non-Christian folk who like to enjoy this celebration too, however it is usually the non-Christian side of the festival we enjoy, bringing in the tree and decorating it with stars and other things – isn't that also what we do with the Yule tree? Buying gifts for people, whether they be Yule or Christmas gifts, means much the same to me - the giving of a little pleasure to someone else.

I also love to hear the Salvation Army bands playing at this time of year. The words themselves mean nothing to me, but I do recognize the goodness in these people and the little bit of festive joy they bring to the less fortunate. Don't we Wiccans like to celebrate the re-birth of our God with music and jollity? And isn't 'Peace' a universal/multi-religious hope for all of us who share this planet regardless of our beliefs.

I would love to share Yule with like minded folk in my own home, but I am a solitary so cannot do this; but I can bring a little of Yule into the season of Christmas without anyone thinking any thing of it.

So peace to all at this holiday time, Solaire

Whitewicca Members Birthdays by Hedge

HeavenlyRomance on the 14th December
Wiccaways on the 30th December
Shushan on the 31st December

Many happy returns to you!



Yule Crafts by Shushan

There are many Christmas decorations that we put up each year that can be adapted to fit in a little better with Paganism. As many of us know, most of these decorations are traditionally pagan that have been adapted over the years. I am going to give you a few ideas along these lines.

Wreath

I wrote about how to make a wreath in a previous newsletter, so I won't go over old ground. But we can adapt it to the season using appropriate colours – red, green, and gold, Pine cones, Holly and representations of the Sun, i.e. apples sprayed gold.

Tree

If you would like an alternative to the traditional Christmas tree, you can go out and find several similar length branches to stand in a tall vase half filled with pebbles. You can spray these branches with gold paint or with glue and glitter, ready to decorate.

Tree Decorations

You can decorate your tree with some of the following:

Bundles of herbs tied up with twine

Muslin pouches with ground spices like cinnamon and allspice

Cinnamon decorations (see below)

Sun representations

Tree Topper

Trees are often topped with a star – representing the star of Bethlehem, or an angel – representing the angels that announced the birth of Jesus.

During Yule we celebrate the birth of the Sun, so this can be an appropriate alternative – and an easy craft project for children.

You will need:

2 paper plates

Glue

Scissors

Yellow, gold and orange poster paints

Gold glitter, metallic confetti, sequins etc

Approx 12" yellow or gold ribbon

Blob of BlueTac

Paint the backs of the plates in orange or yellow and leave to dry.

Paint a Sun on the fronts of both plates using the different paints.

Cut out the gaps between the rays on both plates.



Glue the underside of the plates together so that the rays bend outwards.
Stick the BlueTac onto the middle of one side and using the scissors, very carefully make two holes through both plates about 1" apart (the BlueTac on the back will stop the point of the scissors going into your hand or table!)
Spread some glue onto the sun and decorate with glitter and sequins.
Thread the ribbon through the holes to tie onto the top of your tree.

Yule Log

In recent years, we eat these – usually the chocolate variety! Here is how to make a traditional one to decorate your altar.

A good excuse to go out for a walk in the woods! Find an appropriate size log for your altar/hearth and clean with a soft brush if needed. On Yule night carve a symbol onto your log, to represent your hopes for the coming year.

Attach candles, ribbons, greenery and flowers in appropriate colours either for Yule, or for your intentions. If you do a ritual you can burn it then, or as part of your Yule celebrations. Remember to keep a piece of the coal/wood to light next year's fire.

Cinnamon Decorations

I have never made these, but I keep finding different variations of this recipe, and am dying to try it out!

You will need:

1 cup apple sauce
1 cup Cinnamon
1 tbsp nutmeg (optional)
1 tbsp allspice (optional)
1 tbsp cloves (optional)
Red ribbon

Place the apple sauce in a sieve and leave to drain for a couple of hours. (you can use the liquid collected for cooking if you wish)
Combine the drained apple sauce and the spices, and mix to a smooth paste.
Dust a board with a little cinnamon and roll out the dough to a thickness of 1/4".
Cut out using cookie cutters and make a hanging hole with a skewer or straw at the top of the shape.
Leave on a baking sheet to dry for about 2 days.
Thread a small length of red ribbon through the hole to make a hanging loop.

Some recipes use glue in the ingredients; I think this will make them stronger. You can adjust the amount of spices accordingly, so you end up with a stiff dough.





Mistletoe Ball

I love this idea!

You will need:

2 piece wooden embroidery hoop
Red ribbon
Florist wire or something like strong cotton thread.
Bunch of Mistletoe
Strong glue

Separate the two pieces of the embroidery hoop and fit back together sideways at a 90 degree angle.

Glue in this position.

Secure one end of the ribbon to the bottom and wind round each 'arm' until completely covered, securing with glue.

Make two bows with the remaining ribbon, attach one to the top of the 'ball' and one to the bottom.

Gather the mistletoe into a bundle and wrap the end with the florist wire to secure. Insert into the ball and tie to the top of the ball so that it hangs in the middle of the hoops.

Lastly, don't forget about the birds during the cold northern hemisphere weather!

Melt equal quantities of suet and peanut butter. Combine with bird seeds, chopped dried fruits and nuts. Roll handfuls into balls, you can incorporate a piece of string or twine in a loop to hang the ball.

Either wrap separately in freezer bags or paper, or lay out on a tray and freeze until needed.

Meditation tip by Hedge

When you first start to meditate, it may be challenging to stop all the thoughts of daily life from getting in the way. A really good way of dealing with all the impinging thoughts is to acknowledge them, put them on to a little, fluffy cloud and float them into the distance - so far that they disappear. An alternative

is to have a litter-bin wherever your meditation place is - it works well if you meditate that you're in a park - and every time a thought intrudes, pick it up, screw it up and put it in the bin. It works.

It takes patience and regular practice, but even if you try clearing and quieting your mind before you go to sleep each night, you'll find that you get good at it pretty quickly (and probably sleep better too).

The more man meditates upon good thoughts, the better will be his world and the world at large.--Confucius



The Healing Space

This month's Healing Space includes a number of people who are going to enjoy the energy that we all put into the Healing Ritual on Thursday 30th November. Anyone who would like to join our Healing Rituals, either to help raise energy or to have some help, is welcome. No experience is necessary and details can be found in the Healing & Health forum on the whitewicca.com site.

Vresy: who has difficulties with an infection.

Beatriz: who has lost a finger along with her hand movement due to a car accident, is depressed as a result of this.

Mellissa & family: who are having a really difficult time.

Maria: who has been ill for many years with Vertigo and other related illnesses, is awaiting the results of an MRI scan.

Wayne: who just had surgery to remove a kidney.

Carrie: who is bleeding during pregnancy and maybe having a miscarriage.

Dudley: puppy who has severe structural bone abnormalities in his leg.

Oakey: kitten who is recovering from a nasty viral infection (cat flu).

Picture from Hedge

Here's a Picture from Hedge of her namesake, getting all ripe and tempting for the birds!



Reiki by Arianwen

Well my Reiki Teacher finally came back; she has been very ill, almost hospitalised, but she is regaining her strength. For our first session back we discussed what had happened to us since we had our attunements. Some people had felt nothing and nothing different had happened to them, others, like myself became more aware of auras, one lady has found strong healing ties with animals, other had gone off sweets and sugar but we all felt something when we practised, mainly hot tingly hands or cold spots on problem areas. My teacher told me that what I saw and the tingling I felt up and down my body and on my head meant I have strong energy around my third eye and was at the start of a spiritual journey.

This first session was mainly taken up discussing these things but we did move on to the types of people/instances that we should not practice on or must have written permission from their doctors. I found this quite strange as Reiki cannot harm you but as it heals it could unwittingly cleanse your body of any medication you are taking. Broken bones was one thing not to be practised upon in case the healing starts before the bone is reset. It may also interfere with pacemakers and such, or heighten any effects from drugs and alcohol or put a person on antidepressants in a more depressed state. Our teacher also pointed out that lately we have such a blame culture and instances of suing that we should be extra careful. Ideally do not practice without express permission or on the lesser problems i.e. backache unless we have a signed disclaimer. If, however, you come across an accident she advised not to do nothing but if allowed, put Reiki in at the feet for a few minutes, as it may help ease any pain.

The second session I attended we went over these conditions again before practising Reiki on each other in a seated position. At first as there was an odd number I did some self healing but then joined two women to do joint healing on one another. The seated healing is a series of hand positions starting at the head and working toward the feet. When I placed my hands near the head of one of the ladies I could feel the pull and resistance you get with magnets. This was a strange feeling and as we worked down her we could both feel certain spots on this lady that were really hot. When it came to my turn they got to my throat - I couldn't stop coughing then on my heart - I felt I was being jerked, my solar plexus I saw yellows and finally on my feet the lady's hand and my feet were almost unbearably hot. It was really strange and we spent ages discussing what we felt. I can't wait for my next lesson.

Natural Healthcare by Vita: Yule Gift Basket

Last month we experimented with making Bath Bombs, this time we will carry on with some easy to make items to add to the Yule Gift Basket.

Yule Bath Crystals in a beautiful glass bottle

The ingredients are carefully layered; and the tears of Frankincense and Myrrh make an enchanting gift.



What you need:

500g Epsom Salts (available from Boots The Chemist)
100 g Frankincense Tears (Available from Soap Making Suppliers)
100 g Myrrh Tears (Available from Soap Making Suppliers)
100 drops Frankincense Essential Oil
100 drops Myrrh Essential Oil

Fill a decorative bottle with alternate layers of Epsom Salts, Frankincense Tears, and Myrrh Tears. Make sure that you compact each layer firmly before you add the next layer, you can use the handle of a wooden spoon to compact the ingredients inside the bottle.

If you hold the bottle at an angle whilst you are packing down the layers of ingredients, you can create a spiral effect.

Fill the bottle to just below the neck and then pour in the frankincense essential oil and myrrh essential oil. Seal the bottle with a beautiful cork or lid and leave to infuse for at least a week before use.

Green Velvet Massage Melts

For velvet smooth skin, this massage melt uses a creamy combination of cocoa butter and pumpkin seed oil. The Melts have a soft mossy scent of petitgrain, oakmoss, and palmarosa.

Pumpkin seed oil is a wonderful healing oil which is very useful for blemishes or problem skin.

What you need:

500g Cocoa Butter (Available from Soap Making Suppliers)
10 ml Pumpkin Seed Oil (Available from Tesco's)
50 drops Petitgrain Essential Oil
30 drops Oakmoss Essential Oil
100 drops Palmarosa Essential Oil

Melt the cocoa butter in a medium sized pan over a low heat. Add the pumpkin seed oil and warm through. The mixture will change to a light green colour. Take the pan from the heat and let the mixture cool. Stir in your essential oils carefully and pour the mixture into your moulds. You can use small yoghurt pots, or even ice cube trays, or chocolate moulds.

Place in the fridge to set firmly and then pop out the melts from the moulds. Wrap the melts in some beautiful material or tissue paper and decorate with a dried twig/flower/herb.



Perfume Roll-ons

Glass bottles with a rollette plastic ball insert are easy to fill and convenient to carry in a handbag, so you can use it throughout the day. The following perfume is a floral scent with a delightful feminine fragrance.

The light floral essential oils are gently blended with a little citrus which gives a top note that is light, fresh, and floral. The middle note is deeper with the calming aroma of Chamomile which gives a slightly bitter green note. A small amount of Frankincense and Sandalwood provide the long lasting bottom note, which stabilizes the overall fragrance.

What you need:

10ml of Sweet Almond Oil	4 drops Mimosa Essential Oil
10 drops Rose Essential Oil	3 drops Geranium Essential Oil
10 drops Lavender Essential Oil	4 drops Chamomile Essential Oil
10 drops Neroli Essential Oil	3 drops Bergamot Essential Oil
3 drops Frankincense Essential Oil	3 drops Sandalwood Essential Oil

If you don't have every single one of these Essential Oils, don't worry, try to substitute them with others or increase the number of the oils that you do have, but most important of all - be adventurous and enjoy making your own blends!

Pour 10ml of Sweet Almond Oil in a small bottle and add all the Essential Oils carefully. Close the bottle and shake vigorously, leave the bottle for at least 1 hour so that the oils adjust in the blend. The perfume is now ready to use, but it will improve over the next few days, use within 6 months.

Marmalade Soap

To brighten up our basket, we shall add a Marmalade Soap which is easy to make with a ready made "Melt & Pour Soap Base" if you haven't got the time to make soap from scratch.

What you need:

1kg of Clear Melt & Pour Soap Base	200 drops Mandarin Essential Oil
15ml Yellow Palm Oil	200 drops Bitter Orange Essential Oil
100 drops Lime Essential Oil	100 drops Ginger Essential Oil
2 tablespoons / 30ml grated Citrus Peel	

Place your soap base into the top half of a double boiler (bain Marie) and melt over a gentle heat.

Add the yellow palm oil and stir until fully melted and mixed in, remove from the heat and stand to cool for a moment. Stir in the grated citrus peel and the essential oils, and pour into the moulds.



As the soap starts to set and cool, drag a wooden spoon over the surface to create the texture of orange marmalade.

After a couple of hours, pop out of the moulds and your soap is ready to be cut or used straight away.

Enjoy! Vita.

Yule Puzzle by Kenaz

Here's a wordsearch from Kenaz with a few festivals of light from other faiths as well!

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W F Q E J M S J N D F C E S A M T S I R H C U E I
M Q B N B Q F O W D Z S D J N R Z Q D N F N S G S
Z N N I S Y S M G G Q Q E M A H T A R B J C E R G
Q V F H L S R T U P F P E J Y I N E C I P S V S N
B Z H S U R Y A U B I I V W Q W T B Z O J D E O I
E W I N M Q E V I N T N C O W A Z A P S B W K L T
D X G U B N C B I B N E E N B F R H M J J F P S E
Q I P S E R V D I W A L I B S M S F S E A O Y T E
W E Q E R E G T M R P N A R N H O L L Y N T B I R
Y N R W C X H V K M T S S S A O W Z H N I F R C G
B K A A B T S N X G G H D A R V M Y Q L V O X E U
L J S G T O A S A H A K K U N A H A L Y X G H I N
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O J E L R P R I I S E T K E Q H J N Z N T U Y T M
T N E C S E I U Q O C S T N E S E R P Y I N U D L
W O J F W Q E X U N N L O A D L O G I F J C L P T
Z D X R B O L X W G X X I C P E K J K S D T E N S
    
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athame	yule	sun	solstice	holly	ivy
log	sabbat	diwali	hanukkah	christmas	pine
star	pagan	cinnamon	spice	nuts	presents
rebirth	sunshine	slumber	quiescent	expectation	greetings
song	jollity				

Solution to November's 'Autumn Anagrams'

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1) Cinnamon | 5) Harvest |
| 2) Falling laves | 6) Windy |
| 3) Migration | 7) Haystack |
| 4) Hibernation | 8) Pumpkin |



December – What to do when it rains! By Shimma

If, like me, you want to be in the garden but have been chased out by the pouring rain it can be frustrating to know what you can usefully do. I tend to prepare the garden for the Spring in stages over the Winter, finding the enormous expenditure of time and energy most gardeners put in during the Autumn beyond me both in energy and time!

So, I'm playing truant and not bothering about any more garden than I can see from my kitchen window. This means 2 window ledges and a patch of yard the size of a bathmat.

Thinking about the approach of Yule I have decorated this space with greenery and bright flowers to remind me that Spring will come back to us, far away as that seems now! Bulbs, bright red cyclamen and grey green grasses, yellow violas and a mixture of salmon, gold and red in pots and troughs should see me though the darkest days. I'm really planting for warmth this year, the cheering flame tones celebrating the fires we now seldom need as we have central heating. I'm planning to add a wreath on the door, fairy lights round the eaves and hangings in the windows to finish off.

Meanwhile I'm thinking about the inside. Orchids amaze me, their slow growth and almost rubbery flowers seem magical by themselves. I have two in flower in the kitchen, where they revel in the steam and indirect light. Hippeastrum in bright glazed pots in tones of red and salmon, and baskets of paperwhite narcissi will be on the table and in my room. Hyacinths in glass bulb jars will look good on window ledges.

To plant an indoor arrangement for early Spring, take a wide basket and line it with a carrier bag or clear plastic, tacking in round the top just below the lip. Fill the base with gravel then a thin layer of bulb fibre. Pack in narcissus bulbs, as many as you can for a great display. Paperwhite is a good one as it's sweetly scented but there are many others.

Top up with bulb fibre and add a layer of moss. NOT spagnum but garden moss, perhaps from the lawn or off a shaded wall. Or cover the surface with gravel or coloured chippings. Water and place in a dark cupboard to germinate – when the shoots are about 1.5" high bring out and place in the house. These baskets also make lovely presents for those who can't get out so much, or for anyone who'd appreciate a touch of Spring in their sitting room!

Brightest blessings, Shimma x

Wicca 101 by Arianwen

This month we're covering the letter B

Balefire

This is a sacred outdoor fire burned at Sabbats especially at Beltane, Summer Solstice, Lammas and Autumn Equinox. Dancing clockwise (deosil) around the fire raises energies, invokes deities and is a symbol of the wheel of the year. Wiccans use balefires for



scrying, honouring deities and casting of prayers, wishes and healing requests on slips of paper that are burned. A simple candle can represent a balefire indoors or a garden brazier is a more safe outdoor option.

Bell

Bells are used by all cultures as talismans, fertility charms and in music for rituals. Most Wiccans use a bell to signal the beginning or close of a ritual. The ringing of a bell causes vibrations that, dependant on tone and volume, can have powerful effects. It is a feminine symbol and is used to invoke the Goddess, it can also be rung to ward off evil spirits and evoke good energies.

Beltaine

One of the Sabbats, Beltaine is held on the first of May. It is the symbolic day of the joining of the Goddess and the horned God and celebrates the annual rebirth of the sun, the death of winter and the return of the spring. It also a time when Faeries are out in force. It is a time to celebrate Mother Nature and fertility so decking the altar with flowers and greenery is symbolic of this.

Besom

This is a broom used by Wiccans in Handfasting ceremonies 'jump the broom' and at Candlemas. A broom has always been associated with Witches but for flying on – which of course is impossible. They are used as altar decorations, symbols of fertility, to sweep clean the magic circle of negativity and for protection of a dwelling when placed across the threshold. Besoms can be bought in all shapes and sizes, but can also be made by hand at home using branches that have naturally fallen.

Crystal Insights by Heatherlace

This month, as we all begin to gear up for the Yuletide season, I have chosen a few crystals that really appeal to my sense of the season. I have chosen – with a little help from my friends, Ruby, Garnet and Snowflake Obsidian – each bring something special for this holiday season. Not only do these stones all have something in common with the season but they all compliment each other as well!

Ruby brings Integrity, devotion and happiness as well as enhancing generosity and bringing prosperity. Rubies are known for their healing properties including strengthening of the immune system against infectious diseases, fortifying the heart and circulation and combating low blood pressure. Ruby can cure eye infections as well. Psychologically, it is a good luck stone of love as it encourages sensitivity in relationships. This stone works best on the root and heart charkas.

Rubies should be discharged twice each month using running water and recharged in sunlight for 2 hours.



Garnet is associated with balance and zest. It is known as the stone that illuminated Noah's Ark. This gemstone occurs in many colours except blue. Garnet is believed to protect one from many things including from thieves!

Garnet holds many healing properties and protects against anything that will bring tension to the mind, body or spirit of an individual such as relieving skin irritations and protection from poisons and if placed under your pillow at night, garnet will protect you from bad dreams.

Owing to the similarities in their composition, all types of garnets share similar healing traits although the different colour and chemistry of garnet varieties allow them to have some healing properties exclusive to that particular crystal.

Green garnets, such as Tsavorite (a form of grossular garnet), some Andradites and African Jade (also a form of grossular garnet), are associated with bringing peace, pureness of thought, unobscured mental capacity, and creativity. Green garnets are another of the healing crystals that bring aid in meditation and focus.

Orange garnets, such as Mandarin, orange Malaya, rare shades of Spessartite, orange Almandites and some Grossulars, are associated with energy of commitment. Orange garnets help an individual to solemnly dedicate themselves to any endeavour that captures the need for awaited attention.

Purple-coloured garnets like Mozambique and Grape possess the tenacity to make subtle anxieties and stress brought on by worry and unrest. They also make stable a mind that is not otherwise regulated. The most common form of garnets readily available and more commonly known are the various shades of red.

Red garnets, like many red crystals are associated with passion. Though many red stones are found to heal the slings and arrows that love throws our way, it is not necessarily the sole healing function of this and other red healing gems. Along with being a gem that ignites and refuels the red fires of passion and romance, it also sets ablaze the inner fires of self-confidence, creativity and reflection. Since anger causes the body's physical temperature to increase, the opposing fire of positive energy from which garnet burns, can be used against tantrums and episodes of angst.

Garnet has also been identified by healers as another of the vivid dreaming stones and one of past remembrance. The Garnet family, in general mental healing, is a jewel of life, love and purity enhancing vitality (the life force), commitment in indecisiveness and sexuality. It's regenerating and warming attributes help it not only to cleanse and renew, but also help to comfort, protect and inspire.

Snowflake Obsidian is a stone of purity. It balances mind, body and spirit. If placed on the sacral hara chakra, snowflake obsidian will calm and soothe and allow you to view unhealthy patterns in your own behaviour opening the door to change. The black part of the stone enhances the ability to reach your inner self. Snowflake obsidian has the property of bringing things to the surface. The things brought to the surface could be positive or negative, love, anger, secrets; but with snowflake obsidian, these things are





brought to the surface more gently than they might be otherwise. Snowflake obsidian can provide balance during times of change. It aids in seeing patterns in life and recreating them in a more beneficial way. It is a stone of serenity and purity, and can shield against negativity. It is associated with the root chakra and is beneficial for the veins, skeleton, and smooth skin. Snowflake obsidian gives protection from physical and emotional harm.

The energy of this volcanic rock is restful and serene. Snowflake obsidian can help the wearer recognize and transmute negative patterns and modes of thought. It helps to transform negativity into a positive and brings peace and balance to mind and body.

I wish all of our readers and everyone in our White Wicca family a most wonderful and beautiful Yule!!

Love and Light, Heatherlace

Dragons by Avacraft

Dragons are steeped in the ancient mythology of almost every peoples in the ancient and medieval worlds. From the oriental region of Asia to the Scandinavian peninsula, to the British Isles and beyond.

Probably the most well known is the Western Dragon. These Dragons stand on two almost dinosaur-like legs with two arms and large bat-like wings. They almost always breathe either Fire or poisonous gas. They are also associated with guarding large hoards of treasures, especially the creations of dwarves, supposedly master craftsmen with anything dug from the ground.

The next most popular would be the Eastern or Oriental dragon. They are more serpentine and can often fly even in the absence of wings. In Chinese mythology they are guardians of a certain aspect of nature. They are in fact often colour-coded with the element within their province. Though I was unable to learn exactly which colour was associated with each element, I learned that Yellow was the colour of the Imperial dragon, or the leader of the dragons.

Another popular type of dragon is the wyvern. They are smaller than western dragons but they also have bat-like wings. They are also more serpentine, like the Oriental dragon. Some stories give them the ability to spew fire but most do not support this.

A few stories give dragons the ability to use magic, which is quite possible considering that stories from all over the world contain this idea supporting not only their abilities but their existence. Many modern Witches follow the belief that using dragons in their rituals and spells will boost the spell in one way or another, most often giving it more strength.

Blessed be to all dragon lovers, Avacraft



Animal Antics

This month Aggie, Ladyfox's Australian Shepherd dog, has been composing busily and she hopes that you will enjoy her masterpiece and read it to your canine friends!

A Doggie's Yuletide Carol by Aggie

Here come we all a'barking
To sing our Yuletide song.
All Doggies now that here us,
Come on and howl along.
We'll bark it in the countryside-
We'll howl it in the street;
We'll sing our greetings everywhere
To everyone we meet.
We like our Yuletide song so well
We'll sing it everywhere,
Until our howling loud and sweet
Rebounds upon the air.
The people all will stop to look,
"What will those dogs do now?"
And then we'll end our Yuletide song,
And wag our tails and bow.

Witches Kitchen by Shepherdess

Chocolate Yule Log

1 large or 2 small chocolate Swiss Rolls **

Chocolate Topping

8oz (200g) Plain Chocolate
4oz (100g) Butter
12oz (300g) Icing Sugar

To decorate

2oz (50g) Icing Sugar
1 teaspoon (5ml) hot water

Board to put the Yule log on and bits of holly or other decorations

For the Swiss rolls the easiest way to obtain these is to cheat and buy from a supermarket – no one will know! If using 1 large Swiss roll cut into two about 2/3 up the Swiss roll but cut across with a diagonal cut (like /) or if using 2 Swiss rolls cut one of them in 2 with one "half" bigger than the other, again cutting diagonally (like /).



Cutting at an angle allows you to make a more interesting log shape as you can put the cut edges next to the main "trunk" to form a log or Y shape.

Place the Swiss rolls in the shape you want and stick together using a small bit of the topping.

Chocolate Topping

Break up the chocolate and put in a heatproof bowl with the butter. Place the bowl over the top of a saucepan with hot, but not boiling water, and stir until melted. Add the icing sugar and mix well. Spread this mixture over the Swiss roll (now a Yule log!) and make bark patterns using a fork dragged along the topping gently.

To decorate mix the icing sugar and hot water together and pipe circles on the end to mimic the rings of a tree. Add holly, robins, reindeer or whatever takes your fancy! but do not eat these decorations.....

****For those of you who want to make a Swiss roll:**

Makes 2 x 28 x 18 cm Swiss rolls.

4 eggs
2 oz (100g) caster sugar
4 oz (100g) Plain Flour
1 teaspoon (5 ml) baking powder

Brush the baking tin with melted oil. Line the bases and sides with greaseproof paper. Put the eggs and sugar in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of hot BUT NOT boiling water and whisk until the mixture becomes thick and creamy and leaves a trail when the whisk is lifted (only attempt if you have an electric whisk otherwise it is really hard work!!!).

Remove the bowl from the heat and continue to whisk until the mixture becomes cool. Sift the flour and baking powder over the surface of the mixture and using a metal spoon fold the flour into the mixture until all of it has been incorporated. Put the mixture into the two prepared tins and shake gently to level out.

Bake in the centre of a preheated oven for 10-12 minutes at 190 degrees C or gas mark 5. Test by pressing gently with the fingertips: if cooked the cake will spring back and have begun to shrink from the sides of the tin

To turn out have a piece of grease proof paper bigger than the tin ready and sprinkle with caster sugar. Invert the cake onto the sugared paper and remove the paper from the bottom of the cake. Trim the edges if needed and then roll the cake up with the sugared paper inside. Leave to cool then remove the paper and fill with jam, cream or chocolate topping (note: Nutella or supermarket chocolate spread is excellent for this sort of thing). Roll up again and use to make the chocolate log... (see why I buy one now?)

Cross stitch by Solaire – yet again, we've been struck down by computer problems and all sorts of woes, so the next cross stitch instalment from Solaire will be in January's issue.



Seasons of History and Tradition in Sweden by Klara Starnljus

This month Klara continues her rendition of Swedish folklore and traditions, picking up from events in October, she now tells us all about November traditions and the lead up to the solstice.

Halloween is a holiday that is celebrated around the world, and Sweden is not an exception. Our All Hallows Day is a holiday that is celebrated on the 1st of November. Another day related to the celebration is All Saints Day, a church holiday celebrating all the saints that didn't have a day in the calendar. All Saints day is a mobile holiday that is celebrated on the first weekend in November.

The reason for this seems to be that the Saints day were first celebrated on the 1st of November, and then moved to the first November Sunday in a holiday reformation 1772. The first of November then lost its status as a holiday, but kept its name in the calendar. After that there was two days in the calendar with the same name.

After lots of bills to the parliament about increasing the number of holidays during the autumn, All Saints Day moved, in 1952, to the Saturday before (because Saturdays where work days back then), and the name on the 1st of November was changed to All Hallows Day. All Hallows Day is a holiday celebrated to remember the dead. And as usual in Swedish tradition, the night before is of great importance.

The night before a holiday contains a lot of magick, and they are often wake nights, to watch the house from spirits and evil creatures. Maybe it was first a way to keep awake, but most "eves" came to be celebrated with great dinners and festivities of all sorts, and most of them are still celebrated that way. Unfortunately, All Hallows Day and Eve don't have a very long history, since the dates have been moved back and forth, so most of the modern celebrations on those dates are inspired by English and American traditions.

The Sunday after All Saints' Day, on the other hand, is the day that is most important in Swedish Halloween celebrations. It is also the day that is based on the ancient Celtic and later Germanic traditions, taken over by the church in the 900th century. It is called All Souls Day, and is a silent and solemn day of remembering the dead. I am sure that the feeling of being closer to your loved ones this day than other days is not a coincidence. The feeling of the thinner veil between the worlds at that time of the year is the same around the world.

As well as being a dark, melancholic and solemn holiday, All Souls Day is also a holiday of light. The graves are decorated with wreaths of spruce and flowers and candles, candles everywhere! When darkness falls over Swedish cemeteries at Halloween, it looks like a sea of little flames, some still, some flickering. It is a lovely time for a walk. The tradition of decorating graves of loved ones is, in Sweden, originally a Christmas tradition but in the early 20th century people started to decorate the graves around All Hallows Day more and more instead, and the tradition was moved.

The idea of lighting candles is also something that every tradition seems to have around this date and in all cultures fires have been lit to guide the dead back to their side of the veil. In Swedish mythology, the dead always come back on Christmas Eve (there was, for



example, a great risk of meeting them if you were early for church and entered before the mass of the dead was over!), and that is why I think that the grave decorations took place at Christmas instead of Halloween in older days. The time of the thinner veil...



A candle decorated cemetery somewhere in Sweden.



The hills of my local cemetery, containing many of my relatives, in the early morning autumn mist.

An old Swedish tradition that I want to share is the storytelling. Before radio and TV, even before people had books, it was common that the family (and relatives and servants) sat down in the twilight, with only the light from the hearth, and told stories. This is an ancient tradition that still was common when my parents were younger, especially on the islands where my father grew up. It gets so much darker out there than in the cities.

It could start with the grownups talking about the weather or how the day had been, but after a while, there were always stories from the grandparents' childhood to be told, and there were always young ears that wanted to listen. It was stories about the folklore creatures (as I have chosen to call them in this article, though I believe in most of them) in the woods, stories about ghosts, witches, travellers, fishermen, and all sorts of exciting things! Some were said to be experienced by the storyteller or a friend or relative, or someone in the village, or someone that someone once knew, or his sister's husband's priest. Recognize the concept?

Now when it's getting darker (or lighter in some parts of the world, but that's enchanting as well!), turn off your TV and take your time to sit down in the twilight evening among friends. Light a candle or two, and talk about things you've heard, things you've done, or things that just shiver your backbone in that wonderful way that brings that old mysterious, curious smile on your face and makes your eyes sparkle with excitement!

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To go with the Swedish theme, and because a forum member requested it, here's a recipe for Glögg. This was taken from another website and written by Craig Goldwyn, our thanks to him.

Craig Goldwyn is a Chicago based writer and artist, and the article below originally ran in the Chicago Tribune in 1979. He invites you to visit his website at <http://craiggoldwyn.com>. Heroes Glug Glögg (Swedish hot mulled wine) By Craig Goldwyn.

Samuel Johnson wrote "Claret is the drink for boys, port for men, but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy." By that definition Swedish Julglögg, will make us superhuman.

Glögg, pronounced gloog, is a high octane, hot mulled wine made with a potpourri of spices and all three of the above: Claret (red wine), port, and brandy. It is the perfect cold weather drink, warming the body and soul from the inside out.

There are as many recipes for this old traditional winter beverage as there are for chilli. Instead of brandy, the original Swedish recipe calls for aquavit, a distilled spirit frequently flavoured with caraway seeds. I know of an Irishman who uses Irish whisky and I've tasted it made with bourbon and vodka. But I prefer the taste of glögg made with brandy.

The spices and flavourings change just as frequently, with most recipes calling for cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, orange peel, raisins, almonds, and sugar. Some people use dried cherries. Some swear by dried orange peel, others use fresh. Sugar content can be varied according to taste, and I have tasted it made with honey and maple syrup. Some



brew it and drink it on the spot, and others age it. I usually do both. My wife and I like to make some for Thanksgiving, and age some for Christmas.

One thing is certain: the aroma in the kitchen of mulling glögg is heavenly, and when it is served steaming hot in a mug after a hard day of skiing or shoveling the sidewalk, the body offers thanks. Glögg also makes a good marinade for beef or venison. Here is my tried and true recipe.

### **Swedish Glögg**

Makes about 1 gallon

- 1.5 litre bottle of inexpensive dry red wine
- 1.5 litre bottle of inexpensive American port
- 1 bottle of inexpensive brandy or aquavit
- 10 inches of stick cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon cardamom seeds
- 2 dozen whole cloves
- Peel of one orange
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 cup blanched almonds
- 2 cups sugar
- Garnish with the peel of another orange

### **Notes**

There is no need to invest in expensive wine or brandy because the spices are going to pre-empt any innate complexity of a fine wine, but don't use anything too cheap. Remember, the sum will be no better than the parts. Do not use an aluminium or copper pot since these metals interact chemically with the wine and brandy and impart a metallic taste. Use stainless steel or porcelain.

Cardamom comes in three forms: pods, seeds, and powder. Do not use powder. If you can only find the pods (the look like orange seeds), take about 2 dozen and pop them open to extract the seeds. Cardamom seeds may be hard to find, so you may need to order them from a spice specialist like Penzeys.com.

### **Assembly**

Pour the red wine and port into a covered stainless steel or porcelain kettle. Add the cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, orange peel, raisins, and almonds. Warm gently, but do not boil. Boiling will burn off the alcohol.

Put the sugar in a pan and soak it with half the bottle of brandy. Warm the sugar and brandy slurry over a low flame. The sugar will melt and bubble until it becomes a clear golden syrup of caramelized sugar. If you wish, you can speed up the process a bit and create quite a show by flaming the brandy. Flaming will create a 2 foot high blue flame, so be sure there is nothing above the stove that can catch on fire. Then, stand back and light the brandy. Turn out the kitchen lights and watch it burn! This caramelization is crucial to developing complexity.



Add the caramelized sugar to the spiced wine mix. Cover and let it mull for an hour. Just before serving, strain to remove the spices, and add brandy to taste (about 1/2 pint). You can serve it immediately, or let it age for a month or two. If you are going to age it, make sure the bottle is filled as high as possible and sealed tight.

To serve glögg, warm it gently over a low flame or in a crockpot, and serve it in a mug. Garnish it with a fresh orange peel, twisted over the mug to release the oils.

You can easily tailor the recipe to your own tastes by changing the sweetness, potency, or other ingredients. Try brown sugar if you wish. Or Southern Comfort instead of brandy. The orange peel garnish, however, is essential to the fragrance. Drink while seated and give your car keys to a friend.

[Yum, that's certainly one I shall be trying – Ed.]

### **Diary of a university Pagan by Aradia**

*This item should have been in last month's issue (just in case you wonder why there's mention of Samhain and halloween celebrations).*

Slowly, I am getting back into my spiritual routine. After almost a month of doing nothing more Wiccan than paddling in the sea and saying hello to the moon, I'm getting back into my morning and evening devotions. I received a gorgeous set of oracle cards as an anniversary present from my boyfriend and I have taken to drawing a card every morning and leaving it out for me to look at throughout the day. At night I often perform a chakra meditation, more to calm my mind and help me sleep than anything else since my sleeping pattern has gone nocturnal. I created an altar too – my bedside table has been draped with a scarf and decorated with my pot of incense, masses of crystals and pebbles picked up from the beach, some bits of twig, a glass lizard and a fairy wand I bought at a fair. It gets lots of interested looks from my flatmates, but no one has asked any questions, except "Ahh! I love crystals and pebbles, I've got masses of them back home..." They have all taken to calling me a hippy, but I don't mind. Hippies like trees and so do I.

Now university is getting more hectic, and as the amount of work I need to get round to stocks up, my motivation and self esteem plummets. I missed an entire week of lectures because of a severe attack of the dreaded Freshers 'Flu, which most of my flat is now recovering from, and I now feel incredibly guilty of all the work I have missed and haven't caught up on. I felt like a huge underachiever as I made my way back from campus this afternoon, but I decided to take a walk through the woods rather than follow the busy grey road and it was like walking into another world. The floor was covered in wet ivy and vibrant autumn leaves, and the rain amplified the rotting bracken smell of the woods, and I gulped it in. Everything was slower in the woods, more meaningful and calmer – the trees looked back at me and the stream babbled away happily and they reminded me to try not to sweat the small stuff. I am still alive and living and breathing and learning no matter how many lectures I miss. I came home feeling much, much happier and did my laundry all on my own. We achieve little things every day but we don't take notice of them. Perhaps I should start writing them all down.



I am not very bothered by making friends at the moment – I'm quite happy to just let it happen. I came here with my best friend (boyfriend) anyway, and I get along really well with all my flatmates. I've joined the Wildlife Watch, which is a group that does an after school group about wildlife with a local primary school, and I'm very excited to be involved in it. I've met a few possible pagans – one really bubbly girl in my dance class and another dripping in pentagram jewellery. I mentioned this to my boy and he reminded me that not everyone who wears lots of pentagrams is necessarily a Witch. Some people, especially teenagers I've noticed, wear pentagrams just to be cool or alternative – I knew one once. I've been really drawn to buying a tiny little pentagram as a sort of dedication of my faith and as a Samhain present, but I don't want to be seen as a poser. It's so little and subtle though I know I'm just being silly.

My flat is getting really excited about Halloween. I love the commercial side of Halloween – the fancy dress parties, the pumpkins, the pointy hats and brooms, silly food that's meant to look gory – and we all want to decorate our flat and have masses of pumpkins and dress up to the extreme all Halloween weekend. I am secretly planning a ritual to dedicate my body as a sacred altar to the goddess, on the excellent suggestion of a friend. I also want to send little paper boats into the sea in honour of those who have died. As I don't have any dead relatives (thank goodness), I will be sending them for everyone. Although I am going have to wrap up warm because autumn has truly arrived here in Wales.

### **Shampoo Blessing Ritual by Aradia**

A really, really simple way to remind you that you are sacred too every time you have a wash.

*You need;* shampoo or shower gel that smells really good, or your favourite shampoo/gel. I think coconut shampoo is very appropriate for a goddess ritual.

Before you wash, centre yourself and squeeze a tiny bit of shampoo out onto your power finger. Anoint your third eye, your throat, your heart/centre of your chest, just above your genitals, your knees, and your feet with the shampoo and say;

*I am blessed and sacred  
My body is divine and perfect  
The goddess shines within me  
And I treat her very well  
Cleaning my sacred body.*

Wash, and remember that no matter what size you are, how tall you are, what colour your hair is, how big your breasts are or how insecure you are about your bum, your body is always beautiful and divine to Goddess.



## Blessing(s) by Ladyfox

### Yule Blessing (Northern Hemisphere)

The Oak King has returned again  
With Yuletide carols sung.  
The Sun is reborn once again;  
The Mistletoe is hung.  
The Cold Moon shines above us,  
And with Her silver rays  
Does honour God and Goddess,  
And the lengthening of days.  
The Wheel has turned and so will we,  
Old habits thrown away-  
We look at new beginnings  
With every longer day.  
The Yule Logs blaze and hearts as well,  
And so we greet the light  
With joy and hope and murmured spell-  
Please bless us on this night.

### Midsummer's Eve Blessing (Southern Hemisphere)

The Wheel has turned yet once again;  
The Mead Moon shows Her face.  
Sing now the songs of Summer,  
For Litha comes apace.  
As you light the Litha fires,  
Send your spells up with the smoke.  
This is a night for magick-  
What you wish you can invoke.  
The Wee Folk are abroad tonight  
And lest they make you fools,  
Remember though they friendly seem,  
They play not by our rules.  
So gather now the Saint John's Wort,  
And pick you Vervain too;  
But if you'd not be "pixie-led"  
In your pocket carry Rue.  
Let Mead and Honey Moon shine down  
And hold within Her rays,  
A blessing true for all of us  
And all our Summer days.

Thought for the month: On a crisp winter's day, feel the midday sun as it warms your naked cheek and reminds you of the simple pleasures of life. From Arianwen.

