



November 2006 Newsletter

I'm happy to introduce the November issue of the Whitewicca Newsletter to you. Last month's Newsletter was very well received by lots of our members and this one should provide many more hours of enjoyable reading, thought provoking articles and craft projects that will make the long dark evenings whiz by.

We're happy to have our first Auntie Zelda column and the question certainly is a difficult, but not uncommon, dilemma for younger people. Joining the new Auntie Zelda is our latest addition, a small piece by our animal companions; this month's contribution from Cujo who lives with Cherpatsy.

I trust that you all had a wonderful Samhain and that your celebrations were everything you hoped for. With Yule racing up towards us, Vita has provided a wonderful recipe that can be turned into a delightful seasonal present, so get brewing for a wonderfully fragrant bath-time. Happy reading...!

Diary of A Witch by LavenderBlue

A Trip Into Wales

A long awaited weekend finally arrived, and despite my persistent Bronchitis, SilverThorn and I pack up the car for a road trip. Our destination was the slate landscape around Festiniog, where a friend has a house. We were to take part in a Seidhr Ritual and since I had not experienced this before, I was quite excited.

My reading had taught me that this was a ritual from the Norse tradition, and was a form of trance dance and seer-ship. SilverThorn and I had volunteered to be drummers, since there was no clear seer that evening, and the choice would fall upon the one to whom the 'sight' was granted. Being, by nature, a coward, I had no wish to perform this office, and felt that I would be safer drumming.

We met up with some friends and, after a quick cup of coffee at their home, left for the journey. These friends had been asked by the people hosting the ritual if they would organise and be the 'movers' to get things going. Hence, some inspired scribbling was going on in the car in front. The mobile phone trilled out that annoying little tune, and I could see frantic waving from the car in front. I answered it, while SilverThorn concentrated on his driving. 'I've got a few words for you!' My heart sank. So much for a quiet evening. She dictated over the phone, and I scribbled frantically. There is a paragraph for me and one for SilverThorn. The rest of the journey is a blur of whispered





repetitions and hand gestures. We have a little rehearsal when we stop for a break and a much needed coffee.

By now I have just about got the hang of the script and am feeling a bit happier about it. We arrive at the house and have a look at the room. We are expecting about 18 people in all, so I think we might be a bit crowded. Suddenly, I am really glad that I am to be drumming.

Over the next few hours, the rest of the group arrive and things get quite sociable. Finally it is time to begin, and we take up our positions and stow our drums safely. We call the guardians and the dancing begins. We start slowly, with a steady moderate beat. As people begin to get into the sway of things we slowly increase the beat. The Watcher finally rises from her feet and approaches the one that she believes is to make the journey. We step up the tempo and she guides the Seer through his journey and seats him safely on the Throne. As the Seer sits, we stop the drumming and everyone begins to softly chant.

Questions are asked and answers are given, usually causing more questions, and finally it is all over and it is time to feast. Partying begins in earnest, and I finally tumble into bed around two o'clock.

The next morning, when we meet for breakfast, my friend looks a little the worse for wear. Since she doesn't drink, I ask what is wrong. She pulls a wry face. "Oh, I was kept awake all night by the ghost." she sighs. "I forgot that she is in that room, otherwise I might have joined you on the floor down here."

I had to ask what had happened to keep her up all night. "Her trick is to switch the lights on and off. She was doing it every ¼ of an hour, all night. I would just start to drop off, when suddenly the lights would go on, and wake me up again! The only way to stop her is to take the bulb out of the socket, and I couldn't reach!" she laughed. "I thought I might come and join you, but I kept telling myself that she would stop. She usually does after a while. We must have upset her."

Still, a large mug of hot coffee seems to do the trick, and soon we are off to Betws-y-Coed for some exploring. On the way, we stop at a local waterfall, where we have done rituals in the past. We can't resist a walk down to the rocks to watch the water for a while. Then we are off again. Off to Fairy Glen, a truly beautiful spot in the hills above Betws-y-Coed. A pretty little path takes you down to the water, and we clamber about the rocks like children on a school trip. We pick up sticks and pretty stones to remind us of our visit and leave the Glen at last to go and seek some lunch.

The rest of the day is spent guzzling fish and chips, and causing chaos in the souvenir shops. Happy, tired and fulfilled, we take a leisurely drive back through the misty autumn evening, to home, and supper, and bed.





Crafts by Shushan

As we are between Sabbats for this newsletter, I decided the theme for the crafts section should be autumn. To help me decide what to write about I asked my friends what things remind them of this beautiful season. The most popular answers were: warm drinks (well mulled wine and cider actually!), gingerbread, apple bobbing and the scent of cinnamon. Short of combining them all, having a party with a gingerbread man and bobbing for apples while intoxicated, I searched my trusty friend, the internet and came up with the following suggestions that will hopefully bring a little of the season into your homes!

DRIED APPLES

8 - 10 large apples
8 lemons
2 teaspoons salt

8 teaspoons cinnamon
2 teaspoons allspice/mixed spice

Squeeze the juice from the lemons into a large bowl and stir in the salt. Peel and slice the apples horizontally into ¼" thick circles and soak them in the lemon juice for about 15 minutes. Remove apples from the lemon and pat dry with a paper towel. Mix the spices in a bowl and sprinkle over the apples. Place the apples in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake at 150°F/80°C for approx. 6 hours or until completely dried (they should still be pliable).

These dried apples can be made into various decorations for your home, string them to make a garland, wire them to make a wreath or use them for table decorations. You can alternate them with cinnamon sticks too.

HOT DRINK COASTERS

Scraps of felt
Scraps of Autumnal coloured material
Muslin

2 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 tsp. ground cloves
2 tsp. ground nutmeg

Cut out 8 squares measuring 4" of each of the material, felt and muslin. Mix together the spices in a bowl. Layer the material in this order, sticking them together with a small amount of glue – material, then felt and then muslin. Divide the spices between four squares and place the mixture in the centre. Glue all the way around the edge of the muslin in a continuous line. Place the remaining four layered squares on top and press down firmly to create a sealed packet. Trim the edges with pinking shears.

These coasters will smell lovely; especially if used for hot drinks (better get the mulled wine started!)





Crafts by Shushan Cont...

GINGERBREAD HOUSE

I know this isn't the recipe, and I'm not going to go into how to make it, but this is a craft idea that my Mum used to make when my brothers and I were very small. I'm not even sure of the quantity needed, but it can be made with any quantity over the amount needed to make approx. 25 gingerbread men!

Gingerbread mixture
16oz / 900g Icing sugar
4 egg whites
2 tsp. glycerine

A selection of sweets
Chocolate Buttons (optional!)
Cotton wool ball

Make up the following Royal Icing:

Stir the egg whites in a bowl to break them up.

Add half of the sifted icing sugar and mix well.

Leave covered with greaseproof paper for about an hour.

Add the remaining sugar to form a stiff consistency, so the mixture rises to form peaks when pulled up with a spoon.

Add the glycerine and leave the icing in an airtight container overnight in a cool place before using.

Make up your gingerbread mix and divide into 6.

Roll 4 lots into equal sized squares about ½" thick (These will make up the front, back and roof of the house).

Roll the 5th into the same size and cut in half lengthways (these pieces will make up the sides of the house).

Use some of the 6th into triangles for the sides of the roof.

The remaining can be used to make a chimney, and/or a gingerbread 'person'.

Once the gingerbread has been baked and has cooled, you can start to build your house using the icing to stick the pieces together.

Start with a suitable surface – either a cake board/dish or a tray covered in foil.

The roof pieces may have to be done separately and then stuck to the house when set.

Use the rest of the icing on the house to stick the sweets on (chocolate buttons make very effective roof tiles) if there is any left! The cotton wool can be used as smoke, if you have decided to make a chimney.

Place on display in your home and see how long it lasts!!!





Reiki by Arianwen

Unfortunately I haven't had a class since the last newsletter so for this issue I will give you a little background information on Reiki itself.

Reiki was founded by Mikao Usui who was born in Japan in August 1865. There are conflicting stories about the life of Mikao Usui much of which is still under speculation. What is accepted is that Mikao Usui is the founder of the Reiki system, that was passed to his students who then passed the information to their students and so on and so on. Every Reiki Master should be able to trace their lineage back to Mikao Usui. Mikao Usui was a Tendai Buddhist born to a Samurai family and so was schooled in all that the skills privileged classes should. From 1922 he openly taught 'Usui do' (the term Reiki is used in Western countries) though it is believed he taught students much earlier than this. This teaching became a more formalised technique with hand positions and a healing guide known as Reiki Ryoho Hikkei.

There are many branches of Reiki that have grown from different Reiki masters, but all Reiki that is practiced has a number of features that do not differ. The use of hand positions, mantras and symbols and the knowledge of the five precepts are all central to Reiki.

The five precepts are:

Just for today

- Do not anger
- Do not worry
- Be humble
- Be honest in your work
- Be compassionate to yourself and others

The wording of the five precepts may differ slightly from branch to branch but the message is still the same.

Reiki uses specific hand positions over the body, these help the energy move freely through the body. Often Reiki students practice these positions on themselves initially as a guideline. Not all branches of Reiki have set positions, some feel it is best to place the hands wherever it is 'felt' the energy is needed.

Mantras and symbols were initially used to help with training and invoking energy, now they are associated with 'bringing, enhancing, manifesting and healing...' which can be bi-products of their use. Traditionally there were four mantras and four symbols. As there are different branches you may have more than one level, symbol or mantra, but in Western Reiki there are three levels; Level 1 teaches self healing, Level 2 in Reiki teaches three mantras and three symbols and Level 3 teaches the final mantra and symbol.

Hopefully in the next newsletter I will have returned to class and will be able to let you in on some of my experiences.





ASK AUNTY ZELDA

This month's problem is one that has to be faced by quite a lot of young people as they progress from school into adulthood

L.P. asks:

Dear Aunty Zelda

What can I do? I have always worked hard at school and got good grades, as I have always wanted to be a doctor. I know it will be a few years of hard work – but I am prepared for that however I am one of three children, with two younger than me – and our mum is a single parent. She does a great job of bringing us all up with very little money and we all love her to bits

I am expecting to go to uni next year and that's where the problems begin. My mum has asked me to wait a few years as a job will be coming up in our local supermarket I can do part-time hours for now and next year leave school and work full-time..... I know she finds it difficult to manage – with three of us and herself And I really want to help out – as the two younger ones are only 8 and 10 years old but I know I won't be happy doing this ... and I somehow feel disloyal to mum for even thinking that ... but I have so looked forward to going to uni what can I do?

.....

Dear L.P.

You have all my sympathy as this is a very difficult thing for you to have to decide. Is there a teacher at school who you would find it easy to talk to about this? Or, is there another member of the family, an aunt perhaps, who will have a word with your mother on your behalf? This is a very important time for you, and you need to plan for your future. You need to realise that it is not all down to you to provide for your siblings however difficult it must be for your mother. She has obviously done a fantastic job with you all or you wouldn't be worrying about her so much.

You don't mention a father, if there is one, is he able to pay towards the upkeep of you all? Also, make sure your mother knows about all the benefits she is entitled to.

But ultimately I feel that you should go ahead with your plans and go to university. If you keep putting it off I think you might regret it and then not feel able to take it up again. I hope things work out for you.





Wicca 101 by Arianwen

Athame

This is a black handled ritual dagger that has a double-edged blade but it can be made of other materials such as wood. It is used to direct energy during rituals, sometimes to create a circle, to cut energies, consecrate and bless. It is never used to draw blood but can cut the cake at a handfasting! It is linked to the elements of Air and Fire and represents the God.

Autumn Equinox

It is held around September 21st and is also called Mabon or Madron. Day and night are seen as equal and is a time of re-dedication, meditation and seeking the balance within ourselves.

This is the time the God moves towards becoming the Lord of the Underworld, when people take stock of their harvest for the cold winter months. Altars are decorated with acorns, pines, ears of corn. Corn, grains, bread and fruits are traditionally eaten at the Autumn Equinox

"Thanksgiving" by Cherpatsy

Thanksgiving is approaching once again,
Time for the rum cake (no vermouth, or gin).
Thaw out that turkey, get the stuffing made,
Bring the corn, bean casserole, tea, and lemonade.
Mash the potatoes, make the gravy so delish,
Don't forget the cranberry sauce, and relish.
Pumpkin, mincemeat, and pecan pie all great,
Invite all the relatives, make sure they're not late.
But, most important, before we begin to feast,
Remember what you're thankful for, and last, but not least,
Remember family and friends who are gone, but in our hearts, still near,
And keep all loved ones in your thoughts throughout the year.





Natural Healthcare by Vita

With the festive season approaching rapidly, why not try to make something really special that will be appreciated by young and old.

Bath Bombs

Bath Bombs are very easy to make and cost little for the ingredients; you can get as elaborate as you like. Some people enclose little messages inside the bombs whilst others add dried flower petals, only your imagination is your limit!

I am not keen on adding flower petals as it gets messy in the bath, they stick to your body, but if wish you could add them to the mix if you like. If you do add flower petals then you can pop the bomb into an old pop-sock/tights before you drop it in the bath, this will keep the flower petals in the sock and it will prevent them from blocking up the drains.

Here is a basic recipe, but you can improvise to your heart's content and get elaborate with the essential oils and other ingredients. A little bit of Goat's Milk Powder is also very nice. These bombs are softly scented.

What you need:

450g (1lb) Bicarbonate of Soda
300g (10 ½ oz) Citric Acid
150g (5 ¼ oz) Corn Starch
5 drops Black Pepper Essential Oil
5ml Lavender Essential Oil
2.5ml Sandalwood Essential Oil
1 teaspoon of dried Rosemary (herb)
1 teaspoon of Cinnamon Powder
½ Teaspoon of Turmeric Powder

Sieve the Bicarbonate of Soda, the Citric Acid, and the Cornstarch together in a large mixing bowl. If you want the bath bombs to be extra moisturising you can add a tablespoon of melted cocoa butter or a tablespoon of jojoba oil or Castor Oil and mix it in nicely, do this by hand.

Put your essential oils in a small spray bottle. Slowly and evenly spray on the essential oils, whilst you are carefully mixing the mixture with your other hand. Be careful not to spray on too much as you only need small quantities of essential oil, let your nose be your guide here.





Natural Healthcare by Vita cont...

The mixture is ready when it just holds together when you squeeze it, just like making a small snowball really. Adjust the mixture until you get it right, you can also use a spray bottle with flower water to add extra moisture to the mix, but only a very tiny bit at a time as you don't want the mixture to start foaming as yet. If it is too wet then add some more of the dry mix.

Divide the mixture into 4 portions and colour 3 of these portions with the above herbs/spices, leave 1 portion pure white.

Take your mould you are going to use for the bath bombs and pack the mixture in tightly, pressing down firmly as you go. When you scoop in the mixture, rotate the colours as you scoop them in so that you get nice marbled patterns.

If you are using round bath bomb moulds fill each half very well with a little excess and press the two halves firmly together as hard as you can, hold in place with clips. Work quickly as you don't want the mixture to dry out before you have pressed it in the moulds.

Leave your bombs to harden overnight without peeping, and then remove the bombs from the moulds with a firm twisting action; store in a cool dry place. Your bombs are ready in a couple of days when they have fully dried out.

When you first start to make bombs you will encounter the odd bomb that might crumble or crack, but don't worry, they are still perfectly enjoyable in the bath. All you have to do is store the mishaps in a sealed jar just like you would use normal bath salts or mixes.

To make the bombs look attractive as a gift, wrap them in colourful tissue paper or a nice piece of material and add a dried flower. Making bath bombs is very enjoyable and it is something you can do with children during the holidays as well.

To get hold of the ingredients such as the Bicarbonate of Soda, Citric Acid, and Corn Starch, try a Search Engine to find a Soap Maker Supplier, you will notice that you get a few kilos of ingredients for a few pounds/dollars!

Some people don't use moulds and make their own shapes by squeezing the mixture until they have the shape of a rock. This method might be great fun if you make bath bombs with your children, who can let their imaginations loose.

Have fun and enjoy your bath! Vita.



Here's a Picture sent in to us by Solaire



An amazing swirl of tree roots

The Healing Space

We plan to hold a Healing Ritual on Thursday 2nd November at 22:00 GMT in the private Whitewicca chat room. Anyone who is interested in joining us would be welcome. To find out how to participate, just post in the Health & Healing Forum in the topic called: Whitewicca Healing Pages and we will send you full instructions.

We plan to get together, raise some energy and send it out for healing purposes. You don't have to be experienced or a healer but if you would like to help out people, you will be most welcome!

This month:

The daughter of Elainasdaughter who has bronchial pneumonia
LavenderBlue with Bronchitis
Dudley, Vita's puppy who had a deformed leg
Apathy and the friends and family of Samuel Micha Taylor
Shadow_Song for the injured wrist
Ella and her baby who miscarried
Everyone, and there are lots of you, who have coughs and colds.



Green Witch: The Turn of the Year by Shimma

Here in the Northern hemisphere, in the rural heart of western England, the leaves are finally beginning to drift down. I've spent some time in London this week, working, and noticed that the trees there are all stressed, leaves shredded and dry through lack of rain. Herefordshire never really lacks falling water (!) being so close to Wales, so autumn can progress in its usual way.

This time of the year is my favourite. I love the way the trees colour up and the weather sharpens. The clouds drift slowly across deep blue skies, the cool blue that comes only with colder weather, and I start thinking about putting the garden to bed once more.

There's a lot to clear, and in a sense it's a disassembling of all the hard work that produced the gorgeous Midsummer display. But it's also a planning for the year to come. Wicca's New Year, if there is one, is Samhain, usually celebrated on 31st October. Coincidentally for Green Witches, it's the time of year to start the effort that will produce your next year's garden.

As a metaphor for life, it's useful. As the days shorten and the sun drifts away from us, we can turn inward, and think on the year we have had. What do we want for the year to come? How did we do this year? What do we regret? What can we put right? Who do we remember?

One of my yearly rituals involves thinking on these questions and planning both my garden and my life for the year to come – what do I want to achieve? When I've decided I plant. Bulbs are a favourite. They are fresh, chosen by me yearly, to fit my aspirations and hopes and can be grown indoors, outdoors, wherever!! They are also the equivalent of a promise. This sounds strange, but think – that unpromising brown and tiny onion becomes leaves, flowers, with only the application of water, soil and time. Amazing.

Planting Ritual for Samhain

Take a pot in an appropriate colour – this year I'm using red glazed terracotta, red being the colour for new beginnings.

Assemble your planting soil, bulbs, tools, and give yourself time to meditate and concentrate on the task in hand. Ask the Goddess and God to bless your endeavour.

When you have your ideas firmly fixed in your head, begin planting your bulbs. I usually plant in a pentagram, in layers – the largest bulbs at the base, smaller above and so on. Use a depth two or three times the height of the bulb as a guide. You can pack layer upon layer into a pot. This provides a fantastic display as well as reinforcing your idea.





A piece of crystal, a favourite rock can be placed on or in the soil to finish the job. You will be reminded of your wishes and dreams, and will be drawn back to attempting to achieve them.

So, while the rest of the Northern hemisphere sinks under Winter, you know you've got bulbs growing which will be sprouting green and fresh when all else is dormant, which will brighten your Spring and will remind you of promises and resolutions made. I hope they grow and flower as beautifully your bulbs do.

Brightest Blessings, Shimma x

AUTUMN ANAGRAMS

Find the eight words by rearranging the letters:

NOANNMCI

OGITMRNAI

RATBININOHE

VFLAALLNEESIG (2 WORDS)

RAVETSH

IYWDN

CASHKYAT

NIPPUKM

Solution in next month's issue

Here is the solution to last month's Word Search:

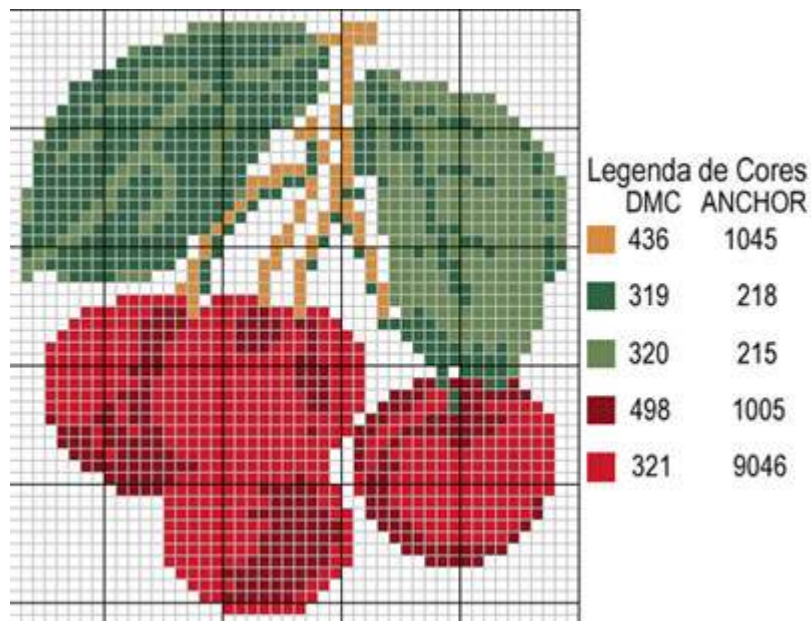
M	O	S	E	B	G	T	E	W	S	B	O	I	C	E	L	P	U	H
R	E	A	N	K	B	B	R	T	R	A	B	C	G	L	O	P	N	U
O	P	P	O	H	Y	T	S	A	B	P	E	I	U	M	L	R	F	R
B	E	A	R	T	R	S	I	E	Y	P	E	S	E	C	K	L	E	J
K	C	S	C	R	Y	I	N	G	N	L	I	B	C	W	D	B	B	N
T	R	I	A	F	E	T	H	I	O	E	E	R	S	P	I	F	L	A
E	T	C	W	A	L	B	B	R	S	T	O	E	V	R	M	O	P	E
M	L	A	H	A	L	L	O	W	E	E	N	B	T	O	M	A	L	V
N	R	U	J	N	K	A	S	U	N	E	I	H	I	L	R	S	T	E
D	E	E	W	B	A	C	T	Y	R	A	K	S	P	I	R	I	T	S
T	U	W	J	I	O	K	B	D	B	O	P	B	N	E	I	G	H	W
R	A	E	Y	T	R	B	L	A	E	E	M	N	I	V	I	N	G	O
N	O	J	C	E	B	U	A	N	U	Y	U	V	S	R	U	L	K	L
N	E	E	W	A	A	J	O	R	P	A	P	T	D	E	B	I	N	L
E	R	M	U	C	B	R	R	A	S	L	R	T	U	M	W	E	D	A
C	T	A	I	L	B	C	A	F	G	J	L	O	P	N	C	S	T	H
E	L	K	A	N	U	B	N	I	A	H	M	A	S	R	H	I	L	L
P	T	V	E	D	Y	K	G	N	I	L	D	S	B	R	E	A	O	L
K	G	T	F	C	P	S	E	E	L	S	R	O	T	S	E	C	N	A





November's Cross Stitch by Solaire

This month we are going to stitch a small design of cherries and make it into a small pin-cushion. This is again a very simple design for newcomers to stitching and will be easy to complete.



The design is 50 stitches by 50 stitches, which roughly translates to a design which when stitched will be approximately 3 ½ inches square. We therefore need a piece of 14 count aida fabric measuring 8 inches square plus a piece of backing fabric cut the same size. This backing fabric can be any kind of material you would like, but not cross stitch fabric. Perhaps a nice dress fabric or even some felt. For the design you will also need some stranded cotton – the numbers given above are for DMC threads and Anchor threads – but you can just choose any two shades of reds for the cherries, and two shades of green for the leaves and one shade of brown for the stalks.

To begin – find the centre of the aida fabric and mark it with a pin. Then find the centre of the chart (above), remembering that each darker line is placed at 10 squares making it easy for you to count. This will be approx 25 stitches across and 25 stitches down and is roughly where the top of the middle cherry is placed. Start stitching from there – perhaps stitch all the cherries first then stitch up into the leaves. This method of finding the centres of both chart and fabric will ensure that your design (whether small or large will be placed centrally on your fabric and there will be no chance of you running out of fabric!

Once you have completed all stitching, press the design on the back to take out any creases in the fabric. Now take the piece of backing fabric and with right sides together pin around three sides approx half an inch out from the





November's Cross Stitch by Solaire cont...

edge of the stitched design. Then turn the piece right side out, fill with stuffing or cotton wool and then slip-stitch the remaining edge. You should now have a nice little pin cushion.

Next month.. how to turn your stitching into a card.

Happy stitching Solaire

Animal Antics

Here is a submission by Cujo, who is walked, served and fed by Cherpatsy:

All doggies beware, there's a terrible thing out that mommies can buy for us, and give us, and it tastes good, but then it hurts!

It's called 'I scream', and I felt like I wanted to. Mommy gave me this little cup of stuff, she called 'I scream', and it tasted so good I ate and ate it. Then, suddenly, my head hurt soooooo bad, I ran and got in gam-ma's lap (you'll know her as Cherpatsy), for comfort. Gam-ma asked me if I had, let me think a minute what she called it...oh yes, a brain freeze. I wasn't sure, so I lowered my head and took my paws and put them as close to my head as I could. I guess she was talking about the hurting in my head, because then my mommy asked if I had a brain freeze, so I did the same thing, again.

Anyway, I can tell you, it hurt! I don't want anymore 'I scream'! But I wanted to warn all you doggies out there, who haven't been exposed to this stuff yet, to please beware! Mommy and Gam-ma said maybe I shouldn't have been given so much at one time. Well, duh! Hey, I'm just a little puppy dog, what do I know about stop eating something, when it tastes so good, or it will make my poor little head hurt? Sometimes I wonder about our humans! But, hey, ya gotta love 'em, right? I'm sure mommy didn't mean to make my head hurt. Well, gotta dash off and play now.

Meditation Tip

This tip was shared with us by Shimma in the Whitewicca forums and, thought simple and frighteningly obvious when you see it, is one that many of us haven't thought of! Often, extraneous noise can distract you from meditating, whether it's car horns or other people in the house making ordinary, but suddenly intrusive, noises. Buy ear plugs!





Crystal Insights by Heatherlace

This month, I have chosen Aventurine. This is a green quartz type crystal and is sometimes referred to as Indian Jade or Stone of Heaven.

This stone was revered by Ancient Tibetans and was used as the eyes in sacred status increasing divinatory powers. Aventurine is considered a fortuitous stone and attracts luck and is extremely useful in spells or meditations involving money or business success.

In times gone by, this stone was associated with the Thymus gland and was traditionally used for improving eyesight and healing diseases of the eyes. But Green Aventurine is an all-round healer as it soothes and balances.

Aventurine has many other invaluable properties. It radiates a calming energy and is used to shield the heart, for healing and balancing of emotions and can also be used to stimulate creativity and independence. It also soothes and opens a broken heart.

It can be used for strengthening blood and muscle tissues if a charged piece is worn or carried by the person. This stone can be used for relieving headaches. For this the person should place the aventurine on the affected area for about 5 minutes. Create a visualization image that you feel is appropriate – I like to visualize something relaxing like sitting on the beach watching the waves come in. For a sharp headache, hold a crystal against each of your temples. For a dull but persistent headache, lay your head on a soft pillow and place the crystal at the back of your head at the point where the base of your skull meets your neck.

Aventurine occurs in several other colours although Green is the most common colour.

Blue is generally used as an All-around healer; opens and dissolves blocks in the brow centre. Increases visionary powers and perceptions. Stimulates creativity and expression.

Orange is also an all around healer to bring joy into one's life. Works with the second chakra, dissolving creative blocks and healing sexual trauma. Aids in independence and originality.

Blue-Green also an all-around healer (mental, emotional, physical). It soothes, heals, and balances. Connects the heart and throat centres helping one communicate in a more loving manner.

I hope that you have a great deal of success using this amazing stone!!

Bright Blessings to you all! Heatherlace





Witches Kitchen by Shepherdess

Easy Chocolate Pudding

Serves 4 normal people (or two male adolescents!)

Makes a pudding with a chocolate sauce underneath.

For the pudding:

2 oz (50g) caster sugar
1 oz (25g) cocoa powder
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 oz (50g) fine semolina
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 oz (25g) butter (melted)
2 eggs (beaten)
¼ teaspoon vanilla essence
1 oz (25g) walnuts (finely chopped) (optional)

For sauce:

3 oz (75g) dark brown sugar
½ oz (10g) cocoa powder
10 fl oz (275 ml) hand hot water

Pre-heat oven to gas mark 4, 350°F or 180°C and grease a 1 ¾ pint (1 litre) deep oval baking dish (although any shape will do!).

Start by sifting the caster sugar, cocoa powder, cinnamon, semolina and baking powder into a bowl. In a separate bowl mix the melted butter, eggs and vanilla essence. Stir the egg mixture into the dry ingredients and add the walnuts if using.

Pour into the bowl and level out a bit. Now mix the brown sugar and cocoa powder together with a fork and whisk in the hot water.

Pour the cocoa liquid over the pudding (it says on the top – do not worry!).

Place the pudding in the preheated oven and bake for about 30 minutes or until the pudding has risen and is firm in the middle.

If you want to decorate it you can sprinkle with a bit of icing sugar but it never lasts that long. Is equally good hot or at room temperature and goes very well served with vanilla or chocolate ice-cream.





Blessing by Ladyfox

May all these pages here be blest,
That all who read may see the best
of information gathered here,
By wondrous witches far and near-
All to enjoy, to learn, and read;
Mayhap they'll find something they need.
May all within these pages find
Something to touch both heart and mind;
From spells to crafts to recipes,
May all find something sure to please.
Please bless these words and all who see
What's herein writ, "So Mote It Be."

Thought for the Month: Happiness is not having what you want but wanting what you have. (Hyman Judah Schachtel, American rabbi and writer), courtesy of Arianwen.

Seasons of history and tradition in Sweden:

holidays, traditions and superstitions Autumn – part1

By: Klara Stjarnljus

Autumn is a magickal time of the year, a time when the light gives place to the dark, and everything alive prepares for the long darkness of the winter. From around the 21st of September, the autumnal equinox, the nights are longer than the days, and the reign of darkness begins.

The Swedish word for autumn, "höst"[høest], is an old word that means harvest, and is probably also related to the English word "harvest". The harvest begins in September, and therefore is September called the "Harvest month" or "Harvest moon".

The 29th of September, Mickelsmäss – Michael's mass (the day of Saint Michael), is an old holiday that marks the day when the harvest should be done, and the cattle brought home from the pastures. The Mickelsmäss night was, as many other holiday nights, full of magic and witchcraft. The day was also counted as "first winter day", first part of the dark half of the year, in many parts of Sweden. It was important to have the outdoors farm work done before Mickelsmäss, and the cattle and horses should be brought home from pasture and sheds.





Seasons of history and tradition in Sweden cont...

If you brought your cattle home that very night, you had to do it in complete silence, not a word could be spoken! This concerned also everyone you met on the road, not a word!

You should also try to keep all the cowbells silent, often by stuffing them with straw. It was important to keep the homecoming of the animals secret from trolls and witches and the skogsrå (also known as huldra or skogsfrau – the Lady of the Woods, a sort of nymph in Swedish mythology), so they couldn't ruin anything for you, play pranks or cast spells on your cattle. If you succeeded in keeping the silence, the cattle were said to be protected from sorcery during the coming year.

Rumour has it that the animals could be poisoned, or get a cough, from the “winter dew” in the grass on Mickelsmäss night, and horses could become psychic if left out during the night. That was very bad, because then they would see all the hard work they would have to do the coming year, and become stubborn and unwilling to cooperate.

There were different rituals around putting the cattle in the barn for the winter on Mickelsmäss. In some parts a sheaf of straw was put in the doorway, and all the cows should take a morsel on their way in. That would give them good appetite during the dark time of the year. In the Finn Forests, the forest parts between Sweden and Finland, they instead put a stone in the barn and told the cows to eat everything that was softer than the stone. In other parts of Sweden, they “cured the barn” by sweeping along the walls with twigs from three kinds of trees: spruce, birch and alder, or walk three times widdershins (anti-clockwise) around the barn, and then kick the threshold and say “Here shall the devil out!” Finally they took three ants from an anthill, mixed them with graveyard soil and said: “Here shall my cattle breed like the ants in the anthill!”

To be on the safe side, most farmers also put steel for protection above doorways and windows. When a new house or barn was built, steel should be put under the threshold for protection. In older days it was also common to carve pentagrams on or above the doors.

In southern Sweden some farmers believed that the mermaid or Lady of the Sea (that in Swedish mythology didn't have a fish tail, but were just a woman who possessed and cared for the sea domains, as the skogsrå cares for the woods) “brought up hers on land” (cattle) during the winter time and fed them with fodder from the farmers' barns. The steel was useful for protection from her and other folklore creatures, and also from rats and mice.

The harvest was also important to handle in the right way, for example the workers had to rest a while before leaving the harvested field, otherwise they would carry the power off the field, and the next year's growth would be bad.





Seasons of history and tradition in Sweden cont...

It was also important to stop working in time before dark, there are several stories about this. I'm going to write my two favourites. One about a barn maid who was bringing her cattle home from pasture to the summer shed too late one evening. In the woods she met a troll woman who was walking to pasture with her gigantic yellow and black striped cows. She just gave the girl a look and said "Th'day is yours and th'night is mine." After that the maid was always careful to bring her cattle home safely in the afternoons.

The other story is about a stubborn farmhand who was eager to finish ploughing the field so he could rest the next day. Suddenly he heard voices from the mountains. The first said, "Can I borrow your big pot tonight?" The other answered, "Of course, what are you going to have for dinner?" The horrible answer was, "I'm going to cook the farmhand Stark, who keeps on working though it's dark!" The man hurried home as fast as he could, and as with all moralizing stories, after that he was always the first one off the field when the workers went home.

But the folklore creatures weren't always evil. The farmers could also get help from them. Stories tell that sometimes, late at night there were heard distant sounds of voices chanting "cut and bind, cut and bind", and when the workers arrived to the field in the morning, the straw was piled up in big sheaves waiting to be carried home to the barn.

Though this wasn't more than a few hundred years ago, fragments from the Asatru lives on in stories, traditions and explanations of phenomena; maybe not as serious as in ancient times, but in sayings and popular beliefs. One saying is that Thor made the thunder, but Thor wasn't the only one to make thunder; Freya had also a part in the game. There are often distant silent lightning flashes without thunder, usually late August to the middle of September. This was said to be Freya, who was lighting up the sky to check on the corn and see if it was ready. Corn flashes, as they were called, were also said to be good for the corn and make the harvest rich. The last straws should always be left on the field for Freya, to make next year's harvest good.

When the harvest work was done, the domestic servants and other workers were allowed to take the week off, as the only free week of the year. They were also, according to the contract, allowed to quit their jobs. It was therefore an official moving holiday, when people applied for new jobs in new towns, or just used their free time to travel and visit their families and friends. Of course, this only free week of the year was celebrated big time! There were fairs and parties, people were eating and drinking and just having a good time. It was common that couples got married on Mickelsmäss.

This was also the first night when candles were lit indoors, something that of course gave further solemnity to the holiday. Traditional food on Mickelsmäss is different types of pancakes, eggs, eggcheese cake (see my recipe in the Witches Kitchen forum), root vegetable soup and traditional Swedish lingonberry bread.



Seasons of history and tradition in Sweden cont...

Mickelsmäss was only an official holiday until 1772, when the Swedish king Gustav III thought that there were too many holidays and declared it a work day like all other days. In 1819 it was decided to move the official 'moving and quitting jobs' date till 24th of October instead of 29th of September, but the festivities were moved too, and the traditions lived on. Today Mickelsmäss is celebrated for fun in some parts of Sweden, with fairs, traditional food and historical plays, cosplaying or costume parties. But maybe some ancient traditions are still alive in some country villages...

October is called Slaughter Month or Slaughter Moon, and is the month that the slaughter starts, in order to be done before All Hallows Day. All Hallows Day is also the deadline for threshing and other farm work that is done after the harvest.

In some places, the slaughter should be done when the moon is waxing, for the meat should then become rich and fat. In other places should the slaughter be done when the moon was waning, because otherwise the fat would melt away.

Traditionally, it was dangerous for a pregnant woman to stir in or get in touch with the blood, because the child could get red birthmarks all over its body.



"Oktober", painting by Swedish painter Carl Larsson, 1882.



Seasons of history and tradition in Sweden cont...

November is the month when the frost arrives, and everything gets colder, and therefore it was important that the outdoors work was done. November is also called Winter Month or Winter Moon.

On the 6th of November we celebrate Gustav II Adolf (G.A. the 2:d), our heroic king who fell in the Battle of Lützen 1632. The day began to be celebrated in the beginning of the 19th century, and in the city of Gothenburg (where I live), which Gustav II Adolf founded, the day has always attracted a little extra attention. All over Sweden, people eat Gustav Adolf cakes, a pastry of sponge cake and marzipan, decorated with the king's picture in relief (profile), made of dark chocolate. In Finland, the 6th of November is, since 1908, celebrated as Swedish Day.

Next month, Klara continues with Swedish history and discusses more traditions in this fascinating journey through Swedish folklore.

Whitewicca Member's November Birthdays by Yuri

Thursday 2nd November: Earthchild

Thursday 9th November: Lisimba

Friday 10th November: Mathair

Tuesday 14th November: Silvermoon

Happy birthday to you all, have a wonderful day of celebration!

Missing but not forgotten...

We all enjoyed reading Aradia's Diary of a University Pagan and the lovely ritual that she wrote for the October Newsletter. Aradia sent in her submissions for this month and unfortunately, they are lost. With the huge amounts of spamming on the net in the past fortnight, mailboxes have burst under the strain, so I'm really sorry that we can't bring these items to you, but I hope we will be able to publish them next month.





Unicorns: a brief history by HeavenlyRomance

The word unicorn comes from the Latin, terms Unus meaning one, and Cornu, a horn. Unicorns are steeped in history, some of which is even depicted in pre-historic cave paintings, as in the example found in Lascaux, France. The painting shows an animal with horns, the painters in this era would have used this type of artwork which in a simple perspective possibly resembles the one legendary horn of the unicorn. Artwork from the ancient Mesopotamian period also shows an animal with only one horn on its profile.



Unicorns are unlikely to have been related to the equine animals so often believed. Instead they are more likely to be descendants of cloven-hoofed mammals like pigs, camels, deer, and antelope. This is because unicorns have cloven hooves and have true horns which you will find on no horse, only cloven-hoofed animals.

To narrow down their 'relatives' even more, we can say that they are more likely to be related to antelope as opposed to deer because of the horn. Deer antlers are bonelike structures that grow out of the male's (generally) forehead in the spring and summer. The antlers are then shed for the winter months. Now the horns found in antelope, cattle and sheep are never shed and continue to grow throughout the animal's lifetime. Also, both sexes typically grow horns where as only the buck (male deer) grows antlers.



The unicorn is said to have magical powers, rooted in the horn. Their horns, which are spiralled (tightly or loosely), can be white, gold, black, or even rainbow coloured, depending on the age of the unicorn. It has even been theorized that the horns are whitish on the outside but black on the inside. Both males and females grow horns, but predictably, the female horns are smaller. Male's horns continue to grow throughout their lives. The youth have white horns. They are believed to have medicinal uses and made of an unusually strong substance. It is believed to be an anti-toxin, and able to purify entire rivers with a single touch of the horn in the water.

Just as the unicorn's appearance may vary, so does his role in the world: sometimes he is simply a beautiful animal. At other times he has intelligence at least on a par with our own, and is famed for his gentle wisdom. Often he is a creature of divinity, pure of heart and spirit beyond any mortal's reach, possessed of incredible powers of creation and healing.





Unicorns: a brief history cont...

The Unicorn is special among the creatures of legend. He is at one and the same time both real and imaginary, a creature of the past and present; solid and intangible; animal and deity; an immortal power and yet with a child-like vulnerability.

Many are wary of saying he never existed. A surprising number are wary of saying he doesn't exist now. Whatever you believe, these magnificent creatures capture imaginations and hearts of all who love mystery and romance.

Moon correspondences by HeavenlyRomance

November

Known as: Dark Moon, Fog Moon, Beaver Moon, Mourning Moon, Blotmonath (Sacrifice Month), Herbistmanoth (Harvest Month), Mad Moon, Moon of Storms, Moon when Deer Shed Antlers, Snow Moon.

Nature Spirits - subterranean faeries

Herbs - grains of paradise, verbena, betony, borage, cinquefoil, blessed thistle

Colours - gray, sea-green

Flowers - blooming cacti, chrysanthemum

Scents - cedar, cherry blossoms, hyacinth, narcissus, peppermint, lemon

Stones - topaz, hyacinth, lapis lazuli

Trees - alder, cypress

Animals - unicorn, scorpion, crocodile, jackal

Birds - owl, goose, sparrow

Deities - Kali, Black Isis, Nicnevin, Hecate, Bast, Osiris, Sarasvati, Lakshmi, Skadi, Mawu

Power Flow - take root, prepare, transformation, strengthen communication with the god or goddess who is closest to you.

Moon phases for November 2006:

Full Moon - November 5

Last Quarter - November 12

New Moon - November 20

First Quarter - November 28



All the information is for the northern hemisphere (note from Editor: if anyone wants to provide this information for the southern hemisphere, that would be great, just get in touch!).

