PAGANS
OF THE NORTH

ISSUE 25

Editors Letter

Hello,

Here at Pagans of the North, we have rolled into 2023 with so many ideas, goals and aspirations for the year ahead.

As you might notice as you read our magazine, we have had some design changes. We are always looking to improve Pagans of the North, both visually and content wise for our readers.

We hope by the Winter, we will be able to provide you with a Winter Solstice physical copy for you to have in your hands and read, which will contain not only new content but also fan favourites from the issues previous throughout 2023, exciting!

In this issue, we will be learning all about Bealtaine, the holiday of May 1st. We meet Rachele our newest team member in our 'Meet: Rachdoesmagic' feature. We join Claire Keen in our revamped Witches Corner looking at how to make simmer pots! As well as our classic pages such as Deity of the Month and our Book Review. We learn about Altars and the upcoming Moon Phases and much more.

We also have our brand new Pagans Of The North store open for our subscribers! Subscribing is free. Don't forget to check out that page to take a look at our really cool designs just for you.

As always, I want to remind you that you can be part of our Suppliers List for absolutely free, and please message us your feedback and comments, we love hearing from you!

Enjoy, Quinn x

PAGANS OF THE NORTH

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Trader Of The *Month*

By Louisa Chisholm-Kelly

Here at POTN one of our favourite ways to shop for magical supplies, oddities, crafts and more is at local witchy markets, so we got very excited when a brand new one popped up. Wolf & Witch Night Market is the creation of Louise Keen and Jane Burns. Their first market was in April at the Linthorpe Community Centre in Middlesbrough.

POTN: Recently you held your first market, can you tell us how it went please?

Louise: The first market went really well, way better than we expected. The atmosphere and energy at the market was brilliant. Our sellers were fantastic and we had more people through the doors than we ever imagined!

POTN: Do you have another market planned?

Louise: Yes, we are planning on doing some more this year but have yet to confirm dates. The best place to keep an eye out is our Facebook page.

POTN: What made you start the market?

Louise: Jane and I are both crafters who sell regularly at local craft fairs; Jane runs Snow Wolf's Art Den (resin art) and I run Hedge Witchery UK selling witchy craft and curiosities. We started the market as alternative markets in the north always seemed to be in Newcastle and Sunderland so we felt Middlesbrough could do with its own.

POTN: How would you describe your Pagan Path?

Louise: I'd say my pagan path is definitely Pagan Hedge Witch. I love nature and I am very open with my craft. I have an active TikTok where I share tips and explain what I'm working on regularly. Jane also follows a Pagan path, she is a witch.

POTN: What advice would you give people that are new to Paganism?

Louise: The very best advice I could give to people that are new to Paganism is find your own path, do things that make you happy!

You can find Wolf & Witch online here:
W&W Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090125829918
Snow Wolf's Art Den Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/snowwolfsartden
Hedge Witchery UK Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/hedgewitchery21
Hedge Witchery UK TikTok - https://www.tiktok.com/@hedgewitcheryuk

Book Review

By Louisa Chisholm-Kelly

The Hellebore Guide To Occult Britain
&
The Magical Card Battle Of Britain

Every so often something different crosses my path, and when this little set popped up we just had to have it!

Hellebore is a small publishing company that specialises in British folk horror and the occult. They were founded in 2019 and are most famous for their (quite beautiful) magazines.

In 2021 they released their first foray into book publication with The Hellebore Guide to Occult Britain. A little book filled with over 500 occult, magical, Pagan, historical and folk horror filming locations. From stone circles to castles, caves, churches, and stately homes used in films such as Dracula and The Rocky Horror Picture Show.

This book is far from a full list of British sites - that book would be especially huge - but it is incredibly useful. It will also fit in a bag or glove box very happily. Separated into regions, it features the publishing house's distinctive illustrations alongside maps, photos, coordinates and drawings along with just enough information on every site to pique interest. We have already used it to gain inspiration for future visits, and have discovered sites we didn't know existed.

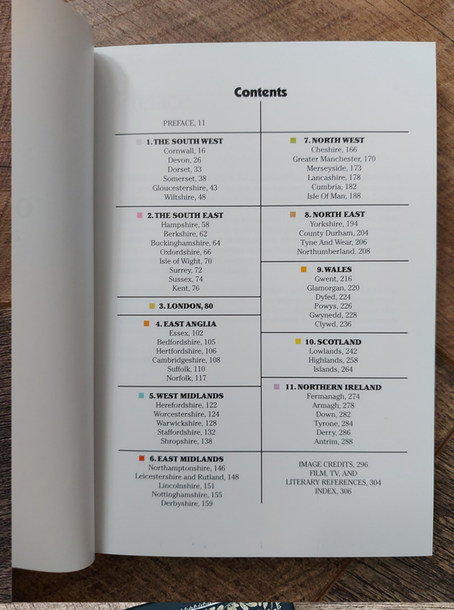
The Magical Card Battle of Britain is a wonderful box of whimsy by the same in-house design team at Hellebore. It can be played in two ways: as a version of happy families and as a version of top trumps. The 36 cards are separated into 9 houses: occultists, scholars, charmers, enchantresses, witches and witchfinders, cliques, ritual objects, visions, and magical sites. Beautifully illustrated, each card has a short description of the featured person, group, place or item, and a list of categories and scores. A fantastic occult twist on two classic childhood games, perfect to be enjoyed with friends and a bottle of something lovely.

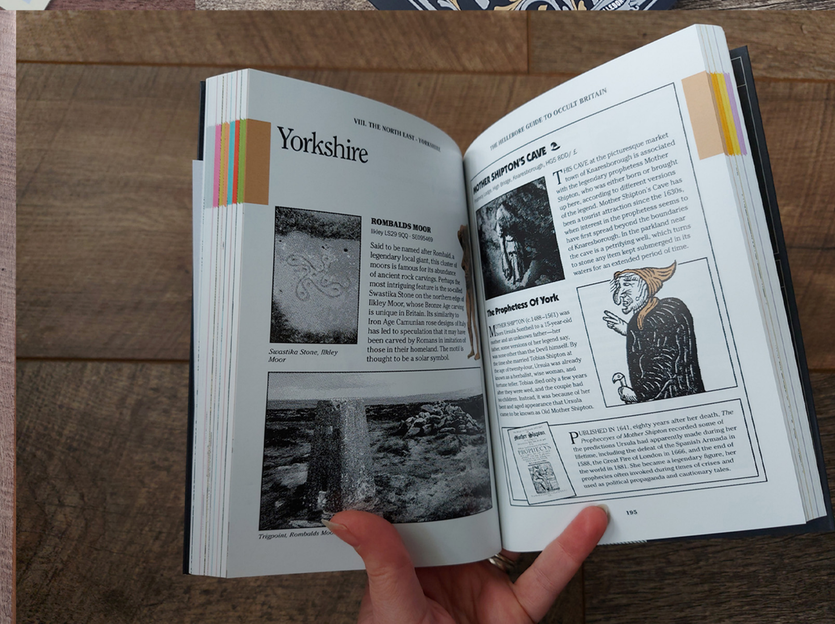
Both items together make a great addition to any staycation, especially a classic British wet weekend!

The Hellebore Guide to Occult Britain and The Magical Card Battle of Britain can both be bought directly from Hellebore.

Their magazine is also well worth investigating.

https://helleborezine.bigcartel.com/





BEALTAINE/BELTANE

By Quinn Green

Beltane (Anglican spelling), or Bealtaine (Irish), Bealltainn (Scots Gaelic) and Boaltinn (Manx) is a Gaelic May Day festival celebrated on May 1st. The Welsh equivalent to this festival is called Calaan Mai. This festival marks the start of summer for Celtic people at sunset. It is mentioned in early Irish literature and has great importance in Irish lore.

Cattle were driven out to the summer pastures and involving fires, such as large bonfires would happen to protect the cattle, crops and people.

The Celtic people felt the flames, ash and smoke of the bonfire would hold protective powers, and so people would walk around or between the fire, sometimes even leaping over the flames.

There would be feasts, and food would be offered to the aos si (faeries or elves in Celtic lore), homes, such as windows and doors would be decorated in flowers, especially the colour yellow, perhaps the colour linking to the fires. In some places, 'May Bushes' would be made, where thorn bushes would be decorated with flowers, ribbons and shells. Holy wells were also visited.

Another custom was to bake a cake and place it and a jug on the table in the home as it was believed that anyone who had died abroad would come to their ancestral home and that the dead would come back home to visit their family and friends. In some places such as Scotland, the morning dew of Beltane morning, would be collected by a young maiden and she would wash her face with the dew to evoke ever-lasting beauty or youthfulness.

Over time, Bealtaine customs fell out of practice or evolved into other practices, though stories were collected and passed down and sometimes even written down by Folklorists in modern times. Some of these folklorists describe Beltane festivities, though not being as big and community-wide as they were hundreds of years ago, as still in some small way practised but were clearly dying out.

In the 20th Century with the rise of Wicca and Neo-Paganism, Beltane was mentioned again and is now part of the popular 'Wheel Of The Year' and called a cross-quarter 'sabbat' (to Wiccans) or holiday. Fertility wasn't a large part of ancient Beltane customs but was made popular by Wicca, taking from Germanic/English May Day customs as well and mixing them together, including the maypole. And, although now marriage seems to be a popular focus during Beltane, ancient traditions suggest marriage or birth during Beltane was believed to be ill-fated.

The concept of the maypole as something that is abundant during May Day is believed to have come from Germanic Europe and, although it may have possibly been pagan in origin, its true origins and meaning have been lost, as is the case with a lot of folklore customs and practices that are now a part of some Christian customs. So although there are many theories that can point to the maypole to paganism, we will never know for sure.

Thoughts: ***'In colour theory, Beltane and the month of May to me is the colour purple, perhaps because of the bluebell woods I love to visit as well as the Lavender, Lilacs and Heather that grow and bloom in May. But the ancient celts considered Beltane to be associated with yellow. as the etymology of the name of this festival links it to words meaning 'bright fire' The name Latha Buidhe Bealltainn (Scottish) or Lá Buidhe Bealtaine (Irish), 'the bright or yellow day of Beltane', means 'the first of May.'***

Ways to celebrate

1 Light a fire! It doesn't have to be a big raging bonfire to still be symbolic. Perhaps, a small fire in your garden, or even a candle or two around the home, to symbolise how important fire is for this festival.

2 Decorate your home with flowers, perhaps yellow like the ancient celtic people did, or even purple flowers like lavender and iris. You could even go out and visit your local Bluebells woods.

3 Have food and drink, make a feast, invite loved ones around and be in the moment with people you care about. Bake a cake. Leave it out for your ancestors or the Aos si, then you can eat it yourself after.

4 Visit a local holy well, leave a clootie, but make sure it's environmentally friendly and biodegrable.

5 Dress in green, yellow or purple, or wear something of those colours as a little hint to the festival.

6 Read further into Beltane and other May Day festivals celebrated this time of year.

MOON PHASES

IN APRIL AND MAY

The next First Quarter is 27th April
After this the moon becomes a Waxing Gibbous

The next full moon is: 5th May
Flower Moon

The next First/Third Quarter is: 12th May
After this the moon becomes a Waning Crescent

The next full moon is called the
FLOWER MOON
to some Native American tribes.

Buddhists celebrate VESAK on the day of this years May full moon which is the most important festival of them all, as it commemorates the birth, enlightenment and deathof the Buddha.

The May new moon is on 19th May
This moon will be in Taurus

There will be a
PENUMBRAL ECLIPSE
during our next full moon but unfortunately we wont get to see it in the UK.

A Penumbral eclipse is when the moon travels through the outer part of the Earths shadow also called the Penumbra, and it is easy to miss.

The May First Quarter is 27th May

Deity Of The Month

By Sam Stoker

Zeus

Perhaps one of the most well known of the pagan gods, Zeus sits atop his throne on Mount Olympus wielding lightning and ruling over the lesser gods. Zeus comes from Ancient Greek mythology and is revered as king of the gods, lord of the sky and thunder, and is another allfather deity (and literal father to many!).

Often depicted as a white ageing man with a full beard and long hair, Zeus holds a thunderbolt and wears a toga. Child of the sibling Titans Cronus and Rhea, Zeus goes on to have seven wives, possibly five of whom were relatives, the last and perhaps most well known of course being Hera, his older sister.

Of his 20+ children - and some sources cite over 30 - the most famous include Persephone, Athena, Apollo and Artemis, and the Muses. Throughout history Zeus has been known to be very busy seducing women and fathering more deities. He didn't stop at wives either; sleeping with nymphs and humans too, Heracles was his final child.

Brother of Hades, Zeus gave his permission for Hades to marry Persephone and thus triggered the seasonal changes (see our older piece on Persephone herself for the details there).

He was responsible for giving Pandora her infamous box, for imprisoning his own son Apollo, and in mythology transformed himself into many, many things including but not limited to a phoenix, a bull, a bear, a human shepherd, and his children, Artemis and Apollo. Pegasus, the winged horse, was used to carry his thunderbolts.

Equated with the Roman god Jupiter, Zeus has been worshipped throughout Ancient Greece, right up until 9th Century CE when Christianity stamped out the last of local paganisms. Zeus and many other Greek deities are worshipped today within Hellenic polytheism. The Roman takeover of Greece enshrined Zeus in history with the mixing and conflation of the two religions. During festivals, white animals would be sacrificed in his honour. Some cults sacrificed humans to Zeus too.

We wouldn't recommend doing that at the moment, but if you feel called to worship Zeus, perhaps you could leave an offering of something a little more palatable!

Claire Keen's Altar

Altars

By Louisa Chisholm-Kelly

The Oxford English Dictionary describes an altar as "a table or flat-topped block used as the focus for a religious ritual, especially for making sacrifices or offerings to a deity."

Almost every recorded religion across the world uses, or used, an altar of some description. Most are used within religious buildings or at religious sites, both modern and ancient. There are Roman altars with clear inscriptions and dedications to specific Gods and Goddesses that have been found all over the North of England. Most of the originals have been moved to local museums to preserve them. Some of them, especially those along Hadrian's Wall, have replicas placed where they were found.

Historical records and archaeological finds, mostly Roman, suggest that having a home or garden altar was also a regular practice. This practice has endured throughout time and across many religions. These altars are often used as a place to focus and pray. They often display pictures or statues of Jesus, Mary, Gods or Goddesses. Many include photos of, or items belonging to, departed loved ones. It is also usual to find candles, crystals, incense, flowers, food, drink, and other offerings. In some religious practices the altars are dedicated to the spirits or creatures of the land that the home stands on.

Within Pagan circles, and in a lot of Pagan books, you will have seen people talking about altars. A lot of Wiccan books will give you a list of what is deemed necessary to place on your altar, while other denominations will often be more vague. Some state that certain things must be included, and they must be in certain places. Others say that you should use the altar at set times and for all, or certain, magical practices. It can get very confusing, and with the levels of secrecy that some adhere to, sometimes people are unwilling to help those that are new to the craft or their Pagan path.

In the spirit of education, clarity and helpfulness, here at Pagans of the North we thought it was time to demystify the use of altars.

Most importantly there is only one rule that everyone should remember when thinking about setting up a Pagan altar: There are no rules!

When there are no rules, you are free to make your altar exactly how YOU want it to be!

Want to put crystals on it? Great!
Want to include photos? Excellent!
Want to include God/Goddess statues? Brilliant!
Want to change it with every season? Wonderful!
Want to have a large altar? Awesome!
Want to have a tiny altar? Marvellous!
Want to have one that lives in a box? Fantastic!
Don't want to have an altar at all? Fabulous!

My altar is very little. It is a silver metal tray that has a candle holder built in. It was a lovely little IKEA find, and it sits on the corner of my TV unit. On it I have crystals; a small bowl with a goddess figure on it; rose quartz carved Willendorf Goddesses; found magpie and crow feathers; dried flowers; found acorns and conkers; a pine cone that is sprayed gold that came from a bouquet my husband bought me at a tough time in our lives; items that belonged to my late mother; candles; a tiny glass that we pour mead into; and the collars that belonged to my dear late doggos. Just behind the tray is a cup filled with seeds that has a deer head on it. It doesn't change very much, sometimes sentimental things are added to it, and sometimes things are moved to a memory box.

After my mother, Carol, died, we left her altar as it was. It had served as both a personal and a family altar, so it felt right to keep it. When I visit my Dad I still use it. It is laid out across a large table, and the adjacent windowsill. Just outside Mum had bird feeders. It has her favourite large crystals, representatives of her animal guides, statues of Diana, Quan Yin, Isis and Sekmet, along with candles, cups, wands, and more. In the drawers beneath she kept various magical tools and extra candle supplies. She would add seasonal flowers and plants, at one point even decorating a small live fir tree with crystal earrings and necklaces!

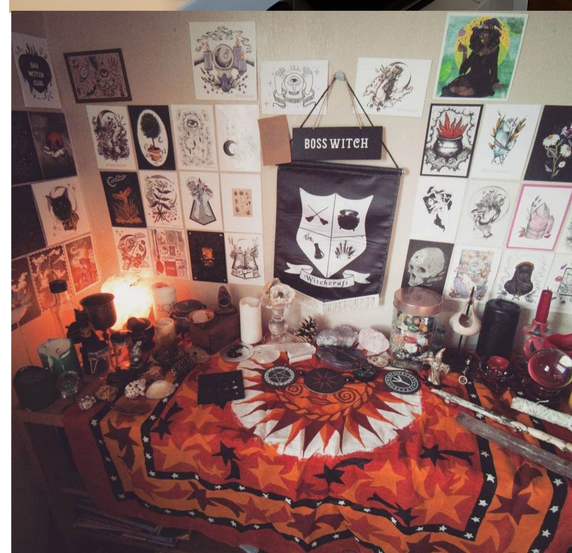
Quinn's Altar (bottom right)

'A picture of my last ever altar from two years ago. I don't use altars anymore, but this one looks the way it does from building it up over the years, adding more pieces to it gradually.

There's symbols of all elements on it, including shells, candles, rocks, incense, and I even have some older remnants from when I was a Wiccan, including a little cauldron and a chalice. I even had a crystal ball that was gifted to me!

Nowadays I don't use an altar in my practice; it's not necessary to have one as part of my own personal path as a witch and pagan, but maybe one day in the future I might create a smaller space with a couple of crystals and some incense with pictures of my relatives that have passed on so they have a permanent space In my home for remembrance.'

Louisa's Altar



RACHDOESMAGIC

New team member Rach introduces herself and her practice, including tips, tricks, and what she offers as a witch for hire.

POTN: Hi Rach, can you tell us a little about yourself?

Rach: Hi! In short, I am a Pagan Chaplain and Celebrant; I practise Traditional Witchcraft, and specifically I follow the Italian tradition. I also qualified and practised as a Counsellor and Trauma Therapist: skills from different paths of life that enlighten my spiritual life and the work I do, as well having also become part of my identity.
I am also neurodivergent, queer, and a first generation immigrant with one of those stories that starts with “I came to the country with only £500 and a bag of clothes and hopes”.

POTN: Can you describe your path and practice?

Rach: Describing my practice is always challenging, as it is integrated into my life, in my way of thinking, my ethics and morals; everything I do is my practice.

My path is that of the Witch that walks the liminal path, a bridge between the worlds and a fighter for the marginalised. I am the resource you go to when mundane means aren’t cutting it, as well as always working behind the scenes to protect those who need it most. In the practical side of my craft, I use my connection to Spirit, and magical tools, to craft spells or rituals - as well as divination tools to both communicate with the Otherworld, with my guides, and for growth and introspection alike.

All of it is supported by a two-way relationship with the practice itself: the utmost respect for the Craft, its history, the roots it came from, the ancestors, and every single thing I use and spirit I call upon. It has to be a balance of give and take, but not because it is a requirement: because it is the right thing to do.

That’s the most important part, the non-negotiable part too.

POTN: What do you have to offer?

Rach: I offer compassionate guidance. Free from judgement, without preconceived notions, and truly inclusive. I try to be as accessible as I can, whilst respecting my boundaries. My services range from Reiki, energetic healing, cleansing and rebalancing of the person’s energy and aura, to Spiritual guidance, trauma recovery and counselling. And of course, cartomancy in the form of tarot and oracle readings. Some clients come to me with a clear idea of the service they want. Some come with an open mind and we follow the path that feels right as we start walking it.

Both approaches are valid, of course!

POTN: What's your favourite service you like to offer people? And what is your most popular?

Rach: My favourite service is an integrative approach, tailored to each client, where we package together holistic healing and reading. My most popular services are tarot readings, followed closely by counselling sessions.

POTN: Any advice you could offer the readers?

Rach: Any advice I feel to offer is to be less focused on “niceties” and more focussed on kindness: for others, and for yourself. The more we listen to our inner selves, the more we see how kindness is the most magical of all tools. But make no mistake: deciding to do so implies that we have to undo a lot of deeply ingrained patterns. And that is hard work. And it’s the most rewarding too.

POTN: Anything else?

Rach: Yes. I’m a Gemini through and through, with Leo Moon and Rising and a Capricorn Stellium. I go from hyper-focused and stable to fluid and airy in the space of seconds. So, you won't always know who you’re gonna get, and neither will I. For me, it’s a great gift, but the chaotic Witchy energy is not for everyone.
I’m looking forward to meeting you!

You can find Rach on Instagram at: @Rachdoesmagic

https://linktr.ee/rachdoesmagic

or email at: info@rachdoesthings.com

Witches Corner

Simmer Pots

By Claire Louise from Hedge Witchery UK

This issue in the witches corner i'm going to be discussing simmer pots. Witches have long used the magical energies of herbs, plants, and flowers in their craft. Simmer pots are a great way to release magical energies into your surroundings.

Whether you are a seasoned witch or new to the craft, experimenting with different ingredients and intentions can lead to some beautiful magical workings. The scent of a simmer pot can also add an extra sensory element to your practice, helping to create a magical atmosphere when completing spell and ritual work.

When i'm putting a Simmer pot together, I first consider my magical intentions. For my example in this issue's witches corner I'm going to be creating a simmer pot for ***Friendship, Happiness and Positivity.*** But you could craft a simmer pot for many different intentions such as abundance, love, or for a spiritual connection with a deity you are working with. The possibilities are endless. I'll give you a few ideas of ingredients to use later on.

I try where possible to use plants, herbs and flowers that I have grown myself or foraged as I think this adds more of my magical energy into the pot, but it is perfectly okay to buy in your herbs, plants and flowers. So to start with I gather the following ingredients for their correspondence with ***Friendship, Happiness and Positivity***.

I always clean my area before I carry out magical workings as this helps me with my clarity of thought. Into a clean pan I add in moon water from the last full moon.

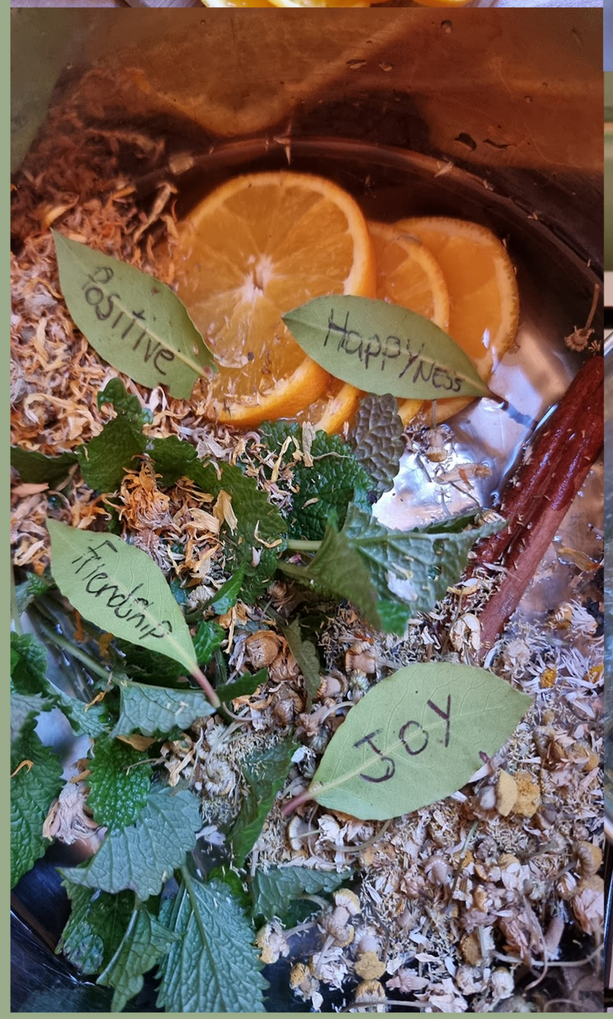
Moon water is clean water that was placed in the moonlight to harness the moon's magical energy. I found a massive beautiful clear glass jar at a local charity shop for a few pounds that's perfect for creating moon water in. However, you can use any clear container to do this with. If you don't have moon water you can use any clean fresh water. I strongly believe magic comes from within so as long as your intentions are clear don't worry too much.

I then take my time to arrange the ingredients in the pan. With each ingredient I add I consider my intentions and the outcome I desire. I find this part very enjoyable and an aesthetically pleasing activity to complete.
Leave the bay leaves until last.

With the bay leaves write your magical intentions on to each one. For this you can write the words or you can create your own sigil. Once complete intentionally place these in the pot too to complete your composition.

Daisy - Foraged on a recent walk
Calendula - Home grown from seed last year and dried.
Lemon balm - Fresh from my garden
Cinnamon - Shop bought.

Chamomile - Home grown from seed last year and dried.
Orange - Shop bought but sliced with my intentions in mind
Bay leaves - Fresh from my bay tree.



Simmer Pots

Once you have added all your ingredients you can turn on the heat. I use a medium heat as I feel this gradually releases the magical energies into my space. However, you could be doing this on an open fire if that's the case I'd use the hot embers rather than flames. As the water heats up and starts to evaporate you will smell all those magical ingredients mixing together and releasing their energies into your space. Take your time to enjoy this process. With a spoon I stir my pot clockwise, stirring in my intentions.

I usually have a simmer pot going for at least 20 minutes. You can then leave it too cool and reheat the next day if you wish. However, I like to let the water cool slightly. I then drain the mixture and in a sterile spray bottle I pour the warm liquid and seal.

This can then be used as a room spray for whenever you need a quick burst of magical energy into your area.

I hope I have inspired you to create your own simmer pot. Here's a few more ideas you could try. I'd love to see photos of any simmer pots you create so please feel free to join the ***Hedge Witchery UK*** community over on facebook.

List of suggested ingredients for different magical simmer pot ideas:

Love and Sexual Energy
Roses
Strawberries
Cinnamon
Apples
Mugwort
Ginger
Hawthorn
Bay

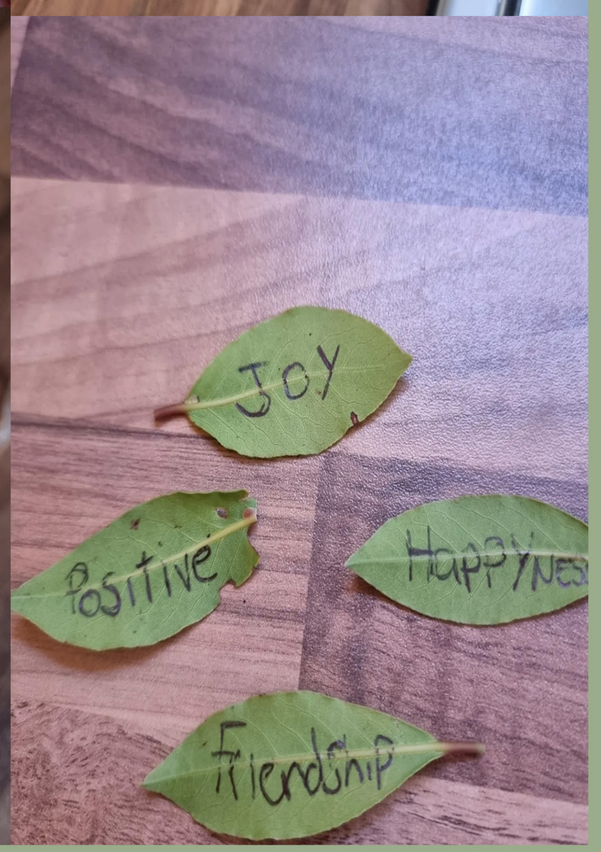
Good luck
Apple
Mint
Sage
Cinamon
Bay

Banishing & Hex Breaking
Parsley
Cinnamon
Pepper
Nettle
Lilac
Bay

Until next time take care
Claire Louise
Hedge Witchery UK

Images in order:
Page one:
1) List of ingredients
2) Moon water
3) Ingredients in the pan
4) Ingredients in Pan on medium heat

Page 2:
1) Another image of ingredients in pan
2) Ingredients drained
3) Ingredients in spray bottle for future use
4) Intentions on bay leaves



Energy Reading for the collective

By Rachdoesmagic

Hello beautiful souls and thank you so much for being here and reading with me. It means more than you know. I'm extremely proud to have joined the POTN team and I'm looking forward to hearing all your feedback.

In this Issue, I'm bringing you a collective reading on the energies of the season. With May, blooming flowers everywhere, nectar and pollen in the air and the sweetness of Summer closing in, this part of the year brings an uplifting fire with it and we start seeing more smiles on folks' faces - and the first BBQs!

So, how do we best enjoy and embody the energies of this season?

It's a good time to make bold choices, there are several options available and some seem safer than others. But this season is not the time to play it safe.
Taurus is the sign of indulgence and luxury, so put on *those* jeans or *that* dress and give yourself permission to feel hot and sexy! Feel into your body, admire yourself in all your gorgeousness, appreciate your soul and your body for all that they do for you: and remember that pleasure is your birthright.

Could other people give you a side-eye? Maybe. But oftentimes those who feel the need to judge are the ones who feel most self-conscious. And perhaps, your boldness will inspire someone to do the same too.
The weeks ahead will present us with options, some safer than others. Use your judgement. But, use *your* judgement, not the fear of others'.

To overcome the feeling of uncertainty and self-doubt might seem challenging but by making the call that feels most audacious, we can bring a whole new sense of fulfilment and gratification to our lives.

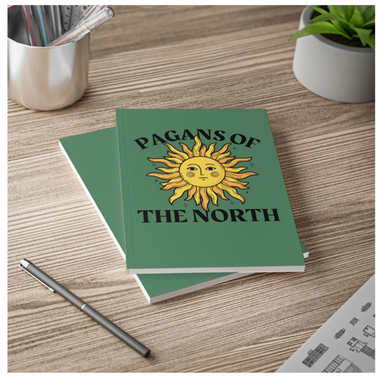
Can you imagine the sense of liberation that comes when letting go of other people's standards? Visualise it, feel how it would feel, and then allow it to manifest. It's time to feel how YOU want to feel when waking up each morning.

You can find Rach on instagram at @Rachdoesmagic

NEW: ONLINE STORE

Pagans Of The North have been working hard behind the scenes recently, creating cool designs and making epic products for you! If you're a SUBSCRIBER you now have access to our brand new and super cool POTN Online Store! We have Water Bottles, T-Shirts, Tote Bags and Notebooks in various unique designs.

Here are just some of our products:



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Volunteer With Us:

Pagans Of The North are always looking for new volunteers to join our team. If you're interested in writing, or social media management is more your thing, perhaps you are great at networking with people and want to help us reach more people across the North? Or want to offer something else to POTN please contact us.

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We offer free advertising in our e-magazine for businesses, suppliers, creators and other sellers. We also have an online directory where you can also advertise with us as well as our Events/Moots page which highlights all the local moots, events, workshops and the like in the North of England.

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Instagram and Facebook: @Pagansofthenorth

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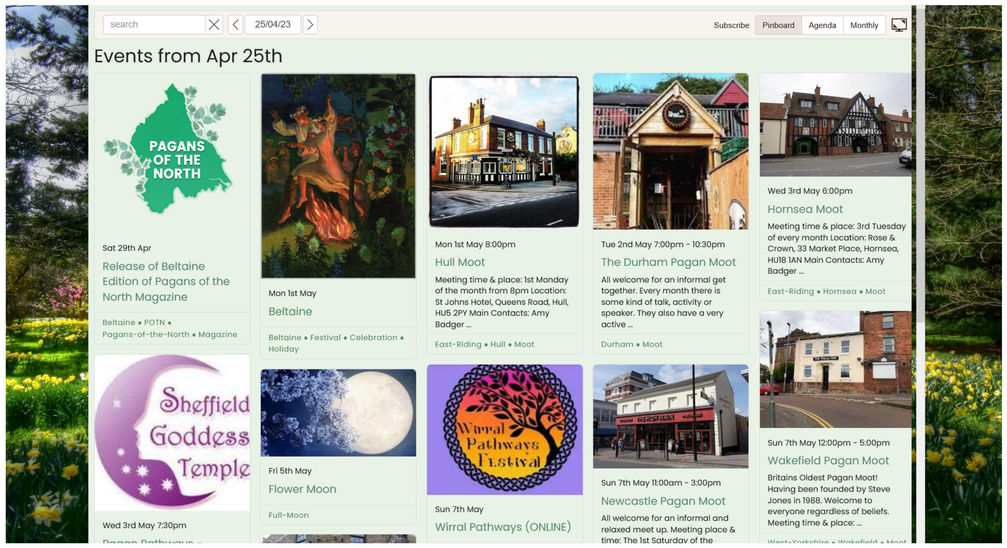
Here you can find local events, moots and workshops, all in one place in our handy pinboard calender!

visit: pagansofthenorth.co.uk/events



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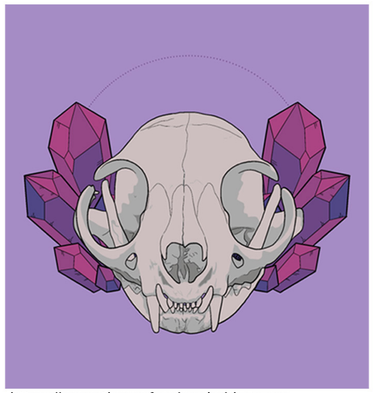

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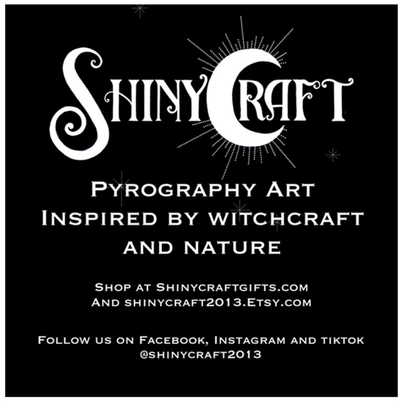

Thank you

Thank you to:

Louisa Chisholm-Kelly
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Louise Bloomer
Sam Stoker
Rachele Pasinato
Claire Keen
Gwyn Kipling

To contact us:

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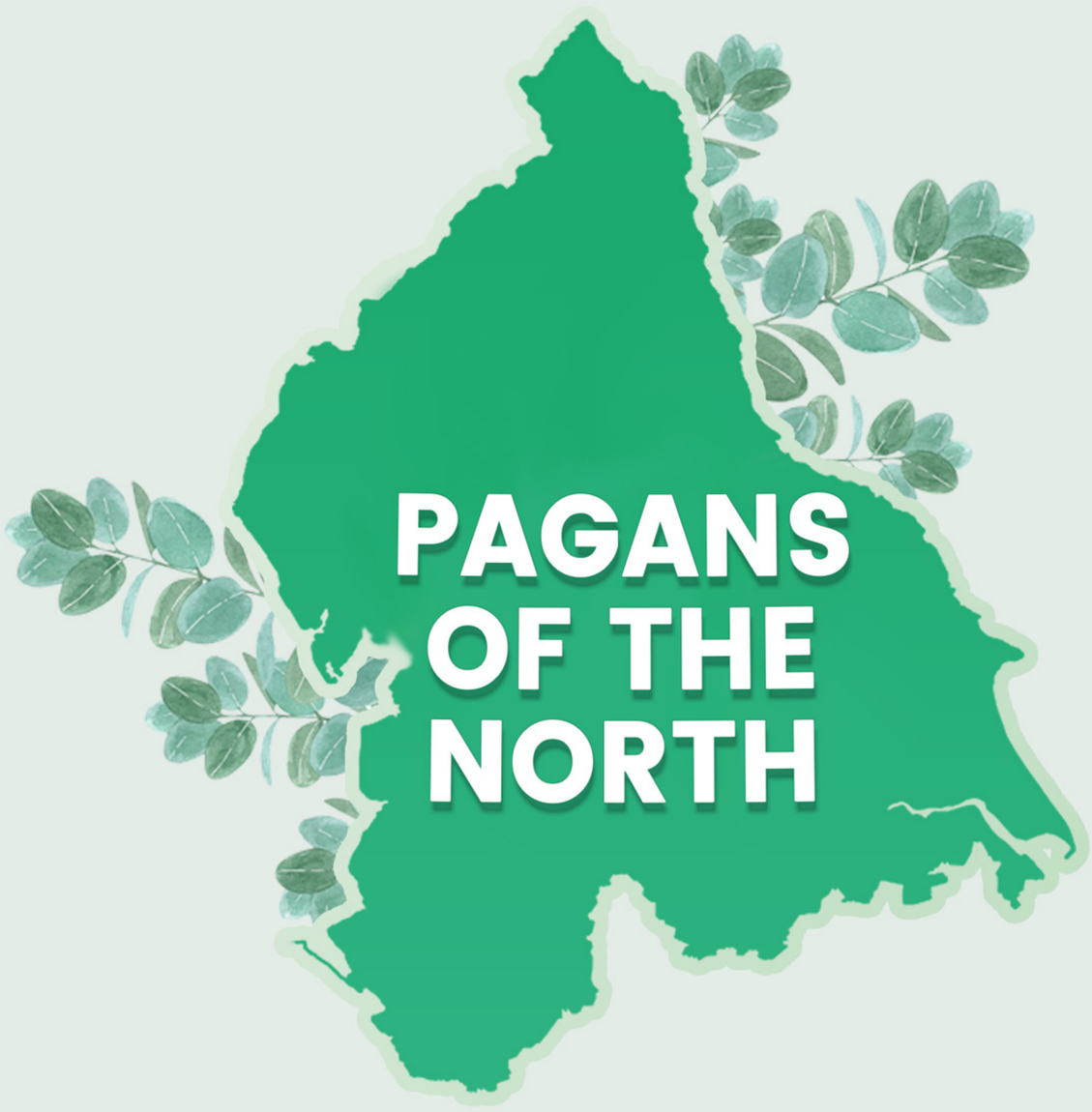

Facebook Groups you may be interested in:

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Northumbria Kith
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Northeast England Pagan - Crafts,
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We are not affiliated or connected with any groups listed in the above list.