

TRADER OF THE MONTH

This month we spoke to Luke Stoker of **KoZy Crafting**, a small woodwork and resin craft business based in County Durham.

POTN: Hi Luke! Can you tell us a bit about KoZy Crafting?

Luke: It's a business built around my hobbies - a way to make me feel like I've accomplished something with my interests. It's bespoke jewellery, custom resin dice for D&D campaigns, 3D printed ornaments, wandcrafting, pyrography, glass cutting...a bit of everything my brain decides would be fun to do and I turn my hand to. It's mostly hobbies at the moment, but I'd love to see it grow into a business.

POTN: Awesome! How did you get started?

Luke: I decided to give pyrography a go and created some Studio Ghibli log slices for my partner for Yule several years ago. From there, I began to acquire parts of machinery and tools piece by piece, building my own workshop using my knowledge from my day job as an engineer, experimenting with wood turning and carving, and then I discovered resin. When I showed people photos of the things I had made, they wanted to buy them! So I began to get occasional orders for jewellery or dice.

POTN: Tell us a little about your pagan path.

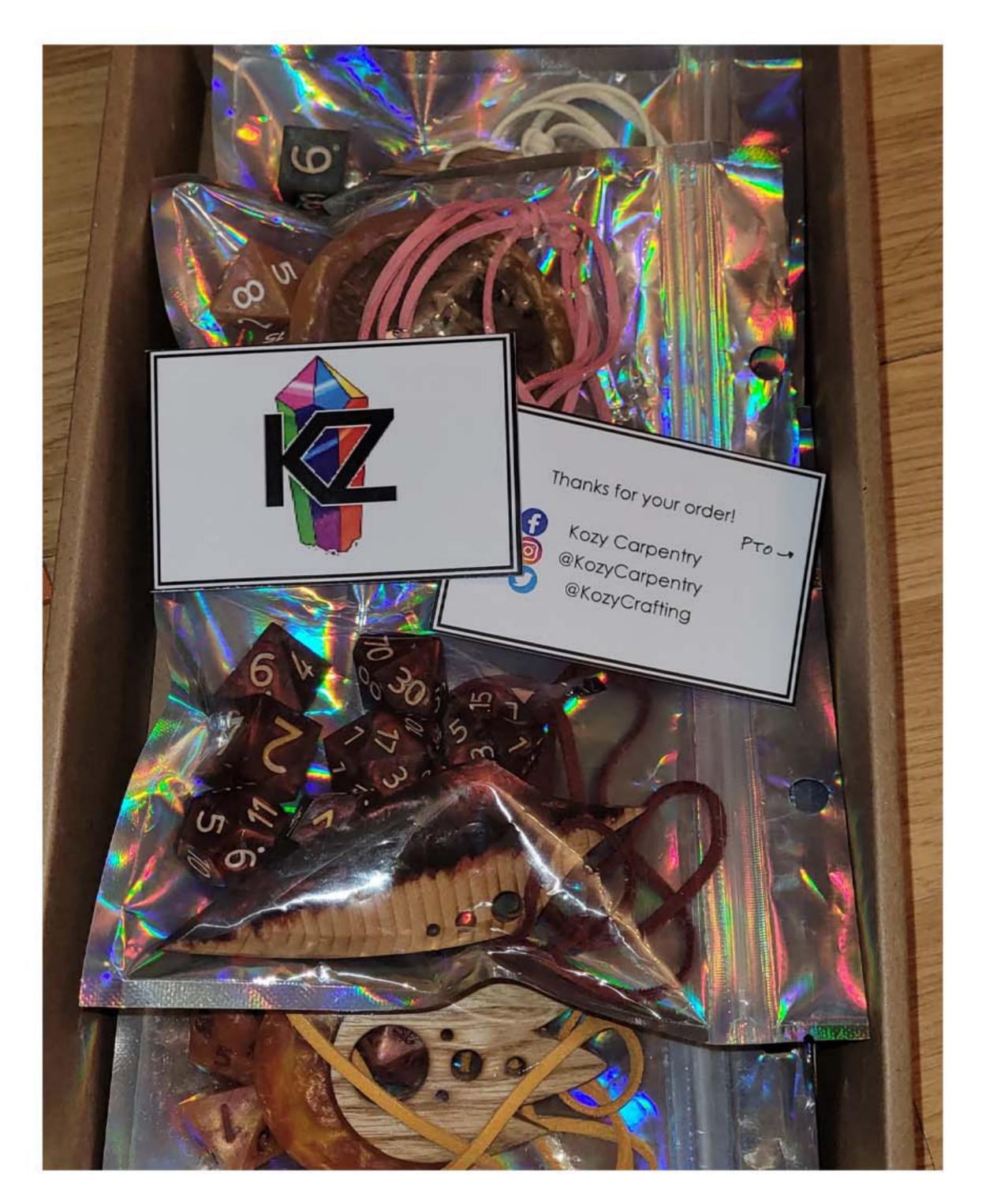
Luke: I have always had an interest in the occult, mythology, and folklore; the supernatural, religious lore, demonology...and it all stems from my nerdy foray into the realms of fantasy, especially Dungeons and Dragons. Personally I am an atheist, but my wife is pagan and their interests combined with my own drew me to rune carving and wandcraft. I have a fascination with Norse paganism/heathenry and am enjoying learning as I go.

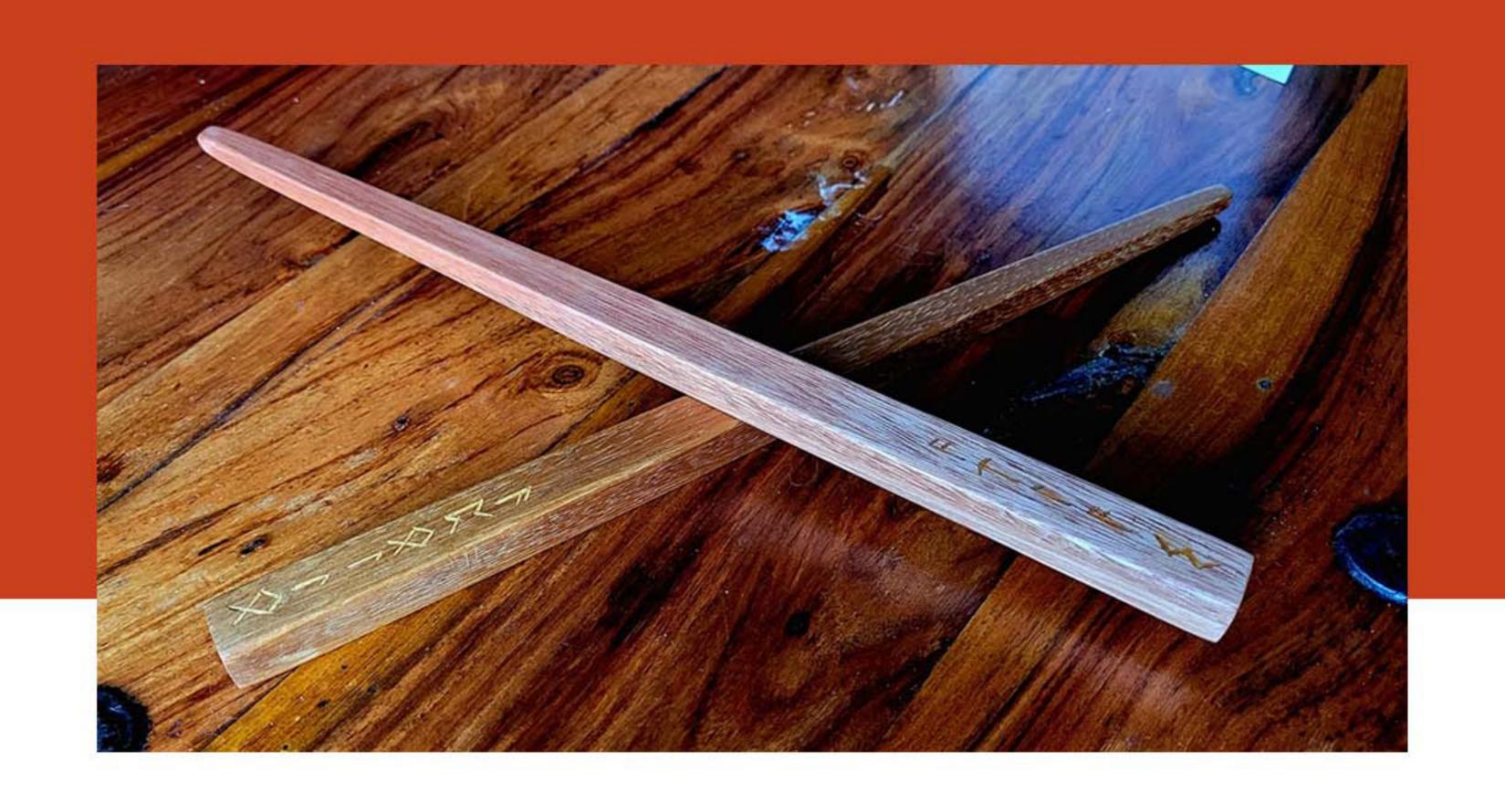
POTN: What are your plans for the future?

Luke: To finish some of the projects that I've started! I plan on making wood and resin rune sets for divination; I have delved into 3D printing recently, combining it with miniature painting. I'd love a proper workshop (currently it's a bedroom in my house!) and time to create and fulfil commissions; for the business to grow and to open an etsy shop or standalone website. I had planned to attend Mabon at Thornborough last year with a stall but sadly we had to back out last minute. Hopefully I'll make some of the pagan festivals this year or next.









POTN: Do you have any advice for anyone starting out?

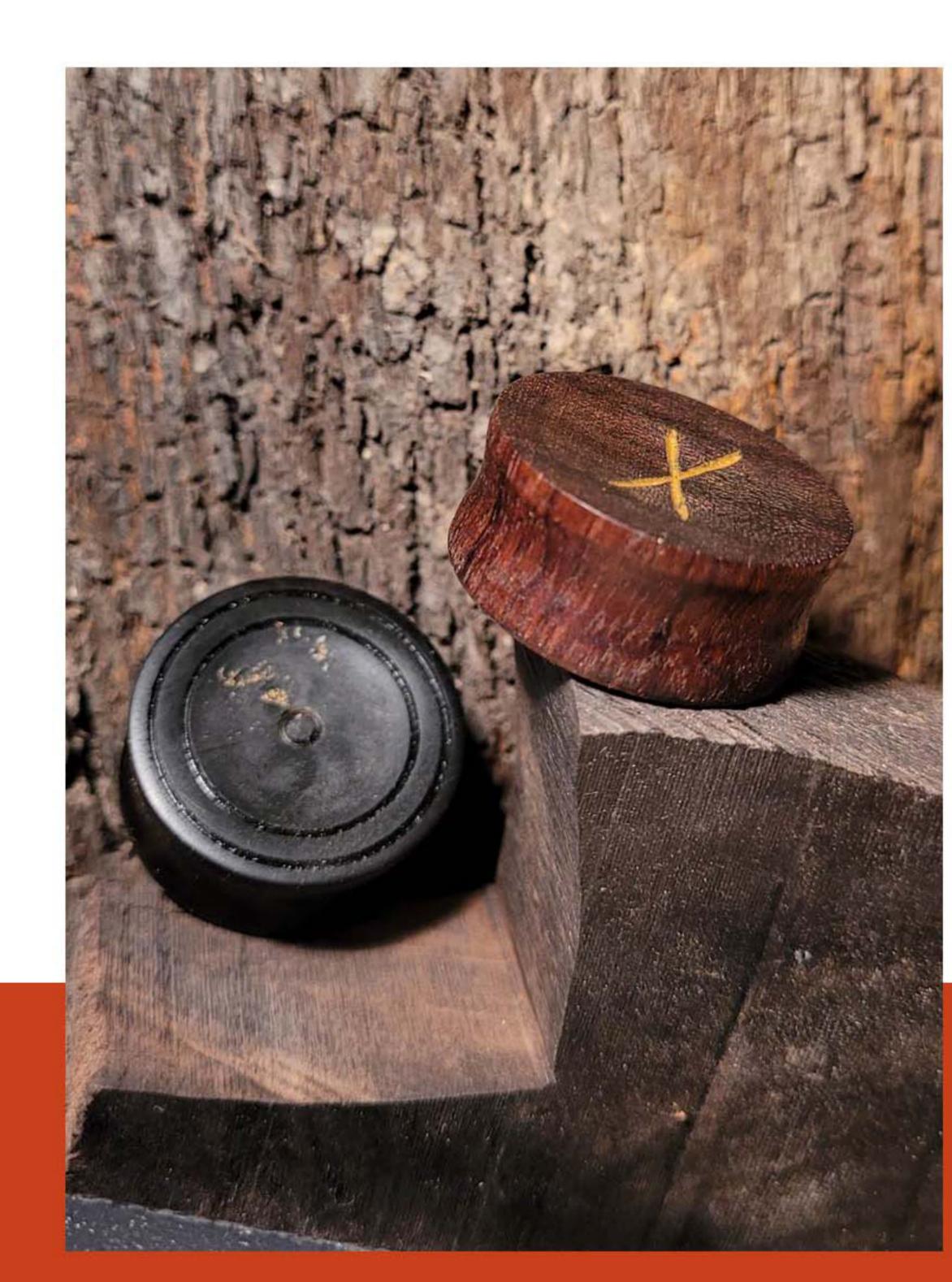
Luke: Start small and cheap. Start with hand tools and then develop into electrical tools, because you get more appreciation for how to work with particular projects, designs and materials if you're physically crafting with your own hands, slowly in a step-by-step fashion.

POTN: How can people find you or get in touch if they want to buy something?

Luke: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter...I'm even on TikTok! Just send me a message wherever you want and I'll get back to you. I'd love to do more work for the pagan community.

www.facebook.com/KoZyCrafting https://linktr.ee/KozyCrafting





BOOK
REVIEW:

Imbol6
Brigid's Feast



ALEXANDRE RAVENHART

illustrated by Maria Finchenko

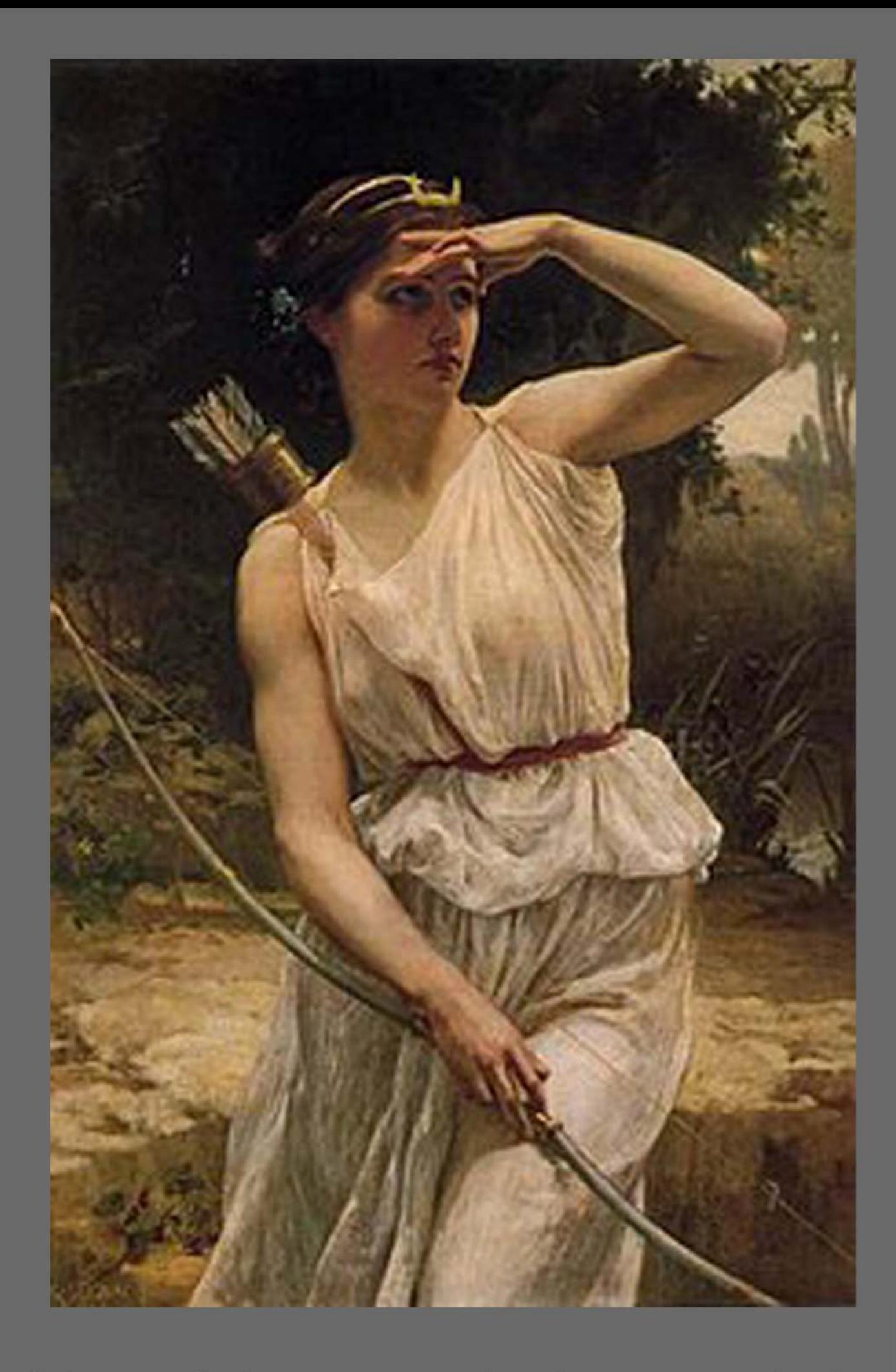
Imbolc: Brigid's Feast is a beautiful children's book in two parts. It begins with a richly detailed poem about Brigid, her awakening, and how Imbolc is celebrated with fire, feasting, and crafts, then goes on with a glossary of some of the words used in the poem (which are highlighted in red for easy reference).

The second part of the book contains children's reading comprehension, vocabulary and story writing activities, word games, drawing prompts, and more.

Stunningly illustrated by Maria Finchenko, whose images are perfectly matched to the words within, this book is a lovely little piece for mini witchlings and pagans learning about the sabbats with their parents.

My children (4.5 and 2.5) are a little too young to benefit from the activities in the second half of the book yet, but have thoroughly enjoyed the poem and pictures, and it's a book we will treasure and read again and again each year at this time.

My only qualm is the misspelling of 'altar' as 'alter'; but overlooking that I would heartily recommend this book to pagan parents. Ravenheart hits the nail on the head with a blend of easy-to-digest mythology for small humans alongside encouraging prompts perfect for home educating folks or just a celebration of the day itself.



DEITY OF THE MONTH DIANA

If you've been pagan for any length of time, Diana will likely be a name you've heard of, at least in passing, though probably a lot more than that.

Widely accepted to be the goddess of the moon, Diana is revered in neopaganism, particularly Wicca, though her roots go much farther back. Originally a goddess in Hellenism and ancient Rome, Diana was heralded as

goddess of the moon, the hunt, rural places, and crossroads. Often represented by a bow, she is equated with the Greek goddess Artemis, and much of her story is conflated there.

Her name is thought to mean daylight sky, celestial, heavenly. She was thought to be goddess of the wilderness and the hunt; this eventually through Hellenism came to be more of the gentle countryside than the wilderness: what Greeks thought of as civilised.

As moon cycles were believed to be linked to the menstrual cycle and pregnancy, Diana as a moon goddess came to be linked with childbirth and fertility, and protection of labouring people. Alongside Juno, she was given the title Lucina, which indicated the significance of her as a birthing protectress. She would even often become conflated with Juno herself.

Diana is thought to have been a goddess of the crossroads - which could allude to the underworld, contrasting with her being invested in childbirth. She has been likened to Hecate in this respect.

Alongside Hecate and Luna, Diana has been heralded as a triple goddess - the underworld, the moon, and the hunt respectively. Wicca takes her as the maiden, mother and crone under their triple goddess belief system.

Neopagans began to take an interest in Diana under the Wiccan flag in the early 20th Century. Charles Godfrey Leland wrote 'Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches', published in 1899. This book has been credited as a major influence in the start of the Wiccan movement, and Aradia, a goddess Leland claimed to have been told of by Italian witches, has been used as another name for Diana and another aspect to her as a triple goddess. This was perpetuated by Gardner and, later, Scott Cunningham.

Dianic Wicca itself, founded in 1971, focuses on Leland's work alongside Gardner's Wiccan teachings and reveres Diana as a feminist icon, drawing heavily on moon symbology and her place as a protector of birthing women. Dianic Wicca has been found to perpetuate transphobia, excluding trans women and focusing only on those assigned female at birth.

Happily, there are those who are not trans exclusionary and welcome all to work with Diana and all her aspects.

Ultimately, placed on the edge of two extremes always - the underworld and the world of the living; the wilderness and the rolling villages and neat fields; the daylight and the moon; childbirth and virginity, she is a greatly important figure who has understandably been worshipped throughout history. Earliest findings date from the first century CE, and she is still glorified in neopaganism today.



The Benighted Path: Primeval Gnosis and the Monstrous Soul By Richard Gavin

"Night, as it existed in the time before time, before the Word, was complete. It was the macrocosmic expression of soul and body harmonious, the ecstatic whirl of Becoming. This state of Becoming does not have a static realization, a moment of completion. It is the flux, the flow of the dark rivers." – Richard Gavin

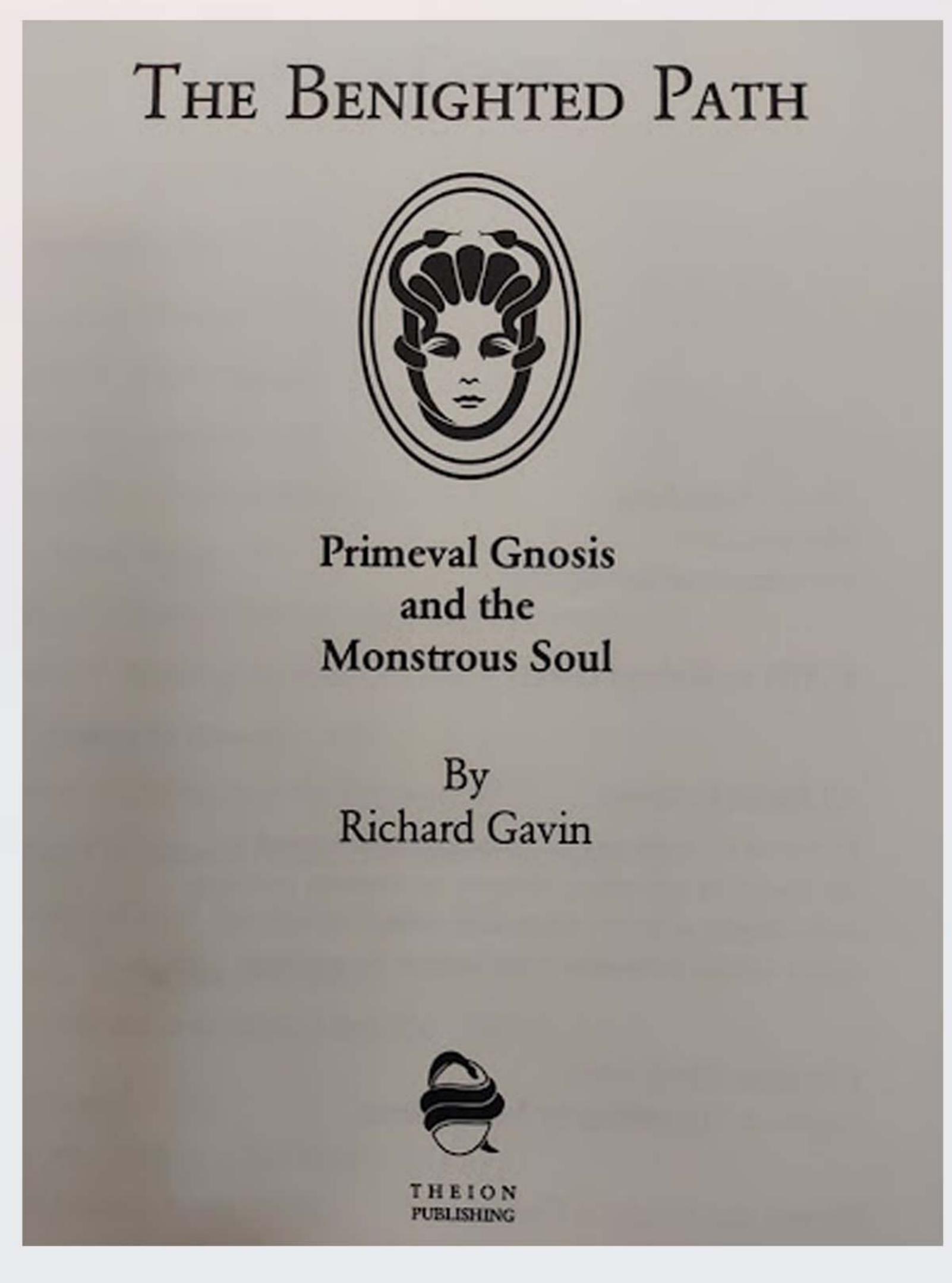
There will always be those to whom the dark is more of a draw than sunlit groves and transcendental pathways to something regarded as higher, to whom the tangled knots of thorned roots barring and alongside the pathway is a welcome challenge to overcome rather than to take an easier path or one that seeks to be made without obstacle, and to whom the shiver of dread-awe down the spine is more welcome and deeply moving rather than something to avoid and flee from.

'The Benighted Path' by Richard Gavin is an esoteric work that is to be drawn from and experienced as much as it is to be read. It is a book to dedicate the time to read and to savour as much as it is to read when the inspiration strikes, when a particular passage or subject within is tugging on the mind to read and engage. What each person takes from the Night-driven words and what they confront will be individual, offering a dynamic and shifting serpentine course to tread.

"...the Night Primeval courses through vacant city streets, pools within places of neglect. But never is it more immediately realized that in the Wilderness that manifests in the physical world as Nature and within human beings as the act of dreaming." – p. 31

Dreaming, waking and otherwise, is a balm for the crushing weight of the enforced necessity of working that otherwise risks burning out and charring the imagination within, contrary to so many innate rhythms that the body would fall itself into if allowed. To find the space and time for wanderings of the mind, to carve out precious energy for explorations of the path within as much as out, is precious and cherished. Whether it is a handful of moments between shifts and their aftermath to shut the eyes and let the mind wander, to sudden ideas that strike like the searing, scorching power of a thunderclap, leaving a lasting impression, demanding to be pried out from the depths and given air, moments where the imagination is uncaged and the reigns loosened to bay and howl, these moments are scale-balancing and savage both.

These are the moments spoken of within the pages of this volume, heartily encouraged. Moments spoken of within tales of warning and horror, the sort of stories traded around campfires. But it is a path willingly trod, and to work with what is encountered and experienced is terrifying and arousing all in one, in a manner beyond articulation.



'The Benighted Path' is a work that stands in steadfast contrast to the solar and to the transcendental. I would definitely advise giving it a read to those who do not find there to be a draw in raising aloft, in seeking to evolve beyond and instead who take comfort in the lived moments and in integrating oneself within their present, and the eager exchange and interchange with the surrounding wildness.

This is not a losing of oneself but the beginning of the potential to discover the interplay between external influences and internal experiences that combine in a truly unique way. It is a prompt to experience without trying to label or to rationalise.

This is less of a review and more a personal offering of recommendation, to help spread the word of this book to those who might be drawn to such an embodied approach to being. It is succinct to encourage investigation while offering hopefully enough to draw in.

The curious can purchase this work through Theion Publishing - https://theionpublishing.com/shop/bnp2ed/.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY GATESHEAD MOOT!



What many Pagans enjoy about the community are monthly meet ups, also known as a moot!

Many Pagans, Witches and others depending on the moot, meet up usually at local pubs, public parks and other similar public spaces, and chat informally about paganism, witchcraft, their lives and most importantly make friends.

Gateshead moot started three years ago. With Gateshead being somewhere which most people seem to forget about for social events, with it being a small town, sometimes overlooked by Newcastle, but there are many Pagans and Witches living in Gateshead who want to meet up more locally.

Helen Morgan said, the moot creator 'I thought: "We need a moot!" So I created the group "Gateshead Wiccans & Pagans" on Facebook, invited some Pagan friends to join & the group has grown from there, along with the moot. The moot started with myself & one other friend...'

Gateshead Moot meets monthly and sometimes has as many as 10 plus people showing up at Cafe Under The Spire in Bensham, Gateshead.

'The moot has been a good thing for our members as it has brought people together & many have made strong friendships...' Helen said.

UPCOMING PAGAN MOOTS

If reading about Gateshead moots birthday got you in the mood to socialise and meet others in your local area, here is a list of upcoming moots in February.

DURHAM MOOT

TUESDAY 7 FEB
7PM
THE HEAD OF STEAM
DURHAM

VISIT DURHAM MOOT EVENTS ON FACEBOOK FOR MORE INFO

GATESHEAD MOOT

SATURDAY 25TH FEB

12 NOON
CAFE UNDER THE SPIRE
GATESHEAD

VISIT GATESHEAD WICCANS & PAGANS ON FACEBOOK FOR MORE INFO

WHITLEY BAY MOOT (REVIVAL!)

SATURDAY 11 FEB

12 NOON
WHETHERSPOONS: THE FIRESTATION

EVENT RAN BY RUNECAST COPPER

HARTLEPOOL MOOT

SUNDAY 12 FEB
6PM
JACKSONS WHARF
HARTLEPOOL

VISIT HARTLEPOOL PAGAN
AND WICCA GROUP
ON FACEBOOK FOR MORE INFO

THE GREN COMET

This February, if you look up to the skies, you may be able to catch a glimpse of a comet that only journeys past Earth once every 50,000 years. This comet is known as C2022 E3,. Comets orbit the sun and are a combination of frozen gasses, dust and rock.

When they get closer to the sun, they experience blasts of radiation in space which then releases gasses and debris which can make the comet look green! It's the atmosphere as a result around the comet, called a 'Coma' that glows green.

By the end of January and into early February, you can try and spot this comet in the sky, it may look like a bright white smudge in the night sky to the naked eye, but with binoculars or a telescope, it can look green. It will be 26 million miles aways but it will burn so bright, it's visible to us which is quite exciting!

The best time for us in the North of England to see the comet is to get out before Dawn and look North-East at the horizon.

The Virtual Telescope Project will also be hosting a free live-stream from 4am GMT on Friday January 13.



(Image Source: Mike Read/Twitter)

This really is a once-in-a-lifetime event. The last time the comet passed Earth was during the last Ice Age, and it won't be seen again for another 50,000 years (when it restarts its orbit around the sun).

ESSAY: ROBIN HOOD'S ENTANGLEMENT WITH THE NATURAL WORLD, PART 1

By Emily Payton

This piece was featured on our blog but we had some issues with notifications going out to subscribers, so as we're sure you'll enjoy it, we are rerunning it this issue.

As a break from my Anglo-Saxon Paganism investigation (...it gets weirder), I have written an essay on Robin Hood and what he portrays in comparison to not only Christianity, but also how paganism is very clearly surviving. Robin Hood has been a longstanding interest of mine. He fits (or doesn't fit) into so many boxes; he is not a stereotypical macho-man of the time, he is a bad Christian who takes strength from the forest - he is twisted to fit into English Literature from French as a result of the Hundreds Year War.

Robin Hood has been part of English and French folklore for over six hundred years. Robin Hood's idea is connected to being the hero and knight of the ordinary people, an avenger of the poor, rebel against hierarchy, and embracer of nature. He is loved for his rejection of the higher classes, for outwitting them and for embracing those deemed weaker. His presence is noted as early as the twelfth century, proceeding into the Tudor period, travelling through the nineteenth century and still today. During that time, depending on Robin's audience's political situation and social class, Robin Hood is represented as either a criminal or a hero. Unfortunately, mention of his female consort Maid Marion does not come into Robin Hood tales until the sixteenth century. Although this still marks her as one of several strong female characters in early English Literature, it is just outside the project's timeframe. However, she does appear in early French literature, namely Adam de la Halle's (d. 1288) Le Jeu de Robin et Marion (1282-1283). In this essay, therefore, I aim to i nvestigate the Robin Hood audience and potential authors, and then the heavy influence of nature and empowerment upon the tales under scrutiny. I will do this by focusing mainly on the earliest texts: Robin Hood and the Monk (1450), Robyn Hod and the Shryff of Notyngham (1475) and Robin Hood and the Guy of Gisborne (1475). I will then focus on Adam de la Halle's Le Jeu de Robin et Marion, along with French traditions of how the natural world intersects with the idea of female empowerment.

The Early Robin Hood

The legend of Robin Hood has sparked much cultural imagination up until the present day. The late mediaeval chronicler, Andrew of Wyntoun (d.1423) had discussed Robin's existence thus:

Litil Iohun and Robert Hude
Waythmen war commendit gud;
In Ingilwode and Bernnysdaile
Thai oyssit al this tyme thar trawale.

Similarly, at the end of the fourteenth century, within William Langland's Piers Plowman (1370), had presented Robin's first appearance in a Middle English text:

I kan noght parfitly my Paternoster as be preest it syngeb, But I kan rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolf Erl of Chestre.

Here we have an additional suggestion that royalty and the higher classes appreciated the legend of Robin Hood and that the legend travelled further down the feudal system. In Piers Plowman, Sloth, the drunken priest, suggests orally produced Robin Hood songs are widely known Atte nale, [at the ale-house], implying he is a popular figure for an illiterate and semi-illiterate audience. It is suggested that Robin Hood is of no importance to the aristocracy. Sloth even suggests here that Robin Hood's legend is more popular than the Lord's Prayer, which was quite a claim from a holy man. However, this is not surprising in terms of the focus on Celtic empowerment of nature within the Robin Hood texts and Christian authority's contrasting strength. John Chandler states that this comment from Sloth 'also reflects the concern of the Church for the souls of people who likely attended mass grudgingly, but could readily recite popular songs.' Such fleeting reference may be how we first discover Robin Hood in England, but he does not remain so low in social ranking for long.



Nevertheless, how has Robin Hood become so popular for so long a time? I argue that the answer lies in the art of story-telling, so evidenced in the tales and in Robin's link with nature. Story-telling is a tradition that can suit any class, whether the narrative is oral or written. Taking the Celtic traditions into consideration, as discussed in the first chapter of this project, Druids learnt their knowledge, such as history, mythology, laws and healing 'verses by heart.' In turn, this inspired the 'bards', who are described as singers and poets who composed works to be sung or told to support or criticise their leaders or issues in society. From chapter two, we know that Marie de France's Breton Lais from the 1170s were also sung or performed. Many different societies followed similar traditions: the classical tradition of Homer's Odyssey and the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf, both designed for oral performance. As Albert Bates Lord has suggested, large parts of these stories consisted of oral text, which was improvised during the story-telling process. Lord also claims that most oral stories are constructed out of setting phrases that have been amassed from a collection of hearing and telling

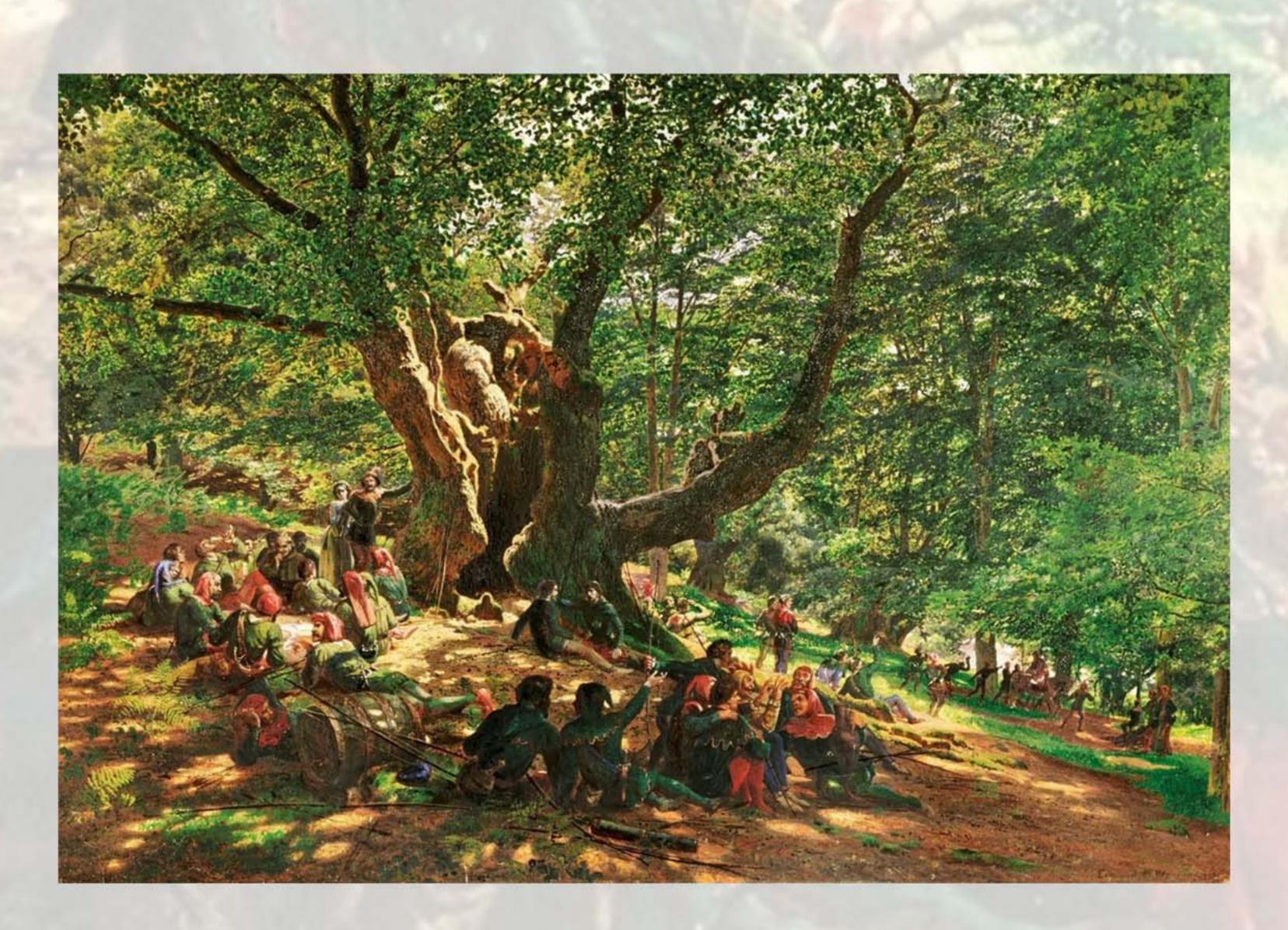
stories. The 'formula is the offspring of the marriage of thought and sung verse.' This relates to the later Robin Hood traditions, where we see the same themes and set phrases, so much so that none of these stories is therefore reliable as the 'true' account.

We now accept Robin as a literary invention. Whether the speakers told the tories for passion or profit, such story-telling became a performance piece to gather listeners. For example, Geoffrey Chaucer's (d. 1400) Canterbury Tales (1387 and 1400) are tales to amuse and inform the pilgrims of the frame-narrative as they wind their way to Canterbury on pilgrimage. Katie Normington focuses on the development of small story-telling gatherings to what would now be described as theatre. She explains there is no clear distinction during the Middle Ages between the different types of narration or the development of entertainment, and I agree with her when she argues that, as long as there is an audience, the size of it does not (or should not) matter to the story-teller, nor the terminology used. Taking into account Lord Normington's arguments, who argued that the definition of theatre should be varied based on its audience and deliverance, I assert that story-telling, oral traditions, and theatre all encapsulate two things: to educate and/or to entertain, regardless of their definition. Let us consider, for example, the oldest surviving Robin Hood text within the tradition, Robin Hood and the Monk dated to 1450. It is regarded as a 'ballad' by Francis James Child and therefore included in his English and Scottish Popular Ballads. The text itself, however, does not identify itself as a ballad, suggesting that it is, instead, a narration:

Thus endys the talkyng of the munke And Robyn Hode I wysse; God, that is ever a crowned kyng, Bryng us alle to His blisse! (355-358)

Here, the term 'talkyng' insinuates that this was not a ballad in the traditional sense, and although it was perhaps performed over music, it was spoken rather than sung. It should be noted that this chapter of the project is not arguing that the Robin Hood tradition should not be considered as a ballad, as Grace Castagnetta's edited collection of the fourteenth and fifteenth-century songs, Song of Robin Hood, alone disproves this argument. This essay primarily considers the context and listener (and later, the reader) of the tradition in the hope of understanding its influence upon mediaeval culture and its later legacy.

(Sources are on the next page.)



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- 15. 'Robin Hood and the Monk', 355-358.
- 16. Holt, p. 37.
- 17. Francis James Child, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- 18. 'Robin Hood and the Monk', 355-358.
- 19. Grace Castagnetta, Song of Robin Hood (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947). Castagnetta presents a ccollection of eighteen ballads, lyrics, and scores about Robin Hood, most dating originally from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with their accompanying sheet music.

SNOW MOON

The next full moon is on February 5th and its name is the Snow Moon.

We are pretty deep in Winter now, it's very cold outside, sometimes very bitter on your skin and nippy on your nose. Usually and for many places in the world, it would be snowing this time of year. Maybe it has already for you?

Some Native American tribes sometimes called this moon the Hunger Moon, as the snowfall would make hunting difficult for them and so they would have less food for the month.

The moon will also be a 'Micro Moon', which means it will lie at the furthest point of its orbit. This might make the moon look smaller.

Things you can do during a full moon:

Charge crystals. Many Pagans and witches believe that the full moon has powerful energy and, if they have crystals, will put them out for them to absorb that energy.

Have a bubbly cleansing bath. What more of an excuse do you need to give yourself time to fill your tub, and relax for a little bit?

Make moon water. Some Pagans and witches believe leaving water out to absorb the full moon's energy will create moon water which can be then used during spells.

Meditation. Sit and meditate: breathe in, breathe out, light a candle, and have a moment of reflection and express some gratitude, or focus on some positivity you may have taken for granted in your life recently.

Overall, the full moon is a beautiful sight to see. Even if you just notice it in the sky, give it a nod and say hi; recognise its beauty and its existence because we're very lucky to have something so beautiful to look up at, and our ancestors certainly felt the same way.

Thank you to:

Sam Stoker Emily Payton Gwyne Kipling

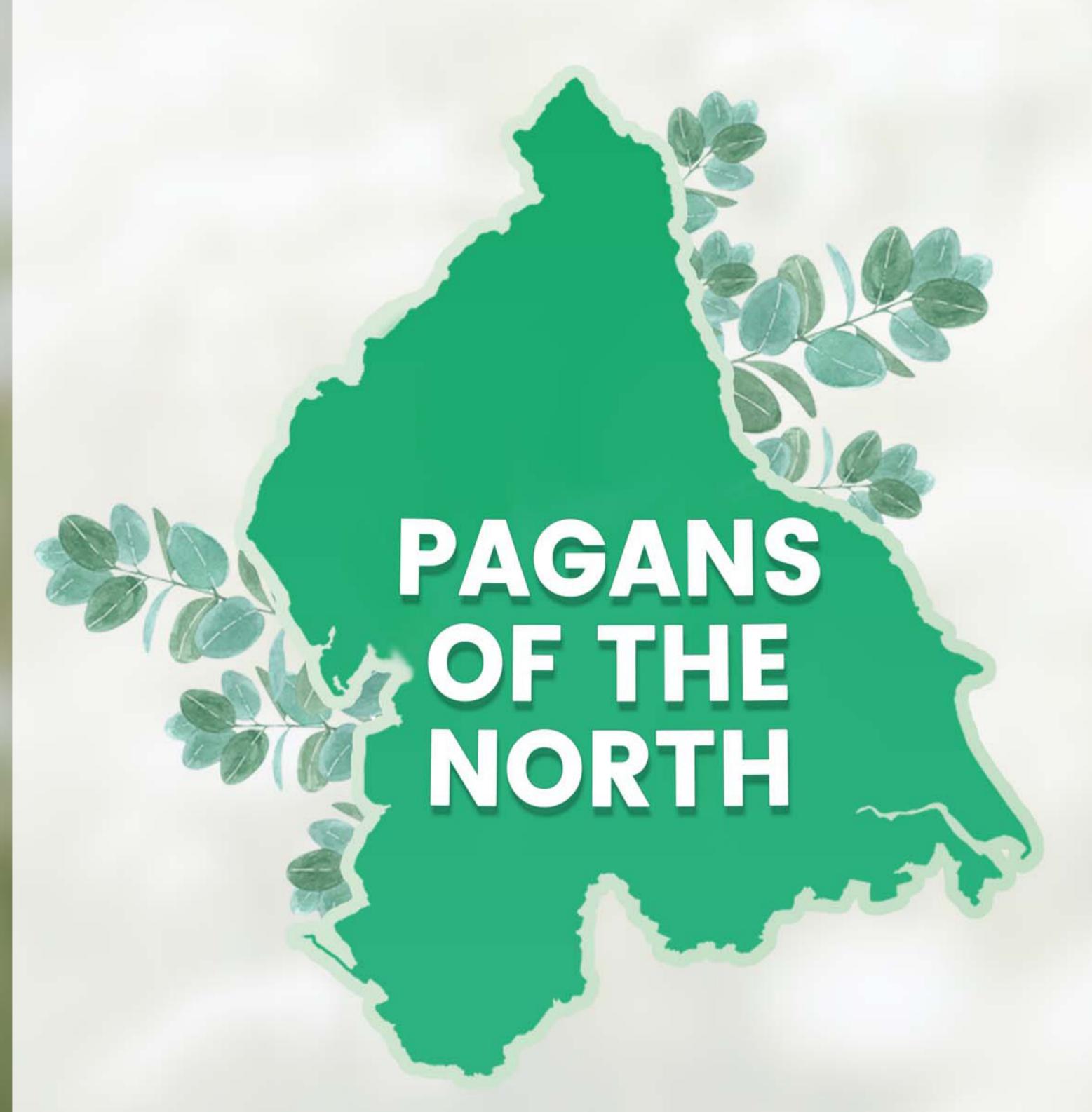
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Facebook Groups you may be interested in:

North East England Witchraft &

Pagan Circle

Newcastle Pagan Gathering

Gateshead Wiccans & Pagans

Northumbria Kith

Sunderland Pagan Moot

The Pagan Federation - North East

Pagan Events NE England

NorthumbriaPagans

Morpeth & Surrounding Areas

Pagan Moot

Witches and Pagans of Gateshead

Northeast England Pagan - Crafts,

Events & Learning

County Durham Pagan and Witch

Network

Hartlepool Pagan and Wicca Group

We are not affiliated or connected with any groups listed in the above list.